

A publication for and about the town of Naper, Nebraska, published by the Naper Historical Society.

The mission of the Naper Historical Society is to preserve, interpret, display, communicate, promote and honor the history, original structures, special places and artifacts of the people and culture of Naper, Nebraska, and the surrounding area. The Naper Historical Society intends to accomplish this mission by operating a museum, publishing a newsletter, sponsoring events, and in other appropriate ways. The Naper Historical Society will initially focus on four themes: School Days, Life in Naper Through the Years, White Horse Ranch, and Naper 28 Plane Crash.

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Naper Paper

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THE EARLY YEARS OF ROCK AND ROLL IN NAPER—PART 1

by Roger Ludemann

If you grew up around Naper in the 1950's and 1960's, it was a wonderful time to be able to see live bands and experience the birth of "Rock and Roll" by singing along to almost everything on the radio. I think it all started with me at age 11 or 12 when I received a gift of a Montgomery Ward *Air-line* transistor radio with an ear phone that I could play at night without disturbing the rest of the family. And, of course, I had it tuned to 1520, KOMA in Oklahoma City!

I would bet there are many of you who remember KOMA. It was a "clear channel" (radio specs for "no one else can be on your wave length" so you own it!) 50,000 watt (that's a lot of power) radio station. You could get it nearly static free on your transistor radio, but only after dark when the "clear channel" reception kicked in. A little later in life, listening to this wonderful rock and roll music source was perfect for doing a little "American Graffiti" cruising of main street or gazing up at the stars from a parked car (who knows where and why).

I can clearly remember sitting in front of the Congregational church while my dad was in a meeting and turning the car radio on to hear Tommy Roe singing "Sheila" (#1 in 1962) or the Cascades singing "Rhythm of the Rain"! All those musical memories reached a fever pitch in the early 60's when the Beach Boys, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and others made it very popular to play a guitar and join in the fun.

I had a very supportive cast to get the party started. My dad (Reo Ludemann) would sing as he drove a tractor in the field, hauled cattle in the truck or stood in the church choir belting out a hymn on Sunday. He had an old guitar his mother had given him for a birthday present when he was very young and even though he never learned how to play it, I think he always thought he would someday. That was a fundamental principle of why he never seemed to have an issue when I discovered I wanted to learn how to play a guitar and all that it led to later. I guess he thought I would be playing some Roy Acuff "Grand Ole Opry" songs, but I quickly let him down when the first song I learned was Elvis Presley's "Heartbreak Hotel"!

THE MAGICAL SOUND OF AN ELECTRIC GUITAR

I must have been about 14 when I attended a Saturday night wedding dance in Naper and there was a blended country/western/early rock and roll band playing. They were from Jamison, Burke, Gregory, etc. and I don't remember the name of the band, I just remember the perfect sound of that sunburst guitar of the lead player and how the electrification through his amplifier filled the air with an incredible, powerful sound. I remember thinking, "I've got to figure out how to do that!" A few years later my mom fell in love with a Johnny Cash song called "Frankie and Johnny" that tells a story about a "long legged guitar picker with a wicked, wanderin' eye" and it always made me think of that guy playing on stage with that sunburst guitar.

NAPER SUPER SERVICE AND THE "GUITARS FOR GAS" PROGRAM

The mystique of the electric guitar had taken hold of me and I just had to learn how to play. Unfortunately, that's tough to do if you don't have a guitar, but we did have Naper Super Service! Besides having the best selection and coldest "pop" in the old horizontal coin operated machine inside the gas station, Naper Super Service provided farm fuel bulk delivery, engine work on your ailing car and guitar rentals. That's right! Super Service owner, Jim McLaughlin, was a bit of a character and a pretty memorable part of my youth because he was the guy that provided a tank of gas to a guitar player from somewhere up north in exchange for his "hocked" electric guitar and amp. It was a cheap Sears and Roebuck Silvertone model in a beautiful sunburst finish and it was leaning against the wall one day when my dad and I stopped in to fill up the pick-up truck.

I remember walking in the front door of the station with the smell of gas and oil permeating the air and seeing this guitar leaning against the wall. It was love at first sight! There was a brief negotiation that went on between my dad, Jim and me and we quickly put together an "on loan" rental program of \$1 per month and I walked out with the guitar, the amp and cords. I cradled the guitar in my arms on the way home and the amplifier sat in the back of the pick-up lodged between two bales of hay so it wouldn't tip over. I was 14 years old and this was the beginning of a great romance with the instrument that continues to this day.



Above: Same model as the Silvertone guitar Jim McLaughlin had leaning against the wall at Naper Super Service in 1962. Now \$649.99 on eBay!

SHARING MUSIC MEMORIES

I hope to share more reflections of those “growing up” days in Naper over the next year or so and I would say some of the most important memories of those days gone by had to do with music. Whether it was you or your parents’ love of Lawrence Welk and his “Champagne” music or your personal experiences with “Little Joe and the RamRods”, the “Flippers”, “Dennis Ray and the Blue Jays” or dozens of other groups, it was a wonderful time to experience live music. And don’t forget the “Swanda Band”, Ray and Luella Gall with the “Mello-Tones” and a bunch of other local “dance” bands that all got us out at night as we headed to the Naper Hall, Herrick, Bones-teele or Rest Haven. It was great fun! Be sure to let the editor of this wonderful paper know your favorite band and we will try to mention it in the next edition.



Above: The “Starfires” (Roger Ludemann, Bill Peppel, Clyde Vogt and Wayne Vogt) playing for New Year’s eve dance in Naper Hall on December 31, 1964.)

RELIVE THE 60’S ON SATURDAY, MAY 27, 2017

To those of you who grew up in the 50’s and 60’s (and certainly before and beyond) please join us in Naper to celebrate the 150th year of Nebraska statehood, the 125th anniversary of the town of Naper and the 50th year of the Sons of Chaplin band! It was in the summer of 1967 when Jerry Stevicks (bass player from Herrick) and I walked past Wentz’s bar and noticed the derby hats on sale for locals to wear in celebration of Naper’s 75th year as a town and Nebraska’s 100th year of statehood. They looked like the same hat Charlie Chaplin wore in old black and white silent films and Stevicks says: “Hey! Let’s buy some of those hats and we can be the “Sons of Chaplin!”

We’ll celebrate the 50th anniversary of that occasion with a free street dance in Naper the night of the alumni banquet on May 27th, 2017 and the party is doubled in importance because it is the 50th year reunion of my 1967 graduating class. Hope to see everybody there! Enjoy music from the “Starfires” playlist (the original band of Bill Peppel, Clyde Vogt and me) and the “Sons of Chaplin” beginning at 8 PM or right after the alumni banquet. Until next time.....!

Below: The Sons of Chaplin” in 1967. Roger Ludemann, Bob Balcom, Jack Mead, Riley Gall and Jerry Stevicks (in the goofy hats!) and Susie “QQ” Sutton



Below: “Sons of Chaplin” reunion in 1996: Jerry Stevicks, Jack Mead, Susie Sutton, Roger Ludemann and Riley Gall. Back together again in Naper May 27th, 2017 for the celebration of 50 years of Rock and Roll!).



SEE YOU IN NAPER MAY 27, 28, AND 29!

LESTER NEUMILLER TELLS HIS STORY

Lester Neumiller and his family became a part of the Naper community when they moved here from Gross in 1943. Lester started out northeast of Bonesteel in July of 1929, the fourth child of Chris and Lydia. When their family needed a larger home, a neighbor was tearing down a set of buildings on a nearby farm. They kept a 16 feet x 24 feet piece of the house and pushed it uphill, spinning it around on the sod, until it was finally in place and then attached it onto the existing house. During the dust storms of the 30's, they had to go down in the cellar to get away from the blowing dirt.

Lester started school in the fall of 1936 with classmates Duane Ping, Art Hertz, Dick Wolf and Mary Ann Cook. The winter of 1936 was a bad one. What hay was available to feed cattle was pulled on bobsleds across the snowdrifts. In March of 1937, the Neumiller family moved to a farm northwest of Gross and the children walked to school in Gross where Helen Van Hove taught the lower grades (1-6) and Delores Van Hove taught the upper grades (7-10). The snow would blow through the gullies and make walls of snow six to eight feet tall.



CHRIS AND LYDIA NEUMILLER FAMILY about 1950

Howard Miller had a grocery store in Gross and his wife was the postmaster. He sold oyster shells which were fed to the hens hoping to make the egg shells stronger. They'd bring the eggs to Gross where they were packed to be shipped to Omaha Cold Storage. Local cottonwood trees were cut and made into lumber which Jerry Lakota assembled into egg cases. Imagine a factory in Gross!

Lester's sister Esther completed 10th grade in Gross after the family moved to Naper in March of 1943. To accomplish the move, four horses were tied to the back of a full hayrack which was pulled by two other horses. Chris rode a saddle horse and trailed the cows. Their dog walked all the way, from Gross to Anoka, to Highway 11, south to Butte and on to Highway 12 until they were two miles west of Naper, then south to their new home. Siewerts had previously owned the farm which had a nice house "featuring" (as they say in the real estate ads) four bedrooms with closets, a kitchen, dining room, living room, and a roof with eight gables! John Forsch, Wilbert Cline and Chris shingled the house after they moved there.

Lester graduated from Naper High in 1948 with JoAnn Cerny (Jons), Delores Zeitner (Stahlecker), Lucille Vogt (Sieh), Velda Sieh (Stahlecker), Roy Goodman, and Carl "Pat" Vance. He went to work for Chris Rockholm who farmed the field just north of Naper on the west side of the road. Chris hired some local folks to walk the corn and chop cockleburrs. It was discovered later that they chopped burrs just as far as one could see from the road and then rested on the chairs they had concealed in the corn. Lester had to finish that job.

Lester's sister Edna was living in Lincoln where her husband was attending UNL. She needed some help so Lester headed that direction and stayed a while. He returned home by train to Stuart, then got a ride to Naper with the mail carrier, Gus Obermire.

Not much chance of coming to Stuart by train today!

That fall, Chris (Rockholm) bought a corn picker that had to be mounted on the tractor—quite a complicated chore but eventually completed successfully. He was having back problems so Lester picked the corn. To move hay, he'd pitch two hayracks full—one on rubber tires, one on steel wheels, and pull them with Chris' "M" Farmall from just north of Naper to the farmstead located in South Dakota, just across Squaw Creek. Yes, literally "just across Squaw Creek", because they was no bridge and one drove right through the creek to get to the buildings.

During the rugged winter of 1949-1950, Lester worked for Ed and Ray Stoltenberg. One of their Cats was frozen down south of the John Camin farm. To get the tracks thawed so they could begin to plow the roads, Ed poured a mix of gasoline and diesel fuel on them and lighted it. The tracks thawed and plowing began. After several hours, they arrived in Naper and ate breakfast at the cafe. They continued north of Naper to Tietgens, clearing the roads and opening paths so farmers could get to hay for their cattle, and ended their trip south of Herrick. The Cat wasn't shut off once in 52 hours. Yes, sir, those were the "good old days."

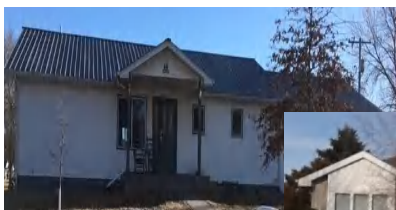
Lester and Arlene Nicolaus were married January 25, 1952. They were chavairied on a brutally cold night when it was snowing and blowing. (All Naper Paper readers know what a chavairi is after reading the last issue, right?) They lived on the Neumiller farm southwest of Naper until the fall of 1961 when they moved to the Nicolaus farm after the death of Arlene's dad Ed. They built a new house on that farm in 1967, starting the day after Thanksgiving, and moving in in September of 1968.



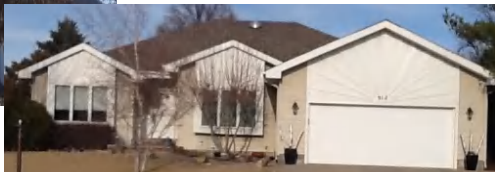
They were hailed out seven times in 11 years. In 1962, the tornado that formed south and east of their farm caused a violent rain storm to develop that ruined their crops. One summer day in 1969, Dale Vogt was swathing hay for them when Lester and Arlene went to Fairfax. A cloud came up that dumped hail on the farm, knee deep on the south side of the granary. Fortunately, Dale had taken shelter in the cellar. In 1981, Lester was cutting silage when a hail storm came along one September night that took care of the silage. That year they had to harvest milo one row at a time due to the snow and ice.

About 1952, Lester built a hay mover that lived a double life serving as a building mover. The 1962 tornado took the schoolhouse at District 50 along with buildings at the Alnard Heermann and Carl Vogt farms among others. A school house was moved from southwest of Butte to the District 50 site. There are some mighty big hills between the first and second "homes" for that school and Randy Keller had to hook on a second tractor to get Lester, his mover and the building in place. Lester moved the building that became "Pete's Café"; he moved the house which is now the Curl Up and Dye Hair Salon; he moved the house (now demolished) where Bud Bechtold lived for many years. After that house came to Naper, Adolph "Buffalo" Martin stuccoed it.

In 1982, they moved to Fullerton, NE, where Lester became a rural mail carrier for 176 patrons out of Fullerton and Belgrade. In January, 1990, Lester and Arlene built a new house in Fullerton. He also built a new house for son Brent and daughter Marcia both in Hastings.



Marcia's house (below)



Brent's house (above)

Throughout his life, Lester has worked with horses. A fellow once said that in a man's lifetime, he's entitled to one good horse and one good dog. Surely Queenie qualifies as Lester's one good horse—although he's had many. He bought her as a colt at a sale in Stuart and trained her himself. She was fast, smart and hot-blooded. She lived to be 35 years old and turned from black to gray to white over the years. Queenie was trained to ride in a pickup. Big deal, you say. Well, Queenie would be saddled, ready to work, and Lester would lead her to his pickup. There was no rack in the pickup, the tail gate would be down, and Queenie would jump into the pickup box and ride down the road! It was quite a sight to see. One time she shared the box with an assortment of steel posts, fencing supplies, and assorted junk that left her with space only about two feet wide.

As mentioned before, Queenie was fast and smart. She had a sixth sense about cattle and seemed to always know which cows should be here and which ones should be there. If the rider wasn't alert, Queenie would leave him or her sitting in the dust! One such unlucky guy said, "I think she's got more experience than I have."



ONLY IN FAIRY TALES?

Some think gingerbread houses like this can be found only in fairy tales but Kaci and Baleigh Koenig know they are real and can be found right in their yard! Thanks to great uncle Glenn Zink, this delightful building is enjoyed by Kaci and Baleigh, their brothers, and the children at Staci's day care.



Above: During the Fullerton Centennial celebration, Lester and Queenie delivered a message to Governor Ben Nelson.



After Arlene's death in 2007, Lester moved back to Naper where he lives in the house they had built in 1968. He keeps himself plenty busy but enjoys a good visit and a game of cards.

Left: Lester, age 75, riding "Pat", a 25-year-old quarter horse—One hundred years of experience!

NAPER'S 125TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION IS MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND!

Plans are being made for some fun things to do May 27, 28 and 29 in Naper! Saturday morning starts with a fun run/walk and later that day, some sand volleyball competition. Museums will be open most days.

Social hour at the alumni banquet begins at 6, food is served at 7. After the banquet, Sons of Chaplin will start playing for the free street dance. The Naper Historical Society will serve burgers and hotdogs during the dance.

Sunday will be family day with kids' games, horse-shoes, other activities and visiting around the town.

Monday, Memorial Day services will begin at 10:15 at the Naper Auditorium with color guard activities at the Knoll Crest Cemetery, followed with a potluck dinner in the auditorium.

Memorabilia will be for sale—t-shirts, cups, cook-books, who knows what else? There has been talk about a beard contest, flea market, maybe other fun things!

Questions? Check with Stephanie Cadwallader, Tara Ahlers, Lisa Reiman, Emma Vogt, Mabel Sattler or Ann Anderson.

REMEMBER WHEN . . .

by Marilyn Sieh

We gals wore nylon hose when we dressed up to attend a social event. At that time, nylons had a fairly dark seam going up the back of the stocking starting at the heel with a plain, fairly dark narrow rectangle which showed a few inches above your shoes. If you wanted to be really fancy, you could wear nylons with a pattern in place of the plain ones described above. Before leaving the house, you checked your nylons to make sure the seams were straight. Then came pantyhose with no seams and later came knee-highs. They both got rid of all the “apparatus” associated with holding up the nylons. I still feel that nylons look dressy plus the fact that shoes feel much better on your feet while wearing them.

We covered our graying hair with hair dye and now in California, they are dying their hair gray on purpose!!! Did anyone else notice the Olympic swimming star with gray hair? Shortly after the big event, his hair was all dark brown with no gray on top.

A PHOTO OF MASTER HOWARD NAPER-

Avis Dalldorf Breyer sent along a photo of baby Howard Naper along with some interesting information. Avis’ daughter found the picture while she was putting together family history. She thinks the picture came from Mrs. Dwight Brown who was a “hired girl” for different families in early days in Naper. Years ago, when a woman had a baby she was bed-ridden for 14 days so there had to be a hired girl to take care of the mother’s household chores. So that was Mary Ann Pendleton’s job until she married Dwight Brown. Note the style of clothing the he’s wearing—back in the day, there were no 6-month size Levi jeans and Wrangler onesies for babies. Baby boy, baby girl—they all wore dresses. And by the way, the idea of pink for girls and blue for boys is a rather new notion as up until about 1920, the boys were wearing pink and the girls were wearing blue!



Myrna Gosch, NHS 1955, was honored to be named Parade Marshall at the 2016 Homecoming Parade in Burke.

The Naper family donated 40 acres of land for the townsite of Naper. They later moved to Gregory where they owned a clothing store.

The real Francis Thibault is pictured below. Last issue his name was attached to Master Howard Naper’s photo.





THE OL' HOMESTEADER IS A-GETTIN' OLDER EVER' DAY BUT HE STILL HUNTS UP SOME NEWS . . .

Busy kids . . .

Daydra Zeisler (daughter of Mark and Tiffany, granddaughter of Richard and Sheryl), Kaci and Kelli Mashino (daughters of Dustin and Tammy Mitchell Mashino, granddaughters of Gaylene Mitchell), Austin Koenig (son of Kevin and Staci Zink Koenig, grandson of Jeff and Rindy Zink), Evan Reiman (son of Casey and Lisa Ahlers Reiman, grandson of Wayne and Virginia Schonebaum Ahlers), Jesse Cline (son of Hoyt and Julie, grandson of Marvin and Judy Hoyt Cline) and Ridge Higgins (son of LaVern and Brenda Klien Higgins, grandson of Margaret Vogt Schmitz) were named to West Boyd Honor Roll.

Kelli Mashino has been selected by the Nebraska Farm Bureau to be a team member of the Nebraska Ag Crew. Ten student Farm Bureau members across Nebraska will share their love of agriculture via social media.

Justin Drueke (son of Tony and Beth Goodman Drueke, grandson of Vernon and Linda Goodman), Ridge Higgins, Blake Ahlers (son of Dan and Tara, grandson of Wayne and Virginia), Evan Reiman, and Jory Zeisler (son of Mark and Tiffany, grandson of Richard and Sheryl) are keeping the basketball moving for West Boyd boys.

Gina McCarthy (daughter of Darrin and Connie, granddaughter of LeRoy and Maxine Windmeyer McCarthy) and Hannah Drueke (daughter of Tony and Beth Goodman Drueke, granddaughter of Vernon and Linda Goodman) are lining up for the girls' basketball team.

West Boyd One Act play placed as runner-up in the NVC West Division at Wheeler. Kelli Mashino was

The Naper Paper is your paper. We rely on you, our readers, for support, both financial and "pat on the back". We count on you for stories and ideas about what we need to write, print, explore, photograph. Most importantly, we appreciate you! THANKS!

named Best Female Actress and Hannah Drueke was a member of the stage crew.

New faces. . .

Jaelyn Rose Kruse, born December 2, 2016, in Sioux Falls, to Kyle and Crystal Keller Kruse. Randy and Carol Keller and grandpa and grandma and Gaynell Keller is great-grandma!

Lester Neumiller is great-grandpa again—Ky Michael Juilfs was born January 11, 2017. Mike and Marcia Neumiller Hogan are grandparents.

Sayin' goodbye

Joy Vogt (NHS grad, 1950) died in Kingman, AZ, January 1. She and husband Julius ("Fritz", 1945 NHS grad) were life-long residents of the Naper community and all six of their children graduated from NHS.

Leona Wentz Lamb, a 1942 graduate of Naper High, passed away in December. She had lived in Washington and Montana.

Mirandi Best died January 10. She had lived in Naper several years.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

The Naper Historical Society needed some help so they asked you, they hung signs around town, they ran ads in the local paper. Boy, did we get help! So this is our way of saying thank you to everyone who sent some money to help fund the siding project at Heritage Hall.

We're hoping to get started on it soon. We'll keep you posted.

LETTERS, LETTERS, LETTERS—

JUST KEEP 'EM COMIN!

[If you want to contact the Naper Historical Society, you can mail us a letter at Box 72, Naper, NE 68755; you can call 402-832-5471; you can look at our website naperne-braska.org; or you can e-mail us at papa-bear@threeriver.net.]

We would like this Memorial money to go to the Naper Paper in memory of Bill Dawson. We enjoy getting the paper!

Jerry and Dolly Spitzenberger and family

Please accept this donation to assist with expenses for the paper. Each issue brings back fond memories. Your work is truly appreciated.

Damon Vogt

Just a little help with the cost of Naper Paper. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Bernie and Carol Ludemann

Enclosed is a donation in honor of our mother, Joy Ann Vogt, who was a lifelong member of the Naper community.

The family of Joy Ann Vogt--Eldon, Vernon, Gordon, Leanne, Bryon and Lyndon

Sending you a small check to keep you going with the paper which we enjoy. We have moved into a nice retirement home. The people are very nice and it is a very nice place to be. We enjoy it very much.

Al and Verdella Stahlecker

I always look forward to the Naper Paper. New news or old, it's always good to get informed. Great job. Enclosed, a check to keep the publication on the presses and the historical society. Keep up the good work.

Larry Stoltenberg

Do enjoy the Naper Paper, reading it cover to cover when it arrives. Enclosed is a small token to help with the siding and to keep the paper coming.

Ed Higgins

Please apply this donation for supplies for the Heritage Hall. Thank you for preserving the old Catholic Church and hall. I have so many good memories of attending mass, choir, etc., there and the good priests and nuns. Keep up your good work in our "Home Town."

Carolyn Honke Swanda

Please accept this donation to the Naper Paper and/or for siding materials. My wife Meredith and I appreciate getting the Naper Paper.

Mark and Meredith McLaughlin

It has been awhile I'm afraid since I sent any money for your fine newsletter. I really enjoy it. Thanks for all the work you put into it. Please use some of the money enclosed for the paper and the rest for the siding fund.

Lauri Bentzen McNulty

Here is a check for the museum in Joy Vogt's memory. Thank you.

Dave and Melody Kapsa

I sometimes feel bad that my mother Ramona is there by herself on the farm but I know she wouldn't want to be anywhere else. I take great comfort in knowing she is surrounded by caring friends and neighbors.

Find enclosed a check for the siding project or where it is needed. I always enjoy getting the paper. Thank you all.

John and Jan Bentzen

WHY ARE FARM PICKUPS NEVER

REPORTED STOLEN???

They have a maximum range of 25 miles before they overheat, run out of gas, or break down.

Only the farmer himself (or Mrs. Farmer) knows how to operate the tail gate.

The pickup can't be speed shifted because of all the grease rags, ropes, OB chains, syringes, buckets, loose papers, mouse traps and gloves in the cab.

It takes a long time to start and the smoke coming through the rusted-out floorboard clouds your vision.

They are easy to spot. Here's a typical description: Driver's door is red, passenger door is green, dented hood, 2 x 6 in place of a tail gate.

The border collie on the tool box looks mean.

The big round bale in the back makes it hard to see if you're being chased.

Can't use the mirrors as they are either cracked or covered with duct tape.

Top speed is 45 mph, or else the steel posts, post driver, fence stretcher and water jugs become airborne.

Who would steal a truck that needs u-joints, \$3,000 in body work, tail lights and a new windshield?

It's hard to commit a crime when everybody in town who recognizes the pickup is waving at you.

NAPER PAPER

Naper Historical Society

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Class of 1941 at the 1971 Alumni Banquet

Back row: Ray Fuhrer, Edward Peppel, George Alexander,
George Kramer, Twila Martin McLaughlin

Front row: Marvin Stahlecker, Florence Wetzler Porter,
Leona Stewart Knox