Manitowoc County Homes for the Less Fortunate

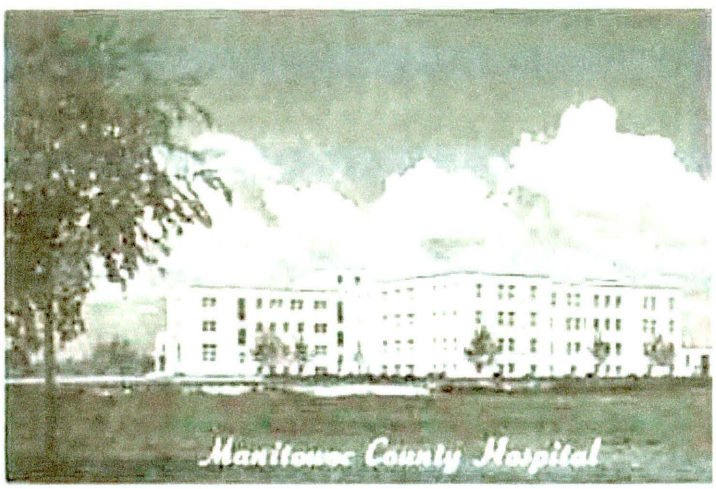
The Orphanage in Manitowoc



Founded by St. Marys in Manitowoc
Also known as the Polish Orphan Asylum

The Manitowoc County Hospital

The Hospital in this photo (on a 1909 postcard) was also the poor farm. It was a home that was a "jack of all trades". It took care of the poor, sick who couldn't afford a regular hospital and the chronically ill. There are orchards there and the inmates used to grow food and keep occupied.



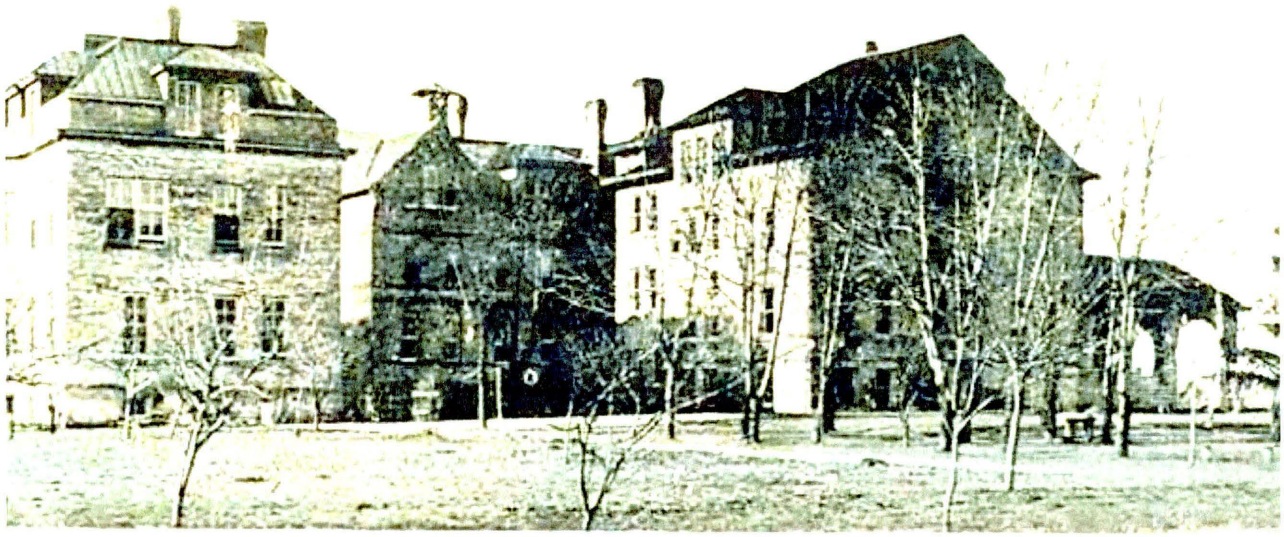
Means of Providing for the Unfortunate

From "History of Manitowoc County" by Falge, pg. 43

It was the custom, under the law, in the primitive days of the county, for each town to make provision for the care and sustenance of those of its people who were in indigent circumstances. In March, 1851, this system was abolished and, what was termed the county system, established. To comply with the

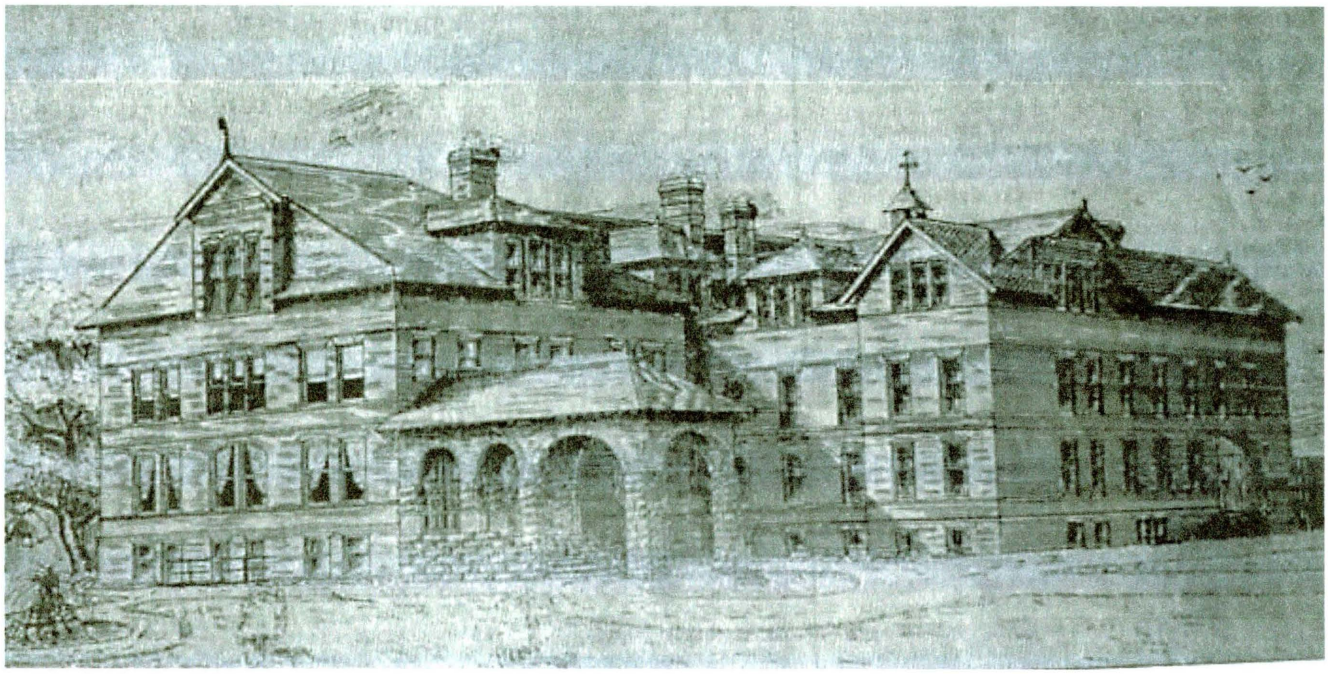
law the board of supervisors elected three superintendents of the poor and in the following May a quarter section of land was purchased in the town of Manitowoc Rapids, near the then county seat, and suitable buildings were erected thereon for the tenancy of all citizens of the county becoming a public charge. This institution was given the title of the County Poor Farm and was so designated until it was abandoned for the purposes originally designed, the county having reverted to its first method, by which the individual towns were made responsible for their own helpless ones, and this system obtains today.

Recently strenuous efforts have been made by both men and women of the county, seeking better and permanent means of providing for and taking care of those having a claim on the county's bounty. The matter took substantial form, in that meetings were held and plans formed by a committee, for the establishing of an institution by the county, erecting and furnishing buildings therefore, which should be called the County Home. The project was made abortive, however, by unanticipated opposition, but the friends of the project are not discouraged by defeat and still have strong hopes that their philanthropic innovation will soon take concrete form and become a reality, indeed.



Twenty-Third and Madison Streets

The Manitowoc County Asylum



This is a drawing of the asylum in 1885 that I ran across. I forgot to make a note as to where I found it.

The county asylum was not actually an insane asylum, but rather a facility to assist in the aid of those with T.B.(tuberculosis), physical health ailments, or mental health ailments.
The facility also housed the poor.

From "History of Manitowoc County"
by Falge, pg. 77-78

To William Rahr is due more credit, probably than any other man in the county, for the provision of an asylum for the care of the chronic insane of Manitowoc county. On April 18, 1884, he introduced a resolution in the county board, providing for a committee to investigate the expense of maintaining the insane of the county and the probable cost of building an asylum. Following favorable action on this resolution the necessary steps were taken and an asylum was built during the following summer. Mr. Rahr served on the first committee of investigation, later on the building committee and was the first trustee elected to the asylum board. The first board of trustees was composed of Messrs. William Rahr, John Carey, Henry Vits, Henry Goedjen and C. F. Hacker. Consequent to the resignation of William Rahr, William Lueps was appointed in his stead.

On March 26, 1884, Gustav Mueller, of Reedsville, was elected as the first superintendent of the Manitowoc county asylum. On January 17, 1885, the first patients were brought to the asylum and up to May 23rd of the same year, when the first report was made, fifty-seven patients had been given care and comfort in the asylum. Previous to that time they had been confined in the county jail, while some had been left in charge of a keeper at St. Nazianz.

In the next ten years the number of patients had increased to one hundred and thirty-four and at various times it had become necessary to make additions to the asylum. At this time William Rahr was again elected trustee and the next year, following the resignation of Gustav Mueller and wife, Henry Goedjen and his wife were elected as superintendent and matron. By this time the buildings and equipment had become entirely inadequate for the purpose. So, in the summer of 1897, complete changes were made. Parts of various buildings were remodeled, additional land was purchased, and sanitary conditions improved so that the institution was modernized in equipment and ranks with the

best of its kind in the state. As a result of these changes the number of outside patients increased from sixty-three to one hundred and six within the next two years.

In 1902 William Rahr again severed connections with the institution and Henry Wernecke was elected his successor. Much credit is due Mr. Wernecke in conjunction with Mr. Goedjen, the superintendent. To these two, through skillful management and far-sightedness, is due, in a large measure, the prosperity of the last few years of the asylum.

It was a distinct loss to the county when Mr. Goedjen died, October 5, 1911. He was succeeded by Roland Kolb, former farm Manager. Mrs. Goedjen was retained as matron. It has been repeatedly said by all in a position to know, that, while other institutions may be ahead of Manitowoc county in the number and cost of its buildings, nowhere in the state are patients better cared for or given more homelike surroundings. This is due to the efforts of the matron, Mrs. Goedjen. The trustees are Louis Wiegand, William Kiel, and Henry Wernecke.

The original farm property of the asylum comprised fifty-seven acres. Now the acreage has been increased to two hundred and sixty-five acres. Owing to the fact that the land was purchased from time to time, some of it is about two miles from the institution. The original building was first intended to house abut seventy-five patients, for whose care and support the county is paid by those responsible , and with the revenue derived from the farm the running expenses of the asylum has been self-sustaining for a number of years. From "History of Manitowoc County"
by Plumb, 1904, pg. 164
Early in the eighties many Manitowoc county men, notably William Rahr, urged the building of the county asylum for the care of the insane and at a meeting of the county board in May 1884 $25,000 was voted for that purpose. A three story brick structure was built on spacious grounds southwest of Manitowoc and the institution was opened in January 1885 with Gustav Mueller as superintendent. The asylum has since been managed by trustees and has proved most successful, many patients from other counites as well as the local insane are being cared for.

A GOOD REPORT.
Made by Trustees of County Insane Asylum.
The thirteenth annual report of the board of trustees of the Manitowoc County Insane Asylum contains some interesting data which readers of the Hereald will appreciate. Heretofore it has been customary for the trustees alone to make a report but the law says the superintendent of the institution shall also make a report, and the following facts are in accordance with the two reports:
The total expected receipts from all sources are $28,609.81 and the expenditures for the care of the patients was $14,919.70 leaving a net gain of $9,690.20 for the county.
The superintendent reports 8593 weeks of board furnished, bringing the per. capita cost per week to $1.62. The per capita cost for the year 1897 was $1.41, showing an increase of 21c. a week.
The improvements made are mentioned at some length. Among the most useful was the sewer ordered by the board at their last session and which is now complete at a cost of $2753.80. The farm buildings, which were started last spring, have been finished and it is the opinion of the board that no more building will be necessary for some years to come.
In the report special mention is made of the sale of the six acres of the Wood farm, sold to the C. & N.W. R'y Co., setting forth the advantages derived from the deal.
The property has increased in value and at present is slated at $136,266.87.

The health of the patients has been exceptionally good, but four deaths being reported for the year. From a sanitary point of view the county has a model institution for the care and keeping of chronic insane.
Dr. Luhman, the attending physician, recommends the erection of a large enclosure for the use of patients who are unable to get exercise.
Taken as a whole the report is a very creditable one and much praise is due those in charge.
Manitowoc Daily Herald, Manitowoc, Wis. Thursday, November 17, 1898 P. 1

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT.
We are under obligations to Mr. Chas. Klingholz, for an early copy of the Report of Commissioners of the Poor, from which we make the following extract.- It will doubless interest many of our readers, and it will gratifying to the friends of Mr. Boucher, the Superintendent, to know that the Commissioner's report commends his management of the affairs at the farm.
Special accounts of the County Poor for 1854.

Flour	$174.62
Pork	141.19
Coffee	15.71
Tea	16.50
Saleratus	1.80
Candies	8.77
Soap	5.23
Rice	1.72
Salt	6.75
Sugar	28.47
Beet	0.56
Dried Apples	3.88
Vinegar	0.45
Starch	0.70
Pins and needles	0.26
Stove blacking	0.51
Peas	0.61
Pepper and mustard	1.41
Codfish	1.01
Tobacco	3.32
Molasses	1.5?
Butter	10.70
Oats, for seed	13.06
Timothy for seed	3.75
Top onions	4.00
Garden seeds	1.24
Nails	1.80

Callico's	80.89
Sheeting	15.24
Bedding, Thread and Buttons	8.66
Brooms	1.64
Matches	0.60
Pants and Woolen clothing	10.17
Rope and bed cords	2.88
Bags	3.19
Diverse furniture	37.20
One Wagon	55.00
Hay etc.	67.09
Boots and Shoes	11.15
Coffins	8.50
Dr. Gibson	12.00
Dr. Muller	90.38
Dr. Zilley	10.25
Dr. Oswald	70.00
Digging graves and $8 to Eatough	10.50
Medicines	33.36
Order to Dorfer for work	1.50
Toll to M. & M.P.R. Co.	3.21
Van Valkenburgh, for Sheriff sale	17.78
Sick people at P.H. with teams	31.50
Blacksmithing	6.38
Hubbard, for sawing lumber	20.00
Provisions carried to the sick at Two Rivers	192.10
Provisions carried to the sick at Manitowoc	110.53
Provisions carried to the sick at Rapids	25.60
Provisions carried to the sick at Eaton	5.00
Total	$333.23
Services of Chester Buel as Poor commissioner	$28.50
Thos. Harrington, Com.	21.50
Chas. Klingholtz, Clk.	50.00
Boucher, P.H. Overseer	62.10

Total	$162.10
Old debts from 1853	
Platt & Bro.	$28.83
Lawrence for Plastering	7.00
Boucher's services	88.29
Emerson for flour	18.00
Total	$147.12
Total	$1625.20

Paupers in the house 39;
Paupers left the house, 32;
No. remaining. 7
Days board of the 39 paupers--3502.
The clearing is 24 Acres.
CHESTER BUEL, CHAS. KLINGHOLTZ, Commissioners.
Manitowoc, Nov. 22d, 1854.
Manitowoc Tribune, Manitowoc, Wis. Saturday, November 25, 1854 P. 3

Cemetery Burials

The first burial at the Potter's field section of the county cemetery is 1917. A big question exists as to what happened to the burials of the indigent before 1917? It is assumed, that the burials took place within the individual townships, since the individual townships were given responsibility to care for their own poor. More research will have to be made to confirm.

Hospital for Church Sisters

Manitowoc, Wis., April 20.-The sisters of St. Francis of Silver Lake to-day through Register of Deeds Lindsted closed a deal for the Gerpheide park paying $7,000. The sisters will erect a large hospital on the premises. The building will be modern in every respect, will have a capacity for about 300 patients, and cost $60,000. The erection will begin soon as plans are accepted. Mother Alexia of Silver Lake will take charge of the hospital when completed.
The Sentinel (Milwaukee, Wis) Thursday Morning April 21, 1898

The trustees of the Manitowoc County Insane Asylum have decided to make the breeding and raising of fancy live stock a feature of the County farming in the future. They already have a number of high grade animals and

excellent buildings for the handling and shelter of stock of all kinds. The move should prove a wise one. Some of the very best and most economically administered county farms in Wisconsin owe their success to their well directed scientific farming.
Manitowoc Daily Herald, Manitowoc, Wis. Saturday, October 22, 1898 P. 1

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Former 'poor farm' site is filled with history

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By Judy Keen, USA TODAY

BREMER COUNTY'S POOR FARM

WAVERLY, Iowa — Ron Leistikow looks at the vacant, three-story building surrounded by farmland and sees a future museum. Ann Harms envisions a bed-and-breakfast or brewery. Karlyn Armstrong thinks it's an ideal spot for ice-cream socials.

Steven O. Heideman looks at the former poor farm and sees his boyhood home, a place where for more than a century Bremer County's poor and mentally or physically handicapped people lived and died. He lived here until he was 18 with his parents, who managed it.

Unused since 1999, the poor farm a few miles outside of town is a vestige of the past. Some area residents who feared it would be torn down formed a foundation, and last month the group was given the deed.

Leistikow, Harms, Armstrong and other foundation leaders plan to raise money and apply for grants to turn the building and 12-acre grounds into an attraction and a commemoration of a part of history that's often considered shameful.


Enlarge

"When these things are gone, they're gone forever," says Leistikow, the president. "It's irreplaceable."

Many of the hundreds of similar institutions that once existed have already vanished. In the mid-1800s, before Social Security, tax-supported poor farms — also called county homes or poor homes — were the only option for some indigent, elderly and disabled people.

Linda Crannell, who collects information on the institutions on her website (www.poorhousestory.com) and talks to historical societies about them, says there once were poor houses in almost every state. Because many were torn down or converted to other uses, there's no way to know how many survived, she says.

Some poor farms closed in the 1940s and 1950s as communities found other ways to care for the needy. Others became nursing homes or juvenile detention centers. Edgefield, which was the poor farm in Multnomah County, Ore., is now a hotel with a winery and golf course.

Digging into genealogy

There's a surge of curiosity about poor farms now from people researching family trees, says Pamela Sayre, education director for the National Genealogical Society.

Crannell, an optometrist in Austin, says her fascination began when she discovered that a great-great-grandmother lived in a New York state poor farm.

Interest has grown, Crannell says, "in an underground movement of mostly genealogists." Decades ago, poor farms were known for grim conditions and forced labor. Lingering stigma prevents some communities from showcasing them, she says.

Brenda Giles, administrator of the Greene County (Pa.) Historical Society museum, says an exhibit explaining that building's past as a poor farm from the 1860s through 1964 includes references to an 1881 *Atlantic Monthly* article that exposed abuse and cruelty at some facilities.

Too often, Giles says, people who lived in such places "were just forgotten" and buried in unmarked graves. Still, she says, poor farms were the only safe homes some residents ever knew. "I'm sure there were sad times," she says, "but they were their own family."

'Kid from the funny farm'

That's how Heideman, 57, remembers the Bremer County Poor Farm. "This was probably the best thing that could have happened to those people, because it really was a family," he says.

Except for the 33,000-square-foot building, the poor farm here looks like any working farm. There are two barns, a brick smokehouse, a cottage and modern storage buildings. The main structure was erected in 1953, when the original 1890s building was removed.

Inside, the past is more evident. There are two jail cells on the bottom floor, clothing storage rooms, a laundry room. Wooden cupboards have names written on yellowed tape marking spots where "Grace B." and "Anita M." stored their belongings.

There's a food pantry, barbershop and nurse's office. Large rooms where eight or more people slept in twin beds are adjacent to small, private alcoves. As he walks through the big room, Heideman remembers sitting there in 1956 watching Elvis Presley on TV for the first time.

Heideman's bedroom was a 6-by-10-foot room over the front entrance with a window looking out on the ¾-mile lane that stretches from the building to the highway. He didn't realize how unusual his home life was until he went to school, he says: "I was the kid from the funny farm."

When the place closed, he says, the remaining residents moved to town.

Heideman wonders if they were happier when they were at the poor farm. "Here at least everybody was accepting," he says.

That legacy should be remembered, Armstrong says. "Many people have no idea what a poor farm was," she says. "That slice of what the state did for its indigent people — it's going to be gone unless we save it."

Mixx

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From: mmsw922@aol.com
Subject: **Re: research gems**
Date: May 24, 2013 7:56:22 AM PDT
To: cddoig@comcast.net

Great! Good morning, Carol and Ivan.

I'm home but dressed up and set to go off and do the agency's "Year in Review" slide show shortly--so my adrenalin is zooming around.

Here's one more poor farm link: http //usatoday30 usatoday com/news/nation/2008-08-14-poorfarm_N htm?csp=1 Some interesting memories: the cubbies labeled for each person's laundry, for instance, and the odd GOOD memory of the experience.

And let me know if you need more costs from 1950.

Martha subsequently told me that the Vantner memoir was one of Dave's favorites to pull for folks----so of course he must have pulled it for you.

I remain stunned by what is "findable" so readily---and sad for what else Dave would find that is not corralled by search terms, what else standing and snooping through a card catalog could do. I like them both.

I am SO glad to be mostly on the far side of a week of rain. Of course we needed it. I find gratitude so much easier when the sun has come back out!

Quiet weekend ahead, I think, with more sorting--and menu-making towards having two sets of company in June, including one of the couples from my first tour that I really enjoy: Bonnie and Frisco from Seattle. She taught; he worked for Seattle Power and Light.

Did I tell you that I enjoyed a great evening a week ago with Mary Murphy----who has had a hell of a spring: acute appendicitis, delayed surgery for its removal, followed by several waves of devastating infections.

She and Bob Swartout were both honored (while I was traveling) with the Governor's Award from Humanities Montana.

Take care! May your world be in full bloom.

Love,

Marcella

-----Original Message-----
From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
To: Marcella Walter <mmsw922@aol.com>
Sent: Wed, May 22, 2013 3:32 pm
Subject: research gems

Ivan here, at Carol's fingers. The research packets are, as one of my characters is in the habit of saying, Outstanding! Isn't that Lewistown flu hospital really something? I'm sure it's the one I had in mind, and kudos for tracking it down. It and the WSS pix and info give me enough to create the book's poor farm, I think. And the Munson has to be the whopper ship of my memory, another inspired find. The list of ship names is terrific; I think I'm going to go right to the top of it and have my fictiional version called The Chequamegon. My kid

From: mmsw922@aol.com
Subject: **Another envelope on its way**
Date: May 17, 2013 4:26:15 PM PDT
To: cddoig@comcast.net

Hi Carol and Ivan,

Greetings on a damp Friday afternoon. I will, of course, always take sun----but am at peace with a cool rainy weekend after this week's fires. Most of something like EIGHT fires on the far side of Canyon Ferry were set by an 18 year old who wanted to join the local fire department. Several hundred burned acres later, I could see flames shooting up on Wednesday evening after dark and the night sounded like summer with the constant thump of helicopters.

I've never assembled my critical papers into one container--but this might be the summer.

So, I think I found the typescript small collection you remembered, Ivan. I could be wrong. Your remembered story is slightly more dramatic than the 1918 "nursing in the Fergus County poor farm" account by this young woman. Still the narrative carries the same theme. The author did have to go to the Poor Farm with the understanding that she could not leave---that she literally had to remain onsite. But--the account says that 7 doctors from Lewistown took turns coming out. It also reports that 2 head nurses died within the span of a couple weeks. So, Xeroxed pages from that will be in the mail tonight--along with a photo of the Fergus County Poor Farm and some pages from Nancy Brastrup's Heritage Project work on the Meagher County Farm. That material contained no decent photos---and if more would be useful, I'll be glad to run over. Read a big smile here! Truly.

I took a loot at the Lewistown Argus for all of 1918 this afternoon. Amazingly enough, flu stories were truly buried and minimized. I could find one reference to the "county hospital two miles out of town" now handling flu patients--and that appeared in October. The war and then armistice consumed far far more print space.

Keep me posted on whether---on any of these topics--you would like more than I've sent. I'm glad to dig deeper--but will wait to see what you think.

You'll notice that this project allows me to use the Walter family accumulated historic stamp collection---I hope--accurately!!

Take care!

Love,

Marcella

SC958

13

MEMOIRS OF MAY VENTVER

Recorded and Transcribed
by
Ester Johansson Murray
1971 - 1973

Historical Memoirs Project
Billings Branch, A.A.U.W.

done to those who had lost three years of their lives and wasted whatever they had borrowed to live on, offered to buy back the homesteads from those who wished to sell them. So I listed mine, but the official who replied to my letter said they only bought back homesteads from those who had families. I, who had a profession, was not in need and they would not buy it back. So I still own the land. I have not been back for years and years and I have no desire to go back. The shack eventually blew down and fell into the cellar underneath, so there are no remnants of it. The huge trees that grew in the canyon were subsequently cut down for lumber and fuel, so they also are gone.

1918 Flu Epedemic

As I mentioned before, I spent only the three summers on my homestead proving up on the land, since the government did not require I stay there twelve months of the year. In the fall of 1918, I returned to Kendall to teach as I had done the year before. At that time Kendall was an active gold mining town with a population of twelve hundred, although today it is a ghost town.

Besides the tragedy of the war going on in Europe, a sweeping illness spread across the country. Apparently the flu started in France, crossed the Atlantic and hit the Eastern seacoast first and soon penetrated to Montana. We had had no cases in Kendall, but there were cases in Lewistown, the nearest town to Kendall, and immediately all the schools were closed. It was such a new disease the doctors did not know how to treat it, but they know that any gathering together of people was to be avoided at all costs. So all the schools in Fergus county were closed.

The Red Cross Organization in Lewistown had turned the Fergus County Poor Farm into a flu hospital so the flu patients could be isolated. They needed practical nurses, or anyone who would be willing to go to help. People were so afraid of this contagion so they had great difficulty finding volunteers.

I had previously contacted the Red Cross in Lewistown and filled out the forms for applying to be a Red Cross Nurses Aide in France. One day, while I was still in Kendall, I received a message from the Red Cross headquarters in Lewistown inquiring if I would consider going out to the Flu Hospital while I waited on a

clearance on my application to go to France. I was glad to do it. Never for a moment did I have any fear of this contagion and I felt that this was something I could do while I waited on a clearance on my application to go to France. So I told the man I would be glad to go. He said, "You have answered this almost too quickly, do you realize that once you get there you will not be able to leave and go into town at any time? You must be content to stay right there. We haven't been able to get any volunteers except one trained nurse, but the matron of the Poor Farm, Mrs. Capron, is also a trained nurse, but they have no help with the patients."

I reaffirmed that I was not afraid to go. I packed my suitcases with what I thought I would need and took a taxi out to the Poor Farm. When we got there the taxidriver dumped my suitcases and drove off in a hurry as if he did not want to hang around those premises any longer than necessary.

They were glad to have me come out to help and I was given a small room next to the cook's room. The cook was a Swedish born woman named Miss Lund. The fear of contagion had not scared her off when the flu patients began to arrive and she stayed on to do the cooking. The regular inhabitants of the Poor Farm were all men and they had been transferred to out-buildings to sleep, and they continued to do their chores of taking care of the many farm animals, fields, stables, barns and chicken houses.

As I remember, they had between forty and fifty patients when I came there, and the trained nurse, whose name was Miss Clark, immediately took me on her rounds and taught me how to take temperatures and pulse. Besides this, I could carry in trays, wash the patients who needed washing and grooming, and I fell in with this routine very readily. I had never seen sick men before, had never realized how their whiskers would grow and how really repulsive they might look after a few days. With the flu, one of the things that happened was that their lips would crack. Besides the men patients there were a number of pregnant women, concerning whom Miss Clark was heart-broken, they had been told that they could not survive the flu, so she said they just would lie there with their hands folded on their high stomachs, quietly awaiting the

and, having given up all hope. And they all did die.

I had never seen anyone die, but that fall during the time I spent in the flu hospital, I got very well acquainted with death. The main dining room of the Poor Farm had been turned into the main ward. The patients were lying along the sides in the single beds turned over to their use by the inmates of the Farm. When a patient would become so ill that we knew he was dying, there was no place where we could put this person. It was very distressing and traumatic to the rest of the men to lie there and listen to the ravings and moanings and final breath difficulties of the one dying. Miss Lund and I discussed this matter, and since we each had a separate room we offered to move together and use the vacated room for a place to put the dying person. Sometimes they would die quickly, sometimes they would lie there for days. This plan was approved and we promptly moved together and thus provided a secluded room for the dying. However, the partitions were thin and the sounds of moanings and groanings could still be heard rather easily. This could be unnerving after a hard days work, so I remember Miss Capron came in one evening with a big jug of port wine and she advised us to take a hearty slug of it when we went to bed so we could fall asleep more readily. She or Miss Clark took turns being on night duty, I was never asked to take a night shift. After awhile I got so used to it that the sounds of the dying did not bother me. We even got used to the matron's dog who invariably would go and lie before the door of the "dying room" and howl at the event of each passing life. Then too, in the mornings when I would get ready to go on the rounds with the nurse to take pulse and temperature, there would sometimes be this long basket in front of the door where they were taking out the latest casualty. Even this, I got used to.

One time the police in Lewistown brought out a man they had found wandering around, seemingly mindless, and suspecting him to be a flu victim they brought him out. The matron asked him if he thought he could walk to the bathroom and take a bath by himself. The man nodded and walked to the bathroom, took his bath and came out wearing the robe that had been provided for him. He was taken to a vacant room

where he got into bed and I showed him there was a bell if he wanted any more attention. He didn't say anthing to that and I left him shortly before noon. Ten minutes later I came in with his tray of lunch. He was sitting up in bed with his eyes open. I talked to him but he did not answer. He was dead. This did shock me. No identification was found upon the body or clothing, he was taken away and although I often wondered about this man the mystery surrounding him was never cleared up.

Seven doctors from Lewistown came out once a day to see the patients. They did not know any specific treatment for the flu itself. If pneumonia had set in they prescribed that mustard plasters be applied. I would stand at a long, long dining table, roll out yards and yards of cheese cloth and spread prepared mustard on this cloth. These were cut and applied to the patient's chest and back. Then a very warm vest cut from a wool blanket was put over the mustard plaster. After pneumonia set in the doctor's knew what treatment to prescribe. Until then, usually the only thing they prescribed was whiskey. I remember one old soak saying, "I've loved this all my life, but now I can hardly stand to drink the stuff."

During the course of time, we had acquired two volunteer male nurses-aides, who were most helpfull in caring for the men.

There was another startling case, somewhat similar to the one mentioned above, that I also remember distinctly. The police had found a well-dressed man lying in the gutter, and since everyone was so flu conscious, the police brought him out to us. Somehow, he too was permitted to get a room to himself. In time we came to find out this man was just dead drunk and did not have the flu at all. As he was recovering from his drunk he began to desperately need some "hair of the dog that bit him". So, everytime I came to his room for whatever reason, he would say to me, "You must bring me a little whiskey. I know the doctors prescribe whiskey for the patients here and you surely know where the supply is kept. I am not asking that you should pour me so much that the matron would find you out, but "just up to the church windows". I had never heard this expression before, but still I was not moved to comply. He further said, "You do that, because if you don't, I'll do something to you that you will be sorry for."

I did not see how he could carry out any threat to me and I continued to refuse point blank. I told him, "I will not help you get any whiskey. If you are going to get whiskey in an underhanded manner you will have to get someone else to help you. I will not do it." He continued to beg and threaten, but finally gave up. He said, "A person like me who has this craving is not responsible. I could even choke you." I backed out of the room. Soon they found out what his real trouble was and he was dismissed.

I cannot remember the exact percentage that died, but of the fifty or so that we had, almost every morning one or two had passed away. I remember the men patients more than the women patients because they were given more to complaining and groaning over their aches and pains. And the pregnant women of course, all died. I soon understood what Miss Clark meant when she said, "It is hopeless, for they have given up from the start."

Lazarus

One day, over the 'phone, the matron heard that a whole threashing crew had been striken with flu up in the Denton country, and had lain in barns and out-buildings in that locality for two or three days without any care, and she was asked to make room for them immediately and there was something like sixteen of them.

So we hurried and got the beds ready. Fortunately, the laundries in Lewistown did accept the laundry from our flu hospital so we had fresh supplies.

As they came, most of them had to be assisted. They had lain so long without any care they were in bad shape. The youngest one was a lad of sixteen who did not yet grow a beard and he looked beautiful among the rest of the whiskery crew. There was one man who was so far gone, the matron immediately put in a room by himself. He suffered from some other malady in addition to the flu, and I have always thought it was probably syphilis, his lips were so full of sores that the straw through which he drank always had a coating of dried matter around it, and when Miss Clark cleaned him up mornings, she put on rubber gloves to handle him. This man was conscious although many other members of the crew would fall into a coma and that would be the end of

them. This man on the contrary remained wide awake and would talk to me. He found out that I had homesteaded and he said that he, too, had homesteaded, but not in my community.

The man did have a name, but the doctor who had first checked him had scribbled down an unintelligible scrawl of a word on the identification card that hung at the foot of his bed, and no one could figure out the name. I asked him what his name was and he said, "That is something for you to figure out, I am not going to tell you." So I said, "If that is the case I am going to call you Mr. Lazarus." This patient reminded me of the Biblical story of the man full of sores lying at the rich man's gate. I called him that when I had occasion to talk to him. He was always very talkative and wanted to visit with me because I had more time with him than the nurses who had to rush away to the next patient.

Every morning he greeted me with the words, "Well, I didn't die last night either." For some reason he suspected that he was not expected to live. So I would reply, "Why no, you'll beat the Old Fellow yet!" And for a time he did rally, so that even the nurses were hopeful. He kept asking about the other members of the threshing crew and several of them had died. It seemed a great source of pride to him that he continued to live. I asked him if he would like to have something to read, that I would bring him some magazines. But as he paged through them, just looking at the pictures, I began to doubt that he could read, and I didn't ask him any more questions.

One day when I was going to get him a glass of water, which he usually drank through a straw because the condition of his lips would not permit him to do otherwise, this time he just chewed the glass. I could see he was not himself, he seemed to be delirious and I thought, Good Heavens, if he bites me with those lips! I am not going to expose my hands too close to that face of his! But he overcame even this particular spell. I told him what had happened, that he had been out of his head, that he had bitten the glass until his lips were bleeding. He could not remember anything about it and he began to think that death would come. I asked him, "Is there some one you would like to have me write to?" This I had done for other patients. "No," he said, "I don't have any relatives or anyone to notify. I did have a pal once, a young man

that I liked very much. And you know," he said, "he took part in a rodeo and his horse threw him, he broke his neck and I watched him die." He said, "That was terrible. One moment he was so full of life and the next moment he lay there dead. He was my only pal, so I did go to his funeral. And I didn't like that funeral," he said. "The man that read over him said, 'From dust thou came and to dust thou returneth.'" The man I called Lazarus continued,"I didn't like that. He wasn't going to turn into dust. I just couldn't stand that. I just couldn't take it, that he who was so full of life would come to nothing."

So I said to him, "You have heard of Jesus the Christ".

"Yes," he said. "And he taught that when you die, your soul lives on," I explained. "Oh," he said, "you mean that you don't really die forever then?"

"No," I said, "it is my belief that we do live on after this body of ours is gone."

"Tell me more about that Jesus who taught like that," he said.

"I think I had better go and get my Bible and read to you about a man who was named Lazarus," I said.

"Oh," he said, "was there really someone named Lazarus?" So I got my Bible and I read to him about Lazarus covered with sores who lay at the gates of the rich man. I opened my bible to Luke, Chapter 16, v. 19-25: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, . . ."

"He died, the poor beggar!", said our Mr. Lazarus, "I don't think that he was like me. You shouldn't have named me after him. He died. He didn't put up the fight I am putting up."

"Well," I said, "I named you that before I knew what a good fighter you were. And then, when I found out how you held out, I found no reason to change your name, because the Bible tells of another Lazarus that Death did not get a grip on, even though he

did once have a real strangle hold on him."

"Ah hah, read me about that one. That is the one I want to hear about," he said.

So I turned to John II, Chapters 1-46. "Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha...Therefore his sisters sent unto him saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby...Jesus said, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. The desciples thought he was talking of sleep that is restful, but Jesus said to them plainly, Lazarus is dead. So they went there and found that he had lain in the grave four days already. Then Martha went out to meet Jesus and said to him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died, But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith to her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believesth thou this? Then Mary came out to Jesus and tells him if he had been there Lazarus would not have died...They come to the cave and Jesus orders the stone taken away. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days...They took away the stonelll And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me...And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

I read all this story of Lazarus, but I ended with the climax of the miracle. The man on the bed lay still and quiet. Even at the end he made no comment. It was I who had to break the silence. "To be named after <u>that</u> Lazarus doesn't make you mad does it?" I asked him. "No, Miss. If the Master had told me to come from the grave I would have done exactly as he did." He continued, "But the priest who stood

over my Pal, Jack Atticus' grave, he did not call him to come out. Dust thou art and to dust thou return, he said, and threw dirt down on him. If the Master in the Bible had stood over Jack's grave he wouldn't have said that, would He?"

"No," I answered with absolute conviction, "Jack Atticus", he would have called out in a loud voice, "Out of life thou art come and into life thou shalt return."

That evening when I brought him his supper, he showed no interest in his food. "To eat or not really makes no difference any more, " he mumbled. But he realized that if he did not eat, I would immediately leave him, so very, very slowly he ate a few mouthfuls and sipped some milk through the tube. That his thoughts still milled around what I had read was obvious when he spoke. "If the Master in the Bible had called me, I too, would have come out. And in another way, too, I am like that Lazarus," he said. "In what way do you mean?" I asked. "Don't you remember where his sister Mary says to Jesus, 'He stinks already'. I have been stinking ever since I came here, a whole lot longer," he said with a slight smile.

He made no further effort to detain me and I had a feeling that he was satisfied now to give up. There had been a change in his attitude and he had heard what he needed to hear.

That night I slept fitfully and when the alarm clock awakened me, I dressed and felt I must go and see what had happened to Mr. Lazarus during the night. The door was standing wide open, the bed was empty and down the end of the long corridor I could see the big wicker basket being carried away.

The Youth Recovers

The sixteen year old boy who was a member of the threshing crew, recovered very quickly in comparison with the others. This he did even though he did not follow thenurses' orders to keep covered and sweat a lot. He fought the blanket "Sweat jackets" and all the covers, he was too hot and uncomfortable. He complained to me because I was not one in authority, he would tell me that if they did not let him lie uncovered he would get out of the bed and leave the place. I pulled up the blind and let him look out the window, I said, "You better not do that, look, there is snow

out there on the ground, and you have nothing to put on except your hospital gown.

On night, Miss Clark, the nurse, came and shook me and awakened me and asked, "Do you know anything about young _____. He isn't in his bed and we have searched everywhere here in the hospital where he could possibly be and we can't see any sign of him." So I answered, "He has talked about running away, so he might be outside." She hurried out to the porch and sure enough there were prints of naked feet in the snow. They followed these tracks and located the youth. The nurses were very apprehensive because they said, "When the doctors find out they will give us hail Columbia for letting this happen." However, no one mentioned the incident so no one was reprimanded, but there was a great fear that the boy would have a relapse and die. Luckily, the young fellow suffered no ill effects, he lived through it.

The Death of Miss Clark

Things went on very smoothly, we seemed to have reached a plateau, we had a fairly constant number of patients and the help of the two male nurses eased the work load.

Then there came a change over Miss Clark. She had always been very kindly and considerate of me, never waking me at night for extra duty or other chores. Then one day she called me and spoke to me very crossly. "I want you to go out in the kitchen and make me a sour lemonade, and hurry." She was in the office at the time lying down on a couch. I was taken aback by the sterness of her tone, but I hurried to the kitchen and made the lemonade. In my haste and wondering about her grouchiness, I accidentally sweetened it. I rushed back with it and Miss Clark took one sip of it, "I said sour lemonade and you bring me sweetened." I apologised and promised to go back and make it over. She accepted the second attempt and didn't say any more, but from that time on she never was on her feet again, she was striken with the flu and died within a day's time. She was overworked and run down and didn't have a chance.

The matron was able to get a nurse replacement for Miss Clark. A lady who in many ways was as kindly and thoughtful as Miss Clark, but she was there scarcely a week until she too was striken with the flu and died within a very short time.

The Decline of the Epidemic

Finally, there began to be a decrease in the patients. One night we could hear a tremendous noise from Lewistown. We pulled up the blind and there seemed to be a conflagration over Lewistown, so much light, so much driving around in cars and tooting of horns. All this was a very unusual nighttime activity and we could not figure out what in the world was going on. In the morning when the ones with the baskets came and the supplies were brought out we were told of the Armistice, of the end of the First World War. They had been making such a tremendous affair of it at Lewistown that the noise had reached clear out to our Flu Hospital at the Poor Farm.

I realized then that my plans to go to France with the Red Cross would never materialize. About the time of the Armistice the patients began to get better, fewer and fewer people were striken with the flu, and I realized that the epidemic was practically over and that my school in Kendall would be reopening soon. And it did reopen before the end of November and I went back to teaching.

My first reaction to the end of the epidemic was a personal let down. For throughout this experience I had really lived. I had lived deeply. A great truth came to me and I realized that the best use you can make of your life is to be involved in something greater than yourself and outside your own concerns. The let down was when I could no longer be of service to that extent. This was my first experience of working with something outside my own personal life, greater than myself, it was something of a readjustment to go back to normal duties of teaching.

A Civil War Headache

There were naturally few lighter moments during those dark days of the flu. One that I do remember involved one of the old men at the Poor Farm. The old men who had been sent to the out buildings to sleep came in to the huge kitchen to eat their meals and then went back to their temporary quarters. I had never seen so many old men together, I do not remember their number but they filled two long tables when they sat down to eat. Among the old men there was one that I was drawn to pay attention to because every single day he complained aloud of her terrible headaches.

After I had heard him complain of these headaches for weeks, I finally said to the old fellow, "Well, uncle, how long have you had this headache anyway?" He looked up at me and answered, "For fifty years now." "Oh," I said, "You are spoofing me now, nobody could have a headache for fifty years!"

"Huh! That shows how much you know. I was hit in the head with a bullet at Shiloh and it has been aching ever since!" the old soldier replied.

So it was that my experience at the Flu Hospital was over, and it soon proved that my days of Kendall school teaching would be finished too.

Cat Creek, Montana's First Oil Field

One of my homesteading neighbors, a Norwegian bachelor, Cy Vontver, persuaded me to marry him in 1920. I had suffered some financial loss from those years of drought but his losses were greater as he had invested in horses and machinery. He had then worked for awhile in the Kendall gold mines, but after our marriage we moved to Petroleum County and he got work in the newly discovered Cat Creek Oil fields. The drilling for oil opened up opportunities for employment better than either farming or mining.

When we first moved to newly established Cat Creek, everyone lived in small shacks, some of which were covered with tar paper. There was a water pump by the office and we could carry in what water we needed. The water was very soft, terrible for making coffee but lovely for washing clothes. My husband built a lean-to entry on the front of our shack for water and the kerosene stove. He also built on a storage place to the back. We lived in this one room cabin for a couple of years then we moved into a two room house. The company furnished the housing and we used as fuel the crude oil just as it came from the wells. This crude oil was of such high gravity that even unrefined it could be used as heating fuel in the houses, it went into the car radiators as an antifreeze in the winter; was used in heavy duty engines and even filled the gas tanks of the Model T Fords and other cars. Although it did "knock" more than refined gasoline, the cars ran well on it. One bad quality, it was so highly inflammable there were many household fires.

Item Details

Bibliographic Information

Title

May Anderson Vontver reminiscence, 1971-1972

Author

Vontver, May, 1892-1990.

Abstract

May Vontver discusses her early life as a Swedish immigrant in Nebraska in the early 1900s; teaching and homesteading in central Montana; work in the influenza hospital in Lewistown in 1918; and life in the 1930s with her husband Simon Vontver at the Cat Creek oil fields.

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May Vontver discusses her early life as a Swedish immigrant in Nebraska in the early 1900s; teaching and homesteading in central Montana; work in the influenza hospital in Lewistown in 1918; and life in the 1930s with her husband Simon Vontver at the Cat Creek oil fields.
Biographical note:
Mia "May" Anderson was born in Tranos, Sweden, on March 7, 1892, the fourth of nine children of Anders Johan and Anna Lovisa Balling Anderson. When an older brother made plans to emigrate to America, twelve-year-old May pleaded to go with him. The two arrived in 1905, and lived with relatives in a variety of places, including Nebraska where she received an elementary education. Always good with language and literature, May moved to Kalispell, Montana, in 1913, to teach and to live with distant relatives, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Alton. From there she homesteaded in Roy, Montana, and taught school during the winter months. She married Simon Antonson Vontver, a Norwegian homesteader,on May 25, 1920. They had one son, Louis.
Biographical note:
While serving as Superintendent of Schools in Petroleum County in 1929 , May Vontver attended a creative writing class taught by H.G. Merriam. She wrote a short story about one of her teaching experiences near Roy. The resulting story called "Kiskis" was later published in Montana Margins (Yale University Press, 1946) and has been widely reprinted. Ms. Vontver also wrote and published an account of her life in Sweden and as a United States emigree, written in Swedish.

Biographical note:
May Anderson Vontver graduated from Normal School in Dillon, MT in 1927, and the University of Minnesota (cum laude) in August, 1947. Her husband, Si, worked for the Continental Oil Company for thirty years. The couple moved frequently following opportunities in the Montana and Wyoming oil fields. After Si's death in 1974, May moved to Seattle to live with her son Dr. Louis Vontver, his wife, and three children. She died there on January 13, 1990.
Scope and content:
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Taking a Look Back at Our Poor Farm...



The copier & I did not understand 2-sided duplicating the same way!

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[illegible] Class

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1601

Vagrancy Act; Relief of the Poor took place in 1601; authorized parishes to build Poor Houses for the 'deservin poor'

1785

British brought the idea of Poor Farms and Almhouses to America; Aid for the poor differed in varying states; In New England, local governments provided sustenance for the poor; In Virgina, the parishes distributed relief.

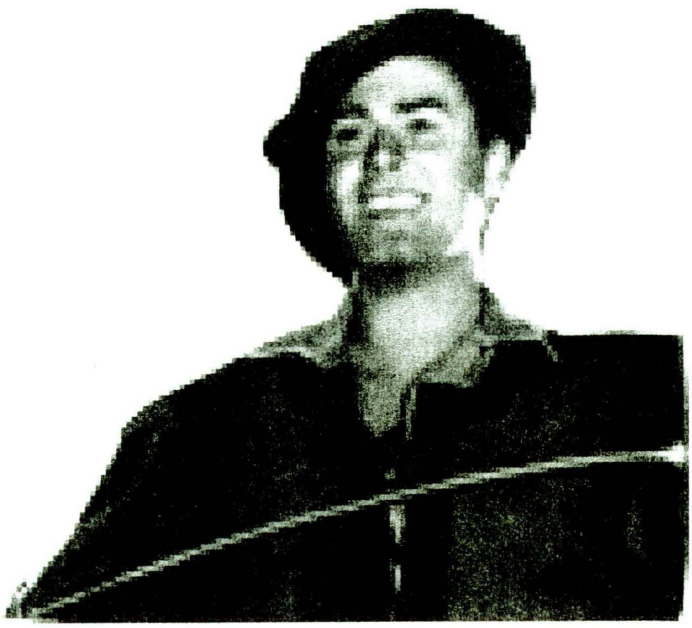
1785 Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom; Virginia's parishes lost responsibility. The Poor became charges of county governments.

1700-1800

Parishes built workhouses to house all paupers under one roof; to reduce the cost of the poor rate. Poor rate was used not only to house the poor but also to make up the wages of those on a low income (Poor Class people) known as out-workers.



Almhouses were brought here from the British
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Paupers were housed under one-roof.
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Timeline of Poor Farms

Medieval

Churches took care of the poor



Churches looked similar to this one in the Medieval times.
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1547

Poor Law Act of 1547; allowed the branding and slavery of persistent vagrancy as punishment



The brand for the slaves looked similar to this one.
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1572

Poor Law Act of 1572; ordered that beggars be branded on the shoulder; easier way to identify them



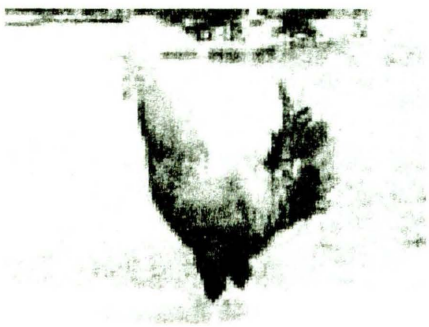
Parishes similar to this one, took care of the elderly and sick.
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Timeline of Poor Farms

1834

1834 Poor Law Amendment act abolished outdoor relief; made all the poor go to the workhouse.

Workhouses to provide shelter to animals to be raised by the inhabitants, such as chickens and pigs.



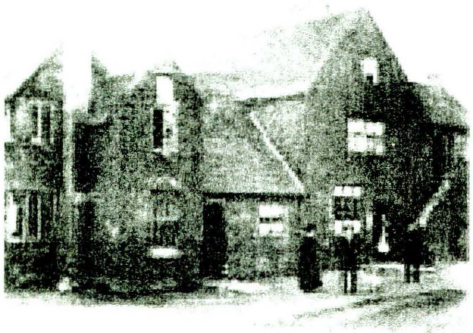
Chickens were raised in the poor house. (copyrighted by Google)



Orphans were housed at the poor farms. (Copyrighted by Google).

1875

Poorhouses responsibility of State Board of Charities. CHildren prohibited from residing; mentally ill patients and people with special needs moved to appropriate facilities.



The workhouses looked similar to this one. (Copyrighted by Google.)

1896

1896 Law; no veteran to be placed in almshouse, nor his family if he be killed in action. Instead, relief will be provided in their own homes.

Laws stated specifically prohibiting placement in the poorhouses. Workman's Compensation, Unemployment Benefits, and Social Security helped stop poor people being placed on the poor farms.



Elderly people were sent to the Poor Far Copyrighted by the Library of Congress.

20th century

Housed all sorts of people. Young orphans, destitute elderly. Most individuals at county poorhouses were elderly or disabled men and women without the means to support themselves (widow, widowers, sheepherders, no family).

Children sometimes apprenticed to a farmer or tradesmen. Poor house was racially integrated; integration does not imply equality.

Healthcare professionals viewed poorhouses negatively. Considered dumping grounds for the unwatned elderly. Mid-centurey, people were beginning to question the success of the poor house movement.

People were uncertain of poorhouse conditions; investigations launched. They proved to be excessively expensive; not as helpful to reduce poor numbers.



Veterens weren't supposed to be placed into alms houses.

1950

Most poor farms/almhouses/workhouses shut down or converted to nursing homes; complete with infirmary.

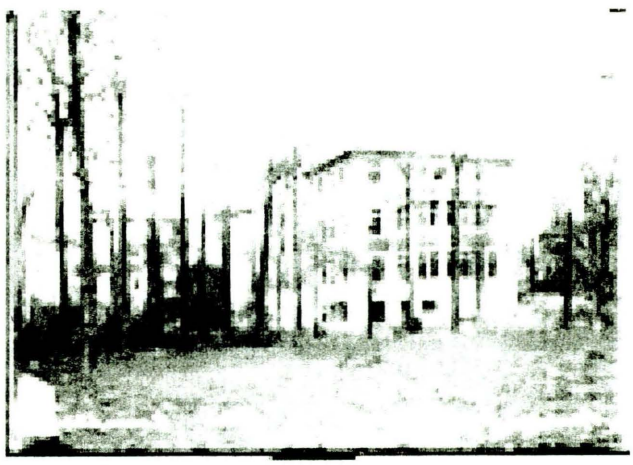
Dependent elderly people to be placed in newly founded nursing homes; orphanages, general hospitals, mental hospitals still around.

Present Day- Nursing Home

Each facility must ensure that it is staffed with qualified and trained nurses to in accordance with a comprehensive assessment and a plan of care.

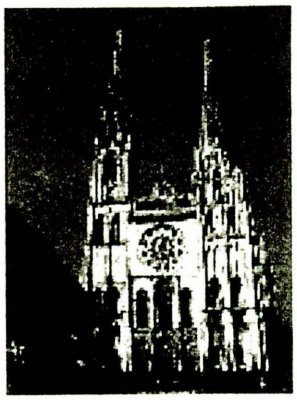
Each resident must be well-cared for and must be in an environment that promotes maintenance or enhancement of their quality of life.

Each facility must provide each resident with a nourishing, palatable, well-balanced diet that meets the daily nutritional and special dietary needs of each resident.



Nursing homes today, look similar to this one. Copyrighted by the Library of Congress.

History of Poor Farms



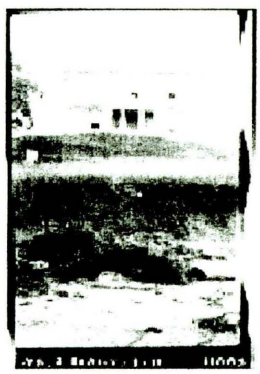
In the times of knights and jousting, the church was responsible to care for the poor; parishes and charities were left to care for the elderly and the sick. Paupers generally gathered in monasteries for shelter and support. However, the reformation and abolition of monasteries led to a succession of ineffectual and often cruel laws. The Poor Law Act of 1547, a very cruel and sickening example, allowed the branding and slavery of persistent vagrancy as punishment. Every vagrant, whether young or old, healthy or deathly ill, could be branded or made into slaves. Another Poor Law Act in 1572 ordered that beggars be branded on the shoulder, as a way to identify them from the common people, as if the rags and the pale, haughty faces weren't enough.

The Vagrancy Act of 1601 authorized the first moves to help the poor, rather than simply ignore them. Called the Relief of the Poor Act, it authorized parishes to build Poor Houses for the 'deserving poor'. The parish elected one or two overseers, who were to maintain the poor and find the residents work. Although there were many responsible and caring overseers that took care of their houses and residents, some were corrupt and abused the residents and their responsibilities. The poor houses were funded by a levy by the residents of the parish. These poor houses were created to help lessen the amount of the poor rate and help paupers get back onto their feet and off the streets.

Poorhouses were intended to be harsh and uncomfortable. Living conditions were supposed to convince paupers that only through hard work would they escape the atmosphere of poverty. However, these harsh and cruel conditions under which the elderly, sick, and poor had to live, just made them resent the poorhouses, and they felt that the only way to survive was on their

own. Though, overseers were late to realize that few inmates were capable of hard work, for they were either too old or had mental disabilities.

When the British came to America, they brought the concept of almshouses with them. Although poorhouses began from a direct concept from England, early colonials changed and bettered the concept into Poor Farms. When the American Revolution ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1783, aid for the poor differed in varying states. Local governments provided sustenance for the poor: the parishes distributed relief. In 1785, the enactment of the Statute for Religious Freedom, parishes lost responsibility. Instead, the poor became charges of county governments.


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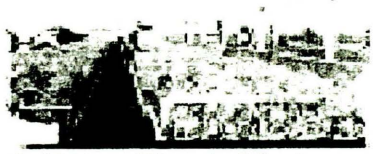
During the 1700s and 1800s, many parishes built workhouses to house all paupers under one roof as a way of reducing the cost of the poor rate. The poor rate was used not only to house the poor, but also to make up the wages of those on a low income. These were known as out-workers, however, the 1834 Poor Law Amendment act abolished outdoor relief and made all the poor go to the workhouse. Workhouses were built to provide shelter to animals to be raised by the inhabitants, such as chickens and pigs. Also, the residents were to spend their time creating useful items to be sold in the nearest town to help feed themselves. Also, inmates, as they were sometimes called, were to plant and harvest grain, wheat, hay, and barley to sell as well. The inhabitants also maintained a garden.

In some areas of the United States, poorhouses housed all sorts of people, from young orphans to the destitute elderly. Some of the residents were immigrants who, after failing to make enough money to bring their families to America, died alone and forgotten on a Poor Farm. Most individuals who lived at the county poorhouses were elderly or disabled men and women without the means to support themselves. Children sometimes lived at the


Poor farm residents

poorhouse for short periods of time, but the overseers usually apprenticed them to a farmer or tradesmen. Most welfare officials opposed allowing children to live in almshouses and be exposed to the 'idleness' of paupers. Mostly the disagreement for children living at Poor Farms was based upon the seldom, yet unforgettable experience of a meeting with the unrestrained and often frightening insane inmates.

While scattered, poor farms and workhouses always had many more White residents than African-Americans, the poorhouses were generally racially integrated. However, in the pre-Civil War era, integration did not always imply equality. Records rarely provided African-American residents the small dignity of listing their surnames. Another ultimate disgrace to the Poor Farm inhabitants, which is still affecting ancestry records today, is the unmarked graves in which the dead inhabitants were flung into after their demise. Although many people hear of the old graveyards, few have been unearthed, and records have not helped, for few deaths were ever diligently recorded.


© Chicago Historical Society
Poorhouse workers in greenhouse

Potter's field

By the mid-1800s, healthcare professionals viewed poorhouses negatively, and considered Poor Farms as "dumping grounds" for the unwanted elderly and crippled. By the end of the century, people were beginning to question the success of almshouses. Sanitation conditions and patient abuse of the mentally instable and revolted elderly were also questioned. Soon, investigations were being conducted to pertain the usefulness of the poorhouses. After many deep investigations of several almshouses, Poor Farms, and workhouses, they proved to be excessively expensive, and they did not help reduce the numbers of the poor as extensively as previously believed.

By 1875, poorhouses in most of America became the responsibility of the State Board of Charities. Children were prohibited from residing in the poorhouses and the mentally ill patients and people with extremely special

needs were soon moved to the appropriate facilities. In the year of 1896, a law was passed that no veteran, whether marine, sailor, or simple soldier, nor his family, lest he be killed in action, could be placed in an almshouse. Also, another law was passed that every grave of the poor needed to be marked and any possible relative informed of the death. Further revisions and regulations were created with the forming of Workman's Compensation, Unemployment Benefits, and the Social Security program. As these became more and more popular, less and less people were ending up on Poor Farms. With these other ends and benefits, most almshouses, Poor Farms, and workhouses were shut down, abandoned, or converted to nursing homes. As a result of the newly formed and highly popular nursing homes; orphanages, general hospitals, and mental hospitals were the only legacy left from the ever-changing poorhouses.



1957 Nursing Home Residents
(© www.rootsweb.com)

Although different in form and ideals, today's nursing homes must meet several requirements. Each facility must provide each resident with a nourishing, palatable, well-balanced diet that meets the daily nutritional and special dietary needs of each resident. Also, resident comfort and safety, along with facility housekeeping, maintenance and sanitation is required and should be up-kept. The residents also have certain rights, however. Each resident has the right to be efficiently accessed to maintain or attain the highest physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being possible. Although there are several laws and regulations pertaining to the up-keep of nursing homes, several elders still suffer abuse, malnutrition, are severely neglected, and die forgotten by their families.

Nursing homes have, as a whole, been a better replacement of poorhouses, almshouses, and workhouses, however, elder neglect and the dumping of the old, degraded, and family less people is still a problem

By Becky Teague

General History of Meagher County Poor Farm

The Poor Farm in Meagher County came about in 1896. It was for the people who could not care for themselves or who were sick. On March 3rd, 1896 a contract was passed through the Board of Commissioners to the care and maintenance of all county poor from April 1st 1896 to Dec. 31st 1896. This was granted to the manager, N.H. Sweat for $3.47 per capita per week. Along with the contract for N.H. Sweat, Dr. McKay got a contract for all furnishings, all medicine to patients at the poor farm, inmates at Jail and the town of White Sulphur Springs, in the amount of $225.00 to the same.

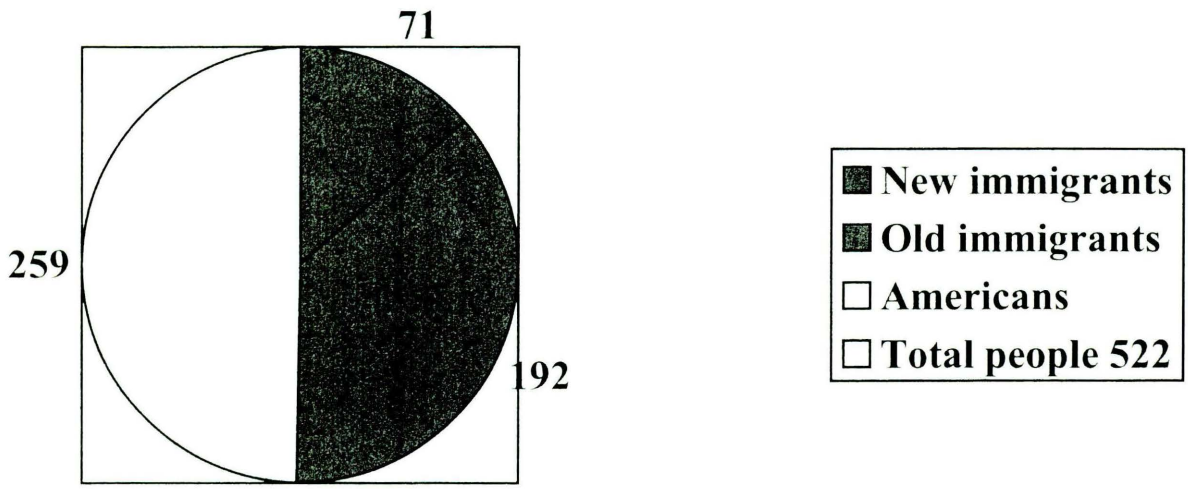
The poor farm was located on Miller road about ½ mile from White Sulphur Springs. When it first started up, the poor farm hired ranch hands to come and do work such as fixing doors. When there was a problem, they would call a handy man to come and repair the problem. A few people did work at the poor farm and got paid. For example, Jno. G.Danzer was paid $12.00, job unknown, and E.H. Teague was paid for labor in the amount of $2.50. These people were not paid a substantial amount of money. They basically received pay of what the owners thought was enough. Only the people who were hired out at the farm were paid and exact amount. These people were the ones who were at the poor farm year around doing work every day; caring for the patients, for example, J.F. Williams got paid $439.10 for the care co. patients. He cared for all the patients that needed help through out the months.

There were no medical facilities in White Sulphur at the time. B.F. Sandow gave, to some extent, medical attention to county patients. He could not do anything but give them medicine basically. When someone was ill, they would have to be transported to Townsend to see the MD, J.L. Belcher. Patients at the poor farm very rarely came into town. Once in awhile if one did need to come into town, the farm would hire a person to drive them into town and back out to the farm.

The poor farm ended in 1947. Most all poor farms were ended because many complained about being abused and treated poorly. Our poor farm ended because it was sold to Jimmy and Ruby Goggins and that in the 1940's, the nursing home in White Sulphur Springs came about and then many patients were treated and stayed there.

By Courtney Sjoden

Where did the residents come from?

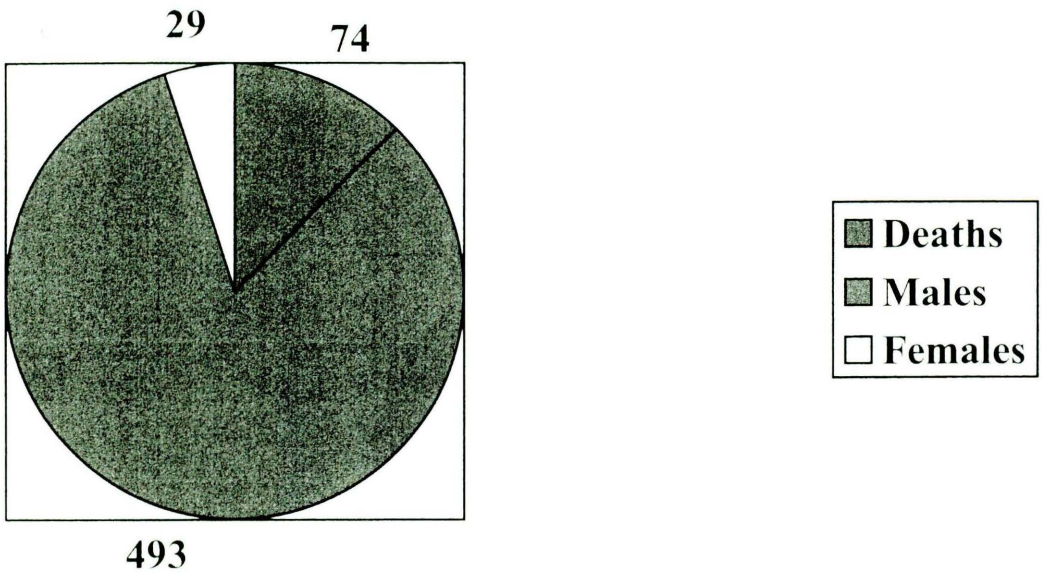


Number of Poor Farm Residents and where they had been before coming to Meagher County

After researching some of the poor farm documents I found that the majority of the residents were American. The rest of the residents were divided into the new immigrants and the old immigrants. The majority of the new immigrants were from Ireland. Of the old immigrants the Scotts and the Germans were the majority. Above is a graph showing how many Americans, Old immigrants, and New immigrants were residents at the poor farm

By Jason Barker

Males, Females, and Deaths at the Poor Farm

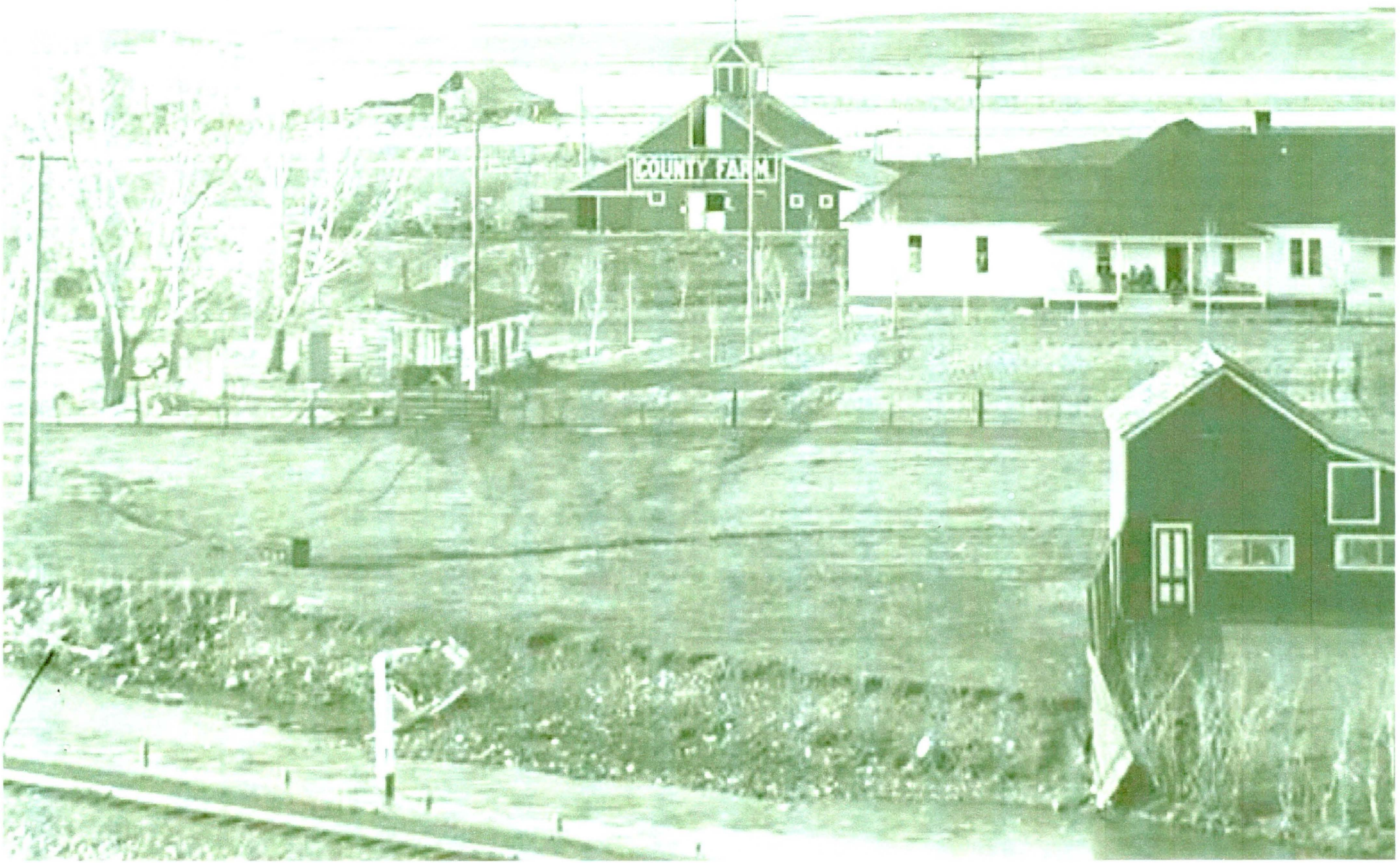


Genders and deaths(males) of those at the Meagher County Poor Farm

After researching the poor farm residents, by looking through the old records of the place. From my research I learned that more than three-quarters of the people who went there were males. I think that the biggest reason for this was that the years during which the poor farm operated, there were a couple depressions, and some wars. This led to many men not having jobs, and also being injured. Less than one-fourth of the people who ever went to the poor farm died. There were very few women ever at the poor farm.

By Craig Gilman

Over plase


COUNTY FARM

Item Details

Bibliographic Information

Title
Fergus County Poor Farm [graphic]
Author
Culver, W. H. (William H.), 1853-1937.
Pub date:
[1930-1940].
Summary
The Fergus County Poor Farm was located near Spring Creek off the Joyland Road. The barn for the poor farm has a sign on the top that reads "County Farm". To the right of the barn is the main building of the poor farm. In the front of the photo is a shed-like building. In the center of the photo near the trees is the first trading post in the area called Reed and Bowles Trading Post located on the Carroll Trail.
Item info:
1 copy at Lewistown Public Library.
http://cdm103401.cdmhost.com/u?/p103401cmhp,871

http://cdm103401.cdmhost.com/u?/p103401cmhp,871

Holdings

Current Holdings

Lewistown Public Library	Copies	Material	Location
PHOTO 01090	1	Photograph	At reference desk

From: mmsw922@aol.com
Subject: **One more tidbit.**
Date: May 18, 2013 6:40:36 AM PDT
To: cddoig@comcast.net

Ivan and Carol,

I decided to hunt one more time for a better image of the Meagher County Bed and Breakfast - and you will not believe what found. I know that this web site is significantly out-of-date info. Last summer, when I drove friends by the place was really dilapidated. This was when it was called "Foxwood Inn." But still - "remind you of your Grandma's house!" Cheers.



Property type: B&B/Inn with 12 rooms. Built in 1890 and renovated in 1994.
Price Range: $42-76 US Dollar
Check In/Check Out: 15:00-11:00
Lodging Description: Roy, Elena and the McCarty family bid you a warm welcome to the FOXWOOD INN BED & BREAKFAST. 'Where You'll Feel At Home!' Our Inn is an Eighteenth Century Victorian home, amidst the vast prairies and rolling mountains of the spectacular Montana countryside. You'll enjoy a magnificent view of roaming long horned cattle, horses, and indigenous wildlife from each of its charming and comfortable old-world rooms. This lovely, old world Victorian home features fourteen bedrooms and four bathrooms (two on each floor). Each room is uniquely decorated with a country accent and is furnished with comfortable queen, full, or full extra long sized beds. All meals are served in this spacious dining room featuring chairs from the turn of the century where they once adorned a luxurious railroad dining car. Today, they still provide the old-world atmosphere and comfort while you enjoy a full home-cooked, country-style breakfast. You will ride on the aroma of piping hot coffee, sizzling bacon, and freshly baked muffins or biscuits to a time when things were simple and to a place that will remind you of Grandma's house.

SEPARATION NOTICE

The following items have been removed from Box 34, Folder 14, Collection 2602, for oversize storage elsewhere.

Items Removed:

Vintage plat: #1032-1033 [illegible] from Sec. 30 [illegible] Township Libraries

7-1 J Bucklin [illegible] dom (Col.) [illegible]

The Dry Goods [illegible]

[illegible] Sec. 8 [illegible] Township Libraries

[illegible]

X Material has been placed in Box 162, Folder 9, Collection 2602

____ Location information is available from the Special Collections Staff.