

FarmMail Newsletter

"We can be proud of our heritage" - Rolan Ratzloff

Volume 1, Issue 2

Spring 2012

Apr/May/June 2012



Photo by ~GTR

Change of Address!

We are no longer having mail delivered to our street address. Please send future correspondence to the return address on this newsletter.

We leaned more toward the Ratzloff side of the family last issue so we're including more Nightengale family history this time. In future issues we'll try for a closer balance between the two.

Of course, if you've looked back to Jacob and Anna (Foth) Ratzloff you know that our Nightengale line shares an ancestor with the Ratzloffs and so we have a common interest.

Our Nightengale line is also related to the Deckers so we are all cousins of one degree or another. :-)

~GTR

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Scott City Farms



Photo RDR?



Photo by ~GTR

Grandpa and Grandma Nightengale (Fred and Anna) moved to this (first) Scott City farm in 1945. Going "out to Scott" meant visiting this place. (It seems we always went "out west" and "back east.") I remember bigger trees and the house was larger (and not just because I was a kid). Later a Quonset was built and they had a horse or two and it just seemed like a wonderful place to visit. (Google Earth satellite [view](#).)

I am working on a Google Earth "tour" of the "canyon" in the pasture northwest of the farmstead. For us kids that was an exciting place to explore.

Directions: From Scott city take Highway 83 north 8 miles, then 4 miles west on W Road 230, and 4 miles north on Herford Road to the intersection with W Road 270.

GPS: 38.65660 -100.98222

Grandma and Grandpa moved to Halstead around 1960 and if I have a photo of that place I haven't found it yet. The sunken living room had an impressive stone fireplace with special vents that sent heat back into the room.

They moved back to rural Scott City in about 1964 and built a place (photo above) just a mile west of their former home.

This is where I unloaded my Harley Davidson Sportster motorcycle (different story) as Carole and I made our way to California in 1967. (Dad shipped it to me later.)

Grandma and Grandpa attended the Scott Menonite Church two miles west of this home and they are buried in the church cemetery. I was a pall-bearer for Grandpa.

Grandpa was a deacon and one of the founding members of that church organized in 1945.

GPS: 38.65610 -100.99050

~GTR

The White Eagle

Not enough space to properly discuss the white eagle here. I'll add more pix and info on the website soon. Briefly: The white eagle above the gas pump in the Canton book (p22) looks much smaller than the one in our backyard.

Several articles online about White Eagle service stations mention a smaller glass eagle atop the pump and a larger concrete eagle in front. Later, the glass eagles were replaced with an eagle image on a glass globe.

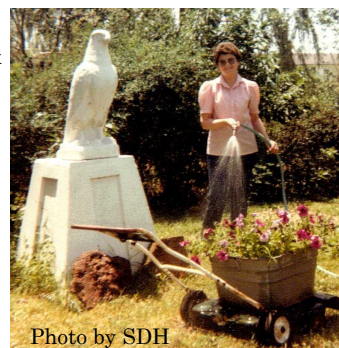


Photo by SDH

The restored White Eagle service station in Osage City, Kansas, is an example of a large eagle on a pedestal out front and the eagle globe atop the pump: [<link>](#)

See the FM website for more. Also, Google "White eagle gas station statue" for more links with photos.

~GTR

Info About Website, Blog & Featured Ancestors

It is no secret that the main purpose of this newsletter is to lure readers to the FamMail blog and website. Some of you are reading this on the website and for you the newsletter is a small bonus of additional information. But some relatives have not yet seen the wonderful photos, videos, collection of stories and audio files we are building online.

If you do not have a way to view the blog and website, please ask a family member or friend to give you a tour of the photos and photo albums, stories, Featured Ancestor pages, history links and more. We are adding new stuff every week.

Beginning in April we will be changing the Featured Ancestor focus every month (has been every 3 months).

The next three Featured Ancestor pages will highlight Dad for April, (his birthday), Mom & Dad for May (their anniversary) and Mom for June (her birthday).

Then we will begin with the Great Grandparents starting with John A. & Anna (Kilmer) Holdeman in July followed by John David & Helena (Decker) Nightengale for August and then continuing to alternate between the Ratzloff side and the Nightengale side.

At this point we have enough names to carry us through 2013. Then we can start over, revisit ancestors if we have new information or we could have a different focus for the home page.

~GTR

Visit the FamMail Blog at:

<http://fammail.blogspot.com>

And link to the website at:

<http://ceilingunlimited.com/fammail>

Note that when reading this newsletter online all embedded links are live.

Bernard and Marie's Dugout

Grandma Anna (Ratzlaff) Nightengale's parents, Bernard and Marie (Schultz) Ratzlaff, lived in this modified dugout near Protection, Kansas in 1914.

Grandma Anna lived here when Grandpa Fred came courting in February of 1916. They married July 22, 1916 in the Clark County courthouse in Ashland which is about 50 miles SSE of Dodge City.



I believe this photo was taken when Mom, along with Uncle Jake, Uncle

Kenny & Aunt Velma visited this homestead in the late 1980's(?).

Other photos from that visit will be added to the FM website when Bernard and Marie are the Featured Ancestors (Oct 2012).

I am not sure where this farm was in relation to the town of Protection.

Any photos or information would be much appreciated.

~GTR

The Cement Slab



This is where we had Ratzloff picnics. It was northeast of Canton but I don't know the exact location. I've searched (using Google Earth) where I think it should be (lane: 5 mi N of 56 & 2.5 E) but a lot can change in 50 years. If you know the location please share the directions or coordinates.

If memory serves, Grandpa's watermelon patch was near-by and a well, where we got water to fill our cistern,

was just to the south.

Also south, was a Catalpa grove where Dad cut posts for the fencing he put up on the farm.

Anyone have more photos or info?

For you purists, yes, it is a concrete slab (cement being a component of concrete) but it just doesn't sound right so I will continue to refer to it as (and pronounce it) the "SEE-ment" slab. ;-)

~GTR

Grandpa Fred Nightengale Immigrates

Grandma Anna Nightengale wrote that Grandpa Fred arrived in Galveston, TX, on the Hanover.

[Reference link](#)

My Internet searches only find a Steam Ship (S.S.) Hannover (double "n"). I would attribute this to a spelling error (the same note had "stoped" misspelled with one "p" however, to add to the confusion, the [Galveston Immigration Database](#) website lists two ships, "Hanover" and Hannover."

I have not been able to determine if there are indeed two ships or if we are chasing a spelling error.

I searched the website and no Nightengale is found on a passenger list for 1912 arriving in Galveston under either ship name.



S.S. Hanover

The caption under this photo says "Hanover." Other references show the same photo as "Hannover." If this is not the ship that Grandpa Fred was on then it is typical of the type of ship carrying passengers from Bremen to Galveston.

The Galveston database has passenger lists for those who "first disembarked" in Galveston. Some ships from Bremen stopped at east coast ports before continuing to Galveston. Passengers on those ships are not in the Galveston database.

The John David Nightengale Family Record (p54) notes that "crossing the Atlantic ocean took four days longer than was anticipated" and that Grandpa arrived in Galveston, Texas on January 12, 1912. He then took a train to Hillsboro, Kansas arriving on January 14.

The ocean crossing probably took about two weeks and the passage cost around \$34 (\$775 adjusted to 2012). Plus there was the cost of travel to the port of Bremen and the train from Galveston to Kansas.

See the Nightengale Photo Album (the links are on Featured Ancestor pages for Grandma and Grandpa) for photos of the George Toews farm near Hillsboro, Kansas where Grandpa Fred first worked after immigrating.

~GTR

Goessel Mennonite Heritage Museum

As I was cropping this photo of the sculpture at right I realized what it represents. The verticals symbolize different types of crops (oats, wheat, etc.) then the horizontal and diagonal pieces suggest a plow. If you look closely you will see a representation of "swords into plowshares."

The museum (now a complex of 8 vintage buildings) was dedicated in 1974 on the 100th anniversary of the migration from Russia.

This is the [brochure](#) as it was when I visited the museum with Mom and Drew in 1988. The museum had many buildings including an old fashioned one-room school and many displays from small items in glass cases to full size buggies and farm equipment. No doubt, there have been many changes since I was there so it is well worth your time to visit this interesting collection celebrating our heritage.

Check this museum [link](#) for latest information and links to other museums in the area.



Photo by ~GTR

The museum is closed December through February and hours vary during other months. Open hours always include 12PM - 4PM (closed Sundays and Mondays).

I contacted the museum to confirm that their gift shop includes books related to our heritage including "The Helpless Poles" by Abe Unruh (\$9.75) which has a very good account of our history from Holland and Prussia to North America.



Photo by ~GTR

Mennonite Heritage & Agricultural Museum
200 Poplar Street, Goessel, Kansas 67053
(620) 367-8200 GPS: 38.248140 -97.342840



Photo by ~GTR



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Fred J. Nightengale and Anna Ratzloff
 Married in Clark County courthouse July 22, 1916

Grandpa Ratzloff's sister, Helen Wedel rescued this picture!

Mom's Great Aunt Julie (Schultz) Mayeske had the picture and when she and her husband John died some people were cleaning out their things and Helen saw some pictures thrown in the fire. She saw Fred and Anna's wedding picture and she grabbed it out. (Many, many thanks to Great Aunt Helen!!!)

-SDH

Looking Back

Honoring our Ancestors

Although our ancestors were of European heritage many of them are often referred to as "Russian Mennonites" because, in the late 1700's, Catherine the Great of Russia invited them to settle on the steppes of South Russia.

Later, the guarantees made by the Russian government were rescinded and the great emigration of our people from Russia began. The peak of this migration was around 1874.

This 17-foot limestone statue created in 1942 (and restored in 2000) stands in Athletic Park in Newton, Kansas. Around the base of the sculpture, in mosaic tile is the inscription:
 "Commemorating entry into Kansas from Russia of Turkey Red Hard Wheat by Mennonites 1874."



Photo by
 ~GTR 1973

"Mennonite Settler"
 Newton, Ks.

A Works Progress Administration (WPA) art project, the statue was partially financed through a community fundraising drive.

In 1998 the statue was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

My Dad took me to see the statue in 1973 and I took Drew there in 1988.

Coordinates: 38.0462 -97.3568
 (or 38°02'46"N 97°21'24"W)

Note: To "Immigrate" is to migrate Into a country while "Emigrate" refers to Exiting from a country.

~GTR

FamMail was originally created around 1995 as a (paper) newsletter (never sent). I set up the FamMail blog 9/2/2009 but didn't do anything with it until I created the FamMail website.

The website has been online since 4/4/2011 and the Newsletter was revived 1/1/2012.

~GTR (Gordon Thomas Ratzloff)