

EVILSIZER EXCHANGE

Volume 8 Issue 1

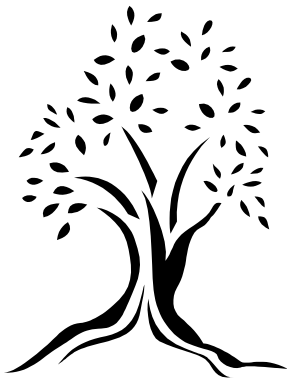
April 2008

Uncovering my Iroquois County Illinois Roots

by Dennis L. Evelsizer ©

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After the Hessian mercenary founder's service with the British in the American Revolutionary War, the Evelsizer family migrated westward to Pennsylvania "Dutch" country and further with each generation or so. The name changed into three or four major variations, but my line stayed with the Evelsizer spelling. Henry Allen Evelsizer, fifth generation and my great-grandfather, was born in 1852 in Lafayette, Indiana. He would marry Miranda Saylor there. By the time their fifth child and second son my grandfather, Carl Evelsizer, was born in 1888, Henry's family was in Tazewell County, Illinois, in the East Peoria area.

PATERNAL SIDE

The Evelsizer family migrated westward to Pennsylvania "Dutch" country and further with each generation or so. Henry Allen Evelsizer, fifth generation and my great-grandfather, was born in 1852 in Lafayette, Indiana. He would marry Miranda Saylor. By the time their son and my grandfather, Carl Evelsizer, was born in 1888, Henry's family was in Tazewell County, Illinois in the East Peoria area.

I am not sure, but believe Grandfather Carl was living in the Deer Creek area between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one. He and a man by the name of Ed Cooper from Bloomington would attend dances in the Eureka and Secor area, looking for a wife. This is where they met two sisters, Mary and Anna Hexamer of Secor. Ed would eventually marry Anna and Grandfather would wed Mary.

Grandfather Carl and Mary tied the knot in a civil union in Eureka in 1909. They settled on a farm in Congerville in Wood-

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Newsletter took a Sabatical!

I wish to apologize for not having a newsletter for a while. With the death of my mom, and taking a year to handle most of her affairs, I can once again concentrate on genealogy. I produce another newsletter for the Worldwide Nuckolls and Kindred Society also. It seems I always have good information for the newsletter, but I have run out of material for our Evilsizers. Most stories found in the published book have been duplicated into a newsletter over the

years and unless someone submits info, the only items I can include in the news are recent births, death, marriages and always find someone who is born after the 1930 census who remains unconnected, so those will have to play a part in future editions.

Also remember the newsletter is now free and emailed electronically to all.

Henry Allen Evelsizer (cont)

(Continued from page 1)

ford County. During the five years they lived there, their first child, Lorene, was born. A boy, Floyd, was born in 1913 but died just short of a year later.

In 1914, the family followed older brother William to Bagley, Iowa in the first of several moves by train. A daughter, Erma, was born there in 1915. But gathering war clouds brought the family back to the Congerville area in 1918 so that Grandmother would be near her family if Grandfather were drafted.

The return to Congerville saw the birth of more children: Dorothy in December of 1918, my father, Raymond, in August of 1920, and Wilma in 1923, just before the next move. Dorothy died ten days after she was born. Grandmother had contracted the dreaded Spanish Flu of that year, but survived it. The nursing Dorothy did not. So a second child was laid to rest in Imhoff Cemetery in rural Congerville, Illinois.

In the spring of 1924, my grandparents packed up four children and their belongings on a TP&W train and moved, as to a farm at Gilman in Iroquois County. I have heard family stories of Grandmother Mary Stoically packing good dishes in wooden barrels of sawdust along with all the other accouterments of living that had to be packed and moved for yet one more train journey. At least this one would be much shorter than the round trip to Bagley, Iowa.

Of course, in keeping with the custom of the day, Grandfather, as the new tenant, had gone to Gilman in the fall of 1923 to do the fall plowing on the new farm. He had to board in Gilman until the work was done and he could return to his family in Congerville for the winter.

When the family moved, Grandmother and the kids would ride in a coach, but the men, Grandfather and assisting extended family men, would ride in the cattle car with the livestock to aid in reducing expenses.

They moved onto a farm located just north of the TP&W tracks on the east side of U.S. Route 45 going north out of Gilman. This would be the south one-half of section thirty-two of Douglas East Township. Grandfather would farm 160 acres of this ground.

This farm was owned by two bachelor brothers and their two unmarried sisters from Peoria. Their name was Sullivans, so, at least in the family, the farm was referred to as "the Sullivan (s) Place."

Grandfather would tenant this farm until the spring of 1942. During that tenure, the family of four children, Lorene, Erma, Raymond, and Wilma, would be increased by the addition of: Kenneth in 1925 and Elsie in 1928. It was on this farm that my father would grow from a three year old to a twenty year old and his marriage in

1940. After 1942, the farm would have several different tenants until it was eventually sold to the Orr family who still own the land today.

In that spring of 1942, the family would buy and move to a farm just north and west of Gilman on what is now county road 620E in the northeast corner of section thirty in Douglas East Township. Lorene and Raymond had married and left their respective nests by this time. The remaining children would all marry before the end of the decade, but Grandfather and Grandmother would continue to live on this farm until retirement in 1958 and their move into Gilman on east third street. Within three or four years, Interstate 57 would be built right down through the middle of the farm.

I have fond memories of this last farm of my grandparents. Between 1946 and 1954, we "townies," my brother Darwin and I, would spend part of summer vacation, "on the farm." We would spend one week with our paternal grandparents on this farm and one week with our maternal grandparents in La Hogue.

What did we do without television and computers? For one thing, we delighted in Grandfather Carl's rubber knee boots and, July heat or not, we would prance around all day in those boots. I loved to "paint" the open, west, "front" porch. The paint, of course, was water. My brother liked to walk around with a more-or-less tame chicken sitting on his head and generally prowl the chicken house.

With that enigmatic smile of hers, Grandmother used to relate how egg production dropped precipitously whenever Darwin was there for vacation. But we were always invited back another summer.

We also liked to listen to the stories Grandfather would tell. One of my favorites told of how he, Grandfather Carl, sleepwalked in his youth. One summer night, while courting my grandmother, he walked in his sleep in the wee hours all the way out to the barn. His parents did not like to wake him unless they had to.

This time they needed to. Grandfather Carl, still deep in sleep and in the inky blackness of a moonless night, was muttering something about visiting his girl while he got the horse fully hitched to the buggy. His father, Henry, finally woke him and told him to unhitch the horse and go to bed. Grandfather Carl had to light a lantern to see in order to unhitch and hang the harness properly on the wall of the barn. Grandmother Mary would sit in her chair and listen to these stories with us, stories she had heard hundreds of times. She always wore that smile I mentioned and a glint of remembered excitement in her eyes.

Grandmother Mary would die in 1971, at age eighty-three. Grandpa would live a widower in that east second

Henry Allen Evelsizer (Cont)



Henry Allen Evelsizer, wife Miranda Sailor (c1903-1904)

Front L-R Viola, Henry, Guy, Miranda, Carl
Back L-R Ellie, Lillie, Willie Minnie

MATERNAL SIDE

On this side of the family, my ties to Iroquois County go back to 1884. My mother's family are more recent immigrants than is my father's family.

In this case, it was my maternal great-grandparents that came to this country as young adults from the Ostfriesland area of Germany. Their families settled on farms in the Minonk area of northern Woodford County where they eventually met and married. That would have been Henry and Hilke Gerdes Johnson.

In 1884, at the age of forty-one, Great-grandfather Henry would purchase a farm in Danforth Township and move his family into Iroquois County Illinois. He and Great-grandmother Hilke (Gerdes) Johnson would raise seven boys and two girls on this eighty acre farm. One of those boys was my grandfather, Hannes Johnson. This farm was on the "Danforth Slab" four miles west of

town at the intersection of the slab and what is now County Road 300E. The eighty acres runs north and south and lies in the northwest corner of the above intersection.

Great-grandfather Henry purchased the eighty acres in June of 1884 for \$1,600 or \$20 an acre. He paid \$100 down and took out a mortgage for the remainder. When it was sold at auction in February of 1934, it sold for \$8,200 or \$102.50 an acre. The farm was sold by order of the chancery court. The family of that purchaser, William Weerts, still owns the land today.

Even though eight thousand dollars was a lot of money in 1934, there were seven surviving siblings and nine survivors of a deceased sibling to inherit. The eldest girl was dead (with the nine children to inherit) and the

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Henry Allen Evelsizer (cont)

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other girl was dead with no children surviving. After court costs and lawyer fees, the total inherited by each heir would not amount to very much. But, in those times, cash was cash.

The sale came about because some of the heirs wanted their share of the money immediately, rather than share in the proceeds of the farm under family management. It was well into the depression years and that was likely the motivation to sell even though others did not want to sell-hence the lawsuit as several heirs persevered and forced the issue into court,

Tales are told in the family of the strict German matron with the iron will in the form of Great-grandmother Hilke. She ruled the family. Grandchildren were almost fearful of going to her house. In the orchard, apples on the ground could be picked up and eaten, but woe to the child that picked one off the tree. Still, she frequently sent fresh-baked pumpernickel bread home with the grandchildren.

In 1917, twenty-six year old Grandfather Hannes left Danforth to join the Doughboys of W.W.I in France. But before he did, he met and married Gaynel Talbot from the Dixon/Sterling area of Illinois. Grandfather would go to that area fairly often to help one of his brothers who lived there. Gaynell was one of the local girls.

Grandfather Hannes returned in 1918 to greet his newborn son and first child, Alfred. The family would live on several different tenant farms. On one of these farms was born a second child, Lorene, my mother. The family eventually rented the "Kuiper place" just three quarters of a mile directly south of Hannes' parents on today's County Road 300E. Here they would live for a decade or more through the 1920s and early 1930s.

It was on this farm that the rest of the children of Hannes and Gaynel would be born, a girl, Eileen, and two more boys, Lowell and Hannes Jr. Mother tells about all the kids trekking down the road three quarters of a mile to attend the Shule School for eight years. The oldest, Alfred, rode a horse, but the rest had to walk. Talk about perks.

Life on this farm ended with the move to a tenant farm east of Onarga in 1935. The four younger children would attend Onarga schools for one year. Lorene, the second oldest, was a member of the freshman class.

1936 saw the next move of the family. This time it was to La Hogue, a tiny unincorporated community one mile north of U.S. 24 and five miles west of Gilman. The children would all marry from this house and my grandparents would continue to live here until they moved into Gilman on South Thomas Street in 1966.

It was at this La Hogue house that my brother and I

spent half of our summer vacation. Since I was the first grandchild on this side of the family, I was adored and spoiled by my grandmother Gaynell.

I remember she was terrified of electrical storms, in part because three really huge cottonwood trees stood very close to the house. One or another of those trees usually took a lightening strike in a storm of any severity. She feared the house would be next.

One of the fun things I enjoyed doing here was playing with the "wheelie thing." Two spoked, four foot diameter steel wheels were connected by a four or five foot axle. That meant one could not grab hold firmly as the axle turned with the wheels. Holding lightly, I then ran for all I was worth with the wheels buzzing merrily on either side of me. Hands heated up towards blisters, forcing a rest before running off again.

Aa "townies" in Morton, it was fun for us to drink from the artesian well out by the wash house. It was the only source of water for the house at that time. It was also fun, different anyway, to use the outhouse occupying one end of the cob shed. We did not have to use corn-cobs, but we did use the old Sears catalog! There was the ubiquitous chamber pot for overnight use. I suspect it would not have been quite so much fun had we been forced to live with these conditions all the time.

Also, brother Darwin and I were there in high summer time. Mother told us of waking up in the upstairs bedrooms in winter with a thin layer of powdered snow on the bedcovers and frozen water in the basin and pitcher. The only heat in the house was the kitchen cook stove and the parlor stove. Two of the bedrooms had floor vents to admit some of this heat, but the fires were banked for the night and not much heat got upstairs, at least not for long as the fire cooled.

Grandfather Hannes would live a little less than two years after the move to Gilman. He would die in March of 1969, at age seventy-seven and only get to see my twin sons, the first great grandchildren on this side of the family a couple of times! Grandmother Gaynell would adore those two boys in the years she had left before she died in 1977, at age eighty-one. We brought them to see her quite often. She loved to sit in the porch swing with them and gently swing with one boy on either side of her.

As I related above in the paternal section, my mother Lorene, would marry my father, Raymond Evelsizer, from this La Hogue house in 1940 and within two years, move to Morton.

And me? Well, I grew up in Morton, attending school there from first grade through twelve. I attended ISNU in Normal, obtaining my B.S. in Education in 1962, and my

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Henry Allen Evelsizer (cont)

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Masters in Social Science in 1969. My teaching career at Fairbury-Cropsey High School in Livingston County, began that fall. That career ended in retirement thirty-two years later at the same high school, but by then known as Prairie Central High School. My wife and I have resided in the Fairbury-Forrest area since 1963 and in our current rural Forrest address since 1970. But I have very deep roots in Iroquois County



Henry and Hilke (Gerdes) Johnson family. My grandfather is second from left in the second row, age about seventeen. c.1908 age 17. He would be nearly bald at age 25



Grandfather Hannes is on the right end. c. 1904



Hannes and Gaynell (Talbot) Johnson 1945 or 1946 My mother is back row, right end. (Lorene Johnson, wife of Raymond Wesley Evelsizer)

We Remember



San Diego Union Tribune Thursday December 21, 2006

Helen Marie Evilsizer passed away Saturday, Dec 16, 2006 resting in the arms of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ after a battle with pancreatic cancer, aged 80y10m19d. Helen was born Jan 27, 1926 in Herrin, IL the dau of Stephen Barnes and Elmina Board. She eloped with her childhood sweetheart, Ivan Evilsizer and married Jul 15, 1946. He died Jan 1 1997. Her hobbies included oil painting and genealogy. Four of her family history books can be found in the Salt Lake Library. She and Ivan lived in Texas and Florida, moving to San Diego in 1972. She was a member of the East Clairemont Southern Baptist Church and attended a local Bible Study Group. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, brothers Bart is Barnes, Bennie Theodore Barnes, and Charles Barnes; sisters Edith Barnes, Ruby Dorrell, and Dorothy Dorrell. She is survived by brother Tex al Barnes; sisters Mary Jeanette Escarcega of AZ, and Lillian Lucius of FL; Children Ivan C Evilsizer and Sandra Koscak, both of Helena, M T; grandchildren Laura and Tyler Evilsizer, also of Helena; special niece Dee Barr of AR; and a host of nieces and nephews who will mourn her loss. She will be interred today next to her beloved husband at Ft Rosecrans National Cemetery, Point Loma, CA.

Springfield News & Leader Nov 19, 2006 *Charles Elmer Evilsizer*, 82, of St James, formerly of Raymondville, died Friday, Nov 17, 2006, at the Phelps County Regional Hospital of Rolla. He was born July 6, 1924 in Sullivan (sic), Mo to Clarence Elmer and Ora Belle (Martin) Evilsizer. On April 16, 1943 he married Helen M Smith, who preceded him. He was a licensed Baptist Minister and pastored small community churches in the area. He was a member of American Legion Post No 890 and served many years as Commander of Post No 41 and was also a District Commander. Survivors include a son Kevin Evilsizer, of Raymondville; daughters, Carolyn D Delaney of Lebanon; Dee Ann Barr and husband Michael of Bella Vista, AR and Sharon Joy Branson and husband Kenneth, of Colleyville, TX; eight grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. Services for Charles Elmer Evilsizer will be held at Evans Funeral Chapel in Houston with the Rev Bob White officiating. Burial will be in Central Baptist Cemetery, under the direction of Evans Funeral Home of Houston (Charles is the brother of Ivan Palmer Evilsizer, husband of Helen Marie in above obit)

Evilsizer, Robert Lynn "Bob" 53, of St. Paris died Friday in Hospice of Dayton. Memorial Services will be 7 p.m. Thursday in the First Church of God, St. Paris, where the family will receive friends for one hour prior to the service 6-7 p.m. The family is being served by the Walter-Schoedinger Funeral Home, Urbana. Published in the Springfield News-Sun on 2/13 /2007. Bob was an Air Force Viet Nam Era Veteran.

Evilsizer William G. 56, of Springfield died unexpectedly Sunday, May 6, 2007 in his residence. Grave-side services will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday at Calvary Cemetery Chapel. The family is being served by the Conroy Funeral Home. Springfield News-Sun (OH) - May 8, 2007

Evelsizer, Robert L. 87 of Worthington, died Monday July 23, 2007. WWII and Korean Army Veteran. Retired Civil Engineer with D.C.S.C. and Parker Hannifin Company, Cleveland, Ohio. Preceded in death by parents, Christopher and Lola Evelsizer; sister Janet Thwaites. Survived by wife, Barbara; children, Nikki (Doug) Hirschi, Kristi (Ron) Beaver, Robert Evelsizer Jr.; grandchildren, Nathan, Tyler, Christian, Jessie Rae, Christopher and Brian; brother, Dick (Ruth) Evelsizer. A service will be held 1:00pm Friday at the SCHOEDINGER WORTHINGTON CHAPEL 6699 N. High St. (1/2 mile south of 270) where friends may call 1 hour prior to service. Interment Resurrection Cemetery. In lieu of flowers contributions may be donated to the Ohio State University Athletic Department. Visit www.schoedinger.com to send online condolences to the family. Published in the Springfield News-Sun on 7/26/2007.

Gerald Ray Evilsizer- He was born April 8, 1957, in Sturgis, a son of Clarence Russell and Joann (Knapp) Evilsizer. Jerry was a lifelong resident of Sturgis. Due to ill health, he retired from McDonald's Restaurant in Sturgis. Prior to that he had worked at Olson Bodies. Sturgis Journal March 26, 2007

Joni L. (Evilsizer) Sheaffer of Urbana passed away Monday, June 25, 2007 at her residence. She

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was born Oct. 3, 1966 in Urbana, Ohio the daughter of Gene and Jo Ella (Herd) Evilsizor. Joni was a 1985 graduate of Urbana High School. She then served her country in the United States Air Force, where she met her husband Neil A. Sheaffer. They were wed on Aug. 5, 1989 in Urbana. Joni was actively involved with the American's Second Harvest campaign headed by Shania Twain. Joni's love and passion was spending time with her family and friends. She was a kind, caring, giving and loving person. She will be never forgotten and sadly missed. She is survived by her loving husband of 17 years, Neil A. Sheaffer, her daughter and son, Meghan Jo Sheaffer and Ethan Kyle Sheaffer, her parents, Jo and Gene Evilsizor, her brothers, Bruce Evilsizor and Brad Evilsizor all of Urbana, father-in-law, Clarence (Ruth) Sheaffer of New Port, PA, several nieces and nephews and a host of friends including two special friends, Sarah Cox and Andrea Tullis both of Urbana. Joni is preceded in death by her grandparents and her mother-in-law, Hattie Sheaffer. A gathering of family and friends will be held from 5-8 p.m. on Friday, June 29, 2007 in the Vernon Funeral Home, Urbana, Ohio. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, June 30, 2007 in the funeral home with the Rev. Kathy Reiff officiating. Memorial contributions may be made to the American's Second Harvest, The Nations Food Bank Network, 701 E. Columbia St. Springfield, Ohio 45503. 6/27/2007 9:10:00 AM Urbana Daily Citizen

Pantagraph, The (Bloomington, IL) - January 5, 2007 *FAIRBURY- Joel Dennis Evelsizer*, 38, died Thursday (Jan. 4, 2007) in a one-car accident in the early hours of the morning. His funeral will be at 2 p.m. Sunday at Duffy-Pils Memorial Home, Fairbury. Pastor Corinne Blissard will officiate. Visitation for family and friends will be from 4 to 8 p.m. Saturday and for one hour before the service Sunday at the funeral home. Burial will be in Graceland Cemetery, Fairbury. Memorials may be made to an education fund for his children at State Bank of Forrest; the Prairieview Lutheran Home, Danforth; or a charity of the donor's choice. Joel was born Oct. 31, 1968, the son of Dennis and Elsie Wilken Evelsizer. He married Tammy Sims Burgess on May 28, 1994. Joel is survived by his wife, Tammy, Gibson City; son, Mark, and daughters Leah, Alex, and Morgan, all of Fairbury. He is also survived by a twin brother, Jason (Jodi) Evelsizer, Champaign; his parents, Dennis and Elsie Evelsizer, Forrest; grandmother, Lorene Evelsizer, Danforth; along with several aunts, uncles and cousins. Preceding Joel in death were maternal grandparents, Bill and Hilda Wilken, and paternal grandfather, Raymond Evelsizer. Joel attended the Forrest-Strawn-Wing schools through his sophomore year of high school and then his last two years at Prairie Central, graduating in 1987. He attended Eastern Illinois University. After working at Koehl Brothers construction for several years, Joel worked for PMI Construction for several more years. He then worked for Archer-Daniels-Midland for some time before returning to Koehl Brothers until his untimely death. Joel was a tireless worker for his employer and for his family. He adored his girls and his only son. The focus of his life was to provide for his family. Few people met Joel who did not call him friend and one had only to ask and Joel would do whatever he could to help. Joel was a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Forrest, and a former member of St. Paul's LYO and the Pleasant Ridge Boys 4-H Club. Tributes and condolences may be made to the family at www.duffypillsmemorialhome.com. (Joel is the son of Dennis who submitted the article for this newsletter)



New Leaves

Breelyn Kate Evilsizer born Feb 7, 2007 Indianapolis, In to Benjamin Ryan Evilsizer and Jessica R Cox

Sofia Danielle Evilsizor born June 4 2007 in Denver to Richard Edward Evilsizor and Angelica Smith (Descends from Henry of Champaign Co, OH)

Noah Michael Barr was born March 15, 2008 in St Louis, MO, son of Brandon Chase Barr and Amy Christine Lorenz, grandson of Michael Barr and Debrah Dee Ann Evilsizer.

Cason Kyler Evilsizer was born March 18, 2008 to Niki Evilsizer. Niki is the daughter of Kevin Evilsizer and Ardna Morgan. Kevin and Dee Ann Evilsizer (above) are siblings. They both had grandchildren almost at the same time.

EVLSIZER NEWSLETTER

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*Researching Evilszer, Evilsizor, Evelsizer,
Evensizer*

Help to Identify!

Springfield News Sun Jan 14, 2007

EVILSIZOR, Logan Ray, son of **Steve and Christie Evil-sizor** was unexpectedly taken to be with the Lord the morning of Jan 11, 2007. Although not carried to full term, Logan Ray will forever be cherished by his parents, family and friends. There will be no services.

(I have 3 Steve Evilsizors in my database , so don't know which is married to Christie.)

Eliza Evilsizer age 69 died May 3, 1915 in Athens State Hospital. She was single and names of her parents are not on this death certificate.

Hazel Downard was born Jan 31, 1093 in Wellsville, Ohio, the daughter of Robert Downard and **Anna Evil-sizer**. She died Columbiana Co, East Liverpooll OH April 26, 1941 as the wife of Howard Fisher. In 1910 there is no record. In 1920 in Columbiana Co, Ohio Hazel Downard, age 17 is the foster daughter of Lee and Elsie Herbert.

Ft Worth Register Feb 8, 1902—Indiana— After living for 99 years and 11 months in Indiana, **Mrs Rebecca Evilsizer** committed suicide. No reason given for this act. But it is supposed she was afraid the newspapers would go to printing her pictures as soon as she got to be 100 years old, (No Rebecca Evilsizer is found in the 1900 census in Indiana or any other state.)

May 31, 1909 Belleview News-Democrat
Death of Woman in Doubt

Junction City Kansas May 31— The dead body of **Mrs J H Evilsizer**, wife of a well known business man here, was found on the banks of the Republic River near here. Death was due to a shot fired from a pistol found near the body. Letters left by the woman indicate that she committed suicide, but the respective positions of the body have induced the coroner to institute and investigation. (Possible wife of John H in Osage Co, Junction City KS, but he died before 1880, so it is not known why he is mentioned in the obit. Son Harry is single in this county and just a farmer. Harrys mother or father are not found in 1900.