

NEBRASKA'S CENTENARIANS AGE 107 OR ABOVE — 1867 to 2001

by E. A. Kral

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Public Announcement for All Nebraskans

Effective May 1, 2002, the Nebraska Health Care Association initiated two on-going public service projects on its website to highlight Nebraskans who reach age 107 or above. The NHCA website address is www.nehca.org.

First, the NHCA has maintained a roster of living Nebraskans who have attained the age of 107 or above that provides name, birth date, and county in which the person resides.

Second, the NHCA has made available access to this updated manuscript version of E. A. Kral's "Nebraska's Centenarians Age 107 or Above — 1867 to 2001" but without photographs.

Moreover, it has also offered a brief on-going ranking of Nebraska's supercentenarians in state history, and another document titled "Oldest Twins in Nebraska History."

Relatives, healthcare professionals, and others are asked to notify the NHCA when someone with Nebraska connections reaches age 107 for placement of name, birth date, and county of residence on the living roster. Since age verification may be necessary via census records involving the centenarian's youth or early adult years, relatives may assist by providing names of parents and location of centenarian during 1900 to 1920. Also please notify the NHCA when the persons on the living roster become deceased so that the roster may be current.

The NHCA website address is www.nehca.org and referrals for the living 107-year-old roster may be mailed to Nebraska Health Care Association, 1200 Libra Dr., Ste 100, Lincoln, NE 68512-9332. The telephone number is (402) 435-3551.

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INTRODUCTION

During the middle decades of the 20th century, an interest in life expectancy and aging issues in the United States emerged. As a result of passage of the Social Security Act in 1935, retirement was determined to be appropriate by age 65, and study of the aging process became a new responsibility of the medical community in the early 1940s.

At the turn of the 21st century, the significant increase in the 65-plus population and in the exceptionally long-lived have gained more attention from medical researchers, scholars, and policymakers.

In 1900, the average life expectancy at birth was 47.3 years. In 2000, it was 76.9 years. Thus the average lifespan for Americans during the 20th century increased by 29.6 years, or virtually three decades.

Data released by statistician Ari Minino of the National Center for Health Statistics on October 10, 2001 showed that life expectancy for white Americans was set at 77.4 years, compared with 71.8 for African-Americans. For whites, the gender gap narrowed to just over five years, with women living an average of 79.5 years to 74.1 for men.

By 2025, “baby girls’ life expectancy could reach 82.0 years while that for boys might climb to 79.8 years — a difference of just 2.2 years,” reported the October–December 1999 *Statistical Bulletin*, published by MetLife. It should be noted that in 1900 the gender gap was just two years.

At present, the highest life expectancy in the world exists in Japan, with 83 years for women and 76 years for men. However, the eventual life expectancy in the United States on average will be 85 years, according to Dr. Denham Harman of the University of Nebraska Medical Center. A biochemist and internist known worldwide for developing in 1954 the free radical theory of aging, he has attributed the increased life span in our nation in the 20th century to several factors, including better nutrition and healthcare.

Aging trends at the turn of the 21st century reveal 12.4 percent of our nation’s population have reached 65 to 85 years of age, the category termed by some as “old”. And 1.5 percent have reached 85 to 110 years of age, the category some label as “old old”.

In Nebraska, aging trends reveal a higher percentage of the state’s population have reached retirement age than the nation as a whole. At the turn of the 21st century, 13.6 percent have reached 65 to 85 years of age, and 2 percent have reached 85 to 110 years of age.

According to Dr. Harman, as a consequence of our nation’s increasing life span, the U.S. has a disproportionate percentage of older people. From 1960 to 1990, the total population grew by 39 percent. For people age 65 and over, it grew by 89 percent. For people at age 85 and over, it grew by an astounding 232 percent!

Predictions of future aging trends released by the federal government on December 13, 2001 indicate that one in every five Americans will reach 65 years of age by 2030, with the 65-plus population tripling worldwide by 2050.

Though life expectancy will likely increase for a while, recent studies show that Americans are becoming less active and more obese, placing them at risk for illnesses that speed up the aging process. However, a new study that indicates physical fitness levels are linked to longevity may give rise to more emphasis being placed on regular exercise.

In the research report “Exercise Capacity and Mortality Among Men Referred for Exercise Testing” published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol 346, No 11 (March 14, 2002), the authors released their findings based on their study of more than 6,000 men for more than a decade. While only men were involved, medical researchers believe the findings also apply to women. The authors concluded that “exercise capacity is a more powerful predictor of mortality among men than other established risk factors for cardiovascular disease.”

It is clear that the major factors of longevity — healthcare, lifestyle, and genetics — will require sustained attention, even if further scientific research confirms the finding that regular exercise increases a person’s chances of living a long life. And society’s attitudes toward the elderly and the quality of their lives will need adjustment in coming decades and centuries.

Prevalence of Centenarians

With the large increase in life expectancy in the United States during the 20th century also came an increase in the proportion of the population that had exceptional longevity. In 1900, only one in 100,000 Americans was a centenarian, but at the turn of the 21st century an average of seventeen out of 100,000 was a centenarian, according to U.S. Census data.

There is much evidence that the greatest increase in centenarians has occurred in very recent decades. First, the results of Census Bureau enumerations. According to the January-March 2000 *Statistical Bulletin*, some 15,000 centenarians were enumerated in 1980, and a revised number of 28,000 in 1990. (Originally, the Census Bureau counted 37,306 centenarians in 1990, but later determined this represented an over count.) There were 50,454 centenarians enumerated in the year 2000.

Data from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) at Hyattsville, Maryland for 1991 to 1994 also offer evidence of exceptional longevity. For the four years, the number of deaths reported at age 100 or above was 58,177, or an average of 14,544 per year. While the data show most were reported in the age 100-104 category, there were many in the 105+ category. The data were taken from death certificates of each state, and reasons for skepticism about the validity or authenticity will be discussed later, especially in the 110+ category. Nevertheless, it is useful to learn how prevalent the reports of exceptional longevity have become in the United States. For more about the NCHS data from 1991 to 1994, see Figure 1.

TOTALS FOR CENTENARIANS IN THE UNITED STATES FROM 1991 TO 1994

Age	1991	1992	1993	1994	Totals
100-104	11,988	12,529	14,048	14,227	52,792
105+	1,223	1,204	1,497	1,461	5,385
105	516	476	626	616	2,234
106	293	288	354	345	1,280
107	171	192	198	205	766
108	103	94	122	115	434
109	64	47	80	78	269
110	36	42	49	41	168
111	12	25	28	17	82
112	7	17	11	8	43
113	1	4	7	12	24
114	3	9	6	8	26
115	2	2	4	5	13
116	5	-	1	4	10
117	2	1	4	1	8
118	2	1	1	2	6
119	1	1	2	1	5
120	-	2	2	1	5
121	2	-	-	-	2
122	1	-	-	-	1
123	-	2	-	-	2
124	2	-	-	-	2
125	-	-	-	1	1
126	-	1	-	-	1
127	-	-	-	-	0
128	-	-	2	-	2
129	-	-	-	-	0
130	-	-	-	1	1

Figure 1. Compiled from data provided by National Center for Health Statistics, statistician Arialdi M. Minino, Division of Vital Statistics/Mortality Statistics Branch, 6525 Belcrest Road, Room 800, Hyattsville, Maryland 20782 — phone (301) 458-4376. Data based on known death dates — unknowns not included — were taken from death certificates of all states and the District of Columbia. **Note: Ages were not verified.**

Another way of interpreting the NCHS data from 1991 to 1994 was to compile **per capita** ranking of states and their proportion of centenarians based on 1990 populations. The top five were South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Kansas — in that order. For author's compilation, see Figure 2.

PER CAPITA RANKING FOR CENTENARIANS IN U.S. DURING 1991-1994

State	1990 Census Population	Four Year Total	Actual Average Per Year	Expected Per Year	Ratio of Actual to Expected	Centenarian Ratio
South Dakota	696,004	339	84.75	40.70	2.08	1 out of 8,212
Iowa	2,776,755	1231	307.75	162.38	1.90	1 out of 9,023
Nebraska	1,578,385	666	166.50	92.30	1.80	9,480
North Dakota	638,800	260	65.00	37.36	1.74	9,828
Kansas	2,477,574	954	238.50	144.89	1.65	10,388
Montana	799,065	299	74.75	46.73	1.60	10,690
Rhode Island	1,003,464	369	92.25	58.68	1.57	10,878
Minnesota	4,375,099	1574	393.50	255.85	1.54	11,118
Maine	1,227,928	405	101.25	71.81	1.41	12,128
Massachusetts	6,016,425	1913	478.25	351.83	1.36	12,580
Wisconsin	4,891,769	1522	380.50	286.06	1.33	12,856
Missouri	5,117,073	1573	393.25	299.24	1.31	13,012
Vermont	562,758	172	43.00	32.91	1.31	13,087
Mississippi	2,573,216	771	192.75	150.48	1.28	13,350
Connecticut	3,287,116	955	238.75	192.23	1.24	13,768
Oregon	2,842,321	817	204.25	166.22	1.23	13,916
Arkansas	2,350,725	675	168.75	137.47	1.23	13,930
Oklahoma	3,145,585	843	210.75	183.95	1.15	14,926
West Virginia	1,793,477	467	116.75	104.88	1.11	15,362
Pennsylvania	11,881,643	3067	766.75	694.82	1.10	15,496
New York	17,990,455	4572	1143.00	1052.06	1.09	15,740
Ohio	10,847,115	2728	682.00	634.33	1.08	15,905
Florida	12,937,926	3253	813.25	756.59	1.07	15,909
District of Columbia	606,900	152	38.00	35.49	1.07	15,971
Washington	4,866,692	1195	298.75	284.60	1.05	16,290
Indiana	5,544,159	1337	334.25	324.22	1.03	16,587
New Hampshire	1,109,252	263	65.75	64.87	1.01	16,871
Illinois	11,430,602	2705	676.25	668.45	1.01	16,903
Delaware	666,168	155	38.75	38.96	0.99	17,191
Alabama	4,040,587	939	234.75	236.29	0.99	17,212
Wyoming	453,588	100	25.00	26.53	0.94	18,144
Kentucky	3,685,296	806	201.50	215.51	0.93	18,289
New Jersey	7,730,188	1690	422.50	452.05	0.93	18,296
Idaho	1,006,749	216	54.00	58.87	0.92	18,644
Tennessee	4,877,185	1024	256.00	285.21	0.90	19,052

PER CAPITA RANKING FOR CENTENARIANS IN U.S. DURING 1991-1994

State	1990 Census Population	Four Year Total	Actual Average Per Year	Expected Per Year	Ratio of Actual to Expected	Centenarian Ratio
Michigan	9,295,297	1929	482.25	543.58	0.89	19,275
Colorado	3,294,394	667	166.75	192.65	0.87	19,756
North Carolina	6,628,637	1326	331.50	387.63	0.86	19,996
New Mexico	1,515,069	299	74.75	88.60	0.84	20,268
Louisiana	4,219,973	811	202.75	246.78	0.82	20,814
Virginia	6,187,358	1178	294.50	361.83	0.81	21,010
California	29,760,021	5480	1370.00	1740.33	0.79	21,723
Maryland	4,781,468	873	218.25	279.61	0.78	21,908
Arizona	3,665,228	651	162.75	214.34	0.76	22,521
Hawaii	1,108,229	190	47.50	64.81	0.73	23,331
Texas	16,986,510	2882	720.50	993.35	0.73	23,576
South Carolina	3,486,703	587	146.75	203.90	0.72	23,759
Georgia	6,478,216	993	248.25	378.84	0.66	26,096
Utah	1,722,850	178	44.50	100.75	0.44	38,716
Nevada	1,201,833	103	25.75	70.28	0.37	46,673
Alaska	550,043	23	5.75	32.17	0.18	95,660
United States	248,709,873	58,177	14,544.25			17,100

Figure 2. Compiled from data provided by National Center for Health Statistics; author's calculation examined by Prof Dan Nettleton, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Nebraska—Lincoln.

While the nationwide average ratio of centenarians based on deaths from 1991 to 1994 was one for every 17,100 Americans, the South Dakota ratio was one per 8,212 residents. For Nebraska, it was one per 9,480 residents.

The recent 2000 U.S. Census data on centenarians, released in August 2001, reveal there were 50,454 enumerated, with a national average of 17.93 centenarians per 100,000 population. The top five states were South Dakota, with 32.72 per 100,000 residents; Iowa, with 32.16 per 100,000; the District of Columbia, not a state but a part of the nation, with 27.97 per 100,000; Nebraska, with 27.17 per 100,000; and Rhode Island, with 26.52 per 100,000.

In some instances, rankings may be misleading. Some states attract more elderly persons, including centenarians, because of warmer climate, more recreational opportunities, or proximity of relatives, which means some states lose some persons of exceptional longevity.

Another cause of misleading rankings is the reliability or unreliability of the statistics. In the case of ranking on the basis of NCHS death data for 1991 to 1994, Nebraska was 3rd in the nation, while the District of Columbia was 24th. However, in the case of rankings based on U.S. Census data for the year 2000, Nebraska was 4th, while the District of Columbia was 3rd.

As was previously noted, the U.S. Census Bureau revised downward its original 1990 enumeration of 37,306 centenarians to 28,000 because it determined there was an over count. It remains to be seen if there may be a similar determination regarding the 2000 Census.

Longevity Worldwide

Centenarians are increasing in industrialized nations worldwide, perhaps as high as eight percent per year, compared to a one percent growth in the general population, reported Dr. Thomas T. Perls and Margery Hutter Silver in their book *Living To 100* (Basic Books, 1999). And they revealed that in France, for example, the number increased from about 200 in 1953 to some 3,000 in the late 1990s; in Great Britain, the number acknowledged by Queen Elizabeth rose from about 300 in 1955 to some 3,300 in 1987.

An estimated 100,000 centenarians could be found worldwide at the turn of the 21st century, reported German researcher James Vaupel. As stated previously, half of them were in the United States in 2000. In comparison with other countries, based on 1990 data, "centenarians comprise a high proportion of the U.S. population age 85 and over," reported the Jan-Mar 2000 *Statistical Bulletin*. There were about 120 centenarians per 10,000 persons age 85 and over in the United States, while in Sweden, there were only about 41, in Finland about 30, and in Japan about 29. The U.S. also had another comparative advantage in survival at older ages, as "researchers have found that life expectancies at age 80 were significantly higher in the United States than in England, France, Japan, and Sweden."

Individual longevity claims have existed since Biblical times, of course, and certain regions of some nations have reported a higher proportion of centenarians. In the United States, claims of longevity were among various unique subjects popularized during the middle decades of the 20th century by Robert Ripley in his syndicated column "Believe It Or Not".

Since the 1960s, the publication of the *Guinness Book of World Records* has offered not only a worldwide clearinghouse for longevity and other reports but also a raising of authentication standards. From time to time it has included a longevity chart, and the data in Figure 3 represent the author's updated international comparison of exceptional individual longevity, with assistance from Robert Young, authentication coordinator for Gerontology Research Group based in Los Angeles.

AUTHENTIC NATIONAL LONGEVITY RECORDS 2002

France	122	Jeanne Louise Calment	1875-1997
Japan	120	Shigechiyo Izumi	1865-1986
United States	119	Sarah Clark Knauss	1880-1999
Canada	117	Marie Louise Meilleur	1880-1998
Great Britain	115	Charlotte Hughes	1877-1993
Australia	114	Christina Cock	1887-2002
Netherlands	113	Catharina Van Dam	1887-2001
Spain	112	Josefa Salas Mateo	1860-1973
Norway	112	Maren Bolette Torp	1876-1989
Morocco	112	El Hadj Mohammed el Mokri	1844-1957
Poland	112	Roswlia Mielczarek	1868-1981
Sweden	112	Elsa Moberg	1889-2001
Finland	112	Maria Rotovius	1887-2000
Italy	112	Antonio Todde	1889-2002
Belgium	112	Joanna Deroover	1890-2002
Ireland	111	The Hon. Katherine Plunket	1820-1932
Scotland	111	Kate Begbie	1877-1988
South Africa	111	Johanna Booyson	1857-1968
Czechoslovakia	111	Marie Bernatkova	1857-1968
Germany	111	Maria Corba	1878-1990
Denmark	111	Anne Matthiesen	1884-1996
New Zealand	110	Ethel Booth	1890-2001
Channel Islands	110	Margaret Harvey Neve	1792-1903
Northern Ireland	110	Elizabeth Watkins	1863-1973

Yugoslavia	110	Demitrius Philipovitch	1818-1928
Greece	110	Lambrini Tsiatoura	1870-1981
USSR	110	Khasako Dzugayev	1860-1970
Tasmania	109	Mary Ann Grow	1836-1945
Iceland	108	Halldora Bjarndottir	1873-1981
Portugal	108	Maria Luisa Jorge	1859-1967

Figure 3. Patterned by permission after chart in *Guinness Book of World Records 1992* (Facts On File, 1991) page 70. Consult original publication for comparison with author's updated version, with assistance from Robert Young of Gerontology Research Group based in Los Angeles, which uses verification standards acceptable to Guinness.

Readers should be cautious, however. As *Guinness World Records 2002* noted, “Centenarians surviving beyond their 113th year are extremely rare. It is thought that only one 115-year life can be expected in 2.1 billion lives.”

According to Robert Young of Gerontology Research Group, the minimum-maximum age has risen to 114, as there has been every year since 1988 a person living at age 114 somewhere in the world. And he has also stated, “It is highly unusual for someone to reach age 116 or 117.”

More information may be obtained by consulting previous annual publications. And public reports or inquiries may be sent to Guinness World Records Limited, 338 Euston Road, London, England NW1 3BD. The website address is www.guinnessworldrecords.com.

Interested readers may also consult the website of Gerontology Research Group at www.grg.org and view the section titled “centenarians”.

To date, the oldest person in recorded history is a woman. Jeanne Louise Calment, who was born February 21, 1875 and who died on August 4, 1997 at Arles, France, lived to the authenticated age of 122 years and 164 days. The oldest man is Shigechiyo Izumi, who was born June 29, 1865 and who died on February 21, 1986 at Isen on Tokunoshima Island southwest of Japan at the age of 120 years and 237 days.

Longevity in the State of Nebraska

As previously noted in Figure 2, Nebraska ranked 3rd **per capita** in the United States from 1991 to 1994 in proportion of centenarians to the state's population. My finding was based on data from the National Center for Health Statistics for each state as derived from death certificates. While the nationwide average during those four years was one centenarian for every 17,100 residents, the ratio for Nebraska was one centenarian per 9,480 residents.

From 1983 to 2000, resident deaths in Nebraska at age 100 or above more than doubled, ranging from 76 centenarians in 1983 to 170 centenarians in 2000. During those 18 years in the latter portion of the 20th century, a total of 2,688 Nebraskans died at the age of 100 or above, according to data maintained by the Nebraska Health and Human Services System. Refer to Figure 4.

NEBRASKA CENTENARIAN RESIDENT DEATHS 1983-2000			
Year	Centenarian Deaths	Age Category	Category Deaths
1983	76	100-104	74
		105-	2
1984	81	100-104	75
		105-	6
1985	103	100-104	96
		105-	7

NEBRASKA CENTENARIAN RESIDENT DEATHS 1983-2000

Year	Centenarian Deaths	Age Category	Category Deaths
1986	107	100-104	95
		105-	12
1987	121	100-104	112
		105-	9
1988	110	100-104	103
		105-	7
1989	124	100-104	108
		105-	16
1990	165	100-104	153
		105-	12
1991	154	100-104	144
		105-	10
1992	155	100-104	137
		105-	18
1993	184	100-104	167
		105-	17
1994	173	100-104	158
		105-	15
1995	179	100-104	158
		105-	21
1996	188	100-104	179
		105-	9
1997	184	100-104	168
		105-	16
1998	227	100-104	214
		105-	13
1999	187	100-104	163
		105-	24
2000	170	100-104	157
		105-	13
<hr/>			
18-Year Totals	2,688	100-104	2,461
		105-	227

Figure 4. Data compiled from Vital Statistics Reports, Nebraska Health & Human Services System, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, Nebraska 68509. Health Data Coordinator is Mark A. Miller — phone (402) 471-0355. Information was taken from death certificates, and ages were not verified.

Data from the 2000 U.S. Census released on June 20, 2001 reveal that centenarians were enumerated in 70 of Nebraska’s counties. An over count in the category of 110+ occurred, however, as five Nebraskans were enumerated in that age group. In the year 2000, the only person who was indeed age 110 during the enumeration period was a woman in the town of Atkinson. The author could not identify the 110-year-olds enumerated for the communities of Fremont, Lincoln, and Lyons or in rural Blaine County.

To date, the only county report in Nebraska that attempted to identify all the centenarians in the history of its existence was the author’s 40-page supplement titled “Saline County, Nebraska’s 101 Centenarians and 160 Marriages of 65 Years or More — 1854 to 2001,” published in the December 5, 2001 *Wilber*

Republican. With a population of 13,843 in the year 2000, Saline County is located along the Big Blue River Valley on the edge of the south central region of the state. However, no statistician calculated the ratio of centenarians and couples to the population of the county, and several individuals were born or lived in overlapping counties during their lifetime.

In the history of Nebraska from 1867 to 2001, this statewide study of longevity reveals there are 101 individuals verified to have reached age 107 or above; only 12 of them are men. Of the 94, there were 13 living at the time this report was published.

The distribution of the 101 individuals is statewide, either by birth or by residence. But there is much overlapping of counties due to mobility, and some spent a portion of their lives in other states.

Their classification by age is as follows: At age 107, there are 41 individuals; at age 108, there are 21; at age 109, there are 16, at age 110, there are 11; at age 111, there are six; at age 112, there are three; at age 113, there are three.

Aside from the 101 verified accounts, this study includes an additional 13 accounts that remain unverified.

Adams County, located in south central Nebraska, is the place of birth or residence of 10 of the 101 individuals, two of which reached 111 years of age. Other counties with several included in this study are Douglas, Holt, Lancaster, Saline, and York. Caution must be taken due to mobility of the population, resulting in some overlapping in the author's count.

Readers may compare the numbers in this Nebraska study with the national statistics shown in Figure 1. Even though death certificate data from 1991 to 1994 were not verified by the states or by the NCHS, the statistics offer an insight that exceptional longevity is more common than most Americans realize.

In a later section, biographies of the 101 verified and 13 unverified accounts are presented.

Previous Indicators of Longevity in Nebraska

A historical perspective related to lifestyle, healthcare, and genetic factors in Nebraska is informative.

In the latter half of the 19th century, white settlers were attracted in greater numbers to the Great Plains Region, which includes the state of Nebraska, by inexpensive land and an opportunity for personal independence. In the 1850s, the earliest were American-born from the East, but to break more of the rich prairie and expand the economy, more pioneers were needed. So state promoters, which included the railroads, immigration agencies, and the Agricultural Board, worked to attract European immigrants.

Historian David A. Emmons, in his 1971 book *Garden in the Grasslands*, noted that "American promoters, though they were not averse to accepting the poorer members of European society, were primarily interested in recruiting the more talented and well trained." And he reported that several countries protested that America was luring away the best people. Nebraska promoters, influenced in part by the theories of Professors Samuel Aughey and Charles Dana Wilber, also advertised that it needed those who were willing to work hard to help settle the virgin land.

Between 1870 and 1890, the population of Nebraska grew from 122,993 to 1,058,910, about two-thirds of which were foreign-born. And over a century later, the 1980 U.S. Census revealed that Nebraska's single ancestry groups were distinctly European — German, Irish, English, Czech, Swedish, French, Danish, Polish, Dutch, and Norwegian, in that order. In 2000, the state's population was enumerated at 1,711,263, with the Hispanics the sixth largest ethnic group, closely behind the Czechs and Swedes.

Even though ethnicity does not correlate with longevity, a population descended from hard-working and able pioneers could increase the pool of longevity genes. And education is thought to be related to an improved lifestyle and healthcare.

Based on national statistics from 1900, published by Wellesley College professor Emily Greene Balch, immigrants 14 years of age and over that represented the state's dominant European ancestries possessed a literacy rate of 94 percent or higher.

The education factor was indirectly reinforced in the 1930s. Studies by Stephen Visher of the University of Indiana revealed "Nebraska's productivity of persons named in categories of American notables is thus nearly three times that of the average of other states," wrote psychologist Leta Stetter

Hollingsworth in the March 1939 *Nebraska Alumnus*. And “the ranking of the first six states in the union for number of notables born per million of population runs as follows: Massachusetts, Connecticut, Nebraska, Vermont, Kansas, and New Hampshire.”

In the 1960s, a study by Public Health Service statistician Herbert I. Sauer revealed the ten lowest mortality areas in the United States were in the western plains region. He based his findings on death rates from cardiovascular diseases among whites aged 45-74, during 1949-51, in 163 metropolitan and 116 non-metropolitan areas in the nation. And he concluded that country of birth or ethnicity was not likely a major factor responsible for low rates.

His article “Epidemiology of Cardiovascular Mortality — Geographic and Ethnic,” published in the January 1962 *American Journal of Public Health*, reported the third lowest death rate for all causes, including cardiovascular diseases, was found in the south central portion of Nebraska, that is, the counties from the Platte River south to the Kansas border, and from the city of Lincoln west to Dundy County on the Colorado border. Among the nation’s metropolitan areas, Lincoln had the third lowest death rate for all causes.

Articles in the popular press in 1969 based on Sauer’s study of 40 years of data extolled the geographic-health link for south central Nebraska. Joan Younger Dickinson, author of “The Healthiest Spot in America,” originally published in the May 1969 issue of *Holiday* and condensed in the October 1969 *Reader’s Digest*, reported that a white man in the south central area of Nebraska between the ages of 44-65 had about 30 percent less chance of succumbing to serious diseases than they were anywhere in the United States as a whole.

She wrote about her investigation of the healthy in the villages and towns in the valleys of the Big Blue and Little Blue Rivers as well as the capital city of Lincoln. Near the town of Surprise (Pop. 79) in Butler County, she noticed in the cemetery so many persons in the 19th century died at more than seventy years of age that she stopped counting. And several who died in the first half of the 20th century reached their eighties and two had lived more than ninety years.

In Sauer’s 120-page publication *Geographic Patterns in the Risk of Dying and Associated Factors Ages 35-74 Years*, published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in September 1980, he reported in the period 1968-72 that 10 percent of the areas with the lowest rates for natural causes of deaths for middle-aged white males were located west of the Mississippi River or in west central Wisconsin. And he reported that the south central Nebraska area had low death rates again in 1959-61.

A related geographic-health link to longevity was suggested by Dr. Denham Harman, professor of medicine and biochemistry at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. In “How To Live To Be 100,” in the November 1979 *McCall’s*, Harman not only agreed with other researchers’ views that heredity, good nutrition, physical fitness, and a stable family life are important factors, but he also stated, “If you want to reach one hundred, the best place to live is right here in western Nebraska.” Harman’s elaboration in an October 18, 1979 *Lincoln Journal* article revealed that people in the Chadron area in Dawes County had the lowest mortality rate in the United States, and a contributing factor there may be a high concentration of the element selenium in the soil.

According to a health report released in 1990, Nebraska tied for 5th with Connecticut on overall state health rankings for all factors, behind Utah, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and Hawaii. The assessment by Minneapolis-based Northwestern National Life Insurance Company involved five categories: lifestyle, healthcare access, disability, disease, and mortality. In a United Health Foundation 1990 report, Nebraska ranked 7th overall.

Studies of Aging and Centenarians

The subject of aging gained the attention of scholars in the United States in the 1940s. One of the first to study centenarians was Belle Boone Beard, who observed that most enjoyed lifelong health, and many believed that hard work contributed to their longevity. Her findings from nearly forty years of research were reported in her book *Centenarians: The New Generation* (Greenwood Press, 1991).

While many individuals with Nebraska connections have made contributions to our society in the fields of healthcare, medicine, and nutrition, two who became notable nationally among the pioneers in aging and longevity are Dr. Denham Harman of Omaha and Bernice Levin Neugarten, a native of Norfolk.

It was in 1954 that Harman originated his free radical theory of aging, then as he conducted his work as professor of biochemistry and internal medicine at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, his idea gradually gained widespread interest and acceptance. Free radicals, which are electrically unbalanced molecules created during normal body functioning, damage cells at random as they seek to replace their missing electron by taking one from nearby molecules.

While some of the damage is repaired naturally, some remains, and deterioration, or aging, occurs over one's lifetime. Free radicals cause the plaque buildup in arteries that result in heart disease, and cause genetic changes that make cells cancerous. To slow up aging, the use of antioxidants protect the body by contributing electrons to stabilize free radicals.

Dr. Harman recommended taking vitamin E and selenium, and eating less to help prevent oxidation. During the course of his career, he authored or edited over 150 articles, abstracts, and books, and obtained 35 patents for discoveries in the field of chemistry. For one example of his publications, see his "Free Radical Theory of Aging: History," in *Free Radicals and Aging*, eds I. Ement and B. Chance (Basel, Switzerland: Burkhauser Verlag, 1992) pp. 1-10. He helped found the American Aging Association in 1970, and became its first president. In 1995, Harman was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Medicine.

In the 1950s, Bernice Neugarten created the academic field of adult development and aging while an educational psychologist and researcher at the University of Chicago and later at Northwestern University. She also challenged stereotypes about aging, and influenced scholars and practitioners worldwide, arguing that because of a fluid life span, age is a poor predictor of an aging individual's physical, social, or intellectual competence.

Her contributions over four decades in the fields of psychology, sociology, and social policy included countless lectures and publication as author or editor of 150 articles and monographs and eight books. The first to receive a doctorate degree in human development, Neugarten was selected as one of 36 leading historical and contemporary women in psychology for a biographical entry in *Women in Psychology* (Greenwood Press, 1990).

In the 1960s and 1970s, a study of centenarians was conducted in Abkhazia, a region in the Republic of Georgia in the former Soviet Union, reported an entry in the two-volume reference *Aging* (Salem Press, 2000), edited by Pamela Roberts of the Human Development Program at California State University at Long Beach. Among the findings were that people in the region led an arduous life and valued old age, and that elders participated in political life.

In the United States, a variety of researchers have conducted longevity studies, but two projects, one based in Athens, Georgia and the other at Boston, Massachusetts, have engaged in a sustained effort to investigate why people live so long and how they do it successfully.

Since 1988, the Georgia Centenarian Study, based at the University of Georgia Gerontology Center and funded by the National Institute for Mental Health, has concentrated on a comparison of centenarians with persons in their nineties and sixties who live independently or semi-independently, are active in their communities, and enjoy relatively good physical and mental health.

In its two-phase study directed by Leonard W. Poon, editor of *The Georgia Centenarian Study* (Baywood, 1992), nearly a dozen faculty members associated with three institutions have found that no one variable seems crucial to longevity, though moderation practiced over one's lifetime appears to be a pattern. They have also observed that centenarians typically possess such traits as confidence, nonconformity, good health, an inclination to daily activity, and use of religion as a coping strategy.

The Georgia Study's website is http://www.geron.uga.edu/centenarian_study.html, and the telephone number is (706) 542-3954.

A comprehensive research project is the New England Centenarian Study, founded in Boston in 1995 by Dr. Thomas T. Perls, a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. Funded by the Alzheimer's Association and Beth Deaconess Medical Center, the study is based at Boston University Medical Center, 88 East Newton Street, Robinson Building, Suite 2400, Boston, Massachusetts 02118.

The study at first addressed the characteristics, survival strategies, and aging processes, followed by a focus on exploring the genetic basis of longevity. The telephone numbers to reach a staff member are (617) 638-6679 or toll free (888) 333-6327.

The findings of Dr. Perls and his NECS associate director Margery Hutter Silver, a neuropsychologist, are published in *Living to 100* (Basic Books, 1999). Its eight chapters thoroughly present key issues, discoveries, and centenarian lessons from a scientific perspective in language for laymen, supplemented with an appendix of up-to-date research readings and internet resources.

According to the authors, centenarians should be role models for aging well. Their traits do include determination, emotional stability, adaptability, and optimism, and they demonstrate “that aging is not synonymous with disease; that it’s not shock and stress that ‘age’ people, but the response to stressful events that can accelerate aging.”

Centenarians are, however, basically different due to their genes, for Perls and Silver discovered that “although they are subjected to the same environmental and metabolic damage that the rest of us undergo, they manage to minimize it while avoiding diseases of aging. And this accomplishment may be the work of only a few genes, perhaps fewer than ten.”

It is the hope of the authors that the majority of the people who do not have the centenarian genetic advantage will learn to reduce the period of ill health in their own lives to a few years. And they offer ways the very old have maintained good health that anyone can use, such as exercising, eating properly, maintaining a good weight, managing stress well, and not smoking.

Selected Examples of Active Centenarians

Some centenarians have remained exceptionally productive well beyond their 100th birthday. Researchers with the Georgia Study reported a retired seamstress at age 100 threaded her own needles, and a 105-year-old man could read without glasses. May Sims Elliott, at age 104, wrote poetry, worked on her autobiography, and tried to influence her church’s position on social issues; Geneva McDaniel, at age 105, taught aerobics daily at her senior citizens center; and former sharecropper Jessie Champion, at age 107, gardened while living with his daughter.

According to Perls and Silver of the New England Study, Angelina Strandel, at age 101, kept house for her children and continued reading and writing poetry; Dirk Struik, at age 104, was publishing and occasionally lecturing on ethno mathematics, the study of mathematics in primitive culture; Lucy Boring, at age 109, played and won at the card game of bridge; and the oldest subject in the study — a 112-year-old resident — could read the *New York Times* at breakfast each morning.

Of those considered Nebraskans by birth or residence in this report, John Sikel, at age 102, built a handicap ramp for his church; Nina Rust, at age 101, drove a car with her daughter from Oregon to Nebraska, at age 106 took her first ride on a motorcycle, and at age 107 had a lens implant in her right eye which improved her vision so she could crochet granny squares for another two years; Jess Edmisten, at age 107, traveled to a nearby community to talk about his World War I experiences; Colora Keckler, at age 108, did her own banking while her daughter lived with her, made a lemon pie in her own kitchen, and refused to be interviewed by the media; Betsy Baker, at age 110, used a ladder to pick crab apples from a tree in her yard.

Reports of publicly active centenarians also occur in the media. In July 2000, June Austin, the mayor of Oakdale, a community of 1,700 residents near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, reached age 100, and expected to complete the remaining years of his term. In April 2001, Emma Schweer, age 104, was reelected as Crete, Illinois township collector for the 17th consecutive term. In August 2001, Queen Mother of Elizabeth II of England, widow of King George VI, reached age 101, and actively carried out her royal responsibilities until a few months before her death on March 30, 2002. And in December 2001, Harold Fisher, age 100, received the Green Thumb Inc.’s annual “America’s Oldest Worker Award” for continuing to work five days a week designing religious buildings at the firm he owns in Harper Woods, a suburb of Detroit, Michigan.

According to *Guinness World Records 2002*, the oldest performing actress was Jeanne Louise Calment of France, who played herself in the film *Vincent And Me* (1990) at the age of 114. The oldest author to be published was Sarah Louise Delany, who wrote *On My Own At 107*, which Kodansha America published for her in 1997. And the oldest professional pianist was Cella Delavrancea, a Romanian concert pianist who at age 103 gave her last public recital in 1990.

Attitudes Toward Aging

There is a national holiday each September in Japan to honor the aged, much like the United States now celebrates Mother's Day each May, and other nations have traditionally looked to their elders for wisdom.

Since the 1950s when Norfolk, Nebraska native Bernice Levin Neugarten created the academic field of adult development and aging, and University of Nebraska Medical Center professor of biochemistry Denham Harman originated the free radical theory of aging, the United States has begun to pay attention to people over age 65. But some believe much more progress is needed.

According to a Santa Ana, California *Orange County Register* article, reprinted in the September 22, 2002 *Lincoln Journal Star*, authorities assert that "television and movie images depicting aging in a negative way are damaging older people's finances, relationships, and physical and mental health."

In testimony before a U.S. Senate committee by Dr. Robert N. Butler, head of the International Longevity Center in New York City, leaders learned that education is the antidote to ageism, a term Butler introduced in 1968.

And Butler argued that "we must change how we think, feel and behave about, late life." This applies as much to Senior Citizens as younger persons. And he optimistically concluded, "Slowly we will begin to change as we have to a degree with women and with race."

Meanwhile, life expectancy in the United States, which rose from 47.3 years in 1900 to 76.9 years in 2000, will eventually average 85 years, Dr. Denham Harman predicted.

The United States has vastly improved its health care services, and spends more per person per year on health care than any other country in the world, according to David Wallechinsky, author of "Is America-Still No. 1?" published in the January 14, 2007 *Parade Magazine*.

And there is a contradiction. He also reported that "we rank 30th in life expectancy for women and 28th for men. The U.S. used to be first in life expectancy for women who already had reached the age of 65. Now we are 20th. Part of the problem is that we consume more calories per capita than the citizens of any other nation and we lead the world in prevalence of obesity."

Evidence that some progress is occurring with regard to attitudes toward the elderly in the United States is recent publication of a book that includes interviews and photographs of 50 supercentenarians worldwide. Profiles of Americans and representatives of other nations are presented by author Jerry Friedman in *Earth's Elders: The Wisdom of the World's Oldest People*, published in 2005 by Earth's Elders Foundation of South Kent, Connecticut.

Three of the 50 profiles involve individuals with Nebraska connections: Agnes Brix Yoho Rich (1892-2003), who was born at Wisner, Cuming County, then lived elsewhere; Mary Fowler Norris (1892-2002), who was born near Weeping Water and lived in Cass County her entire life; and Catherine Zubrod Kral (1891-2002), who was born near Holstein, Adams County, and lived her entire life in Adams, Franklin, and Webster Counties. (The author of this publication is not related to her.)

Age Verification

Reliable information on the ages of the very old, especially centenarians, is often difficult to locate. Even where birth records are kept, researchers do find errors. Where birth records are not available, one must then use such sources as census records, marriage certificates, school and war records, baptism records, and family bibles or other genealogical data.

Nationwide, the initiation of birth registration was varied. In Nebraska, birth and death records were not initiated on the state level until 1904, and registration of marriages began in 1909. However, marriage

records can often be found from the 1870s on the county level, and microfilm of these records for some of the state's counties is housed at the Nebraska State Historical Society in Lincoln.

Guinness World Records Limited of London, England requires at least one of the following forms of evidence: "a birth certificate, together with proof that it is that of the individual concerned rather than that of a relative; evidence from a census; or proof of the person's age at a major event in their life."

Why is age verification necessary? According to the January-March 2000 *Statistical Bulletin*, "some near 100 may overstate their age so that they are in the magical 100+ category. Some older people, especially those near 100 years of age, may not know their true age and, therefore, take a guess. And also people who are near 100 may be too sick to answer the census and may rely on a younger relative to report their age. Such a relative may not know the exact age and mistakenly report the relative as a centenarian."

Inflation of ages, starting about age seventy, is not uncommon on census records, and as reported in *Aging* (Salem Press, 2000), "people may round their ages up, causing 'heaping' at numbers such as 90, 100, and 105." Reasons for this vary, as often families do not keep written records, and some people of longevity are rewarded by public approval in many areas of the world.

Perls and Silver report, for example, that longevity claims in one village in the former Soviet Union that a Ukrainian man was allegedly 148 years of age turned out to be inaccurate, for "later, when birth records were examined closely," it was found that "the villagers had altered their birth records years before to escape conscription in the Russian Army." A similar claim about Ecuadorian highlanders caused some Japanese investors to purchase land to establish a spa near the alleged "region of centenarians" but it was found later to be a hoax after careful investigation of vital records.

For this report on Nebraskans age 107 or above, the author needed to verify information in obituaries, death certificates, and published articles by examination of census records when the person was much younger and in some cases more than one census record to determine a pattern of accuracy or not. Occasionally, errors were made by the census taker, so ages recorded on marriage certificates were used as corroboration as were secondary records such as the Social Security Death Index available on the website www.ancestry.com,

Where contradictions occurred, the author attempted to search for all available records in determining probable age of the individual involved. As anyone who has performed investigative work of any kind knows, detective work is needed to gather the best evidence available. Some of the obstacles the author encountered during two years of research for this project were reported in the June 19, 2001 front-page *Omaha World Herald* article titled "Sleuth Searches For Nebraska's Longest-Lived."

At present, the foremost group engaged in the validation of ages of supercentenarians (110+) worldwide is Gerontology Research Group, the Los Angeles-based organization of volunteer scientists, scholars, and investigators. Its executive director is Dr. L. Stephen Coles, who can be reached via email at scoles@grg.org or his beeper phone at 800-471-5431. Leave your phone number for Coles at the numerical option.

The website of the organization is www.grg.org and periodic updates are offered for validated living supercentenarians worldwide and other information about human longevity, including contact information for investigators. For a listing of all validated supercentenarians in world history, which numbers over 1,000 at this time, consult Table B and Table BB by following this procedure: upon reaching Gerontology Research Group's home page, click onto the side heading titled "Centenarians," then click on section heading titled "Official GRG Tables on Supercentenarians," scroll through the various Tables until reaching the link for the Table you desire.

BIOGRAPHICAL ENTRIES

In this major section comprised of five categories, the author offers for Nebraska-connected persons — who by December 31, 2001 reached age 107 or above — biographical entries of 101 verified accounts divided into categories for those who reached age 110 or above, age 109, age 108, and age 107, and 13 unverified accounts, all of which include a standard format, basic factual information available, sources of verification (or shortcomings in verification), and published articles and obituaries. Nebraska census records and newspapers are on microfilm housed at the Nebraska State Historical Society at 1500 R Street

in Lincoln. For census records of other states, see microfilm housed at the Mid-Continent Public Library at 317 West 24 Highway, Independence, Missouri.

Nebraska's Supercentenarians Age 110+

To date, as of this updated version, there are 23 individuals with Nebraska connections by birth or by residence who have lived to the age of 110 or above. Three persons reached age 113, three persons age 112, six persons age 111, and eleven persons age 110. In each category, entries are presented in alphabetical order.

Betsy Russell Baker, the third oldest Nebraskan to date, was age 113. One of ten children of William and Martha (maiden name unverified) Russell, she was born August 20, 1842 at Great Brington, Northampton County, England. She died October 24, 1955 at Tecumseh, Johnson County, Nebraska, with interment at Sterling Cemetery east of Sterling, Johnson County. Her father William Russell was born March 6, 1807 at Brington, England, and died April 6, 1851 in Columbia County, Wisconsin, while her mother Martha was born January 22, 1806 (place unknown) and died April 19, 1881 in Union Township, Worth County, Iowa. At present, Betsy's great grandson Robert E. Fuller is conducting research to find the maiden name of Betsy's mother.

The family had immigrated to America when Betsy was three years of age, arriving in New York on March 25, 1846 after a journey of six weeks. Soon the William Russell family settled in the Columbus area of Columbia County, Wisconsin, located northeast of the city of Madison. Her father was a farmer. On August 12, 1866, Betsy married Tyler C. Baker at Columbus, Columbia County, Wisconsin. Her husband was a foreman of a lumber camp, but later became a farmer. In 1876 they moved to Milford, Cass County, Iowa, then relocated in 1883 to Johnson County, Nebraska, where they lived on a farm near the town of Sterling.

They raised five children to adulthood: daughters Florence Cooper, Jessie Fuller, Sabra Rutherford, and sons Allen R. and Hugh P. Baker. The family interrupted its stay in Johnson County to live for seven years in Norton County, Kansas. About 1908, Betsy and her husband moved to Tecumseh, where they lived at 552 North Third Street, the house Betsy continued to occupy after her husband's death in August 1921.

After World War II, daughter Florence Cooper lived with Betsy, whose declining eyesight prevented her from reading the newspaper, though remaining in good health otherwise. At the time of her 107th birthday, she received a congratulatory letter from U.S. President Harry S. Truman. About the date of her 110th birthday, Betsy used a ladder to pick crab apples from a tree in her yard, with daughter Florence, age 80, holding the ladder, and granddaughter Stella, age 50, holding the basket, reported great grandson Robert Fuller, who observed the event. A member of the Christian Church, Betsy was named honorary Queen Mother of the Johnson County Fair in 1953, the same year she received publicity on her 112th birthday in the U.S. Army's "Stars and Stripes," published in Germany. At her death, she was survived by five children, 11 grandchildren, eight great grandchildren, and two great great grandchildren.

The author verified Betsy's age with the assistance of Robert E. Fuller from a baptismal record of the Parish of Brington, Northampton County, England from microfilm # 1999033 housed at the Family History Library of the Church of Latter-Day Saints at Salt Lake City, Utah. She was baptized on October 16, 1842, and her home was listed as Great Brington. The author also found in the 1880 Iowa Census under Tyler C. Baker, Cass County, Nobb Township, that wife Betsy was listed as age 37. In the 1885 Nebraska Census, under Tyler Baker, Johnson County, Sterling Precinct, she was listed as age 42, and in the 1920 Nebraska Soundex, under T. C. Baker, Johnson County, Tecumseh, she was listed as age 77. All census records revealed her birthplace was England.

For history, consult her husband's obituary in the August 6, 1921 *Tecumseh Chieftain*, articles in the August 21, 1948 and 1949 and August 20, 1950 *Omaha World Herald*, and obituary in the October 25, 1955 *Lincoln Star*. Articles were published in the *Tecumseh Chieftain* near her birthday from age 93 to 113. Betsy Baker was mentioned in a footnote to national records listed in Chapter 1 page 24 of the *1973 Guinness Book of World Records*.

Clara Herling Huhn, the oldest Nebraskan to date, was age 113. The youngest of eight children of John Henry and Katherine Meusborn Herling, she was born January 28, 1887 on the family farm located 7½ miles south and ½ mile west of the town of Clarkson in Section 20 of Midland Precinct in Colfax County. She died December 20, 2000 at La Mesa, California, with interment in Glen Abbey Cemetery at Bonita. Her father John Henry Herling was born February 27, 1839 at Erntebruch, Westfalen region of Germany, and died August 23, 1918 at age 79 near Schuyler, while her mother Katherine Meusborn was born September 5, 1845 at Vornwald, near Hilchenbach, Westfalen region, and died April 22, 1917 at age 71 near Clarkson.

The parents and older sisters and brothers had immigrated to America from Germany in 1883, and lived for a short time near Greenbush, Warren County, Illinois, then settled on a homestead in Midland Precinct in Colfax County, Nebraska by early 1885. Clara walked two miles each way to nearby Rural School District 21 north of the family farm. Her social life involved attending barn dances and the nearby Lutheran Church, and living with her parents and brother William and his family until she was married at the age of 29 to farmer John F. Huhn on December 6, 1916 at Schuyler.

From 1916 to 1938, Clara and her husband lived on a farm in Section 28, Grant Precinct, located from the center of Schuyler three miles north, one mile west, and one-half mile north. They raised four children: daughters Mrs. Albert (Mayrene) DePuydt and Mrs. Chester (Margaretha) Good and sons Dale and Wayne, with Mayrene and Dale graduating from Schuyler High School, and Wayne attending Emanuel Lutheran School.

After her husband suffered a disabling injury during a farm accident, Clara decided to move her family to California for John's health, and while living in San Diego, she worked at Convair's aircraft factory during World War II. After her husband died in 1948, Clara supported herself with domestic kinds of work until reaching age 80. She resided in the North Park and Normal Heights areas of San Diego, living independently until age 103. For two years she lived with daughter Mayrene until her death in 1996, then lived with son Wayne and his wife Corinne at Campo, California, taking care of herself and doing housework until age 113. For the last six months of her life, she resided at a La Mesa care center. At her death, she was survived by daughter Margaretha Good and son Wayne, along with eight grandchildren, 13 great grandchildren, and 13 great great grandchildren.

The author verified Clara's age with assistance of Wayne and Corrine Huhn from the Herling family bible, which contains notes in the German language, with the assistance of the Colfax County Clerk from rural school census records in 1895 and 1901 and the marriage certificate of December 6, 1916, and examination of the U.S. Federal Census for Colfax County, Nebraska in 1910, 1920, and 1930.

For history, consult features in the January 30, 1997 *San Diego Union-Tribune* and December 25, 2000 *Alpine /CA/ Sun* and lengthy profile in the September 22, 2004 *Crete /NE/ News* and September 29, 2004 *Colfax County Press*.

Helen Stetter, the second oldest Nebraskan to date, was age 113. One of four children of Henry and Mary Schwalm Stetter, she was born on November 18, 1893 at Chadron, Dawes County, Nebraska. She died on June 1, 2007, at Valentine with interment at Mt. Hope Cemetery in Valentine. At age 5 she moved with her family to Valentine in Cherry County, and attended school in the community, lived with her parents, and took care of her mother who lived to age 98. Very adept at intricate embroidery, she made candy and pickles to supplement her income, and was known for making watermelon pickles, fudge, icebox cookies and other sweets, often giving boxes of candy to relatives and friends. She also raised African violets and other plants, had a special bond with neighborhood cats and dogs, and kept a cat as a pet. She did not marry.

Her father had moved from Richmond, Virginia to settle in Nebraska in the 1870s, supplying meat to Fort Niobrara, owning ranches and operating a billiard parlor, and serving as one of the founders of St. John's Episcopal Church. Helen's first cousin was Leta Stetter Hollingworth, who became nationally distinguished as a psychologist, educator, and author who promoted women's greater professional commitments and achievements in business and public life, pioneered gifted student education, and authored in 1928 *The Psychology of the Adolescent*, which became a standard textbook. An entry on Leta

Stetter Hollingworth was published in *American National Biography*, Volume 11 (Oxford University Press, 1999).

A member of the Episcopal Church, Helen walked regularly to conduct errands in town, and upon her doctor's prescription, drank a glass of wine each day. In 1989, she moved to Pine View Good Samaritan Center, where she visited with her relatives about former times and recalled names and events. At the age of 109 on November 18, 2002, she was honored as an Admiral in the Great Navy of the State of Nebraska from Governor Mike Johanns, and at age 113 on November 18, 2006, she was honored with Helen Stetter Day proclaimed by Governor Dave Heineman, and received a letter of recognition from U.S. President George W. Bush. In *Guinness World Records 2007*, she was recognized among the world's top 15 oldest living people. At her death, she was ranked by Gerontology Research Group of Los Angeles as the 2nd oldest living American and the 4th oldest living person in the world, and among the top 100 oldest persons in world history. She was survived by one nephew, a retired Air Force officer who is now 92 years of age at the time, nine grandnieces and nephews, and eight great grandnieces and nephews.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Henry Stetter, Cherry County, Valentine Precinct, city of Valentine, and found daughter Helen listed as age 6, born November 1893 in Nebraska. For history, see articles in the November 24, 1999 and November 28, 2001 and November 26, 2003 November 23, 2005 and February 7, 2007 *Valentine Midland News* and November 13, 2005 *Omaha Sunday World Herald* and November 16, 2006 and January 29, 2007 *Norfolk Daily News*, and obituaries in June 4, 2007 *Norfolk Daily News* and June 13, 2007 *Valentine Midland News*.

Mary Cully Bittlebrun was age 112. The oldest of 11 children of Patrick and Alice Cahill Cully, she was born March 19, 1864 at Bloomington, McLean County, Illinois. She died August 6, 1976 at Mena, Polk County, Arkansas, with interment at Mt. Calvary Cemetery near Mena. When Mary was 12 years of age, her family moved to Friend, Saline County, Nebraska, where she attended nearby Rural School District 69 until 1883. She taught at District 69 until 1890, and at other schools nearby, recalling "some were three miles apart," so she owned a pony, built a shed for him, and rode a one-seated open wagon for transportation. Mary may have taught in the town of Friend until 1902, when she relocated alone to homestead and teach near Aberdeen, South Dakota. On May 8, 1906 she married Peter Bittlebrun at Ipswich, Edmunds County, South Dakota when she was 42 years of age, and helped her husband with a cattle and sheep ranch, while continuing to teach in a one-room country school. Her husband suffered from ill health, so they moved in 1919 to Mena, Arkansas. In 1924, her daughter Catherine Alice died of pneumonia at age 17. After her husband died in 1954, she relocated to Dallas, Texas to live with niece Margaret Mitchell, as she had suffered a stroke and couldn't live alone. Her doctors did not expect her to live long.

At the age of 100, she was featured in the March 19, 1964 *Dallas [TX] Times-Herald*, and had received congratulations from U.S. President Lyndon Johnson. Within a year, she moved back to Mena, Arkansas to reside at Leisure Lodge, where at the age of 106 she broke her hip and became confined to a wheelchair. In the summer of 1971, she won two county fair blue ribbons for her crocheting while an alert age 107, and received congratulations from U.S. President Richard Nixon. In a March 1975 nursing home newsletter, it was reported that Mary would read letters from family and friends, work on embroidery, and read the local Mena newspaper cover to cover at age 111. During her lifetime, she regularly attended the Catholic Church, and was quoted as saying she "just took good care of myself and I didn't do anything unreasonable." She also ate a plain, simple diet, and at Leisure Lodge wanted bread, butter, and jelly for breakfast.

The author verified her age in the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Patrick Cully, Saline County, Friend, where Mary was listed as being born in March 1864 in Illinois; her parents were born in Ireland. According to the 1920 Arkansas Soundex under Peter Bittlebrun, Polk County, Mena, she was listed as his wife at age 55 just before her birthday that year. At her death, she was survived by two nieces, including Margaret Mitchell, who went on to live to age 98, and four nephews, most of whom lived in the Dallas, Texas area. For history, see article in June 5, 1975 *Friend Sentinel*, and articles and an obituary in the March 20, 1968 and March 18, 1971 and August 12, 1976 *Mena [AR] Star*. Mary Cully Bittlebrun was featured posthumously in the March 1991 issue of *The Looking Glass*, published at Waldron, Arkansas.

Mary P. Romero Zielke Cota, age 112, was one of five children of Pedro and Viviana Sanchez Romero. Born July 5, 1870 at Montecito, Santa Barbara County, California, she died July 22, 1982 at Hemet, Riverside County, California, with interment at Desert Lawn Park in Calimesa, San Bernardino County. She became known as the mother in the world's first combination of a mother and her child to both become supercentenarians (age 110 or more). Her father was born at Montecito about 1843, and her mother was also born in California about 1854. Family members reported their ancestry can be traced to the Basque Region of Spain.

On February 9, 1889, she was married to Edward Zielke in Los Angeles, a native of Germany and resident of Los Angeles. His family had immigrated to the United States about 1868, settling in the Chicago area. Soon after their marriage, Mary and Edward Zielke relocated to Seattle, where in 1890 she gave birth to the first of her nine children.

From about 1891 to 1903, she lived with her family at Carroll, Wayne County, Nebraska, where her husband operated a respectable tavern. They relocated to Oregon, perhaps the Salem area, then moved to the Los Angeles area during the famous April 18, 1906 San Francisco earthquake. After her husband injured himself from a fall, he died at San Bernardino on August 6, 1907, and Mary moved her family to the Santa Barbara area. Some of her children became performing artists, and Mary formed a relationship with Antonio Cota.

She lived independently in Los Angeles, then El Monte, and finally at Hemet. Her children exceeded normal life expectancy, and four of her daughters lived to near or beyond age 100. Daughter Rosabell went on to live to age 111.

The author verified Mary's age from baptism records housed at the Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library and the marriage certificate application form obtained from Los Angeles County. Her Social Security Administration application form verified the names of her parents.

For history, consult lengthy profile in the July 5, 2006 *Crete /NE/ News* and the July 23, 2006 Omaha *Sunday World Herald*.

Agnes Groves Gardner Callahan Ferron, age 112, was the youngest of four daughters of Henry H. and Phoebe Jewell Groves. Born November 13, 1893 at Hillsdale, Miami County, Kansas, she died January 18, 2006 at Cozad, Dawson County, Nebraska. Her cremated remains were sent to Gilbert, Arizona for inurnment. Her father was born in Kentucky, and died at an unknown location, while her mother, who was born in Ohio in March 1864, left the family and eventually married Mr. Hyden, and died in Arkansas at age 62.

After living with her mother and sisters at Paola, Kansas, she was adopted by the Gardner family, where she learned how to farm with horses and do various indoor chores. After she married John M. Callahan at Kansas City, Missouri on June 17, 1914, a brakeman and conductor for the Missouri Pacific Railroad, she lived at Spring Hill, Johnson County, Kansas, then north of Hiawatha in Brown County, Kansas, and raised seven children.

In 1923, the family relocated to Falls City, Richardson County, Nebraska, where Agnes lived with her children until 1946 after the end of her marriage in 1933. She moved to Cheyenne, Wyoming for two years before settling in 1948 at Evansville, a small town near Casper. She was remarried to Richard Ferron, with a divorce occurring before he died.

The day before Valentine's Day in 1985, her home was destroyed from a gas explosion, but Agnes survived without any serious injury, and lived at St. Anthony Manor in Casper until 1993. Then she relocated to Cozad, Nebraska to live near her son Jere, until age 105 when she broke her hip and had to reside in Southview Manor Care. She read her Bible often, and enjoyed baking and crocheting, along with caring for her garden. At her death, Agnes was survived by two children, 14 grandchildren, 27 great grandchildren, and 17 great great grandchildren.

The author verified Agnes' age by examining the 1900 Kansas Soundex under Phoebe Groves in Paola Township, Miami County, which listed her as born in November 1893 in Miami County. According to the March 1918 Assessment Roll for Padonia Township in Brown County, she was listed as age 24 and the 1920 U.S. Census for Kansas, Padonia Township, Brown County, listed her in February as age 26.

For history, consult article in November 13, 2005 *Omaha Sunday World Herald*, an obituary in the January 20, 2006 *Omaha World Herald*, and a profile in the *Crete /NE/ News*, September 6, 2006.

Sophia Papst DeMuth, age 111, was the daughter of Leonard and Maria Goeller Papst. Born June 30, 1866 at St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri, she died December 2, 1977 at her farmhouse near Ayr, Adams County, Nebraska. Interment was at nearby Blue Valley Cemetery. During her childhood at St. Joseph, she lived within a few blocks of the infamous Jesse James, and her father died in an 1877 bridge accident over the Missouri River. Later she moved to California to work in a shirt factory. After a long-distance courtship with Oliver DeMuth, who earlier in his life had owned land in several states and traveled extensively west of the Mississippi River before settling in 1883 in Adams County, she was married to him on October 25, 1899 at St. Joseph. After living on a farm in Adams County, they relocated to Toulon, Illinois, her husband's hometown, and then to North Dakota. By about 1915, they returned to the original DeMuth farm near the Little Blue River northeast of Ayr, where her husband became a farmer and cattleman, and was instrumental in the development of the Blue Valley Cemetery. They raised four children to adulthood: daughters Marie Fulkerson, Jennie DeMuth, and Emma Hunter, and son Joe DeMuth, with Jennie living to age 75, Joseph to 96, Emma to 97, and Marie to 108.

After her husband died in 1965 at the age of 101, Sophia continued to live in their farmhouse. One of her favorite activities was gardening, which she continued until age 106, and family members reported she could handle a crisis by "cleaning the chicken house or something." Because she married at the mature age of 33, she believed "she never would have lived so long if she had been a child bride like so many girls were then." Sophia also was a member of the First Methodist Church, and enjoyed her four grandchildren. With the assistance of daughter Emma Hunter, the author verified Sophia's age from a Certificate of Baptism of St. Joseph's Cathedral in St. Joseph, Missouri. She was baptized on July 8, 1866. The author also examined the 1900 Federal Census for Nebraska under Oliver R. DeMuth, Juniata Township, Adams County, and the 1920 Nebraska Soundex, but Sophia's ages were listed in error by two years and four years, respectively. For history, see article in June 30, 1977 *Lincoln Journal* and obituary in December 3, 1977 *Hastings Daily Tribune*. Her husband's obituary appeared in the October 14, 1965 *Blue Hill Leader*.

Rosabell Zielke Champion Fenstermaker, age 111, was one of nine children of Edward E. and Mary P. Romero Zielke. Born November 4, 1893 at Carroll, Wayne County, Nebraska, she died October 14, 2005 at San Juan Capistrano, Orange County, California, with her cremated remains placed in the Pacific Ocean near Dana Point, California. She is the daughter in the world's first combination of a mother and her child to both become supercentenarians (age 110 or more). Her father, a businessman, was born in Germany, and died at San Bernardino, California on August 6, 1907.

She attended school at Carroll through the 3rd grade until her family relocated in 1903 to Oregon, then later to the Santa Barbara, California area, where she and sisters Edna and Ruth performed on stage at the La Petite Theatre, and played the saxophone. She was also a gifted seamstress. Her marriage to silent screen actor George J. Champion from 1911 to 1917 produced two children. She was married briefly to two other men, then was married in 1922 to printer Arthur Fenstermaker, and lived in Glendale, where Rosabell managed the business and raised a son Arthur Fenstermaker Jr.

After enjoying their travels to Africa, Asia, and Russia, and living in Arcadia, Flintridge, Pasadena, and finally San Diego, they celebrated their 50 years of marriage before her husband died in 1978. Rosabell then shared a condominium with her daughter Elinor Champion at nearby San Juan Capistrano, continuing her active lifestyle. For example, she dug trenches and laid sprinkler pipe for a new watering system in their backyard at the age of 104. And after failing eyesight at the age of 109, she continued to follow news on radio and television, and participated in discussions about world events.

The author verified Rosabell's age from the U.S. Census of 1900 for the village of Carroll, Deer Creek Precinct, Wayne County, Nebraska and School Census Reports for District 52 for the summers of 1901-1903. Robert Young of Gerontology Research Group, based in Los Angeles, also examined a copy of her 1897 baptism record.

For family history, consult obituary in October 19, 2005 *Orange County Register* at Santa Ana, a lengthy profile in the July 5, 2006 *Crete /NE/ News* and the July 23, 2006 *Omaha Sunday World Herald*.

Luther L. Goding Sr, to date the oldest man in the history of Nebraska, was age 111. The youngest of eight children of Jonas and Sarah Conley Goding, he was born July 1, 1884 near Pauline, Adams County, Nebraska. He died December 5, 1995 at Hastings, with interment at West Lawn Cemetery in Omaha. His Goding ancestry originated with Henry Goding, who had emigrated from England in 1628 to settle in Massachusetts Bay Colony. After his Revolutionary War ancestor Johnathan C. Goding fought at the Battle of Bunker Hill, the family had relocated to Maine, then in 1840 to Illinois. His parents were early settlers of Little Blue Township in Adams County, arriving from Warren, Illinois in 1873.

After the age of eight, Luther lived in Pauline, helping his parents with a boarding house, and attending the Pauline schools, then later he collected cream from farmers and hauled it to a Pauline creamery. He took a telegraph course in Hastings, attended Fremont Normal School in Fremont, and enrolled in a business course in Lincoln. From 1905 to 1921, he was rural mail carrier for the Pauline Post Office, then relocated to Omaha, where he worked for the South Omaha Post Office until retirement in 1950. After a few months at Tucson, Arizona, he returned to Omaha, performing a variety of tasks for relatives, and eventually gaining employment at age 76 as a guard at a furniture company. From his marriages to Katie Jones in 1907, then Effie Peabody in 1914, and Leta Parkins in 1929, all of whom died for reasons of health, five children were raised to adulthood: Sarah Post, Katherine Beeren, Lucile Butts, Marietta Goding, and Luther Goding Jr.

After returning in 1965 to live at Glenvil, Clay County, with his daughter Marietta, he worked on the house and garden, and spent time reading. Prior to retirement, his weight averaged 150 pounds, then ranged from 160 to 170 pounds during his older years. His daughter reported his favorite meals consisted of meat, potatoes, gravy, bread, vegetables, and fruit, and he believed in having breakfast daily. Luther was mild-tempered, had a strong religious faith, and remained optimistic no matter his situation. His health remained good until about age 90 when he began taking an anticoagulant, at age 99 when glaucoma and cataract caused declining vision, and age 105 when a stroke occurred. He was a member of the Methodist Church, the Nebraska Society of Sons of the American Revolution, and several historical societies. During his centenarian years, he was honored by messages from political dignitaries, mentioned on the NBC-TV "Today Show", and recognized at age 109 as the oldest retired federal employee in the nation.

At his death, Luther was survived by three children, 14 grandchildren, 35 great grandchildren, and 12 great great grandchildren. The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under James Goding, Little Blue Township, Adams County, and the census listed son Luther as being born in July 1884 in Nebraska. For history, consult article and obituary in the June 27, 1989 and December 5, 1995 *Hastings Tribune*, respectively, and an obituary in the December 6, 1995 *Blue Hill Leader*.

Agnes Brix Yoho Rich, age 111, was one of ten children of the late Frank F. and Rosalia Urbanek Brix. Born January 20, 1892 at Wisner, Cuming County, Nebraska, she died on December 31, 2003, in Augusta, Georgia with burial at Forest Lawn Memorial Park at Glendale, California. She was descended from parents born in Moravia, now the Czech Republic. Her mother's family had settled near Linwood in Butler County in 1873, where Agnes' parents were married in 1888. When Agnes was three years of age, the Brix family relocated from Wisner to a farm near Arcola and Fresno in Fort Bend County, Texas just south of Houston. There, she attended elementary school, and arose at 4 am to feed the farm animals. Eventually the family relocated to the Tulsa, Oklahoma area. Meanwhile, Agnes worked for a telephone company, and in 1914 was married at Houston to J. C. "Jay" Yoho, a contractor who specialized in wood flooring and painting. After moving to Tulsa, she gave birth in 1920 to son John, her only child.

As a housewife, she raised chickens and a garden, and canned fruit and vegetables. Agnes even raised baby chicks and turkeys in the basement of her home. She was also proficient at sewing clothes. After her husband Jay died in January 1953, and her son died in May of the same year, she moved to Los Angeles to help some friends, and there met Edward Rich, who she married on April 6, 1954 at Tulsa. Her second husband worked for a Los Angeles lumber company. After Mr. Rich died in 1968, she cared for her stepson,

regularly exercised on a stationery bicycle, and belonged to the Christian Church, where she was an official greeter until age 99.

After her stepson died in 1990, she moved to Evans, Georgia to live with granddaughter Nancy Beazley, then when she needed specialized care at the age of 107, she moved to the Kentwood Nursing Facility in Augusta. At the age of 100, she was diagnosed with diabetes, which became controlled by diet, but she was able to walk in the facility despite being blind. Never a user of tobacco or alcohol products, she also wasn't worried about little things, and had taken mid-afternoon naps every day. Her sister lived to age 98, and had a sister and brother in their mid-90s. Aside from a granddaughter, she was survived by one sister and one brother, three great grandchildren, and four great great grandchildren as well as numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins across the nation.

An examination of the 1900 Texas Soundex under Franz Brick, Fort Bend County, Precinct 3, revealed daughter Agnes was born January 1892 in Nebraska. Marriage records at the Tulsa County Courthouse, Tulsa, Oklahoma reveal Agnes listed herself as age 62 on April 6, 1954, the date she married her second husband Edward Rich. For history, see articles in January 20, 2001 *Augusta [GA] Chronicle*, and January 31, 2002 *Wisner News-Chronicle*, and lengthy feature in March 28, 2002 *David City Banner-Press*. See obituary in *Augusta/GA/Chronicle*, January 2, 2004.

There is a profile/photograph on Agnes Rich in Jerry Friedman, *Earth's Elders: The Wisdom of the World's Oldest People*, published in 2005 by Earth's Elders Foundation of South Kent, Connecticut.

Nina Billick Rust, age 111, was one of 11 children of David and Eva Stines Billick. Born June 18, 1881 in a sod house near Hainesville, Holt County, Nebraska, she died January 6, 1993 at Roseburg, Douglas County, Oregon. Interment was in Pleasant Hill Cemetery at Pleasant Hill, Oregon. Her ancestry was traced to a great paternal grandfather who emigrated about 1810 from Germany to settle in Pennsylvania, and her great maternal grandfather who emigrated in 1817 from Nova Scotia to settle in New York. After the marriage of her parents in Davenport, Iowa, where they lived for several years, they traveled by prairie schooner to Holt County, Nebraska in 1880 to take a homestead claim some 20 miles north of O'Neill.

With her father a farmer and a well driller, the family lived like pioneers, enduring the usual hardships on the Great Plains. In 1891, the family moved to the Creighton area of nearby Knox County, then to the town of Gross in Boyd County about 1896. Like the other children in the family, Nina helped with farm chores, and periodically attended ungraded elementary schools. On June 24, 1902, she married Samuel E. Rust at Butte, Holt County, and lived on a farm near Gross, later relocating to Spencer in 1913, where her husband operated a delivery service. In 1923, they moved to a ranch northeast of Bonesteel, Gregory County, South Dakota, where Sam was a ranch hand, then they lived in two different towns in Fall River County in the Black Hills area from 1926 to 1941. They raised to adulthood 12 children: daughters Eva Barney, Ida Nelson, Emma Nelson, Phyllis McMeekin, Clara Gossel, Meda Larson, Florence Governor, and sons George, Dave, Floyd, Melvin, and Willard.

Upon her husband's retirement, they moved to Oakland, Douglas County, Oregon, but after he died in 1943, Nina worked part-time for several years, until she lived with her daughter Phyllis at Dallas, Polk County, Oregon. In 1956, she relocated with her daughter to Chadron, Dawes County, Nebraska, then in 1970 returned with Phyllis to Oregon, living at Roseburg, Douglas County. Except for contracting the flu while pregnant during the 1918 influenza epidemic, her health was excellent. Nina was able to read and crochet at age 105, then after a lens implant in her right eye at age 107, she continued to crochet nearly 1,900 granny squares for over two years.

Nina Rust remained very active well into her elderly years. She enjoyed word puzzles, reading, and games such as Scrabble. At the age of 99, she took her first elephant ride at a nearby animal park, and her first airplane ride on her 100th birthday. At the age of 101, she drove a car with her daughter Phyllis to Nebraska, then flew round trip to the East Coast for tours of various sites, then drove back from Nebraska to Oregon. At age 106, she took her first motorcycle ride with her grandson, and at age 109 she rode with her grandson in the lead car of a stock car race. Among the recognition over the years was a message from U.S. President Ronald Reagan and mention on NBC-TV's "Today Show" by host Willard Scott. In 1990 when

she reached age 110, she was invited to appear on ABC-TV's "Good Morning America" and Johnny Carson's NBC-TV's "The Tonight Show" but she declined due to hearing difficulties. At her death, she was survived by nine of her twelve children, 36 grandchildren, 86 great grandchildren, 82 great great grandchildren, and five great great great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under David C. Billick, Gross Precinct, Boyd County, and found daughter Nina listed at age 19, born in Nebraska in June 1880. For history, consult 234-page biography by daughter Phyllis N. McMeekin, *Dear Reader: 100 Years with Nina Rust* (Roseburg, OR: Graphic Dimensions, 1984) and an article in the 199-page book by Jim Heynen, *One Hundred over One Hundred* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1990). See also articles in June 21, 1990 and June 20, 1991 *Lincoln Star* and July 8, 1990 Roseburg, Oregon *Times-Review*. For obituaries, see January 7 and January 8, 1993 Roseburg *Times-Review*.

Nellie Hindman Swayne, age 111, was one of six children of James B. and Milda Swerdfigger Hindman. Born December 13, 1883 at Ashland, Saunders County, Nebraska, she died September 14, 1999 at Riverside, Riverside County, California, with burial at Olivewood Cemetery. Her father was born in Indiana, and served in the Iowa Infantry during the Civil War, while her mother was born in Canada. The family relocated by 1890 to southwestern Colorado, where her father farmed near Cortez in Upper Mancos Precinct of Montezuma County.

After her marriage to teacher Francis A. Swayne on February 13, 1904 at Cortez, the couple lived in Nevada, Oklahoma, and California while her husband worked on various Indian Reservations. They raised four daughters, and Nellie worked on the Reservations as a clerk, teacher, and counselor. About 1921, the family moved to Hemet, Riverside County, where her husband was a fruit rancher until 1945, then they moved to Riverside, where he worked in real estate and Nellie was a homemaker.

Her husband died in 1956, but she continued her enthusiasm for living, a love for writing poetry, and singing her favorite hymns. In her older years, she lived at the Extended Care Hospital in Riverside. At her death, Nellie was survived by two daughters, three grandchildren, nine great grandchildren, seven great great grandchildren, and one great great great grandchild.

The author helped validate her age by examining the 1900 U.S. Census for Colorado, Montezuma County, Upper Mancos Precinct No. 6, which listed Nellie's age as 16 and birthplace as Nebraska. The 1910 U.S. Census for California, Riverside County, listed her as age 27, and Gerontology Research Group accepted her marriage certificate from 1904.

For history, consult profiles and obituary in December 22, 1993, September 19, 1995, and September 29, 1995 *Riverside /CA/ Press-Enterprise*.

Mabelle Bauman, age 110, was the daughter of Charles and Mary Moran Bauman. One of seven children, she was born July 22, 1889 on a farm west of Atkinson, Holt County, Nebraska, and died July 12, 2000 at Good Samaritan Center in Atkinson. An early recollection of hers was riding a pony to rural school, and attending the Atkinson Public Schools. After studying at a secretarial school in Fremont, she worked for ten years as a stenographer for attorneys in Omaha, then followed that with a few months in Seattle, Washington, working for a federal judge.

For much of her career she worked in Atkinson for attorneys J. Joulenet and D. R. Mount. During World War II, she worked for a rationing board in O'Neill, then returned to Atkinson, where she worked for Consumers Public Power until her retirement in her 70s. In her later years, she took into her home a nephew and her sisters. In 1985 she moved to a retirement apartment, then in 1995 she entered Good Samaritan Center.

Mabelle was unmarried, but enjoyed being an aunt to nieces, grand nieces and nephews and other relatives. She was regarded as an easy-going person, never one to worry, and a faithful member of St. Joseph's Catholic Church. One of her sisters lived to age 101, another to age 98. More than 160 people, mostly family, attended her 110th birthday party in Atkinson, many of them from California, North Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, and Virginia as well as Nebraska.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Charles Bauman, Holt County, and listed was daughter Mabel, age 10, born July 1889 in Nebraska. A baptism record of the St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Atkinson dated December 18, 1889 confirmed Mabelle was born July 22, 1889. For history, see articles in July 22, 1999 *Omaha World Herald* and July 28, 1999 *Atkinson Graphic*, and obituaries in July 11, 2000 *Omaha World Herald* and July 13, 2000 *O'Neill Holt County Independent*.

Mabel Stolzer Brinkworth, age 110, was one of 12 children of Nicholas and Rosa Correll Stolzer. Born December 13, 1893 at Beatrice, Gage County, Nebraska, she died August 27, 2004 at Lake Wales, Polk County, Florida. Interment was at Lake Wales Cemetery in Lake Wales. Her father was born February 6, 1861 at Beacon, Iowa, and died January 28, 1934 at Beatrice, while her mother was born in Berks County, Pennsylvania on July 4, 1866, and died December 31, 1946 at Beatrice.

The parents were married at Washington, Kansas in 1883, where her father was a laborer. The family moved to Beatrice in 1891, then returned to Washington, Kansas in 1896. After 1903 they lived in Beatrice. Mabel attended elementary school, then worked in 1907 as a candler for Swift & Company, but resided with her parents until she married Ernest O. Brinkworth on June 24, 1914 at Beatrice.

She and her husband, a carpenter, lived in Beatrice until the mid-1920s when they moved to Lake Wales, Florida, and raised eight children. Her husband died in 1943. A homemaker, she practiced her Christian faith all her life. At her death she was survived by five children, six grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.

The author verified Mabel's age by examining the 1900 Kansas Soundex, where she was listed as living in the city of Washington, Kansas and age 6, born in Nebraska, the 1910 U.S. Census for Gage County, Nebraska, city of Beatrice, Ward 1, where she was listed as living with Nicholas Stolzer at age 16, and the marriage certificate of June 24, 1916 at the Gage County Courthouse, where she listed her age as 20.

For history, consult obituaries of her father Nicholas Stolzer in the January 28, 1934 *Beatrice Daily Sun* and of her mother Rosa Correll Stolzer in the January 4, 1947 *Beatrice Times* and her obituary in the August 29, 2004 *Lakeland /FL/ Ledger*.

Josie Walker Hinds, age 110, was the daughter of William and Josephine Mead Walker. Born October 6, 1873 at Pleasant Prairie, Kenosha County, Wisconsin, she died March 30, 1984 at Cambridge, Furnas County, Nebraska. Interment was at Lincoln Memorial Park in Lincoln. Her ancestry was traced to Joel Walker, a sergeant during America's Revolutionary War. At the age of 10, she relocated with her family to Gage County, Nebraska, settling on a farm north of Odell. After graduating from high school in 1894, and studying music at the University of Nebraska for one year, she returned to Odell to offer piano and organ lessons. In 1895, she married Charles N. Hinds, who had earned bachelor and master degrees from the University of Nebraska, where he studied under Lieutenant John J. Pershing, who later served as Commanding General of the Allied Expeditionary Forces during World War I. Her husband was a history professor at York College for one year, then served as Gage County deputy register of deeds at Beatrice for five years before organizing a bank at nearby Barneston. In 1903, he established with his father the Hinds State Bank at Odell, where Josie served on the board of education, was active in the Women's Club and the Methodist Church, and was president of the local Red Cross chapter during World War I. They raised seven children to adulthood: daughters Lulu Hiatt and Hazel Bowden, and sons Charles H., Clarence, Edwin, James, and William.

Josie moved to Table Rock, Pawnee County, in 1925, and after her husband died in 1940, she lived in Lincoln, then Portland, Oregon, and finally Arapahoe, Furnas County, Nebraska. Believing she should keep busy all the time at something good and practical, she continued with her habits upon entering in 1972 the C. A. Mues Memorial Good Samaritan Center at Arapahoe, where she continued to play for church services and the center's rhythm band. She also attended Bible-study and current-event discussion groups, enjoyed quilting, reading, and watching sports on television. At age 106, despite some loss of hearing and use of a wheelchair, she still used her needle. During her lifetime, she had earned many purple ribbons for her sewing at fairs in Nebraska and Oregon. In a 1980 interview, she attributed her longevity to never smoking and drinking alcoholic beverages, and stated, "When I went to bed at night, I forgot everything and went to

sleep. I made that a habit.” Her daughter Hazel became a centenarian, and son Charles nearly so. At Josie’s death, there were 10 grandchildren, 25 great grandchildren, and 12 great great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex, which listed her husband Charles Hinds, Beatrice, Gage County, with wife Josie, age 26, born in October 1873 in Wisconsin. For history, consult obituary of husband in September 5, 1940 *Odell Oracle*, and mention of Josie in Catherine Renshaw’s *More Than Common Land, A History of Odell, Nebraska 1881-1981* (Privately published, 1981). See also article in June 22, 1980 Lincoln *Sunday Journal & Star* and an obituary in April 5, 1984 *Arapahoe Public Mirror*.

Clara Bangert Kirchner, age 110, was one of 12 children of John and Mathilda Gust Bangert, who were immigrants from Germany. Born October 3, 1884 in a small dugout 10 miles north of Guide Rock, Webster County, Nebraska, she died December 9, 1994 at Blue Hill, with interment at Missouri Lutheran Cemetery southwest of Lawrence. Her father was one of the founders of the Zion Lutheran Church, and when she was four years old, she attended the dedication ceremony. Her early education was spent at a Lutheran school, where religion and German were studied, and religious music was an important part of life in her home. At about age 15, she was conversant in English. She took her first trip outside the county at age 20 when she traveled with a cousin to St. Louis, Missouri to visit relatives. On this trip, she tasted ice cream for the first time, and said, “I thought I was going to die!” For most of her early years, she helped her mother raise the family and prepare the meals. On September 16, 1909, she married John Kirchner near Lawrence, and they lived on a farm southwest of that community, raising eight children to adulthood: daughters Eleanora Stork, Lydia Rogness, and Mildred Deines, and sons Donald, Kenneth, Robert, Walter, and Wilfred.

After her husband died in 1947, she remained on the farm another five years, then moved to Rosemont, also in Webster County, where she continued to keep busy with her domestic duties and regular attendance at the Calvary Lutheran Church in Rosemont. She was considered “kind of the hub of the family,” reported her son Kenneth, and she made everyone feel welcome through writing letters to family members and previous pastors, and visits in her home. Clara enjoyed good health, and did not need the care of a doctor until cataract surgery at the age of 94. She believed her eating habits were one reason for her longevity. When she reached age 100, she moved from Rosemont to the Blue Hill Care Center. At the age of 110, she was mentioned on the NBC-TV “Today Show” by host Willard Scott. At her death, surviving relatives included three siblings, six children, 21 grandchildren, 39 great grandchildren, and five great great grandchildren.

An examination of the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under John Bangert, Webster County, Stillwater Township, revealed daughter Clara was listed as age 15, born in October 1884 in Nebraska. For history, see articles in the October 3, 1984 and 1989 *Hastings Tribune*, and obituaries in the December 10, 1994 *Hastings Tribune* and December 14, 1994 *Blue Hill Leader*.

Bertha Radil Knezacek, age 110, was one of eight children of Joe and Mary Krajnik Radil. Born December 5, 1890 on a farm north of Western, Saline County, she died December 28, 2000 at Ord, Valley County, Nebraska. Interment at Ord Bohemian Cemetery. Both her parents were of Czech ancestry, with her mother among the first Czech settlers in Saline County in 1865. After attending nearby Rural School District 37, she relocated in 1904 with her family to a farm southwest of Ord, where she continued her schooling at nearby Manderson School, and finished the 9th grade. For a few years she worked as a merchandise clerk, then married local railroad agent Joe Knezacek on October 7, 1913 at her parents’ home near Ord.

Shortly after the wedding, Bertha was diagnosed with tuberculosis, and lived at Boulder, Colorado for treatment for almost two years, then returned to Ord, where her husband served several terms as Valley County Clerk, then operated his own abstracting business until he retired in 1953. He had also served as State Senator from the 41st District from 1941 to 1943. The couple had no children, but were married for 68 years until Joe’s death in 1982. Bertha was content as a homemaker, and liked cooking, sewing, gardening, and visiting, as well as reading books by Jack London. After reaching age 100, she lived with a niece at St.

Paul for six years, then resided at the Valley County Nursing Home at Ord. At her death, the surviving relatives included six nieces and nephews and 29 grand nieces and nephews.

The author found in the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Joseph Radil, Saline County, North Fork Precinct, daughter Bertha listed at age 9, born December 1890 in Nebraska. For history, consult article in December 7, 1998 *Omaha World Herald* and a lengthy biographical treatment in the December 13, 2000 *Wilber Republican*. For obituaries, see January 3, 2001 *Ord Quiz* and *Wilber Republican*.

Catherine Zubrod Kral, age 110, was the daughter of the late Peter and Annie Stozel Zubrod. One of ten children, she was born November 15, 1891 near Holstein, Adams County, and died at Campbell, Nebraska on August 19, 2002, with interment in Parkview Cemetery at Hastings. Her father came to Nebraska from Wisconsin, her mother from Illinois. While a young girl, she attended a one-room rural school, and performed the usual farm chores of her era, such as milking cows, churning butter, and baking bread. On April 27, 1915 she married Charles P. Kral near Holstein, then they lived on a farm in Webster County between Campbell and Bladen. As a wife she not only raised chickens and kept a garden but she gave birth to seven children, five of whom lived to adulthood: daughter Marge Davis, and sons Charles, Leonard, Melvin, and Paul. After retirement from farming in 1955, she moved with her husband to Hastings.

Her husband died in 1973, and ten years later she entered Grandview Manor at Campbell, Franklin County, where she continued her sewing and Catholic faith, and maintained her sense of humor, attended many activities, and enjoyed the weekly hair styling. At the age of 108, she began using a walker and a year later her vision and hearing began to decline. She attributed her long life to country living and hard work. A large celebration was held at Grandview Manor on her 110th birthday, called "Catherine Kral Day", and she received a plaque from the Chairman of the Campbell Village Trustees. Surviving relatives included daughter Marge and son Paul, 20 grandchildren, and 26 great grandchildren, and two step great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Peter Zubrod, Adams County, Logan Township, and found daughter Katie listed as born November 1891 in Nebraska. Marriage records at the Adams County Courthouse, Hastings, reveal she listed herself as age 23 on April 27, 1915. And the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under Charles P. Kral, Webster County, lists wife Catherine as age 28, born in Nebraska. For history, consult articles in November 15, 2000 and 2001 *Hastings Tribune*, the November 24, 1998 and November 20, 2001 *Franklin County Chronicle*, and November 21, 2001 *Blue Hill Leader*. For an obituary, see August 21, 2002 *Blue Hill Leader*.

There is a profile/photograph on Catherine Kral in Jerry Friedman, *Earth's Elders: The Wisdom of The World's Oldest People*, published in 2005 by Earth's Elders Foundation of South Kent, Connecticut.

Adelia M. Mead, age 110, was a public school teacher for 40 years. One of six children, she was born February 14, 1885 to William D. and Lena Brown Mead Jr. at Coxsackie, Greene County New, York. She died November 10, 1995 at York, York County, Nebraska. Interment was in Greenwood Cemetery at York. She arrived with her family in York in 1892, where her father was well-to-do, and prominent in the building of the community's YMCA. After graduating from York High School in 1903, she attended York College for one year, then attended the University of Nebraska, graduating in 1911. Adelia also took courses at the University of Southern California, the University of Denver, and Wellesley College, and returned to the University of Nebraska at Lincoln in 1930 for a semester of business-related courses.

The family lived a private lifestyle. Adelia's father died in 1910 in a car accident near Milford, though her mother remained in York, where she was president of the Women's Club from 1911 to 1913. The mother died in 1945. Meanwhile, Adelia had begun her teaching career at Leadville, Lake County, Colorado, then she taught in the York Public Schools from 1924 to 1953, followed by several years as a substitute teacher. Well respected, she had assignments on both the junior and senior high levels in arithmetic, history, visual education, and commercial education.

Adelia was a member of the P.E.O. and the First Methodist Church. She did not marry, but looked after her brother William during his elderly years, moving with him to an apartment, and then in the 1970s to

reside at Hearthstone Care Center at York. They were known for playing Scrabble into the evenings, and occasionally she would attend meetings or do shopping downtown. Her brother William died in 1988 at the age of 101. At her death, surviving relatives included niece Ardelle Mills and nephews Arthur and William Mead.

The author verified her age through records at the York Public Schools and the Archives at the University of Nebraska — Lincoln. An examination of the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under W. D. Mead Jr, York County, New York Township, revealed daughter Delia, age 14, born in February 1886 in New York. For history, consult article and obituary in March 11, 1995 and November 13, 1995 *York News-Times*.

Maryetta Cornish Metcalf, age 110, was the daughter of Harvey and Etta Carter Cornish. One of at least four children, she was born August 16, 1882 in Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska. She died November 11, 1992 at Newport Beach, Orange County, California, with interment at Pacific View Memorial Park in that city. Her father, a farmer, was born in New York, and her mother in Ohio. On May 1, 1901 she married Wilbur C. Metcalf in Lincoln. At first, her husband worked for the railroad, but from 1920 to 1941 he was with the Lincoln Fire Department, where he achieved the rank of captain. While in Lincoln, the family lived on South 20th Street and later in the College View area, where Maryetta affiliated with the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. The couple raised four children to adulthood: daughter Genevive D. Beck, and sons Al, Donald, and Earl.

Upon relocating to San Leandro, Alameda County, California in 1941, her husband became a security officer at the Alameda Shipyards during World War II. Eventually, their children and Maryetta's mother relocated to California, settling in Santa Cruz along the Pacific Ocean. A few years later, she and her husband moved to Santa Cruz, where Wilbur owned and operated the Shuffle Inn until retiring in 1956. After her husband died in 1959, Maryetta remained in Santa Cruz, living with her sister, then her son Donald. In the mid-1970s, she moved to Newport Beach to live with her daughter, then at age 103 entered Flagship Healthcare Center in that city.

Known as a homemaker ready to take part in activities when asked, Maryetta loved her many grandchildren. At her death, there were seven grandchildren, 14 great grandchildren, and 18 great great grandchildren. The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Harvey Cornish, Lancaster County, city of Lincoln, which listed the daughter as Mabelle at age 17, born August 1882 in Nebraska. For a history, see article in August 14, 1988 Lincoln *Sunday Journal & Star*. See also her husband's obituary in the October 8, 1959 *Lincoln Star*.

Mary Fowler Norris, age 110, was one of 11 children of the late John and Laura Compton Fowler, both of English descent whose ancestors arrived in America as early as 1776. Her father had come to the Weeping Water, Cass County, Nebraska area about 1860, and married Laura Compton in 1877 at nearby Plattsmouth. He owned a molasses mill at Weeping Water. Born on February 29, 1892 just east of Weeping Water, she died on September 12, 2002 at Louisville. Mary lived with her family in a sturdy house with 24-inch walls of hand-cut native rock. After attending Center Valley rural school for about two years, she completed her schooling with the Weeping Water Public Schools, where she graduated from high school in 1910 as valedictorian of her class. She then taught at rural schools in Cass County for five years. On October 21, 1915 she was married to John W. Norris in Weeping Water, and they lived on a farm seven miles south of town, not far from Avoca. The couple raised two children to adulthood: sons John Merton Norris and Clifford Norris.

Her husband died in the spring of 1970, but Mary continued to live in their farmhouse until age 106, though a son lived in a house close by until she reached her mid-90s. After renewing her driver's license at age 96, she used her car until it stopped running. Known for growing her own garden of healthy foods, she always ate well-balanced meals which she cooked for herself, though alone, and exercised regularly, walking a mile every day until age 102, and stretching her body muscles before retiring to bed. She continued to use her 2nd floor bedroom, and the steps into the basement and garage of her home. Along with her sisters, she was an avid worker of crossword puzzles, and maintained her articulate, exacting, meticulous nature, reported her relatives. Longevity in her family included her mother and one sister who

lived into their mid-90s. Though Mary's eyesight was not what it once was, she was still able to play double 12 dominos at the age of 109. From 1998, she lived at the nearby Louisville Care Center, making her a lifelong resident of Cass County, Nebraska. Surviving relatives included three grandchildren, six great grandchildren, and two great great grandchildren.

According to the 1900 Nebraska Soundex, under John M. Fowler, Cass County, Weeping Water Precinct, city of Weeping Water, daughter Mary was listed as age 8, born February 1892 in Nebraska. Marriage records at the Cass County Courthouse, Plattsmouth, reveal she listed herself as age 23 on October 21, 1915. For history, see articles in February 28, 1985 *Weeping Water Republican*, March 2, 2000 *Plattsmouth Journal*, and March 1, 2002 *Omaha World Herald*. For an obituary, see September 14, 2002 *Lincoln Journal Star*.

There is a profile/photograph on Mary Norris in Jerry Friedman, *Earth's Elders: The Wisdom of The World's Oldest People*, published in 2005 by Earth's Elders Foundation of South Kent, Connecticut.

Francis N. Cruts Heaslet Spickard, age 110, was a daughter of John and Katie Cruts. She was born April 4, 1880 in Hitchcock County, Nebraska, and died May 14, 1990 at Castle Rock, Colorado, with interment in Fairview Cemetery at Colorado Springs.

Her family relocated to the Colorado Springs area when she was 11 years of age. She married Frank M. Heaslet, a miner, on February 8, 1897 at Colorado City, and the couple raised four children.

In 1926, the family moved to Englewood. After her husband died in 1936, she was married to Mr. Spickard, and continued her affiliation with the First Christian Church. She was survived by 10 grandchildren, 29 great grandchildren, 10 great great grandchildren, and four great great great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1880 Nebraska Soundex, and under John Cruts, Hitchcock County, Driftwood Precinct, was listed Frances as age 3½ months. Marriage records for El Paso County, Colorado reveal Frances listed herself as age 17 on February 8, 1897. For history, see obituary in May 19, 1990 *Denver Rocky Mountain News*.

Litta A. Walker, age 110, was an educator for 43 years. Born on March 23, 1893 at Randolph, Fremont County, Iowa, she was one of four children of the late Jesse and Amy Clark Walker. She died on January 13, 2004, in Omaha, with burial at the Randolph, Iowa cemetery. Her younger years were spent at Randolph, where she attended the public schools, followed by attendance at nearby Tabor College before graduating in 1914 from Highland Park College in Des Moines. She then held teaching positions at Green Castle rural school near Randolph, at Ankeny High School, Bancroft, Nebraska High School, Jerome, Idaho High School, and Sidney, Iowa High School. After serving as superintendent of schools at Anderson and Randolph, she taught in the Cedar Rapids, Iowa schools from 1925 to 1957, retiring as head of the English Department at Roosevelt High School.

Upon retirement, she returned to her hometown, where she lived until breaking her hip at age 98, and consequently entered Montclair Nursing Center in Omaha in 1991. Litta attended the Nazarene Church in Tabor, and was a member of the Ladies Aid of the Methodist Church in Randolph. She was a lifetime member of the Iowa State Education Association. Among her interests were people, gardening, books, family, and travel. Her surviving relatives were a sister, 100 years of age, three nieces, nine grand nieces and nephews, and nine great nieces and nephews.

The author verified her age by examining the 1900 Iowa Soundex under Jessie H. Walker, Fremont County, Riverside Township, which listed daughter Litta as age 7, born March 1893 in Iowa. For history, see article and obituary in March 24, 2003 and January 15, 2004, *Omaha World Herald*.

Nebraska's 109-Year-Olds

According to my research, as of this updated version, at least 16 individuals with Nebraska connections have lived to the age of 109. Entries are presented in alphabetical order.

Martha Campbell Aldrich, age 109, one of five children of James and Elizabeth Henderson Campbell, was born January 28, 1860 between the Wabash River and Possum Run in western Indiana, not far from Crawfordsville. She died December 23, 1969 at Brock, Nemaha County, Nebraska. Interment was at nearby Clifton Cemetery. It was after her mother died in 1871 that her father moved the family westward with a team of oxen, and they settled at what became the town of Brock, where her father established a mercantile store. Martha worked in her father's store partly as a bookkeeper, and she attended Peru Normal School. On February 3, 1895 she married Karl Aldrich, and they settled on land his family owned near Brock. They raised two children to adulthood: daughter Elizabeth Dougherty and son William Campbell.

After her husband's death in 1921, she lived with her daughter, and continued her attendance at the Brock Methodist Church. Her daughter had credited Martha's longevity to milk, fruit, and calmness, but she herself believed it was due to "the mercy of the Lord." All of Martha's siblings lived into their 90s. She recovered from a hip injury at the age of 90, and later suffered a hairline fracture of her wrist at the age of 108 just before Nemaha County's fair parade, but she rode in the parade anyway. In her late 90s she became known as the oldest alum of Peru State College and as the state's oldest registered voter. She was also the nation's oldest member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Order of the Eastern Star, and of the Nebraska Methodist Church. At Martha's death, surviving relatives included her two children, seven grandchildren, and 14 great grandchildren.

According to the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Karl Aldrich, Johnson County, wife Martha was listed as age 40, born January 1860 in Indiana. For history, see obituary in December 24, 1969 *Lincoln Evening Journal* and December 26, 1969 *Auburn Nemaha County Herald*.

Clara J. Anderson, age 109, one of two children of Nels and Elna Akeson Anderson, was born December 25, 1888 on a farm southwest of Minden, Kearney County, Nebraska. She died March 14, 1998 at Minden, with interment in Minden Cemetery. She attended Rural School District 48, then moved to Minden in 1905, where she lived with her parents. Two years later, she became a member of the Westminster United Presbyterian Church, where she taught Sunday School in the primary and junior departments for 50 years. Clara did not marry. A faithful supporter of her church, she was an active member of the circle and Presbyterian Women as long as she was healthy. As a talented seamstress, she devoted many years to sewing and quilting for others, and made a scarf that adorned the communion table at her church.

She resided at Bethany Home in Minden after 1992. At Clara's death, surviving relatives included niece Ione Peterson of Minden, great nephew Kendall Peterson of Ralston, great niece Janice Carstenson of Lincoln, and great great nephew Matthew Carstenson of Denver, Colorado. Her mother had lived to age 92, her father to 87. The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Nels Anderson, Kearney County, Hayes Township, and found daughter Clara listed at age 11, born December 1888 in Nebraska. For history, see article in December 27, 1994 *Lincoln Star*, and obituary in March 17, 1998 *Minden Courier*.

Elizabeth Gerner Bennett, age 109, was the daughter of William and Barbara Kiskalt Gerner. Born October 12, 1894 at Lanham, Kansas, located at the Gage County, Nebraska boundary, she died on January 13, 2004 at Kenesaw, with burial at Parkview Cemetery in Hastings. She attended the Hill Country School near Diller in Gage County, then lived in nearby Beatrice and finally in Herrington, Dickinson County, Kansas, where she completed the ninth grade, and worked at a dry goods and grocery store. There, she met her future husband, a railroad worker who drove a brand-new car. On June 8, 1919 she married George W. Bennett at Council Grove, Morris County, Kansas, then the couple lived at St. Joseph, Missouri before relocating in 1924 to Hastings, where her husband, a machinist for the Union Pacific Railroad Company, was based. The couple raised two daughters to adulthood: Betty Magee and Aletha Bennett.

After her husband died in a work-related accident in 1938, she continued living in Hastings, and helped part-time at her daughter Aletha's flower shop in the community, and maintained her interest in automobiles. During her elderly years, she moved to Haven Home in nearby Kenesaw, and on her 107th birthday, a celebration was held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Hastings. Surviving relatives included her two daughters, three grandchildren, five great grandchildren, and one great great grandchild.

The baptismal record from St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church at Lanham, Kansas reveals Elizabeth Gerner, daughter of Wilhelm and Barbara Kiskalt Gerner, was born in October 1894. The marriage certificate on file at the Morris County, Kansas Courthouse shows that Elizabeth listed her age as 24 on June 28, 1919, which is three months before her 25th birthday, verifying her birth year as 1894. For history, see articles in March 1, 1999, October 11 and 13, 2001 *Hastings Tribune*, and obituary of January 13, 2004.

Marie Jensen Carstenson, age 109, was born on January 24, 1849 at Vordingborg, Denmark. She died March 30, 1958 at St. Edward, Boone County, Nebraska, with interment at the Genoa Cemetery. After immigrating to the United States about 1870, she was married to Anders Carstenson, and they lived in Green Bay, Wisconsin until 1881 when they moved to Platte County, Nebraska, near the town of Leigh. The couple raised six children to adulthood. When they began their Nebraska farm, they used cornstalks, sunflowers, and other vegetation for fuel, and they lived in a sod hut with a roof of slough grass. In 1886, their oldest daughter died, then a month later her husband died, but Marie took care of her family and managed the farm at the same time.

During her lifetime, Marie was able to return to her native country twice, the first time in 1897 and the second in 1911. Her son Carl died in 1932, then during her elderly years, she lived with a daughter in Texas for three years. Later on, she spent her remaining years with her daughter Mrs. Chris Matzen at St. Edward. At the time of her death, surviving relatives included her daughter, two sons, 25 grandchildren, 59 great grandchildren, and 17 great great grandchildren.

An examination of the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Maria Carstenson, Platte County, Creston Township, revealed her age was 51, born January 1849 in Denmark. For history, see article in May 30, 1954 *Lincoln Sunday Journal & Star*, and an obituary in the April 3, 1958 *Albion News*.

Nellie Baber Christensen, age 109, was the daughter of John and Sarah Ballenge Baber. One of seven children who reached adulthood, she was born January 1, 1875 at Dow City, Crawford County, Iowa. She died March 15, 1984 at Kearney, Buffalo County, Nebraska. Shortly after the blizzard of 1888, the family relocated to homestead near Gordon, Sheridan County, Nebraska, residing in a sod house, and learning to live in the presence of Native Americans from the nearby Pine Ridge Reservation. At the age of 17, Nellie taught school at Gordon, and shortly afterward in 1894 married Martin Christensen, a shoemaker who had emigrated from Denmark to Nebraska. At first, the couple returned with the Baber family to Iowa, but in 1910, they moved with their children back to Nebraska to take positions with the Youth Development Center, then the State Industrial School at Kearney. Her husband taught shoemaking, and Nellie worked in the kitchen.

After her husband retired in 1937, they moved to New Mexico, but soon returned to Buffalo County to live at Miller. Upon her husband's death in 1942, she helped a friend run a restaurant in Miller, and then drove to Kearney to provide companionship to older women alone. She moved to St. John's Care Center in Kearney at the age of 99 after a car accident. A member of the United Methodist Church, she once headed the Women's Improvement Park Committee in Miller. During an interview, she reported that "I taught my family what it is to live right, for that's the secret to getting by in hard times." Her five children preceded her in death, yet all but two of her own brothers and sisters lived to their nineties. Among Nellie's surviving relatives were four grandchildren, three great grandchildren, and one sister.

The author verified her age by examining the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under Martin Christensen, Buffalo County, State Industrial School. His wife Nellie was listed as age 45, born in Iowa. For history, see article in December 31, 1974 *Kearney Daily Hub*, and an obituary in the March 21, 1984 *Elm Creek Beacon-Observer*.

Jesse N. Edmisten, age 109, was the son of the late William and Jane Buckridge Edmisten. One of eight children, he was born on January 16, 1894 in a dugout on a homestead near Oconto, Custer County, Nebraska, and died January 17, 2003 at Lexington, with burial at Greenwood Cemetery in Lexington. He grew up on his father's ranch, herding cattle like a cowboy, then he entered the U.S. Army in September 1917 during World War I, and served in France with the 89th Division, 355th Infantry. While in combat, he was wounded in the knee and right arm. After his discharge in March 1919, he married Clara B. Wilcox on April 16, 1919 at Kearney, Buffalo County. At first, the couple farmed near Oconto, and raised son William and daughter Nettie Ardissono before his wife died in 1924. Not long after, he married Esther Kline on May 5, 1925 at Broken Bow, and they raised four children: daughters Marie Schwenka and Eileen Snowden, and sons Arthur and Earl. In 1938, they moved to a farm three miles north and two miles east of Lexington, Dawson County, where their home was near Rural School District 25. Irrigation was used for such crops as alfalfa, corn, and sugar beets.

During World War II, he served as a U.S. Deputy Marshall in California, where he assisted in the nation's program to relocate Japanese-Americans. In the 1960s, he retired from farming and moved with his second wife to Lexington. Upon her death in 1987, he lived in a small house until 1992 when he moved to an assisted living apartment at Park Avenue Estates. His health and memory remained good. After 1928, he owned season tickets to University of Nebraska football games, but at the age of 94, he gave up his driver's license along with his tickets. At the age of 105, he had colon surgery, and used a walker to attend meals in the cafeteria, and was an avid reader of newspapers and a television viewer. In 1999, he was a recipient of the Chevalier of the National Order of the Legion of Honor presented as part of French President Jacques Chirac's effort to recognize all surviving World War I veterans who helped free France. In November 2001, he gave a talk at the nearby Overton Senior Center on an occasion to honor all local veterans. He was an 83-year charter member of the American Legion, and belonged to Nebraska Posts in Scottsbluff, Oconto, and Lexington. Surviving relatives were two daughters, 17 grandchildren, and 5 great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under William F. Edmisten, Custer County, Wood River Township, and found son Jesse listed as age 6, born January 1894 in Nebraska. For history, see articles in November 14, 2001 Elm Creek *Beacon-Observer*, and the January 17, 2002 *Omaha World Herald* and the *Kearney Hub* and obituary of January 19, 2003, *Omaha Sunday World Herald*.

Edna M. Coleman Feddersen, age 109, was one of five children of Frank and Laura Gorsuch Coleman. Born August 11, 1893 west of Kenesaw in nearby Kearney County, she died October 16, 2002 at Gothenburg, Dawson County, with interment at Greenwood Cemetery in Lexington. When she was 16 years of age, the family moved to a farm northwest of Buffalo in Custer County, and she graduated from Oconto High School. Soon after, the family relocated to Venango in Perkins County, where she married Fred Feddersen in 1912, lived on a farm, and raised four sons.

After her husband became ill, the couple moved to Lexington, where her husband died in 1958. At the age of 108, she relocated to Gothenburg. A member of the First Presbyterian Church in Lexington, she loved people, and playing cards and making craft items. At her death, surviving relatives were four daughters-in-law, 10 grandchildren, 32 great grandchildren, 33 great great grandchildren, and five great great great grandchildren.

According to the 1900 Nebraska Soundex, under Frank Coleman, Kearney County, Lowell Township, was listed daughter Edna as age 6, born August 1893 in Nebraska. For obituaries, see October 17, 2002 *Kearney Hub* and October 19 *Lexington Clipper Herald*.

Virginia Bowden Galligher, age 109, was one of five children of Ernest and Ida Archer Bowden. Born September 29, 1890 at the small community of Kewanee northeast of Valentine, Cherry County, Nebraska, she died on November 16, 1999 at Valentine. After completing grade school, she lived with her parents, sewing and riding horses. Eventually, she moved to Johnstown in nearby Brown County to take employment as a store clerk, and after meeting James Galligher, the town barber, they were married on August 12, 1912 at Hot Springs, South Dakota. The couple then spent time traveling in Wyoming and South Dakota, as her husband dabbled in gold mining before moving back to barber at Wood Lake, then at Kilgore, both in

Cherry County. Virginia was a member of the Methodist Church, Eastern Star, and Rebekah Lodge. She also cooked and sewed and raised their two children. In 1964, James retired from barbering and carrying mail.

After her husband died in 1970, Virginia continued to enjoy crocheting and spending time with family and friends. As for her longevity, she reported that she never smoked, never drank alcohol, and didn't care much for pop. And she was quoted as saying, "I was always satisfied with whatever we had; it pleased me, I liked it, and I never thought I should have something better." Preferring that her family enjoy living their own lives, she continued residing in her home until she had an opportunity to sell it, then she moved to Pine View Good Samaritan Center. At her death, surviving relatives were daughter Erma Jane Hart of Denver, five grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren, and three great great grandchildren as well as two sisters.

An examination of the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Ernest Bowden, Cherry County, Kewanee Precinct, revealed daughter Virginia was born September 1890 in Nebraska. For history, see article in September 24, 1997 and obituary in November 24, 1999 *Valentine Midland News*.

Amy Kunze James, age 109, was the daughter of Ferdinand and Susan Long Kunze. Born September 11, 1891 on a farm in Smith County, Kansas near the Nebraska border, she died April 28, 2001 at her home in North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska. Interment was at the North Platte Cemetery. Her father was an immigrant from Prussia, her mother a native of Auburn, Illinois before they established their farm during the early years of the state's development. After Amy married Elmer E. James on April 5, 1910 at Bloomington, Franklin County, Nebraska, the couple moved to North Platte, where her husband worked for the Union Pacific Railroad. Because of the wide age differences of their six children: daughters Velma Snook and Hazel Jaehnke, and sons Robert, Harold, James, and William, there were school-age members in the family in the house they built in 1919 for almost 40 years.

Her husband retired in 1959, then died in 1965, but Amy continued to live in her home until the end of her life. In an interview, she recalled that longevity had existed in many generations of her family, and she never had any ailments. Additionally, she liked to "putter" around the house so much that "the time in the day seems to go so fast," and she took care of all the details for a large family gathering until well into her nineties; she also did not have people assist with housekeeping until her centenarian years. Her view for a successful long life was based on the philosophy of building a solid foundation, and she added, "Most everyone thinks they already know what they need to know. They don't. Listen to other people's experience. We have to live and learn. But you can also learn and live." At her death, she was survived by four children, 13 grandchildren, and some 25 great grandchildren.

An examination of the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under Elmer James, Lincoln County, North Platte, revealed his wife Amy was listed at age 28, born in Kansas. For history, see articles and obituary in September 4, 1991 and September 13, 2000 and May 2, 2001 *North Platte Telegraph*.

Lillian Thompson Kasselder, age 109, was one of 15 children of John and Lydia Smith Thompson. Born March 23, 1885 at Harlan, Shelby County, Iowa, she died June 4, 1994 in Albion, Boone County, Nebraska. Interment was in Pible Lake Cemetery. When she was a teenager, the family relocated to a farm near Cedar Rapids, Boone County, Nebraska, where Lillian was confirmed a Christian at a rural church. On May 17, 1904, she married Charles Kasselder at North Loup, then lived in Cumberland, Wyoming for a short time, where her husband worked in a coal mine, and she helped neighbors with midwife duties. They returned to Nebraska to live on a farm near Ericson, first in Greeley County, then in Wheeler County, where they built a sod house in 1910, then later a frame house. They raised seven children to adulthood: daughters Pearl, Florence Lichtenberg, Opal Timmer, Ruta Zimmerman, and sons Elwood, Garrett, and Paul.

Her husband died in 1963 at age 91. After Lillian and her daughter Pearl continued on the farm until 1967, they moved to an apartment in Albion. Talented in cooking, sewing, and crafts, she authored her autobiography *Life with Lillian*, and presented it to relatives on her 100th birthday. She reported that her husband had become ill with smallpox after their wedding, so they spent their honeymoon under quarantine. A unique member of the family was "Polly the parrot" for nearly 30 years, and it enjoyed telephone conversations. A member of the Presbyterian Church, Lillian attended church regularly in the communities

where she lived. After a fall in 1991, she moved with her daughter to the Wolf Memorial Good Samaritan Home. At her death, she was survived by two daughters, 17 grandchildren, six step-grandchildren, 26 great grandchildren, two step-great grandchildren, and 13 great great grandchildren.

The author verified her age by examining the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under John Thompson, Boone County, Cedar Precinct, and found daughter Lillie listed as age 15, born March 1885 in Iowa. For history, see article in April 29, 1994 *Lincoln Journal*, and obituaries in the June 8 and June 15, 1994 *Albion News*.

Colora Hale Keckler, age 109, was the youngest of four children of Henry and Carrie Warfield Hale. Born on February 28, 1891 at Pueblo, Colorado, she died on March 3, 2000 at Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska. At the age of six months, her family moved to Lincoln, settling in a house near the campus of the University of Nebraska, and observing the growth of the city at the turn of the 20th century. As a teenager, she began to work for the Lincoln Telephone Company as a long distance operator. It was there she met her husband, but after she was married to Arthur Keckler on April 16, 1913 at Omaha, she had to discontinue her job due to company policy. The couple settled in the Havelock area of Lincoln, and her husband held various positions with the telephone company for 45 years, including several years as an instructor for the district manager. He retired in 1955. They raised one child: daughter Marion Kantner.

After a marriage of 69 years, her husband died in late 1982. Colora then lived in Lincoln with her daughter for the remainder of her life, and continued keeping house, preparing meals, and canning tomatoes. She never smoked, and restricted her use of alcoholic beverages. Considered exceptionally independent, she did her own banking, and watched the stockmarket. For her 100th birthday, her daughter held a celebration at an exclusive restaurant, attended by the mayor. At age 105, she had a quiet dinner out with friends. At age 107, she wrote and delivered a three-page autobiographical statement at a Charter Day Banquet for an Eastern Star Chapter. But she disliked the attention over her age, and refused to grant interviews to the media. Colora was a member of Electra Chapter 8, 75 years, Temple Chapter 271, Daughters of the Nile, 50 years, and Heritage Presbyterian Church. At her death, surviving relatives included her daughter and five nieces and nephews.

The author's examination of the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Henry H. Hale, Lancaster County, Lincoln, North 10th Street, revealed daughter Colora was age 9, born February 1891 in Colorado. For history, see obituary and feature article in March 5 and March 7, 2000 *Lincoln Journal Star*.

Ethel Hensley Ruyle, age 109, was one of six children of James and Elizabeth Brown Hensley II. Born August 3, 1889 near Seneca, Nemaha County, Kansas, she died March 9, 1999 at Greeley, Weld County, Colorado, with interment at Sunset Memorial Gardens. While a young girl, the family moved to nearby Sabetha, then to a farm near Rockford, Gage County, Nebraska, where she and her husband-to-be attended school together. On January 8, 1908, she married George W. Ruyle at Auburn, Nemaha County, Nebraska, then the couple lived for about two years on a homestead near Edmonton, Alberta, Canada before returning to Gage County to farm near Beatrice, where they raised four children to adulthood: sons Glen, Marion, Orman, and Wayne.

In 1925, they relocated to Greeley, Colorado, where they operated a grocery store and a cream and egg receiving station. Four years later, they established Farmers Equity, a produce business, and operated it until retirement in 1949. After her husband died in 1966, she continued her membership in the Circle and Women's Christian Temperance Union through the church, and drove her automobile until age 94. She was assisted for nearly 30 years by her son Orman and his wife, and after injuring her hip, she moved to a retirement home, where she played dominoes with the other residents. When interviewed at the age of 105, she said, "There's no secret to long life. You just keep on going from day to day. I drink milk every day, and I've never been sick until I fell and broke my hip at age 103." She was also very conservative with her money, the family reported. Ethel remained very alert, even during her final two years in an assisted care home, for she maintained her Bible studies. At her death, surviving relatives included two sons, eight grandchildren, 20 great grandchildren, and 12 great great grandchildren.

According to her marriage certificate dated January 8, 1908 from Nemaha County, Nebraska, Ethel listed her age as 18 at the time, which verified her birth in 1889. For history, see article in August 3, 1994 *Lincoln Journal*, and obituary in March 11, 1999 *Greeley [CO] Tribune*.

Winnie Jackson Hatch Sharp, age 109, was one of 12 children of Ernest and Margaret Cheney Jackson. Born April 1, 1878 at La Crosse, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, she died November 27, 1987 at Loup City, Sherman County, Nebraska. Interment was in Evergreen Cemetery. At the age of 10 months, she traveled by covered wagon with her family to homestead near Phillips, Hamilton County, Nebraska, in a sod house. After completing the eighth grade, she worked as a cook at the Midway Hotel in nearby Aurora. On May 29, 1898 she married Rufus P. Hatch, and upon moving in 1911 to farm in Sherman County, they raised two children to adulthood: daughters Faye Couton and Pearl Wilkie. Her husband died in 1940.

She held several jobs in Nebraska and California, and for a time she and her husband managed a hotel in Loup City. Her second husband was George Sharp, who she married on July 27, 1950 at Giltner. After his death in 1962, she moved to West Side Park in Loup City, and in 1971 became the first resident of the newly opened Rose Lane Home, where she resided the remainder of her life. A 100-year member of the United Methodist Church, Winnie had received letters from three governors, two presidents, and the National Broadcasting Company, as well as special recognition from the Phillip Morris Magazine. She was known by her caregivers for being outspoken and a storyteller with a good memory, a regular participant in most of the nursing home's programs, and a player of Canasta twice a week. Her longevity was attributed to her faith and strong will, a family member reported. At her death, surviving relatives included a step-daughter, four grandchildren, 15 great grandchildren, and 13 great great grandchildren.

The author found in the 1885 Nebraska Census under Ernest Jackson, Hamilton county, Hamilton Precinct, daughter Winnie listed at age 7, born in Wisconsin. For history, see article in December 21, 1986 *Lincoln Sunday Journal Star*, and obituary in December 3, 1987 *Loup City Sherman County Times*.

John Sikel, age 109, was one of seven children of John V. and Elizabeth Kolanar Sikel, both of whom emigrated from Bohemia, now the Czech Republic. Born February 26, 1892 at Wilber, Saline County, Nebraska, he died June 20, 2001 at Faribault, Rice County, Minnesota, with interment at Cannonville United Methodist Cemetery in nearby Le Sueur County. His father had cut tombstones for a living, and had moved his family from Iowa in the 1880s to Wilber, Nebraska, where John's sister Mary was also born in 1889. When John, known as Jack, was five or six years of age, the family relocated from Wilber to Turtle Creek, Wisconsin, then by the turn of the 20th century, moved again to Le Sueur County, Minnesota, settling by 1901 in Waterville.

For about seven years, Jack attended schools in Montgomery and Waterville, and learned the English language. He spent time fishing, and at the age of 14 he built a boat, the first of more than 100 he constructed during his lifetime. On June 2, 1920 he married Doris Blulm at the Cannonville Church near Waterville. They had no children, and his wife died in 1970. For a living, Jack worked as an undertaker, then was engaged in commercial fishing and carpentry, including boat-making. He was also a mechanic at Miller's Garage. At the age of 102, he built a handicap ramp in front of the Cannonville Church, then lived the final three years of his life at St. Lucas Care Center in Faribault. At a celebration organized by David Crow, lay minister of the Cannonville Church, for Jack's 108th birthday, the subject of longevity was raised, and Jack replied, "God has been good to me. I've hardly been sick a day in my life." He also expressed gratitude to the staff at the Lucas Care Center. At his death, he was survived by several nieces and nephews.

An examination of the 1900 Minnesota Soundex under John Sikel, Le Sueur County, city of Montgomery, revealed son John was listed as born in February 1892 in Nebraska. For history, see lengthy article in March 7, 2001 *Wilber Republican*, and an article and an obituary in the March 2, 2000 and June 28, 2001 *Waterville, Minnesota, Lake Region Life*.

Lula Neligh Sokol, age 109, was one of five children of the late George and Ida Kesling Neligh. Born April 7, 1894 at West Point, Cuming County, Nebraska, she died on June 5, 2003 in Omaha, with interment at Hillcrest Cemetery. She grew up in the town where her father was a lathe machine operator, a policeman, and owner of a pool hall. After attending a nearby rural school, and reaching the seventh grade, she left home to work in Norfolk and later Omaha because of economic hard times. When she was age 19, her parents died, so she raised the rest of her family. On January 16, 1924 she married Otto Sokol at Papillion, Sarpy County. Her husband worked at the Paxton Garage and for the U.S. Corps of Engineers, while Lula was a saleslady in the flower department at Younkers. There were no children.

Her husband died in 1972. In a newspaper interview, she reported the secret to longevity is reading a lot of books. She devoted eight to ten hours a day to reading and completed three to four books per week. She stated, "I live in my books, and sometimes I almost think I'm a character in the book. I never get lonesome. And I'm so grateful to God that I have my mind and my eyes. You'll never find me in bed because I'm always up and going." In 1989, Lula entered Hickory Villa, an assisted living home. Surviving relatives included three nephews and three cousins.

An examination of the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under John G. Neligh, Cuming County, West Point, revealed daughter Lula was listed as age 6, born April 1894 in Nebraska. For an article, see April 8, 2001 *Omaha World Herald*, with obituary in June 8, 2003, *Omaha World Herald*.

Jessie Kramer Welling, age 109, was one of nine children of the late John and Mary Miller Kramer. Born June 10, 1894 at Sabula, Jackson County, Iowa, she died on January 25, 2004 at Omaha, with interment at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Omaha. She was raised on a farm at a time when horse-drawn machinery prevailed, and large vegetable gardens maintained. Known by her middle name Pearl, she helped her mother prepare and serve meals to a threshing crew of 22 men, and performed other tasks common to farming in the early part of the 20th century. She completed all grades at Pearl Creek Country School in Jackson County. On June 24, 1919 she married James C. Welling at Miller, Hand County, South Dakota, and taught rural schools in Hand County for five years. Her husband was an automobile mechanic at first, then studied at Detroit, Michigan to learn the trade of aviation engine mechanics. He barnstormed with Clyde Lee in the third Ford tri-motor plane ever built, and flew to air races nationwide and in Canada and Mexico, taking up passengers and parachute divers. Her husband attained the rank of Air Force major in World War II, and died in 1966.

The couple raised three children to adulthood: sons Arlyn, Gerald, and Glen. The family relocated to Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska in 1930, where Pearl was active in the Boy Scouts and served as Cub Scout den mother. She performed volunteer work at Immanuel Hospital, and at the USO during World War II. Her hobbies included gardening, church sewing clubs, and reading her Bible. "She is a marvelous inspiration for us all," reported her son Glen, and friends at her 107th birthday celebration concluded her longevity was due to never drinking alcohol and having a good heart. She recalled that Chicago Cubs baseball broadcaster Harry Caray announced 100th birthday greetings to her over the air. Jessie's surviving relatives included three sons, four grandchildren, six great grandchildren, and 13 great great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1900 Iowa Soundex under John Kramer, Jackson County, Iowa Township, and found daughter Pearl listed as age 6, born June 10, 1894 in Iowa. For history, see articles in June 11, 2001 and August 24, 2002 *Omaha World Herald*, and death notice in January 27, 2004 *Omaha World Herald*.

Nebraska's 108-Year Olds

To date, as of this updated version, at least 21 individuals with Nebraska connections have lived to the age of 108. Entries are presented in alphabetical order.

Ella Raasch Benne, age 108, was the daughter of Herman and Ella Lehman Raasch. One of three children, she was born December 22, 1882 in Stanton, Stanton County, Nebraska, and died December 27, 1990 at Columbus, Platte County, Nebraska, with interment at Stanton Cemetery. After attending the Stanton Public Schools, she married Fred Benne in 1906 at Stanton. They raised two children to adulthood:

daughter Elvira and son Leonard. After her husband died in 1926, she worked fulltime in a drygoods store and part-time as a telephone operator. She also loved maintaining a garden, with canning and baking of food, and crocheting. When her children attended college in Lincoln, she relocated to that city to operate a boarding home for female students, and bought a cafe which her son managed. She furnished the cafe daily with fresh baked pies.

After her daughter became a home economics teacher at Columbus High School in Columbus, Ella relocated to Columbus, where she continued to lead a very active life. In 1959, she began exhibiting her homemaking crafts at the Platte County Fair, took care of her home and garden, along with canning of vegetables, fruit, and preserves, and was a member of the Immanuel Lutheran Church. In 1984 she became a resident of Morys Haven Nursing Home in Columbus. At her death, surviving relatives included three grandchildren, eight great grandchildren, and six great great grandchildren.

The 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Herman Raasch, Stanton County, Stanton Precinct, city of Stanton, revealed daughter Ella was age 17, born December 1882 in Nebraska. For history, see "Tales of Platte County" in January 17, 1988 *Columbus Telegram*, and an obituary in the December 28, 1990 issue.

Ida Banner Coatney, age 108, was the daughter of Stephen and Martha Long Banner, born March 25, 1871 at Pound, Dickenson County, Virginia. She died December 24, 1979 at Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska, with interment at Lincoln Memorial Park. Along with her parents, she relocated to the town of Endicott, Jefferson County, Nebraska before the turn of the century, then on June 20, 1900 she married Edward Coatney, and they established their home in Falls City, Richardson County. An avid gardener and reader, she and her husband raised four children to adulthood: daughters Wilma Amsler and Ethel Rhoades, and sons W. E. and Dr. G. Robert.

After her husband died November 13, 1957, she remained in Falls City, where she was the oldest charter member of the First Baptist Church. When her health declined, she became a resident of Tabitha Nursing Home in Lincoln. At her death, surviving relatives included four children, seven grandchildren, and 10 great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Stephen Banner, Jefferson County, Endicott Precinct, town of Endicott, and listed was daughter Ida, age 28, born March 1872 in Virginia. The 1920 Nebraska Soundex, taken in January of that year, some two months prior to her birthday, revealed under E. E. Coatney, Richardson County, Falls City, that wife Ida was age 48, born in Virginia. For history, see obituary in December 26, 1979 *Falls City Journal*.

Mary Chaney Criss, age 108, was one of at least two children of William and Elizabeth Nation Chaney. Born on March 29, 1872 at Clarinda, Page County, Iowa, she died March 29, 1980 at St. Paul, Howard County, Nebraska, with interment at Elmwood Cemetery in St. Paul. She married William T. Criss on March 21, 1890 at Rockport, Atchison County, Missouri, then the couple lived in Missouri and Iowa before arriving in Nebraska in 1908, where her husband died on December 17, 1912. She then settled in St. Paul in July 1915, where she raised her six children to adulthood: daughters Mamie Dvoracek and Fern Rosenau, and sons Glenn, John, Louis, and a fourth son who lost his life in a Japanese prison camp during World War II.

A member of the First United Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, she was also a Gold Star Mother of the American Legion Auxiliary, Carl Mogensen Post 119. In her later years, she lived with her daughter Mamie in St. Paul, then after age 103 resided at the Long Term Care Division of the Howard County Community Hospital, where she was active enough to transport herself in a wheelchair. At her death, Mary's surviving relatives included two daughters, six grandchildren, 23 great grandchildren, and 18 great great grandchildren.

According to the 1920 Nebraska Soundex for Howard County, St. Paul, Mary Criss was listed as age 41, born in Iowa. For an obituary, see April 2, 1980 St. Paul *Phonograph-Herald*.

Bee Rebecca Janet Richards Fisher, age 108, was one of three children of George A. and Etta Fuller Richards. Born April 16, 1894 at Prairie Center, Buffalo County, Nebraska, she died June 22, 2002 at Clearfield, Davis County, Utah, with interment in Memorial Gardens of the Wasatch at North Ogden. While growing up on her father's farm located 12 miles north of Kearney in Buffalo county, she attended elementary school, completing the 8th grade, then relocated to Kearney in 1920 when her father quit farming.

On October 14, 1920 she married Percy B. Fisher at Kearney, then the couple lived in Ravenna, where her husband was an auto mechanic. In 1931, they moved to LaGrange, Goshen County, Wyoming, and there her husband owned and operated the Fisher Garage. In 1941, the relocated to the Ogden, Utah area, where her husband became an aircraft welder at Hill Air Force Base, then later on a power ground equipment operator. A year later, the family moved to Layton, where Bee did babysitting in her home, liked to crochet, and later performed volunteer work for the Clearfield Baptist Community Church when the family relocated in 1947 to Clearfield. The couple raised four children to adulthood: sons Robert J. H. Gene, and Dale R. Fisher, and daughter Ruth Wright.

After her husband retired in 1958, they organized the Senior Citizen's Heritage Center a few years later where Bee did volunteer work for many years. Her husband died in 1969, and Bee continued to live in her home, where she enjoyed gardening and her flowers. A charter member of her church, she was a Sunday School teacher, a president of the Martha Circle Women's Society, and a life member of the American Legion Ladies Auxiliary Unit 139. In November 1996, she entered Bee Hive Homes Assisted Living in Clearfield, where she continued in excellent health until about a year before her death, when she used a walker and had cataract surgery. Her son Gene attributed her longevity to religious beliefs and taking one day at a time. At her death, Bee was survived by two sons, a daughter, 11 grandchildren, 23 great grandchildren, and 11 great great grandchildren.

The author verified her age by examining the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under George Richards, Buffalo County, Thornton township, and found daughter B.R.J. listed as age 6, born April 1894 in Nebraska. Marriage records for Buffalo County on microfilm housed at the Nebraska State Historical Society in Lincoln reveal Bee listed herself as age 26 on October 14, 1920. For history, see obituary in June 26, 2002 *Kearney/NE/Hub* and article in *The Crete News*, October 2, 2002, p. C-1.

Clara Dawson Briley Fountain, at least age 108, was born of a slave mother in Culpepper County, Virginia. Her father was a plantation master. Date of birth is unclear, though reported as May 7, 1801. Clara died on September 9, 1922 in Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas, with interment at Highland Cemetery in Wichita. According to her obituary, she married at the age of 15 Andrew Gath, one of her master's slaves, but he died shortly after their marriage. Later she was married to Nelson Briley, who died while yet a slave, but the couple raised several children, two of whom served in the Civil War. One son Nelson, born in 1841, and a Civil War veteran, died on December 23, 1920 at Wichita. After the Emancipation Proclamation was signed on January 1, 1863, she moved with her children to Charleston, South Carolina. A few years later she moved to Louisville, Kentucky, and was married to Harry Fountain. About 1885, she relocated with her son Nelson and his family to Hastings, Nebraska, where she resided until May 1918. Nelson D. Briley, a veterinarian, had a wife and seven children.

In Wichita, Clara Fountain resided with her granddaughter Hester and her husband James W. Johnson until she died. She had learned to smoke a pipe at the age of 12, and attributed her long life to simplicity of habits, hard work, and Christian faith. At her death, she was survived by 19 grandchildren and 10 great great grandchildren. One grandson, Dr. Noral D. Briley, born October 7, 1870 at Bowling Green, Kentucky, died later on August 25, 1933 at Wichita. Among the great grandchildren were Cecil O. Briley, who later died in 1959 in Kansas City, and Raymond H. Briley.

The difficulty of verification of ages reported in records and in newspaper accounts and obituaries is clear from Clara Dawson Briley Fountain's longevity report. The author attempted to verify her age, and found in the 1870 Indiana Census, Clark County, Charlestown Township, under Harry Fountain, age 55, a farmer born in Kentucky, wife Clara was listed at age 57, housekeeper born in Kentucky, along with three children, including Noil Riley, age 17, born in Kentucky. However, in the 1880 Indiana Census, Clark

County, Charlestown Township, under Nelson Brierly, age 39, farmhand born in Kentucky, there was a listing of mother Susan, age 80, born in Virginia. From the 1900 Nebraska Soundex, Adams County, city of Hastings, under Nelson Briley, age 58, born in Kentucky, there was listed Clara Fountain, age 99, born March 1801 in Virginia. And in the 1910 Federal Census, Adams County, City of Hastings, under Nelson Briley, age 68, born in Kentucky, listed was mother Clara Fountain, age 108, born in Virginia. In the 1920 Kansas Soundex, Sedgwick County, Wichita, under James W. Johnson, there was listed grandmother Clara Fountain, age 118, born in Virginia. And in Clara's 1922 obituary, it was stated "a record of her birth was sent to her a few years ago by her former master's children, and this record verifies the statement that she was the oldest citizen of the state of Kansas and among the oldest in the United States."

For history, consult November 23, 1907, May 24, 1911, and May 7, 1918 *Hastings Daily Tribune* articles, and the section titled "Negroes in Adams County" in Dorothy Weyer Creigh, *Adams County, The Story 1872-1972* (Adams County, Nebraska – Hastings Centennial Commission, 1972). For an obituary, see *Wichita Negro Star*, September 15, 1922.

Ida Drummond Gewecke, age 108, was the youngest of six children of Alan and Nancy Hubbart Drummond. Born November 18, 1886 near Ohiowa, Fillmore County, she died March 9, 1995 at Geneva, Fillmore County, with interment at Geneva Public Cemetery. After attending nearby Dudley Country School, she graduated in 1907 from Ohiowa High School, then worked as a store clerk, followed by time as a clerk at the Strang Post Office. She also helped the family with harvesting. On May 11, 1920 she married William Gewecke, and they lived in Ohiowa, but later spent summers in Strang and winters in York. Her husband worked as a blacksmith, and was employed by the railroad, while Ida was a fulltime homemaker and tended to her fruit and vegetable gardens. The couple raised one child: son Earle.

After her husband died in 1971, Ida lived in York fulltime. In August 1989 she moved to Heritage Nursing Home in Geneva. Her favorite hobbies were crocheting, knitting, and reading. Her family was known for longevity, as her mother lived to age 93 and her great grandfather to age 104. At her death, surviving relatives included her son, five grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren, and eight great great grandchildren.

According to the 1900 Nebraska Soundex, under Allen Drummond, Fillmore County, Chelsea Township, daughter Ida was listed as age 13, born November 1886 in Nebraska. For history see article in November 15, 1994 *Lincoln Journal*, and an obituary in the March 15, 1995 *Geneva Nebraska Signal*.

Ida Morgan Kiplinger, age 108, was one of three children of William and Ellen Vervallin Morgan. Born June 21, 1867 at Evansville, Rock County, Wisconsin, she died January 11, 1976 at Holdrege, Phelps County, Nebraska. Interment was at Prairie Home Cemetery. After arriving in Holdrege at the age of 18, Ida was organist at the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1888, she married Frederick W. Kiplinger, the minister's son, and they moved to nearby Loomis, where her husband was a banker. They raised three children: daughters Aline Schirk and Ruth Sylar, and son Ralph.

After her husband died in 1935, she returned to Holdrege, where in 1958 she moved to Christian Homes Health Care Center. When she reached age 100, messages were received from U.S. President Lyndon Johnson and Nebraska Governor Norbert Tiemann. In 1975, she was one of four centenarians at Christian Homes to be awarded the Nebraska Bicentennial medallion. At her death, surviving relatives included one daughter, three grandchildren, and eight great grandchildren.

An examination of the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Frederick W. Kiplinger, Phelps County, Land Township, revealed wife Ida was age 32, born June 1867 in Wisconsin. For history, see articles in June 21, 1974 *Holdrege Daily Citizen* and April 3, 1975 *Lincoln Journal*. For an obituary, see January 12, 1976 *Holdrege Daily Citizen*.

Mary Johnson Locke, age 108, was the daughter of Thomas and Mary Deverill Johnson. One of 11 children, she was born January 4, 1886 at Ida Grove, Ida County, Iowa, and died January 22, 1994 at Kimball, Kimball County, Nebraska. Interment was at Cedar Hill Cemetery at Bazile Mills, Knox County, Nebraska. Her family had relocated by the turn of the 20th century to a farm east of Center, Knox County,

Nebraska, where Mary worked at the Knox County Courthouse and later for a lumber company. On December 27, 1923 she married George Locke at Sioux City, Iowa, then they lived at Belden, Cedar County, and later at Osceola, Polk County, Nebraska, where she helped raise her husband's two sons. She herself did not have children.

After her husband's death in 1953, she sold the home in Osceola, and lived with her nieces, nephews, and other relatives over the next 36 years at locations in California, Nebraska, and South Dakota. During that time, she traveled by Greyhound Bus, and when she did that after her 100th birthday, a television station at Fremont, Nebraska found her an intriguing person. In 1989, she moved to the Kimball County Manor to be near her sister, a resident there. At her death, surviving relatives included two step-daughters and seven step-grandchildren.

The author found in the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Thomas C. Johnson, Knox County, Harrison Township, a listing of daughter May E, age 14, born January 1886 in Iowa. For history, see obituary in January 27, 1994 *Kimball Western Nebraska Observer*.

Emma Bauerle Metzger Lutjeharms, age 108, was one of four children of John and Barbara Walz Bauerle, who had emigrated from Germany to their Nebraska homestead just six weeks before Emma's birth. Born April 6, 1880 in a sod house near Naponee but across the county line into Harlan County, she died December 27, 1988 at Alma, Harlan County, with interment in Alma Cemetery. After her formal schooling ended with the fourth grade, she worked for neighboring farm families, and was a member of the Lutheran Church at the age of 12. Emma married John N. Metzger on June 9, 1897 at the home of her parents near Naponee, and led a farm life. The couple raised two children: daughter Julia Artz and son Lawrence.

After her husband's death in 1926, she moved to Alma two years later. On December 8, 1937, she married her second husband William Lutjeharms, who died in 1945. She traveled widely during her married years, belonged to the Peace Lutheran Church, and was a charter member of the neighborhood Good Citizens Club. The oldest Lutheran in Nebraska at the time of her death, she received birthday greetings from U.S. President Ronald Reagan. She made her first airplane flight at the age of 80, and her last driver's exam was taken at the age of 92. Emma resided at her Alma home until 1978 when she moved to the Colonial Villa Good Samaritan Center. At her death, surviving relatives included five grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren, and 33 great great grandchildren.

The author found in the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under John Metzger, Harlan County, Washington Township, wife Emma listed at age 20, born April 1880 in Nebraska. For history, see obituaries in the December 29, 1988 *Lincoln Journal* and the January 5, 1989 *Alma Harlan County Journal*.

Henry C. Maranville, age 108, was one of seven children of Eli and Christina Maranville. Born April 26, 1872 at Lewistown, Fulton County, Illinois, he died August 10, 1980 at Benkelman, Dundy County, Nebraska, with interment in Benkelman Cemetery. When he was age 14, his family moved to a homestead near Imperial, Chase County, Nebraska. He attended a one-room country school a few months each year, worked on his father's farm, and took part in the Cripple Creek, Colorado gold rush. He then re-enrolled in primary school at the age of 19. Henry married Mary Myrtle Goddard on May 6, 1900 and they raised six children to adulthood: daughters Darlene Allred, Ethel Boles, and Goldie Harper and sons Theodore, Calvin, and Lloyd. For about five years they lived on the family farm near Lewistown, Illinois, then in 1918 returned to Nebraska to purchase a farm east of Benkelman.

After the death of his wife in 1963, Henry lived with his daughter Ethel at Mesa, Arizona, but in 1978, he entered the Sarah Ann Hester Memorial Home at Benkelman, after taking a fall while raking his yard. His hobbies included playing checkers and going fishing, and he confessed to drinking whiskey and chewing tobacco, which he believed contributed to his longevity. Despite some physical difficulties, he was able to participate in answering questions when interviewed two months before his death. Henry was a lifelong member of the Church of Christ. Surviving relatives included five siblings, 12 grandchildren, 24 great grandchildren, and 10 great great grandchildren.

An examination of the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Henry C. Maranville, Chase County, Valley Precinct, revealed he was age 27, born April 1872 in Illinois. For history, see June 22, 1980 *Lincoln Sunday Journal & Star*, and obituary in August 21, 1980 *Benkelman Post and News-Chronicle*.

Hazel Askey Morgan, age 108, was the youngest of four children of John and Luzetta Moyer Askey. Born September 20, 1891 near Biddick, Montgomery County, Iowa, she died December 5, 1999 at Ainsworth, Brown County, Nebraska. Interment was at the Bassett Memorial Park Cemetery. After growing up in the Red Oak, Iowa area, she married on July 30, 1913 Merrill E. Morgan at the home of her parents. They settled on a farm south of nearby Elliott, and after several years relocated to a farm near O'Neill, Holt County, Nebraska, where in 1923 her husband became seriously injured, ending their farming years. It was in 1933 that the family moved to Bassett in Brown County, and her husband served as the Standard Oil agent for the area until 1952, when he became judge of Rock County, presiding in that capacity until his death in 1956. They raised three children to adulthood: daughter Betty Madison and sons Herbert and Ross.

Hazel continued her quilting and embroidering, and maintained her interest in flowers. After her daughter died in 1969, she kept her faith in the goodness of the world. She was a lifelong member of the Methodist Church, a 50-year member of the Eastern Star, and belonged to several neighborhood clubs. At Hazel's death, surviving relatives included two children, 14 grandchildren, 36 great grandchildren, and 14 great great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1900 Iowa Soundex under John Askey, Montgomery County, Sherman Township, and found daughter Hazel listed as age 8, born September 1891 in Iowa. For history, see obituary in December 15, 1999 *Ainsworth Star Journal*.

Rozena Runyan Coffman Mortensen, age 108, was one of six children of Stephen and Mary Radford Runyan. Born December 13, 1883 near Mason City, Custer County, Nebraska, she died June 21, 1992 at Broken Bow, Custer County, with interment in Mason City Cemetery. After spending her youth with her parents, she was married on April 14, 1904 to Henry "Harry" Coffman at Mason City, and lived on a farm northeast of Mason City. From 1916 to 1918, they homesteaded in Sioux County and then Box Butte County before returning to the farm near Mason City. The couple raised seven children to adulthood: daughters Dora Krecji, Grace Coffman, Harriet Slagle, Mary Evelyn Woolsey, Viola Krecji, and sons Douglas and Henry.

She recalled in a newspaper interview that the family "often walked 2 miles into Mason City to go to the store and church," and used cow chips for fuel. Christmas was an important holiday, and gifts often included old clothes from families who had more than her family. Her husband died in 1939, then she was married on November 13, 1944 to Fred Mortensen, who died six months later. Rosie then lived with her sons until their deaths in 1979, when she lived in a home alone next door to a daughter, and maintained an active lifestyle, including membership in the First Baptist Church and the Women's Circle. At the age of 103, she entered Heritage Hall Nursing Home in nearby Broken Bow. Her longevity was attributed to her sense of humor, a good appetite, and reasonable lifestyle, and she reported, "singing around a piano always was better entertainment than drinking and carousing when she was young." At her death, Rosie's surviving relatives included two children, 19 grandchildren, 43 great grandchildren, 34 great great grandchildren, and one great great great grandchild.

The author examined the marriage record with Custer County, and found that on April 14, 1904 she was listed as age 20. For history, see article in December 24, 1990 *Kearney Hub*, and an obituary in June 29, 1992 Broken Bow *Custer County Chief*.

Rose Guggenmos Nelson, age 108, was one of ten children of the late Joseph and Caroline Steiner Guggenmos, immigrants from the German region of Bavaria. Her father was a brewmaster. Born September 11, 1894, she died February 23, 2003 at Omaha. She attended Vinton Elementary School, then was a bookkeeper and later an office manager. On August 6, 1926 she married Adolph E. Nelson at Papillion, Sarpy County. Her husband owned a grocery store, was a car salesman, and ran for election as city

commissioner in 1950. Both worked hard, traveled nationwide, and enjoyed social occasions. There were no children.

After her husband died in 1952, she worked at Natelson's, a ladies ready-to-wear store. She retired in 1960, lived in her apartment, and liked to stay at home, reading books and working crossword puzzles. According to her nephew Jack Guggenmos, she was rarely ill, and took life in stride. Her family longevity is evident in that her mother lived to age 92, one sister to age 91, and another who reached age 87. In 1993, Rose entered Montclair Nursing Home. Surviving relatives included two nephews.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Joseph Guggenmos, Douglas County, Omaha, 1st Street, and listed was daughter Rose, born September 1894 in Nebraska. See obituary in February 25, 2003 *Omaha World Herald*.

Wayland M. Newell, age 108, was the son of Myron and Lydia Basett Newell. Born September 15, 1846 at Volney, New York, he died September 17, 1954 at Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska, with burial in Des Moines, Iowa. His father was a Baptist minister, and the family moved to Illinois when Wayland was age 14, then to Iowa in 1877. Wayland worked for the Des Moines Street Railway Company, and later became president of the People's Fuel and Supply Company, retiring at age 84. He and his wife Caroline, born in Wisconsin, raised six children.

He relocated in 1949 to Omaha to live with his daughter Mrs. Ada L. Rice, and soon after at the Jonas Baptist Rest Home. At the age of 104 he was advised to give up gardening, but adopted the hobby of basket weaving, and a year later won a contest. That was the same year he emerged from major surgery and amazed his doctors with his recovery. A nonconformist, he possessed a caustic wit. At his death, surviving relatives included two children.

An examination of the 1880 Iowa Soundex under Wayland M. Newell, Polk County, Des Moines Township, revealed he was listed as age 33, born in New York. For an article see *Lincoln Sunday Journal & Star*, May 30, 1954, and an obituary was published in the September 18, 1954 *Omaha World Herald*.

Clara Buethe Peters, age 108, was one of seven children of Carl and Wilhelmina Geistfeld Buethe. Born June 13, 1883 on a farm southwest of Tecumseh, Johnson County, Nebraska, she died January 31, 1992 at Tecumseh, with interment in St. Peter's Lutheran Cemetery at Elk Creek. As a youth she attended Rural School District 27 and St. Peter's Lutheran School. On June 27, 1906 she married Gustav R. Peters at Elk Creek. They established their home on the Peters family homestead south of Tecumseh, and raised five children to adulthood: daughters Alma Carmine, Eleanor Gottula, and Ruth Hurst, and sons Orval and Raymond.

After retirement in 1952, Clara and Gustav moved to Tecumseh, where her husband died in 1973 after almost 66 years of marriage. Clara liked flowers and gardening, and wrote letters to friends and relatives. At the age of 90, she took her first airplane ride to visit her daughter in South Carolina, and lived in her own home until age 103, when she moved to the Tecumseh Care Center. There, she participated in various activities, including music programs. Clara belonged to the Ladies Aid at St. Peter's Church, the Long Branch Home Extension Club, and the Women's Club. In 1988, she served as grand marshal for the Johnson County Courthouse Centennial. As for her longevity, she believed her happy life was due to her Christian upbringing. At her death, surviving relatives included four children, 10 grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren, and seven great great grandchildren.

According to the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Carl F. Buethe, Johnson County, Todd Creek Precinct, daughter Clara was listed as age 16, born June 1883 in Nebraska. For history, see obituaries in February 3, 1992 *Lincoln Journal* and February 6, 1992 *Tecumseh Chieftain*.

Veva M. Russell, age 108, was a teacher for at least 38 years. One of four children of Samuel and Mary Wythers Russell, she was born on January 15, 1885 near Exeter, Fillmore County, Nebraska; she died on February 15, 1993 at Minden, Kearney County, with interment in the Minden Cemetery. During her early years, she attended school at Exeter and Merna, Custer County, and graduated in 1904 from Hastings High School. Over a period of years she attended Hastings College, with some work at Kearney State, and

graduated from Hastings College in 1912, where she won first prize in a Biblical oratorical contest. Years later, she remembered that she was “very proud of the scholarship she had earned for academic excellence.” Upon graduation, her first teaching position was at Prague, Oklahoma, followed by elementary school employment at Butler County and at Wood River, Hall County, in Nebraska. In 1924, she began in Minden as a sixth grade teacher at East Elementary School, where the future U.S. Senator Carl T. Curtis then served as principal for a brief time. Veva continued as elementary teacher until her retirement in 1950.

She did not marry, but she kept active by taking summer school courses at colleges in Colorado and Nevada, and she was not only a member of Westminster United Presbyterian Church but also Chapter N, P.E.O., an organization for professional and educated women, serving actively for over 60 years. She was also a secretary for a women’s association, and during her retirement years worked as an assistant in the Jensen Memorial Library at Minden for several years. Veva lived during her years in Minden with her sister until her death in 1965, then lived at home alone until a leg injury at age 100, after which she resided at Kearney County Community Hospital the remaining eight years. One of her hobbies was writing poetry, and she was a fan of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln football team. As for her longevity, she lost her mother as a small child, but was raised by a stepmother who “took mother’s place in a way.” Teaching was her top priority the majority of her life. At her death, surviving relatives included two nieces, and several cousins,

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Samuel J. Russell, Custer County, Kilfoil Township, town of Merna, which listed daughter Veva as age 13, born January 1887 in Nebraska. She was age 19 when she entered Hastings College in 1904, according to records in the Registrar’s Office. For history, see articles in January 21, 1992 and January 19, 1993 *Minden Courier*, and an obituary in the February 23, 1993 issue.

Mary Evers Saathoff, age 108, was one of five children of Henry and Antonia Bettiker Evers. Born March 16, 1884 at Plattsmouth, Cass County, Nebraska, she died October 22, 1992 at Plainview, Pierce County, Nebraska, with interment in Pleasant View Cemetery. Her father had immigrated from Germany, her mother from Vienna, Austria, and they settled in Cass County. When Mary was eight years old, the family moved to a farm northeast of Plainview in Eden Valley, and her schooling was completed through the fifth grade. On February 11, 1904 she married Fred Saathoff at her parents' home. The couple lived on a farm nearby, and raised two daughters to adulthood: Alyce Hladik and Edna Lenhoff. In 1928, her husband retired, and they moved to Plainview, where he was a member of the city council, school board, and hospital board.

After her husband died in 1966, Mary continued to live at home until age 101, continuing to do her own work and maintaining a small garden. In 1986, she moved to Plainview Manor. At Mary’s death, surviving relatives included two grandchildren, five great grandchildren, eight great great grandchildren, one nephew, and two nieces.

According to the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Henry J. Evers, Pierce County, Thompson Precinct, daughter Mary was listed as age 16, born March 1884 in Nebraska. For history, see her husband’s obituary in the September 14, 1966 *Plainview News*, and Mary’s obituary in the October 28, 1992 issue.

John G. Trupp, age 108, was one of seven children of George and Katrinna Lapp Trupp. Born October 3, 1890 in Frank, Russia, he died July 4, 1999 at Hastings, Adams County, Nebraska, with interment at Sunset Memorial Gardens. At an early age, he moved with his family to eastern Colorado, then in 1898 to Hastings. However, the family spent the summers in western Nebraska, Colorado and other states, thinning, hoeing, and harvesting sugar beets. While in Hastings, John attended school through the third grade, and later took a job making horse collars, then in 1929 he worked as a shipping clerk with Sidles Automotive until his retirement in 1956.

He was married in 1914 to Mollie Lissman in Nelson, Nuckolls County, and they raised five children to adulthood: daughters Anna Downey and Bonnie Scheele, and sons Marvin, Milen, and Wilson. His wife died in 1969 after a lengthy illness, but he continued to live in his home until age 105, mowing his own lawn and doing errands on a three-wheeled bicycle. Then he moved to Good Samaritan Village-Perkins

Pavilion, and continued his membership in the New York Avenue Congregational Church. A longtime friend reported that “he was a very gentle, quiet Christian man” who did not get upset about anything. At his death, surviving relatives included four children, 12 grandchildren, 12 great grandchildren, and two great great grandchildren.

An examination of the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under George Trupp, Adams County, city of Hastings, revealed son John was age 10, born October 1889 in Russia. For articles and obituary, see October 1, 1994 and July 6, 1999 *Hastings Tribune*.

Theresa Vogel Walter, age 108, was one of nine children of the late Frank and Carolyn Kreutzmuller Vogel. Born on December 22, 1893 at West Point, Cuming County, Nebraska, she died April 18, 2002 at O’Neill. She attended the Guardian Angel School at West Point through the eighth grade. Then at the age of 16 she relocated to a farm in Holt County near Ewing and Clearwater, where she worked as a housekeeper for several families. On November 24, 1914, she married carpenter George Walter in Holt County, near her home. They raised three children to adulthood: daughters Sophia Cork, Imelda Box, and son Martin.

Her husband died in 1978 after their marriage of 63 years, but she continued to live on the farm until 1989, when she moved to the O’Neill Nursing Center, where she was honored as Resident of the Month on her 100th birthday. Theresa enjoyed belonging to the Holt Happy Homemakers Extension Club, the Christian Mothers, and the Catholic Church Choir. Among her other activities were crocheting, music and singing, and writing letters to family and friends. Surviving relatives included three children, 13 grandchildren, 34 great grandchildren, and 27 great great grandchildren.

According to the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under George J. Walter, Holt County, wife Theresa is listed as age 28, born in Nebraska. For history, see article in April 19, 2001 O’Neill *Holt County Independent*. For an obituary, see April 25, 2002 *Holt County Independent*.

Reka Rademacher Woods, age 108, was one of nine children of John and Anna (maiden name unverified) Rademacher. Born on November 14, 1886 near Glenvil, Clay County, Nebraska, she died on May 14, 1995 at Hastings, Adams County, Nebraska, with interment in Blue Valley Cemetery near Ayr, Adams County. At present, Reka’s great great nephew Dan L. Woods is conducting research to find the maiden name of Reka’s mother because the name listed on the marriage certificate is not legible. At about the age of six, Reka suffered the loss of her father, so at some point she relocated to the area of Raymond, Kandiyohi County, Minnesota to live with relatives. On September 9, 1908 she married Ray L. Woods at Pauline, Adams County, Nebraska, where her husband operated a general store. The couple then farmed in the Glenvil area and in other areas of Adams County, and spent some time in Holt County, Nebraska. They raised three children to adulthood: sons Cecil, Chester, and Dexter.

After her husband died in 1954, she resided with her children until about 1969 when she entered Good Samaritan Villa Grace in Hastings. Reka belonged to a church in Pauline, enjoyed gardening, and said to relatives her garden had the “best strawberries you ever tasted.” A relative reported her longevity could be attributed to hard work and having a great sense of humor. At her death, surviving relatives included three grandchildren, five great grandchildren, and five great great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under Ray L. Woods, Holt County, and found wife Reka listed as age 35, born in Nebraska. Her marriage certificate listed her age as 22 on September 9, 1908. For history, see obituary in May 15, 1995 *Hastings Tribune*.

Matilda Herschberger Zimmerman, age 108, was the daughter of the late John and Emily Fischer Herschberger. Born January 13, 1894 near White Cloud, Brown County, Kansas, she died October 8, 2002 at Falls City, with interment at Steele Cemetery. She relocated with her parents to Richardson County, Nebraska, and attended Fort Hazel School through the 8th grade. Her father died while she was young, so her mother remarried to Augustus Tubach, and her sister Laura Tubach Jones was born. On September 23, 1914 she married Walter J. Zimmerman at Rulo, Richardson County, Nebraska, where they farmed nearby until 1940 when they moved to the town of Rulo, and her husband worked in carpentry. During the 1940s,

Matilda was a cook at nearby Camp Rulo. The couple raised one child to adulthood: daughter Loreena Woolen.

After her husband died in 1948, she moved to the Washington, Kansas area to live with her daughter. There she kept a garden and worked in a cafe and continued her enjoyment of animals and hobby of fishing. About 1980 her daughter died, so Matilda returned to Falls City, living in the Eastview Apartments until 1995 when she entered Midland Villa, where a celebration of her 107th birthday was held in 2001, the same year she had surgery to remove cataracts from her eyes. Her surviving relatives included a grandson, one great grandchild, one niece, the wife of a nephew, and one second cousin.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under John Herschberger, Richardson County, Jefferson Precinct, and listed was daughter Tillie as age 6, born February 1894 in Kansas. For history, see article and obituary in January 19, 2001 and October 11, 2002 *Falls City Journal*.

Nebraska's 107-Year Olds

In the history of the state, at least 41 individuals with Nebraska connections have lived to the age of 107. Entries are presented in alphabetical order.

Mary Lauber Akers, age 107, was the oldest of six children of Frederick and Christiane Frederike Aeckerle Lauber, both immigrants from Germany. Born November 3, 1893 at Strang, Fillmore County, Nebraska, she died April 1, 2001 at Hastings, Adams County, with interment at Greenwood Cemetery in Franklin, Franklin County. At the age of 12, the family moved from their farm in Fillmore County to settle in Turkey Creek Township near Naponee in Franklin County. A few days after moving, her father died from pneumonia, so the children helped their mother with caring for the livestock, gardening, and canning of vegetables and fruits. Mary completed the eighth grade at nearby Woody School, which also served as a church her family attended regularly. Her mother, who was married to Mr. Herman, and had two more children, died in 1941.

On September 14, 1916 she married her neighbor Andrew Elmer Akers in a double wedding ceremony with her sister at Herrington, Dickinson County, Kansas. The couple homesteaded for a few years near Arthur, Arthur County, Nebraska, then moved to the Akers family farm south of Naponee, where they raised seven children to adulthood: daughters Wilma Ecce, Leah Ritchie, and sons Glenn, John, Lyle, Orval, Virgil. In 1942, they moved to Franklin, and all five sons served in World War II. After her husband took his own life in 1954, Mary worked for several families in the Franklin and Hastings areas, and was employed briefly at the Girls Correctional School at Geneva. In 1967, she moved to Hastings, where she worked as a cook at Good Samaritan Village for 19 years, then she lived at Sunnyside Home for 11 years, before moving to Good Samaritan Village as a resident.

Mary was a member of the United Methodist Church at Franklin for over 75 years, belonged to the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and volunteered at the Good Samaritan Village. She enjoyed quilting and crocheting, and listening to books on tape and sports broadcasts on radio. At the age of 105, she voted in the November election, and at age 106 her family arranged for 106 birthday greetings from all over the nation. As for her longevity, Mary credited hard work, and stated, "I always stay busy. I live day-by-day, taking things just one at a time." At her death, surviving relatives included six children, 22 grandchildren, 36 great grandchildren, and 10 great great grandchildren.

An examination of the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Fred Lauber, Fillmore County, Hamilton Township, revealed daughter Mary was listed as age 6, born November 1893 in Nebraska. For history, see articles in October 29, 1993 and November 3, 1998 and November 9, 1999 *Hastings Tribune* and obituary in April 3, 2001 issue.

Mary Chvatal Bartosh, age 107, was one of eight children of Anton and Mary Mahlik Chvatal, both of Czech descent. Born November 17, 1885 near Prague, Saunders County, Nebraska, she died September 3, 1993 in Fremont, Dodge County, Nebraska, with interment in the National Cemetery at Prague. She was baptized in St. John's Catholic Church, and helped her family. On January 15, 1907 she was married to

Frank Bartosh at nearby Wahoo, and at first they lived on a farm, but after time passed, her husband operated a grain elevator at Morse Bluff in Saunders County. Mary was a homemaker, a seamstress, and kept a garden. The couple raised two children to adulthood: daughter Irene Wachel and son Francis.

After her husband died in the 1960s, she continued to live in Morse Bluff until 1977 when Mary moved to Prague to care for her father. In 1978 she moved to Arbor Manor in Fremont. As for longevity, Mary's father lived to age 97, and five siblings lived into the 90s, with her oldest brother reaching age 99. At her death, surviving relatives included three grandchildren, several great grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

The author examined the marriage certificate on file with the Saunders County Courthouse, and found Mary listed her age as 21 on January 15, 1907. For history, see obituary in September 30, 1993 *Wahoo Newspaper*.

Agnes Donahue Bearinger, age 107, was the oldest of nine children of John and Edith Hagaman Donahue. Born July 21, 1894 near Butte, Boyd County, Nebraska, she died November 26, 2001 at Verdigre, Knox County. She attended rural school, and also Wayne Normal School for one summer, then taught for eight years in Boyd County. On October 23, 1918 she married Van Bearinger at O'Neill, Holt County, then the couple lived on a farm near Orchard in Antelope County, where Agnes during her younger years worked on the land by her husband's side, milked the cows, and performed other necessary farm tasks. She was also known as an excellent cook and baker, and enjoyed gardening. They raised two children to adulthood: daughter Helen Wilson Wantz and son Van Jr.

After her husband died in 1954, she lived with her daughter until 1974 when she moved to Orchard, continuing to care for two gardens and walk for several blocks daily. Known by the family and friends as "Meme", she attributed her longevity to being "a very simple person who lives the simple things of life." Her daughter recalled that Agnes always worked hard all her life, ate bacon for breakfast and lots of it, and always used butter and lots of salt. When she reached age 100, a celebration honoring her was held at the Lutheran Fellowship Hall in Orchard, and over 115 guests attended. In 1995, she moved to Alpine Village at Verdigre. At her death, surviving relatives included one daughter, five grandchildren, and nine great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under Van V. Bearinger, Antelope County, and listed was wife Agnes at age 26, born in Nebraska. The marriage certificate filed for Holt County shows that she listed herself as age 24 on October 23, 1918. For history, see articles in July 27, 1984 and July 17, 1987 and July 28, 1994 *Orchard News* as well as July 26, 2001 *Verdigre Eagle*. For an obituary, see December 6, 2001 *Orchard News*.

Martha Williams Boggs Brown, age 107, was the daughter of Hardy and Jane McKenzie Williams. Born on May 26, 1869 near Blaine, Kentucky, she died on August 14, 1976 at Ogallala, Keith County, Nebraska, with interment in Plum Creek Cemetery at Lewellen, Garden County. After her schooling in Blaine, she was married to David Lantford Boggs in 1887, and the couple raised eight children while residing in Kentucky and West Virginia. In 1903, they moved to Garden County, Nebraska to homestead north of Lewellen, residing there until her husband died in 1925.

On March 13, 1937, she married Ben Brown at Blackfoot, Bingham County, Idaho, and the couple lived on a farm near Idaho Falls for 14 years. They then moved to California for seven years before returning to Lewellen. After her second husband died in 1961, Martha continued to live at home with a daughter until 1971 when she moved to live with another daughter in Ogallala. She was a member of the Baptist Church for many years. In 1974, she moved to the Lewellen Community Care Home, and at her death, surviving relatives included daughters Mollie Adkins, Emma Meissner, Lou Miller, and Alma Orr, and sons Mack and Wesley Boggs, 21 grandchildren, 51 great grandchildren, and 31 great great grandchildren.

According to the 1910 Federal Census for Nebraska, under David Lantford Boggs, Garden County, Blue Creek Precinct, his wife Ellen was listed as age 40, born in Kentucky. The 1910 Census was taken on April 21 of that year. For history, see obituary in August 19, 1976 *Oshkosh Garden County News*.

Anna Stejskal Most Chaney, age 107, was one of eight children of Frank and Anna Stastny Stejskal, both immigrants from what is now the Czech Republic. Born on February 25, 1887 on a farm southwest of Wilber, Saline County, Nebraska, she died January 5, 1995 at Grand Island, Hall County, with interment in Giltner Cemetery, Hamilton County. After her family relocated from Wilber to a farm near Tobias in 1888, she attended Rural School District 81 in Saline County, then later Rural School District 12 in Fillmore County. On October 21, 1909 she married Conrad Most in Fillmore County, where the couple lived until her husband's death in 1918. They raised three children to adulthood: daughter Wilma, and sons Louie and Leonard Most.

She married her second husband Elijah Chaney on December 21, 1920 at Fairbury, Jefferson County, and they lived on a farm near Giltner in Hamilton County. Anna gave birth to two more children who lived to adulthood: daughter Erma Williamson and son Albert Chaney. Following her second husband's death in 1955 at Aurora, she moved to Giltner, living there until 1992, when she entered a Grand Island nursing home. At her death, surviving relatives included one daughter, one stepdaughter, many grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great great grandchildren. There was also one great great great grandchild,

An examination of the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Frank Stejskal, Fillmore County, Belle Prairie Township, revealed daughter Annie was listed as age 13, born February 1887 in Nebraska. For history, see obituary in January 7, 1995 *Grand Island Independent*.

Henry P. Christensen, age 107, was one of eight children of Chris and Else Marie Salling Christensen. Born on November 29, 1892 on a farm near Avoca, Cass County, Nebraska, he died November 4, 2000 at Ravenna, Buffalo County. When Henry was almost two years old, the family relocated to a farm near Lushton in York County, where he attended rural school. In 1901, the family moved to a farm ten miles northwest of Palmer, Merrick County, and Henry continued his schooling at District 51 in nearby Nance County until he was needed to help with farmwork. In 1911, the family moved to a farm north of Loup City, Sherman County, where he helped his father, then rented his own farm. On September 8, 1917 he married Johanna Franzen at Loup City, and continued on the nearby farm until 1920, when the couple bought a farm south of Litchfield. Henry was a skilled carpenter as well as a farmer, and though the couple moved to Litchfield in 1955, he continued to operate the farm. There were no children.

After his wife died in 1960, he married Marie Jensen Caddy on June 14, 1962 at Loup City, and after his second wife died in 1983, he continued to live in his Litchfield home until 1997, when he moved to Good Samaritan Center in Ravenna. A member of the United Methodist Church, he also served on the school board and township board. As for his longevity, his nieces, including Laura Christensen, reported he never drank or smoked, ate three square meals a day, worked hard and always had a good sense of humor. His father lived to age 100, and a sister to age 97. At his death, surviving relatives included a stepson, 12 nieces and nephews, 30 grandnieces and nephews, 57 great grandnieces and nephews, and 14 great great grandnieces and nephews.

According to the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Christ Christensen, York County, Henderson Township, son Henry was listed as age 7, born November 1892 in Nebraska. For history, see articles in August 17, 2000 *Palmer Journal* and the August 20, 2000 *Lincoln Journal Star*, and an obituary in the November 16, 2000 *Palmer Journal*.

Matilda Turner Clark, age 107, was one of three children of Mr. & Mrs. John Turner (name of mother unverified). Born May 27, 1852 at Mercer, Mercer County, Pennsylvania, she died October 21, 1959 at Timberlake, Dewey County, South Dakota, with interment in Taylor Cemetery at Taylor, Loup County, Nebraska. At the age of three, she moved with her parents and two brothers to the Peoria, Illinois area. On November 18, 1881 she married Stewart B. Clark at Trivoli, Peoria County, Illinois, then in 1898 the couple moved with their two children to a farm northwest of Taylor, Loup County, Nebraska. About 1914 the family moved to Taylor, where her husband was a contractor and builder, known for construction of an opera house named after him. In his elderly years, he also worked as a janitor at a local school. They raised two children to adulthood: daughter Lulu Doran and son Ora.

After her husband's death in 1926, Matilda continued to live in Taylor, and remained an active member of the Congregational Church. In 1951, her failing eyesight required her to live with her children the remainder of her life. In a newspaper interview several months after her 106th birthday, a relative was quoted as saying, "Her appetite is perfect. She eats anything and everything." At her death, Matilda's surviving relatives included two children, 10 grandchildren, 22 great grandchildren, and one great great grandchild.

According to the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under Stewart B. Clark, Loup County, village of Taylor, wife Tillie was listed as age 67, born in Pennsylvania. For history, see articles in May 30, 1954 *Lincoln Sunday Journal & Star*, in December 26, 1958 *Lincoln Star*, and in May 21, 1959 *Taylor Clarion*. For an obituary, see October 29, 1959 *Taylor Clarion*.

Mabel Bell Coe, age 107, was the youngest of five children of Isaac and Mary Epperson Bell. Born on May 10, 1890 southeast of Smith Center, Smith County, Kansas, she died November 20, 1997 at Alma, Harlan County, Nebraska. Interment was in the Orleans Cemetery at nearby Orleans. She attended a rural school near Harlan, Smith County, Kansas, then she worked as a housekeeper at Naponee, Franklin County, Nebraska, and at Orleans. On December 19, 1917 she married Benjamin F. Coe at Orleans, and the couple resided at Huntley and Orleans until 1930, when they moved to a farm near Stamford. They raised five children to adulthood: daughter Velda Simpson, and sons Cleo, Darrell, Lester and Milo. While her children were growing up, Mabel was active in 4-H Club with them, and was a member of the Presbyterian Church.

She and her husband moved to Stamford in 1967, where her husband died in 1971. Mabel moved to Parkview Manor in Alma in 1972, and became a resident of the Colonial Villa Good Samaritan Center in 1986. At her death, surviving relatives included her five children, 12 grandchildren, 23 great grandchildren, and one great great grandson.

According to the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under B. Ferman Coe, Harlan County, wife Mabel is listed as age 29, born in Kansas. For history, see obituary in November 27, 1997 *Alma Harlan County Journal*.

Corena Lamb Cotner, age 107, was one of 10 children of Jesse and Sarah Smith Lamb. Born October 30, 1886 at Evans Landing, located near Evansville, Indiana, she died on September 16, 1994 at York, York County, Nebraska, with interment in Waco Cemetery at nearby Waco. After teaching rural school a few years, she was married on May 15, 1909 to Harry B. Cotner in Corydon, Harrison County, Indiana. In 1918, the couple moved to Waco, York County, Nebraska, where her husband was a laborer, worked for York County, and rented a farm. They raised seven children to adulthood: daughters Marilyn Garner, Mae Hirschfeld, Marjorie Terrill, and sons Carl, Charles, Leon, and William. About 1936 the family relocated to the York area, where the couple rented a farm, raised dairy cows, and delivered dairy products to the city of York.

After her husband died in 1953, she lived with family members, and was employed in assisting the elderly in their homes. Corena took her religion very seriously, and belonged to the Church of Nazarene. She liked crocheting, people, and cooking, using real ingredients and lots of salt in preparing food. She did not diet. After several years of residing with her children, she entered Hearthstone Care Center at York in 1990, and enjoyed taking care of herself while in good health. At her death, surviving relatives included four children, 22 grandchildren, 52 great grandchildren, and 14 great great grandchildren.

An examination of the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under Harry B. Cotner, York County, revealed wife C. Cornita was listed as age 33, born in Indiana, For history, see obituary in September 17, 1994 *York News-Times*.

Anna Voss Dose, age 107, was one of four children of Wilhelm and Minnie Schroder Voss. Born on September 8, 1885 near Mineola, Pottawattamie County, Iowa, she died September 17, 1992 at Emerson, Dixon County, Nebraska, with interment in Rose Hill Cemetery at Emerson. Sometime before 1900, the family relocated to a farm in Dakota County near the town of Waterbury, Nebraska, where Anna attended a nearby rural school. In May 1909, she married Adolph J. Dose, and they farmed in the Waterbury area until

1918, when they relocated to a farm northeast of Emerson in Dakota County, where Anna milked cows, kept a large garden, and liked crafts and embroidering. The couple raised one child to adulthood: son Alfred.

The couple retired in the 1950s, and moved to Emerson, where her husband died in 1971. Anna then lived in senior citizen apartments until 1982, when she moved to Heritage of Emerson. She was a member of St. Luke's Lutheran Church, and worked hard her entire life. Her son lived to age 91. At Anna's death, surviving relatives included her son, three grandsons, 11 great grandchildren, and two great great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under Adolph Dose, Dakota County, and found wife Anna listed as age 33, born in Iowa. For history, see obituary in September 24, 1992 *Pender Times*.

Clara Wilder Everett, age 107, was one of ten children of Will and Anna Dehm Wilder. Born March 11, 1885 in Hamilton County, Nebraska, she died November 5, 1992 at Central City, Merrick County, with interment at Central City Cemetery. After graduating in 1903 from Central City High School and in 1906 from Nebraska Central College, she worked at local stores for several years. On November 12, 1924 she married William Everett, and the couple operated the Wilder Cafe, which Clara had purchased one year earlier, until retiring in 1962. There were no children, but the couple raised two nephews and a niece.

After her husband died in 1975, she continued her active life, as she helped organize the Merrick County Historical Society Museum, and was an antique collector. Clara was also a member of the Friends Church, a 68-year member of the American Legion Auxiliary, a member of Rebekah Lodge, Order of Eastern Star, Business and Professional Women, and Riverside Golf Club. At her death, she was survived by a brother, a niece, and two nephews.

According to the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under W. A. Wilder, Merrick County, Prairie Island Township, daughter Clara was listed as age 15, born March 1885 in Nebraska. For history, see obituary in the November 12, 1992 *Central City Republican-Nonpareil*.

Helena Fells, age 107, was one of four children of Christian and Elizabeth Rupp Fells, immigrants from Germany. Born February 1, 1869 in Indiana, she died March 28, 1976 at Hebron, Thayer County, with interment in Rose Hill Cemetery. At the age of eight, she moved with her family by covered wagon from Indiana to a farm near Carleton in Thayer County, Nebraska, where she lived and worked with her two brothers until 1949 when she relocated to Hebron. She did not marry.

In 1962 she moved to the Blue Valley Lutheran Home. In an interview at the age of 105, she credited her longevity to "hard work on the farm," including the cradling of wheat and handling of teams of horses and mules. Her younger sister lived to her 90s. For her 107th birthday celebration, some 200 friends, relatives, and dignitaries were present, and she was named an honorary member of the Nebraska Navy. At her death, Helena was survived by one sister, nieces, and nephews.

An examination of the 1920 Nebraska Soundex revealed Helena Fells, Thayer County, was age 50, born in Indiana, and residing with Fred Fells. For history, see article in February 1, 1974 *Lincoln Star*, and obituary in March 31, 1976 *Hebron Journal-Register*.

William H. Frahm, at least age 107, was one of nine children of John F. and Maria Mortensen Frahm, both immigrants from Germany. Born on April 6 in 1890 or 1891 at Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska, he died January 6, 1999 at Omaha, with interment at Evergreen Cemetery. After attending school through the eighth grade, he spent much of his life painting churches and theaters in the community, and "did mostly walls – striping, stenciling, that sort of thing." On August 31, 1914 he married Anna Zechmeister in Omaha, where they lived at 4505 Leavenworth Street for many years, and raised two children to adulthood: daughter Margaret Gaylord and son William Jr.

His wife died in 1967, and he maintained his exceptional health all his life despite smoking until the age of 90. In his elderly years he became a resident of Lindenwood Nursing Home. At William's death, surviving relatives included his two children, along with several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex, and found John F. Frahm recorded as John Frahn, Douglas County, Omaha, 809 52nd Street, along with entries for his wife and eight children. Due to a

recording error, son John was listed as born in May 1889 in Nebraska and son Willie as born April 1889 in Nebraska. According to the marriage license for William H. Frahm and Anna Zechmeister, who were married in Omaha on August 31, 1914, the age at the time for William was recorded as 23 years, suggesting he was born in 1891. The author could not locate William Frahm in the 1920 Nebraska Soundex or 1920 Federal Census. For history, see article in April 11, 1995 *Omaha World Herald* and obituary in January 8, 1999 issue.

Carrie Wilken Hawks, age 107, was one of six children of John and Anna Schroeder Wilken. Born on October 27, 1889 at Danforth, Illinois, she died September 29, 1997 at Geneva, Fillmore County, Nebraska, with interment in Bruning Public Cemetery at Bruning in Thayer County. In 1890, her family had relocated from Illinois to Bellwood, Butler County, Nebraska, where she attended school and was confirmed in the nearby Rising City Lutheran Church. In 1907, she graduated from Fremont Normal School, then moved to Bruning, where she taught in nearby Rural School District 49 for a year. On October 14, 1908 she married Thomas A. Hawks, then the couple lived on a farm near Carleton for four years, later moving to a farm east of Bruning, where they resided until 1943 when they retired and moved into town. They raised two children to adulthood: daughter Dorothy Garrels and son Fieldon.

After her husband died in 1977, she remained at her home until entering Heritage Home in Geneva in 1990. Always active, she and her husband had served as janitors of their church for many years. Carrie held offices in the United Methodist Church, women's organizations, and Sunday School. She was also a member of the Federated Women's Club of Bruning. At the age of 99, she preserved in writing a family history, which was published in book form with help from family and friends for her 105th birthday.

According to the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under John Wilkins, Butler County, Alexis Township, daughter Carrie was listed as age 10, born October 1890 in Illinois. For history, see obituaries in September 30, 1997 *Lincoln Journal Star* and in October 1, 1997 *Hebron Journal-Register*.

Martha Holscher Maake Hesson, age 107, was one of nine children of Henry and Minnie Grotrian Holscher. Born an identical twin on February 22, 1894 near Burr, Otoe County, Nebraska, she died November 7, 2001 at Syracuse, Otoe County, with interment in Hope Lutheran Cemetery at Burr. She attended a German rural school until eighth grade, and lived in a home where German was spoken. On September 12, 1918 she married Henry Maake at Burr, then the couple lived on a farm near Burr at first, and later near Douglas. They raised five children to adulthood: daughters Dona Hesson, Ilene Fraizer, and Opal McNeil, and sons Virgil and Wayne.

After her husband died from an accident in 1938, she moved her family to Douglas, where she worked at various jobs. On March 3, 1951 she married Wellington Hesson at Beatrice, and continued to live at Douglas. A former member of Hopewell Presbyterian Church at Unadilla, she liked taking care of everyone, playing cards and dominos, and quilting. After her second husband died in 1978, she soon moved to Westview Manor in Syracuse, then in 1993 entered Good Samaritan Center, also at Syracuse. Her twin sister Amanda Miesbach lived to age 96.

At Martha's death, surviving relatives included three children, 14 grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren, and two great great grandchildren. The author examined the marriage certificate for Henry J. Maake and Martha Holscher on record with Otoe County, and she listed her age as 24 on September 12, 1918. The 1920 Nebraska Soundex under Henry J. Maake, Otoe County, reveals wife Martha was listed as age 25, born in Nebraska. For history, see article and obituary in March 8, 2001 and November 15, 2001 *Syracuse Journal-Democrat*.

To date Martha Hesson ranks as Nebraska's longest-lived twin.

Sarah Ross Hull, at least age 107, was one of six children of Archelauss and Amanda Ross. Born on September 6, 1855 or 1856 near Boone, Boone County, Iowa, she died July 5, 1964 at O'Neill, Holt County, Nebraska, with interment in Paddock Cemetery north of O'Neill. After she grew to adulthood near Boone, she was married on October 7, 1877 to William Hull in Boone County, and two or three years later arrived in Holt County, Nebraska by covered wagon to homestead 20 miles northeast of O'Neill. The couple raised

12 children to adulthood: daughters Alice Miller, Sarah Nelson, Altha Jones, Edna Mellor, Esther Haynes, and sons Arch, Clyde, Edwin, Elmer, John, Levi, and William.

Though her husband died in 1929, she continued to live on the farm with her son William the remainder of her active life. In her very elderly years, she lived in O'Neill, the Lynch Hospital, and the O'Neill Senior Citizen's Home. At her death, Sarah's surviving relatives included eight children, 33 grandchildren, 109 great grandchildren, 102 great great grandchildren, and one great great great grandchild.

The author examined the 1870 Iowa Census, enumerated in the month of July, and under Archelaus Ross, Boone County, Yell Township, was listed daughter Sarah E. at age 13, born in Iowa. In the 1880 Nebraska Soundex, enumerated on June 12 of that year, under William Hull, Holt County, Paddock Township, listed as wife Sarah E., age 23, born in Iowa. The 1900 Nebraska Soundex under William Hull, Holt County, lists wife Sarah as age 42, born September 1857. The marriage certificate on record with Boone County, Iowa for William Hull and Sarah Ross does not list ages. For history, see obituary in July 9, 1964 O'Neill *Holt County Independent*.

Mabel Lair Hunt, age 107, was one of seven children of Samuel and Lydia Crays Hunt. Born on September 12, 1886 at Wilber, Saline County, Nebraska, she died October 15, 1993 at Humboldt, Richardson County, with interment in Heim Cemetery at nearby Dawson. She married Cyrus Hunt on June 3, 1906 at Wilber, where they continued to reside until 1913, when the couple moved to Dawson in Richardson County, where they owned and operated a barbershop. They raised two children to adulthood: daughter Hazelbell Stierwalt and son Wilburn. Mabel was a barber from 1918 until her husband's illness in the 1950s forced her to close the shop.

Upon her husband's death in 1956, she remained at Dawson until 1969 when she moved to Park View Heights housing in Humboldt, and in her late elderly years moved to Colonial Acres Nursing home. At her death, surviving relatives included son Wilburn, four grandchildren, five great grandchildren, and 16 great great grandchildren as well as two sisters.

According to the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Samuel T. Lair, Saline County, Wilber, daughter Mabel was listed as age 13, born September 1886 in Illinois. The marriage certificate on record at the Saline County Courthouse in Wilber reveals Mabel's birthplace was in Saline County, and her age was listed as 20 on June 3, 1906. For history, see her husband's obituary in the May 28, 1956 *Falls City Journal*, and her obituary in the October 18, 1993 *Falls City Journal*.

Mary Kriz Janecek, age 107, was one of three children of Anton and Eleanora Jakl Kriz. Born on May 6, 1889 at Dodge, Dodge County, Nebraska, she died July 18, 1996 at Dodge, with interment at nearby Bohemian National Cemetery. At the age of four, she moved with her family to Arkansas. After crop failures, they returned to Nebraska, and Mary spent time with her grandparents in Omaha. She attended schools in Dodge County, completing the eighth grade. On June 16, 1908 she married Elhard Janecek at Fremont, then the couple farmed east of Dodge until her husband's death in 1940. The couple raised four children to adulthood: daughter Milada Beaumont, and sons Albin, Floyd, and Lumir.

In 1943 she moved to Dodge, where she was a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church and the ZCJB Lodge, also known as the Western Bohemian Fraternal Association. She married Frank Janecek in October 1949, and she helped care for his four children. After her second husband died in 1963, she continued living in her home until age 97, then became a resident at Parkview Home in Dodge in 1986. At her death, Mary's surviving relatives included three children, four step-children, nine grandchildren, 17 step-grandchildren, 29 great grandchildren, 27 step-great grandchildren, many great great grandchildren, and four step-great great grandchildren.

An examination of the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Anton Kriz, Dodge County, Webster Township, village of Dodge, revealed daughter Mary was listed as age 11, born May 1889 in Nebraska. For history, see obituary in July 20, 1996 *Fremont Tribune*.

Griffith E. Jones Sr., age 107, was one of three children, born on July 27, 1879 at Llandyssul, Wales. He died January 24, 1987 at Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska, with interment in St. Joseph Park Cemetery at St. Joseph, Missouri. The family has not verified the names of his parents. His father was a ship captain, and upon giving him and his brother William \$1,000 each, recommended they should “fend for themselves in America,” so by 1900 he located at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for a year because of its Welsh population. Then he moved to St. Joseph, Missouri, and worked as a salesman for John S. Britton Dry Goods Company until the early 1920s, when he became manager of a shirt company there until 1929. Meanwhile, he was married on June 9, 1915 to Grace Griffin at the First Baptist Church in St. Joseph. They raised two children to adulthood: daughter Frances Flores Clark, and son Griffith Jr.

The family relocated to Lincoln, Nebraska in 1936, where he was a traveling salesman in southeast Nebraska and elsewhere for Tootle-Campbell Dry Goods Company until retiring in 1967 at the age of 87. His son attended Lincoln High School, and later the University of Nebraska. His brother worked in Grand Island. His wife died in 1978, and five years later Griffith moved to Madonna Care Center. A member of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, he attended a University of Nebraska football game at the age of 102. Though he smoked cigars and cigarettes his entire life, he remained in good health, and credited his longevity to his family. In an interview he also stated, “Don’t worry. Worry makes you old quicker than anything. Tomorrow will settle the whole thing and make it look simpler than it did the day before.” At his death, surviving relatives included two children, five grandchildren, and a niece.

The author examined the 1920 Missouri Soundex, and under Griffith E. Jones, Buchanan County, St. Joseph, South 13th Street, he was listed as age 40, born in Wales, and enumerated with Frederick B. Griffin as a son-in-law. For history, see article in August 2, 1984 *Lincoln Star*, and obituary in January 28, 1987 *Lincoln Journal*.

Catherine Hansen Krebs, age 107, was the daughter of Mr. Hansen and Christina Hansen, according to marriage records. Born May 27, 1883 at Hassum, a village near Hamburg, Germany, she died July 11, 1990 at Neligh, Antelope County, Nebraska, with interment in Laurel Hill Cemetery at Neligh. After becoming an orphan at the age of four, she was raised by her grandfather and other relatives. In 1903, Catherine immigrated to the United States as one of a group of youth sponsored by Mathilda Petersen of Neligh, and became a housekeeper for Edward Krebs, a farmer and widower of four children.

On October 31, 1906 she married Edward A. Krebs in Antelope County, and the family lived on a farm southwest of town. Together, they had one child: son Harold. After her husband died in 1945, she operated a boarding house for high school girls. In 1973, Catherine entered the Neligh Nursing Center. At her death, surviving relatives included a stepdaughter, four grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren, and four great great grandchildren.

The author examined her marriage certificate recorded with Antelope County, and she was listed as age 23 on October 31, 1906. According to the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under Edward Krebs, Antelope County, wife Catherine was listed as age 36. For history, see obituary in July 18, 1990 *Neligh News and Leader*.

Harry H. Lefler, age 107, was one of four children of William and Nettie Phelps Lefler. Born on September 12, 1885 at Springfield, Sarpy County, Nebraska, he died October 20, 1992 in Lincoln, Lancaster County, with interment at Bedford Cemetery near Auburn, Nemaha County. As a young boy, he lived with his family on a farm near Gretna, then moved to a farm the family rented near Murdock in Cass County, followed by residence in nearby Elmwood, where Harry completed the 10th grade, after which he attended school in Peru to earn a high school diploma.

He then attended business college in Lincoln and the University of Nebraska, where he studied law from 1912 to 1914, and supported himself by working at Lincoln Drug Company. After being an attorney in Plattsmouth, Cass County, for seven years, he returned to Elmwood when his father became ill. The family returned to their farm near Gretna, where Harry helped with the farm work. After his father died in 1940, he continued on the farm with his mother until she died in 1966, then moved to Lincoln. In 1970 he was married for the first time, and resided at Eastmont Towers, where he remained in good health until suffering a stroke in 1980. In a newspaper interview, he attributed his longevity to his family, as his mother lived to

age 104 and his uncle Paul E. Phelps lived to age 105. His brother Millard C. Lefler, who served for 28 years as superintendent of the Lincoln Public Schools, lived to age 94, a sister lived to 100, and another sister to 93. At his death, Harry's surviving relatives included his wife, one sister, a stepson, and several nieces and nephews.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under William Lefler, Cass County, Stove Creek Precinct, city of Elmwood, and found son Harry listed as age 14, born September 1885 in Nebraska. For history, see obituaries of his mother in the October 27, 1966 *Gretna Breeze* and of his uncle in the November 12, 1981 *Ralston Recorder*. For an article and obituary of Harry Lefler, see September 8, 1985 *Lincoln Sunday Journal & Star* and October 21, 1992 *Lincoln Star*.

Gladys Salisbury Martindale, age 107, was one of seven children of John and Emma Roberts Salisbury. Born December 6, 1893 at St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri, she died October 29, 2001 at Kearney, Buffalo County, Nebraska, with interment in Brewster Cemetery at Brewster, Blaine County. During her youth, her family relocated to northern Nebraska, where her mother died in 1905 at Plainview, Pierce County. After that, she and her father moved to a ranch north of Lisco in Garden County, where she began cooking at age 13. Later they moved to Morrill County. On April 2, 1913 she married Elmer W. Martindale at Angora, Morrill County, and the couple lived near Broadwater until 1937 when they moved to Halsey. In 1943, they moved to their home north of Brewster, and in 1952 moved to Canon City, Colorado, where they operated a rest home for eight years before returning to Brewster. They raised one child: son Eldon was adopted in 1929.

Their son took over the family ranch in 1952, and today it is owned by Eldon, but farmed by a grandson. After her husband died in 1961, she moved to Elm Creek, Buffalo County, then resided at St. Luke's Good Samaritan Village in Kearney in 1988. A member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church for nearly 100 years, she enjoyed crocheting, cooking, and quilting, and during World War II delivered mail in the Sandhills area. In a newspaper interview, her son was quoted as saying, "She was never one to dwell on the bad side of things. She would always say there's always another day coming." During her life she worked hard and enjoyed giving to people. At Gladys' death, surviving relatives included one son, four grandchildren, four great grandchildren, one step-great grandchild, and two great great grandchildren.

In examining the 1910 Federal Census, the author found Gladys Salisbury of Garden County, Pioneer Precinct, listed at age 17 as a servant for the household of Sylvenus Avery. The marriage certificate on record with Garden County issued on April 2, 1913 reveals she was 19 at the time. For history, see husband's obituary in March 17, 1961 *Brewster News*. See also Gladys' obituary in October 31, 2001 *Kearney Hub* and articles in the November 1 *Kearney Hub* and November 7 *Elm Creek Beacon-Observer* of the same year.

Susan Bell Gillespie Maxfeldt, age 107, was the daughter of Robert and Amanda Waller Bell. Born May 3, 1894 near Lexington, Dawson County, she died March 21, 2002 at Holdrege, Phelps County. Interment was at Robb Cemetery south of Lexington. She grew up on the family farm southeast of Lexington, then after moving to Lexington, graduated from Lexington High School in 1912, after which she attended what is now the University of Nebraska – Kearney for teacher training, then taught for one year at Ogallala.

She was married on March 3, 1914 to mechanic Ray A. Gillespie at Lexington, and raised two sons. Meanwhile, she worked in the field of women's clothing fashions, first at Masterson Brothers Millinery in Omaha for seven years, then at McVickers Ready-to-Wear in Lexington for three years. After her marriage ended, she continued to live in Lexington, and was remarried to Roy Maxfeldt.

She resided in Lexington until 1980 when her second husband died, then moved to Holdrege, where on her 106th birthday in 2000 she celebrated by taking a motorcycle ride.

According to the 1910 U.S. Census for Nebraska, Dawson County, Lexington Precinct, listed under Robert Bell was Susan, age 16, born in Nebraska, thus verifying her age. Upon her death, Susan was survived by one son, two grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. For an obituary, consult March 23, 2002 *Lexington Clipper*.

Edna Burk Maxfield, age 107, was one of nine children of John and Emma Smith Burk. Born on October 12, 1888 near Stratton, Hitchcock County, Nebraska, she died November 26, 1995 at Wauneta, Chase County, with interment at Riverside Cemetery. Raised on a farm northwest of Stratton, where she attended a rural school, she recited poetry from school, and learned from her older siblings. As a young lady, she lived with an aunt and uncle at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, where she was a seamstress. In 1915 she returned to Nebraska, and married Bert Maxfield on January 1, 1917, then her husband's work as a miller took the couple to North Dakota and Montana. In 1925 the couple moved to Wauneta, where they built the roller mills and made their home. The couple raised three children to adulthood: daughters Dorothy Dudek and Emma Jean Maris, and son Raymond.

After her husband died in 1960, she continued living in the home, and her children took over operation of the mill. Edna kept her active membership in the United Methodist Church. In 1991, she moved to Heritage of Wauneta, where she continued her hobby of card playing. Her family reported that longevity was common with her relatives, with a sister who lived to age 105, and other siblings who lived into their 90s. At her death, Edna's surviving relatives included a brother, three children, three grandchildren, five great grandchildren, and two great great grandchildren.

According to the 1900 Nebraska Soundex, under John Burk, Hitchcock County, Webster Precinct, daughter Edna was listed as age 11, born October 1888 in Nebraska. For history, see article and obituary in the November 30 and December 7, 1995 *Imperial Republican*.

Ada Smith McCarter, age 107, was one of six children of James and Frankie Spaulding Smith. Born on December 3, 1887 on a farm southeast of Bennet, Lancaster County, she died February 27, 1995 at Bayard, Morrill County, Nebraska, with interment at Bayard Cemetery. Her early schooling was at a rural school before she graduated in 1906 from Lincoln High School, then she took nurses training and earned a Registered Nurse Degree in 1911, the 17th person in Nebraska to gain this accomplishment. On May 1, 1912 she married Frank M. McCarter in Lincoln, and settled on a farm southeast of Bayard. Occasionally, she helped local doctors when there was special need, and during the flu epidemic of World War I assisted whenever she could. The couple raised five children to adulthood: Alice Lane, Betty Jordan, Jacquelyn Leach, June McCarter, and Verna Crigler.

Her husband died in 1935 from a car accident, so Ada moved to Lincoln, and three years later graduated from Northwest Institute of Medical Technology in Minneapolis, then bought the family farm near Bennet and lived there. She was married to neighbor Frank Jensen from 1943 to 1948, when he died, then in 1954 she married Bob McCarter, the brother of her first husband, but he was killed in a car accident while they were returning from their honeymoon on the West Coast. Ada lost her lower left leg in this accident. She continued to live on the farm until 1958 when she moved to Lincoln to be near her daughter. In 1983, she moved to reside at Chimney Rock Villa at Bayard. Ada was a charter member of the Order of Eastern Star in Bayard, and was honored by the Nebraska State Genealogical Society with the "First Family" status. At her death, surviving relatives included three daughters, a 99-year-old sister, five grandchildren, 12 great grandchildren, and nine great great grandchildren.

The author examined the marriage certificate housed in Lancaster County and her age was listed as 24 on May 1, 1912. For history, see obituaries in February 28, 1995 *Lincoln Journal* and March 1, 1995 *Bayard Transcript*.

Lulu Weber Merrill, age 107, was one of five children of Jacob and Eva Egelhoff Weber. Born January 19, 1876 at Pawnee City, Nebraska, she died January 27, 1983 at Pasadena, California. Interment was at Mountain View Mausoleum in nearby Altadena. After her parents had arrived at Pawnee City in 1874, where her father became a prominent cigar manufacturer in a town that reached a population of almost 2,000 by the turn of the century, Lulu resided with her family, may have attended local schools but did not graduate, and was married at home on October 25, 1898 to Earl L. Merrill.

Her husband was a train station agent, so the couple moved at various times, first residing at Riley, Kansas in 1900, then briefly in Pawnee City, followed by Logan, New Mexico in 1910, then the Dodge City, Kansas area in 1920. The couple raised two children, son Glenn and daughter Loraine, born in Pawnee

City. In the 1920s, Lulu moved to Pasadena, California so that her daughter could attend a nursing school. Not long afterwards, her husband died while working for the railroad.

Lulu was a Christian Scientist, and according to the 1940 U.S. Census, she resided with daughter Loraine and son-in-law Morton T. Coops. Lulu's sister May Weber Ovenden died in November 1978 at age 96. Lulu's son Glenn Merrill died in 1998 at age 96, and daughter Loraine reached age 110 in January 2014.

The author verified Lulu's age from the 1880 U.S. Census, Nebraska, Pawnee County, Pawnee Village, enumerated on June 25, 1880, where under Jacob Weber and wife Eva were listed their children, including daughter Lulu, age 4, born in Nebraska. According to the California Death Index, Lulu Merrill passed away on January 27, 1983.

Maude Mendenhall Meyers, age 107, was one of eight children of Joseph and Mina Knapp Mendenhall. Born June 15, 1885 near Ponca, Dixon County, Nebraska, she died November 9, 1992 at Ponca, with interment in Silver Ridge Cemetery nearby. She attended Sunnyside country school, then taught piano lessons at age 16 to students in a 15-mile radius of her home, traveling by horseback or horse and buggy. On December 21, 1904 she was married to LeRoy Meyers near Ponca, and farmed west of town. They raised two children to adulthood: daughter Mina Kollbaum Miille, and son Harold.

Her husband died in 1959, and Maude remained on the farm, where she was observed washing windows on the second story of her home when she was 80 years of age. In 1967, she moved to Ponca, then in 1988 she moved to Elm's Health Care Center. She gave piano lessons for 70 years, and was a member of the United Methodist Church and Rebekah Lodge. In her elderly years, her memory was considered exceptional, and she could bend over and touch her toes without assistance, reported a family member. At her death, Maude's surviving relatives included a son, two grandchildren, two great grandchildren, and nieces and nephews.

Her marriage certificate on file with Dixon County indicates she was age 19 on December 21, 1904. For history, see obituary in the November 12, 1992 *Ponca Nebraska Journal-Leader*.

Emily Bristol Mook, age 107, was the daughter of Christian and Elizabeth Blessman Bristol, immigrants from Germany. Born July 30, 1875 on the family homestead southeast of Waco, York County, Nebraska, she died March 8, 1983 at Munster, Lake County, Indiana, with interment at Wyuka Cemetery in Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska. In 1908 she married Simon Mook, and they lived in the Malcolm and Walton area before moving to Lincoln in 1935, where her husband died two years later. They raised two children to adulthood: daughter Ethel, and son Merle.

While living in Lincoln, Emily was an employee of the University of Nebraska Food Services, and a member of Grace United Methodist Church and the Order of Eastern Star. During a newspaper interview, she reported memories of her childhood on the prairie, and was quoted as saying, "I lived in Nebraska all my life. I feel like I helped build Nebraska." She had moved during the 1970s to Lansing, Illinois to live with her daughter. At her death, Emily's surviving relatives included two children, three grandchildren, seven great grandchildren, five nieces and nephews, and two great nephews.

An examination of the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Christian Bristol, York County, Beaver Township, revealed daughter Amelia was listed as age 24, born July 1875 in Nebraska. For history, see obituaries in March 10, 1983 *Lincoln Journal* and March 11, 1983 *York Times-News*.

Mary Howarth Morris, age 107, was the oldest of 11 children of Thomas and Nancy Bovee Howarth. Born December 17, 1877 in a dugout near Blair, Washington County, Nebraska, she died July 31, 1985 at Osmond, Pierce County, with interment in Bethany Cemetery at Carroll, Wayne County. In 1891, she moved with her parents to a farm near Carroll, where she attended rural schools nearby. After attending Wayne Normal School, she taught for several years in Wayne County. On July 6, 1904 she married Cradock H. Morris at Randolph in Cedar County.

The couple farmed near Carroll until her husband died in 1966. They raised four children to adulthood: daughter Wilva Brewer, and sons Donald, Harold, and Thomas. In 1984 she moved to Colonial Manor at

Randolph. At her death, Mary's surviving relatives included three children, seven grandchildren, and nine great grandchildren.

An examination of the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under Cradock Morris, Wayne County, revealed his wife Mary was listed as age 42, born in Nebraska. For history, see obituaries in August 2, 1985 *Lincoln Journal* and August 5, 1985 *Wayne Herald*.

Ella Eret Mottl, age 107, was one of three children of Joseph and Katherine Bartunek Eret, immigrants from what is now the Czech Republic. Born on April 28, 1893 in Howard County in a sod house near Wolbach, Nebraska, she died December 16, 2000 at Burwell, Garfield County, with interment in Ord Cemetery at Ord, Valley County. When she was ten years old, the family moved from Howard County to Custer County and finally to Valley County, where they engaged in farming. On January 9, 1912 she married John Mottl, and the couple lived on a farm in Valley County until retirement when they moved to Ord. They raised three children to adulthood: sons Elder, Frank, and John Jr.

After her husband died in 1967, she continued living in her home, working at Douthit's Diner for 11 years, and working as a health care provider in the homes of elderly people younger than her until she was in her 90s. Family members reported that she rode in a pickup truck in her 80s from central Nebraska to Chicago for a granddaughter's wedding, moving a gift that was a piece of furniture owned by her father. At age 97, she joined a great grandson in stepping over seats at a dance recital to change rows. A member of the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church and the Western Fraternal Life Association, she was known by her family for making dandelion wine.

She moved to a health care center when about age 103. At her death, Ella's surviving relatives included a son, seven grandchildren, 13 great grandchildren, and numerous great great grandchildren, and a half brother.

According to the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under John Mottl, Valley County, his wife Ella was listed as age 27, born in Nebraska. For history, consult obituaries in December 20, 2000 *Ord Quiz* and December 21 *Omaha World Herald*.

Maggie Boag Niklaus, age 107, was one of six children of John and Margaret Stewart Boag, immigrants from Scotland. Born August 31, 1891 on a farm between Giltner and Trumbull in Hamilton County, Nebraska, she died March 22, 1999 at Aurora, Hamilton County, with interment in Greenwood Cemetery at Trumbull. After attending Case Country School through the 10th grade, she worked in the home, and enjoyed cooking. On November 23, 1923 she married Rudolph Niklaus at Giltner, then lived on a farm near her parents. There were no children.

After her husband died in 1961, she lived on the farm until moving to Aurora six years later, but continued to manage her farm until after she reached age 100. She attended the First Christian Church in Aurora, and enjoyed crocheting. In 1990, she moved to Memorial Community Care. At her death, Maggie's surviving relatives included one nephew, three great nieces and nephews, nine great great nieces and nephews, and nine great great great nieces and nephews.

The 1900 Nebraska Soundex under John Boag, Hamilton County, Scoville Precinct, listed daughter Maggie as age 8, born August 1892 in Nebraska. For history, see obituary in March 31, 1999 *Aurora News-Register*.

Lucy Van Horne Sawyer, age 107, was the eldest of eight children of Hugh and Ella Peckham Van Horne. Born January 12, 1886 at Almena, Norton County, Kansas, she died October 20, 1993 at Pawnee City, Pawnee County, Nebraska, with interment in Pawnee City Cemetery. Shortly after her birth, her family moved to Beaver City, Furnas County, Nebraska, then when she was about three years of age, moved to Pawnee City, where her father managed the Opera House, then eventually became president of the Farmers State Bank. After graduating from Pawnee City high School in 1903, she attended the University of Nebraska for two years, and was initiated into Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority. She taught elementary school in Pawnee City for three years, then on September 2, 1908 she married clothier George Sawyer in Pawnee City. While her husband owned Sawyers Clothing, she joined the United Methodist Church and the Order

of Eastern Star, and was a member of the Garden Club. She also served as county chairman of the American Cancer Society, and organist for the church for over 30 years.

The couple raised four children to adulthood: daughter Jane Bickel, and sons Hugh, Ted, and Tom. After her husband died in 1951, she lived in the house earlier built in 1926 until moving into Pawnee Manor in 1992. Lucy was a charter member of the Pawnee County Historical Society, president of the Coterie Club, gave blood until too old to the American Red Cross, an honorary member of the American Legion Auxiliary, and Gold Star Mother of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. At age 100, her vision and hearing declined, but she listened to books on tapes, and walked with the aid of a walker in her own home. She enjoyed bridge and canasta, and watched game shows on television. Lucy also received a centenarian greeting from U.S. President Ronald Reagan and letter from NBC-TV "Today Show" host Willard Scott. In a newspaper interview, she attributed her longevity by saying, "I enjoy life and never get bored ... I've never been a worrier but just took things for granted." At her death, Lucy's surviving relatives included two children, seven grandchildren, and 16 great grandchildren.

The marriage certificate recorded with Pawnee County shows that she listed herself as age 22 on September 2, 1908. For history, see articles in January 11, 1986 *Lincoln Star*, January 16, 1986 *Pawnee Republican*, and April 2, 1987 *Beatrice Daily Sun*. For an obituary, see November 4, 1993 *Pawnee City Pawnee Republican*.

Althea Turner Seamark, age 107, was an employee of the Lincoln Journal Star Company for about 42 years. One of two children of Rufus and Mattie Bower Turner, she was born on February 15, 1887 on a farm near Wymore, Gage County, Nebraska, and died December 3, 1994 at Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz County, California, with interment in Holy Cross Cemetery. Born prematurely, she weighed only two pounds when delivered by a midwife, who placed her near a cook stove to keep her warm in a farmhouse, while the mother nursed her to health with constant care. After attending rural school until age 10, she moved to Wymore, where she graduated from high school. After one summer at the University of Nebraska, she taught at a country school. Her father died in 1912, her only brother in 1921, and her mother in 1925. She was married to Alexander Seamark in 1919, but they were divorced in 1924. There were no children.

Very capable in the English language, she moved to Lincoln in 1922, and began work as a proofreader at the Lincoln Journal Star Company, then became its librarian in 1950 until retirement in 1964. After her brother died, she helped raise his four children while working as a proofreader. In 1973 she relocated with her great nephew Mark Seamark from Lincoln, Nebraska to Santa Cruz, California, where she helped found the Live Oak Senior Center, and was president of the Tri-County Council, which helped allocate money among programs for senior citizens. She lived in an apartment until about a year before her death a stroke reduced her activity. For several years she had been legally blind, but her nephew reported her "tremendous determination and will to live carried her on all her life." She always ate properly, and gained an interest in health foods in the 1940s. "She wore eight bracelets on her arm, and would take one off for every glass of water she drank that day. She attributed her good health to drinking water every day." Althea was a member of St. Joseph's Catholic Community Church, the Altar Society, and Catholic Daughters Association. At her death, surviving relatives included numerous nieces and nephews.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Rufus Turner, Gage County, Blue Springs Township, city of Blue Springs, and found daughter Alpheia listed as age 13, born February 1887 in Nebraska. For history, see article in March 28, 1993 *Lincoln Journal Star*, and obituaries in December 6, 1994 *Santa Cruz [CA] Sentinel* and December 12, 1994 *San Jose Mercury News*.

Maude Anderson Smith, age 107, was one of nine children of Andrew and Celia Hanson Anderson. Born September 16, 1887 on a farm near Craig, Burt County, Nebraska, she died September 28, 1994 at Oakland, Burt County, with interment in Tekamah Cemetery at nearby Tekamah. She attended Happy Hollow Rural School District 66, and was confirmed in the First Evangelical Lutheran Church at Oakland. In May 1913, she married Guy Smith at her parents' home near Craig, then the couple lived on the Smith family farm for 54 years. There were no children.

After her husband's death in 1967, Maude continued to live on the farm until 1988 when she moved to Oakland Heights. Aside from the Lutheran Church, she belonged to the Prairie View Club in her rural neighborhood, and was a 69-year member of Eastern Star, and the American Legion Auxiliary, the latter two of Craig. At her death, Maude's surviving relatives included 10 nieces and nephews.

According to the 1920 Nebraska Soundex, Maude Smith, Wayne County, village of Carroll, was listed as age 34, born in Nebraska. At the time, she was enumerated with Mrs. George W. Laryan. For history, see obituary in October 6, 1994 *Oakland Independent*.

Albert Starr, age 107, was the fourth son of Thomas and Sophronia Parks Starr. Born April 13, 1882 at Elkhart, Anderson County, Texas, he died on July 19, 1989 at Mullen, Hooker County, Nebraska, with interment in Cedarview Cemetery. After he grew up in Texas, and attended grade school for a few months, he was married on June 21, 1906 to Lula Payne at Grapeland, Houston County. In 1911, he moved his wife and small sons to Nebraska, and settled on a homestead 23 miles northwest of Mullen, where his family grew up. The couple raised seven sons: Gerald, Homer, Leonard, LeRoy, Lyle, Milton, and Murrell.

He was a hard worker and added to his ranch. In 1950 he and his wife moved to Mullen, where Albert worked as a carpenter's helper until he was 90 years of age. His wife died in April 1972. Albert moved to the Pioneer Memorial Nursing Home in Mullen in 1979. At his death, surviving relatives included five sons, nine grandchildren, and 16 great grandchildren.

According to the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under Albert Starr, Cherry County, he was listed as age 37, born in Texas. For history, see obituary in the July 27, 1989 Mullen *Hooker County Tribune*, and a follow-up tribute in the August 3 issue.

Lydia Bantel Stephen, age 107, was one of 13 children of Immanuel and Anna Rieske Bantel. Born on July 29, 1894 west of Naper, Boyd County, Nebraska, she died on May 26, 2002 at Valentine with interment in Mount Hope Cemetery at Springview. She attended rural school near the family homestead, completing the sixth grade, and helped her parents on the farm. On January 20, 1915 she married Thomas Stephen at Springview, Keya Paha County, where the couple resided on a ranch, and Lydia assisted her husband in his work. They raised five children to adulthood: daughters Lucile Lambley, Iola Stewart, Ilene Dobbin, Virginia Belknap, and son Donald.

After her husband's death in 1948, she worked in care centers and cared for a number of older people in her home while living in Long Pine, Brown County, retiring at about the age of 80 years. She made pieced quilts and did custom quilting at home, and enjoyed making various handmade items to give to family and friends. Her delight was to prepare family dinners on special holidays and birthdays. Lydia actively attended churches, and belonged to the Baptist Church. At the age of 96, she sold her home in Long Pine and bought a home in 1990 in Valentine in Cherry County to live next to her daughter Iola. After developing health difficulties, she entered in 1996 the Pine View Good Samaritan Care Center in Valentine. Surviving relatives included four children, 9 grandchildren, 27 great grandchildren, and 29 great great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under William Bantel, Boyd County, Basin Precinct, and found daughter Leta listed as born in July 1894 in Nebraska. For history, see article in August 8, 2001 *Valentine Midland News*. For an obituary, see June 12, 2002 *Valentine Midland News*.

Michael J. Thralls, age 107, was among the longest-lived Civil War veterans in the nation. The son of Remus and Catherine Doff Thralls, he was born January 16, 1843 at Terre Haute, Vigo County, Indiana, and died on November 30, 1950 at Oregon City, Clackamas County, Oregon. Burial was in Grand View Cemetery near Long Pine, Brown County, Nebraska. After spending his early years as a farmer in Clay County, Illinois, he entered active duty during the Civil War on October 24, 1864, serving with Captain Hutchins in Company C of the 57th Indiana Regiment of the Union Army. During a battle at Nashville, Tennessee in December of that year, he was wounded in the right shoulder, then spent several months in a field hospital at Cumberland, Tennessee. After he was honorably discharged on October 24, 1865 in Illinois, he returned to farming. On February 21, 1868 he applied for pension due to his wound during the Civil War. His service number was C 2 578 355.

The name of Michael's first wife is unknown, but daughter Orilla was born August 1884 in Illinois. Sometime after that, he moved his family by covered wagon to settle on a homestead near Ainsworth and Long Pine, Brown County, Nebraska, where his wife Martha, perhaps his second wife, died on May 4, 1897. He was the father of three children who lived to adulthood: daughters Rose Holmes, Etta Senter, and Orilla Morton, the latter having been married to Ezra Morton on February 1, 1905 in Brown County.

In 1937, he moved with his daughter Orilla Morton's family to Payette, Payette County, Idaho, and sometime later to Nyssa, Oregon. In 1946, he then moved with his daughter's family to nearby Nampa, Idaho, with several months spent in the Veteran's Hospital at Boise in 1949, followed by relocation to Oregon City, Oregon. During the week of his 104th birthday, the Nampa newspaper reported that Michael was in good health, but "smokes cigars and chews tobacco constantly." On Memorial Day of 1949, he was honored for his service to his nation. At his death, surviving relatives included three children, nine grandchildren, and nine great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Michael Thralls, Brown County, Buffalo Precinct, and found him listed as being born in January 1841. His death certificate with the Vital Records Unit of the Oregon State Health Division revealed his birthdate was January 16, 1843. And records on file with the Veterans Administration revealed he was born January 16, 1843 in Terre Haute, Vigo County, Indiana. For history, see article and obituary in June 2, 1949 and December 7, 1950 *Ainsworth Star-Journal*,

Addie Wagey, age 107, was one of seven children of G. A. and Adelia Culver Wagey. Born November 23, 1878 in a dugout on a farm northwest of Cambridge, Furnas County, Nebraska, she died January 21, 1986 at Cambridge, with interment in Fairview Cemetery. Her father, a native of Germany, married her mother in New York, then lived in Dixon, Illinois until arriving in the Cambridge, Nebraska area in 1876. After several years of living in a dugout, the family lived in a sod house for several years, then later constructed a wood frame house. Addie attended the Cambridge Public Schools, graduating in 1897, after which she taught in nearby country schools for about 10 years, then she managed the family farm until 1951 when she moved with her sister Pearl to the town of Cambridge.

At an early age, she attended church and joined in 1912 the Congregational Church of Cambridge, and was a member of the Christian Endeavor Society of Nebraska, of which she held the office of state secretary for 10 years. Two years after her sister died in 1970, Addie moved to the Long Term Care Wing of Cambridge Memorial Hospital. Her mother lived to 100 years of age, and two sisters until they were age 92. At her death, Addie was survived by six generations of family, including three nieces.

An examination of the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under Adelia Wagey, Furnas County, revealed daughter Addie was listed as age 41, born in Nebraska. For history, see article and obituary in December 1, 1983 and January 30, 1986 *Cambridge Clarion*.

Margaret Safford Waters, age 107, was the daughter of Henry and Salinda Robinson Safford. Born March 13, 1873 at Sycamore, De Kalb County, Illinois, she died December 1, 1980 at Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin, with interment in Wyuka Cemetery in Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska. She moved with her family to the Lincoln area as a young girl, settling on a farm nearby. On June 14, 1893 she married Frank R. Waters in Lincoln, a prominent attorney and judge, and she attended the University of Nebraska. The couple raised three children: Helen Rader, Alice, and Asa, the latter serving as executive director of the Cedars Home for Children in Lincoln.

Her husband, who served as Lancaster County Judge, died in 1907, but Margaret remained a Lincoln resident for 71 years before relocating to live with her daughter in Wisconsin. Margaret was a member of the First Presbyterian Church and of the Daughters of the American Revolution. At her death, she was survived by two children, three grandchildren, and 11 great grandchildren.

According to the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Frank Waters, Lancaster County, city of Lincoln, wife Margaret was listed as having been born March 1873 in Illinois. For history, see her husband's obituary in October 2, 1907 *Nebraska State Journal*, and her obituary in the December 3, 1980 *Lincoln Journal*.

Bertha Dunkel White, age 107, was one of 13 children of Carl and Amelia Munchow Dunkel. Born July 7, 1882 in Stetten, Germany, she died October 7, 1989 at Seward, Seward County, Nebraska, with interment at Lincoln Memorial Park in Lincoln, Lancaster County. At about age 10, she immigrated with her family to the United States, settled on a farm near Pleasant Dale, and attended parochial and public schools in Seward County. She moved to Lincoln when age 16 to do housework. Later she became a seamstress at Miller & Paine Department Store, working in the drapery section. Bertha married Jake White, a Lincoln police officer who was also employed as a guard at the Nebraska State Penitentiary for 40 years. He died in 1953. There were no children.

After living in Lincoln for more than 60 years, she moved to Seward in 1963, and became a resident of the Sundermann Home in 1980. A member of Rebekah Lodge in Lincoln, she also belonged to the United Church of Christ. At her death, surviving relatives included two sisters and several nieces and nephews.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Bertha Dunkel, Lancaster County, city of Lincoln, and found her listed as age 19, born March 1881 in Nebraska, with enumeration as a servant for Robert H. Walcott. For history, see obituary in October 11, 1989 *Seward County Independent*.

Elizabeth Cross Willey, age 107, was one of six children of George and Malinda Willard Cross. Born March 23, 1890 at Coldwater, Comanche County, Kansas, she died November 15, 1997 at Wymore, Gage County, Nebraska, with interment in Liberty Cemetery at nearby Liberty. After spending her childhood in Comanche County, she married Joseph E. Willey on January 5, 1908 at Coldwater, then the couple moved to Marshall County, Kansas. In 1918, they moved to the rural Barneston and Liberty area of Gage County, Nebraska, and in 1943 moved to Wymore. The couple raised two children to adulthood: daughter Edith Norris and son Richard.

Her husband died in 1948, but she kept active as a member of the Order of Eastern Star, the Daughters of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, and Wymore Woman's Club. She enjoyed playing cards, and belonged to the Friendly Neighbors Card Club. Elizabeth also was a member of the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints in Lincoln. At her death, surviving relatives included a daughter, daughter-in-law, five grandchildren, six great grandchildren, two step-great grandchildren, and one step-great great grandson.

According to the 1920 Nebraska Soundex, under Joseph E. Willey, Gage County, wife Elizabeth was listed as age 30, born in Kansas. For history, see obituary in November 17, 1999 *Beatrice Daily Sun*.

Della Ramsey Witt, age 107, was the daughter of Thomas and Alwilda Coselman Ramsey. Born October 25, 1888 at Livingston, Madison County, Illinois, she died on April 14, 1996 at Hastings, Adams County, Nebraska, with burial in Juniata Cemetery at nearby Juniata. In 1900 she moved with her family to Hastings, and on February 14, 1906 she married Fred Witt at Juniata. The couple raised three children to adulthood: daughters Ruth Bridgen and Verna Maxfield, and son Elvin.

Her husband died in 1960. She was a homemaker and nurse's aide at Good Samaritan Village, and a member of First United Methodist Church. At her death, Della's surviving relatives included two children, five grandchildren, 21 great grandchildren, and 25 great great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1920 Nebraska Soundex under Fred Witt, Adams County, and found wife Della listed as age 31, born in Illinois. For history, see obituary in April 16, 1996 *Hastings Tribune*.

Unverified Longevity Reports

Though the author has attempted to verify the age of all individuals reported to have reached age 107 or above in the history of Nebraska, at least 13 remain unverified for a variety of reasons. Because birth certificates were generally lacking from the 19th century, baptism records, where available and needed, were consulted. Other official documents such as census records and marriage certificates were also considered reliable when age of a youth or person in early adulthood was involved. Death certificates, like all records, may contain errors because the family member or other informant may not have conducted sufficient background research. When census records and marriage certificates contain contradictory data from

published accounts, or when data within a category of records reveals an inconsistent pattern, the author determined verification was lacking.

Some families have made extra efforts to conduct genealogical research, but in cases where documents were not maintained since the 19th century or where family members have relied solely on the testimony of relatives who were in their late elderly years, the chances for error were greatly increased.

In some instances, a descendant could find other official documents that the author did not locate, and arrive at a definitive answer, different from what is presented here. For those who are inclined, I have helped make the task easier by making my sources known so that others may determine if what I have presented is accurate.

Nebraska census records are housed at the Nebraska State Historical Society, where microfilm of marriage certificates for some counties is also available. For information about hours the reference room is open to the public, contact the NSHS at 1500 R Street in Lincoln by telephoning (402) 471-4270 or toll free (800) 833-6747.

Census records for all states are housed at various repositories around the nation. For this project, the author used the genealogy and local history department of the Mid-Continent Public Library at 317 West Highway 24 in Independence, Missouri 64050. It is located just south of the Harry S. Truman Library. The general telephone number is (816) 252-0950, and available also are microfilm records of the 1930 Census.

Most state historical societies can provide a list of private individuals who conduct genealogical research for a fee.

Bessie Baca, thought to be age 108, was reportedly born November 8, 1885, birthplace and parents unknown. Perhaps originally from Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska, she relocated in 1959 to Hilltop Manor in Genoa, Nance County, then to Hofmeister's Retirement Home in 1970 before moving in 1972 to Fullerton Manor in nearby Fullerton, where she died on January 17, 1994. It is known that she was a cleaning lady and housekeeper, but rumors persisted that she may have spent her younger years as a cook on cattle drives in western Nebraska and Wyoming. The author could not locate her on census records for 1900 and 1920. For an obituary, see January 19, 1994 Fullerton *Nance County Journal*.

Ada E. Burton, thought to be age 107, died on May 10, 1976 in Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska. According to her death certificate, her father was unknown, her mother was Maggie Reed, and Ada was listed as born on March 24, 1869 at Ivy, Virginia. After growing up in several Iowa communities, including Des Moines, she was married to John W. Burton, and the couple moved to Omaha in 1911. After they separated sometime in the 1920s, she raised her four children: daughters Beatrice McKinley and Athalone Bates, and sons John Jr. and Osborn. The first listing in the Omaha City Directory occurred in 1925 and the 1931 Directory indicated she was operator of Hinchey Laundry Company at 2522 Caldwell. Ada reported she worked as a laundress, a cook, a domestic, and a janitor, never was on welfare, and gave up her last job at the age of 80.

She attributed her longevity to hard work and will power, and was quoted as saying, "I am a self-made woman. You can't make me do anything I don't want to." Mention was also made of assistance from the Bible. At her death, Ada's surviving relatives included three children, five grandchildren, and six great grandchildren.

The author examined the 1920 Iowa Soundex under John W. Burton, age 50, Monroe County, Bluff Creek Township, town of Buxton, West 9th Street, and listed was his wife Ada as age 40, born in Virginia, son John Jr., age 6, daughter Beatrice, age 5, and daughter Athalone, age 1, all born in Nebraska. If the 1920 Census for Iowa, enumerated for the Burton family on January 7 of that year is accurate, she was born in 1879, suggesting she may have been age 96. For history, see articles in March 24, 1971, March 23, 1974 *Omaha World Herald*, and obituary in May 11, 1976 issue.

Anna Chasdek (or Chastek), thought to be age 110, died July 24, 1892 at Western, Saline County, Nebraska. Reported born on July 26, 1781 in what is now the Czech Republic, perhaps the Brandys and Orlici area, she and her family first settled in the Cedar Rapids, Iowa area, then relocated to the Steele City,

Jefferson County, Nebraska area before residing on the farm of her son John Chasdek in North Fork Precinct, Section 17, Saline County. Making genealogical study difficult is the variation in the spelling of the family name, including Schastek and Shestak, and language translation.

According to the 1885 Nebraska Census for North Fork Precinct, Saline County, there was an Anna listed as age 50, mother of John Chasdek, born in Bohemia. Burial records for Plainview Cemetery near Western indicate a Mrs. A. Chasdek died on July 24, 1892 at 85 years, 8 months, and 13 days, interred in Section 4, Block 22, Lot 1. For history, see article in April 14, 1892 *Wilber Republican*. While the *Western Wave* issue that likely included an obituary was missing on microfilm, an obituary did appear in July 27, 1892 *Lincoln Daily Nebraska State Journal*.

Emma Davis, thought to be age 111, died July 2, 1959 in Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska. According to her death certificate, her father was Jim Davis, her mother Martha, last name unknown, and Emma was listed as born on December 25, 1847 at Waxahachie, Ellis County, Texas. She arrived in Lincoln in 1947 to live with her son Girt Davis, who later died in 1955, causing Emma to move to a nursing home until being hospitalized before her death. Interment was in Wyuka Cemetery. Most of her life, she lived in Cooper, Delta County, Texas, and raised five children. There is no information about her husband. In published accounts, she recalled her days of slavery after being born on a plantation, then after the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 she became a dishwasher. While living in Lincoln, she experienced a fire in her son's house in March 1951, in which she removed her grandson and a neighbor girl from the building, then tried to put out the flames by herself before she was rescued with no ill effects. At her death, Emma's surviving relatives included five grandsons.

An examination of the 1920 Texas Soundex revealed Emma Davis, Delta County, Cooper, West Sixth Street, was age 54, living alone, black, born in Texas. In the 1860 Texas Slave Schedule, a James W. Davis, # 287, was listed for Ellis County. The evidence suggests Emma Davis was probably age 94. For history, see article in May 30, 1954 *Lincoln Sunday Journal & Star* and obituary in July 3, 1959 *Lincoln Evening Journal*.

Jose H. Escamilla, thought to be age 107, died on October 1, 2001 at Scottsbluff, Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska, with interment in Fairview Cemetery in the community. Reported born on March 19, 1894 in Molino Del Cortijo, Mexico, he was the son of Alejandro and Teresa Hurtado Escamilla. After helping care for his mother, while a young boy, he married Rita Zavala in 1917 at Molino Del Cortijo, and the couple moved to the United States two years later to live in Topeka, Kansas, where he worked for the railroad. After living in Kansas and residing in Colorado, the couple moved to the Nebraska Panhandle area, where Jose farmed in various places, including Lyman, Minatare, Morrill, and Torrington, Wyoming. In the early 1960s, they moved to Scottsbluff. The couple raised 13 children to adulthood: daughters Angelita Escamilla, Bernice Herrera, Eva Flores, Rebecca Herrera, Sarah Avila, and Victoria Serrano, and sons Abraham, Alvaro, Antonio, Daniel, Joseph, Rudolph, and Samuel.

His wife died in 1983. A member of the Spanish Seventh Day Adventist Church, he served as head elder, head deacon, treasurer, and other offices. His family reported Jose knew the English language, liked to read, loved seeing his large family during birthday celebrations, and was very alert and strong. "He never even used a cane or even needed glasses," reported a daughter-in-law. At his death, Jose's surviving relatives included 13 children, 63 grandchildren, 135 great grandchildren, and 85 great great grandchildren.

The author found a Jose Escamilla in the 1920 Kansas Soundex, Montgomery County, city of Coffeyville, born in Mexico, but no age was listed. His social security number was issued in Nebraska before 1951, and the Social Security Death Index on www.ancestry.com revealed that he was born March 10, 1897. This suggests he may have been 104. For history, see obituary and article in October 3 and October 11, 2001 *Scottsbluff Star-Herald*.

John Johnson, thought to be age 107, died June 2, 1897 at Ashland, Saunders County, Nebraska. Reported born on October 22, 1789 near the present city of Cleveland, Ohio, he was married twice, settling in Ashland about 1860 with his second wife Jane, about 40 years younger than he. The couple raised three

daughters to adulthood: Lucinda, Lorinda, and Louisa. Known as Colonel Johnson, a title he had acquired by training a company of militia in 1812, he managed a meat market for about 15 years, ranking as one of the pioneer businessmen of Saunders County. At his death, his surviving relatives included his wife and three married daughters.

The author examined the 1870 Federal Census for Nebraska, and found John Johnson, Saunders County, Ashland, listed as age 72, born in Ohio. The 1880 Federal Census for Nebraska, Saunders County, Ashland, listed John Johnson as age 88, born in Ohio, father and mother born in Ireland. With the discrepancy in age enumerated over a 10-year period, he may have been age 99 or age 105. For history, see obituary in June 4, 1897 *Ashland Gazette*.

Thomas Morris, claimed to be 126 years of age, died April 30, 1920 near Ansley, Custer County, Nebraska. Reportedly born on January 15, 1794 at Berriew, Montgomeryshire, Wales, he was the son of Thomas Morris, a laborer. There is no mention of his mother. Thomas did not attend school, and did not marry. When young, he lived in Scotland, where he was a butcher, but he also worked at the Cook O'Forden Inn, where he was a cobbler for about 20 years. He was reared in the Episcopal Church. Along with a young friend, Charles Mytton, he sailed from Liverpool on the Colorado, and fifteen days later they arrived in New York on October 3, 1871. Thomas and his young friend located in the Streator, Illinois area, then in 1881 moved to Missouri. In 1886 they located in Custer County, Nebraska, Westerville Township.

The author examined the 1900 Nebraska Soundex under Thomas Morris, who was listed as a boarder with Charles Mynton in Custer County, Westerville Township, age 75, born January 1825 in England. However, the 1910 Federal Census for Nebraska, Custer County, Westerville Precinct, the Charles Mytton family, revealed Thomas Morris was listed as age 116, born in Wales, and immigrated in 1871. This discrepancy between 1900 and 1910 suggests he may have been age 95. For history, see article in June 29, 1911 *Custer County Beacon*, and obituary in May 1, 1920 *Grand Island Daily Independent*.

Emma Parks, thought to be age 112, died May 1, 1993 at Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska, with interment in Mt. Hope Cemetery at Omaha. One of three children, she was the daughter of Abe Brown and Lusie Fladey, and was reported born on December 23, 1880 at Gloster, Amite County, Mississippi. She had moved from Arkansas to Omaha about 1890 to be near friends and work as a housekeeper for private families. After her birth, she had traveled across several states with her mother and stepfather, then left them at age 12 to be raised by an uncle and an older woman friend. Married three times, she had eight children who died young, according to newspaper accounts. Caretaker friends reported that Emma recalled living in Ashley County, Arkansas, talked about nearby Greenville, Mississippi, and mentioned a daughter named Geneva and a son named Ossie.

For most of her life, Emma lived near Pine Bluff, Jefferson County, Arkansas, working in cotton fields, serving as a nanny, and doing the work of a mortician. Her third husband died about 1960. While in Omaha, she was an active member of the Great New Hope Baptist Church, and resided at 5100 Florence Boulevard in an apartment until her death at the Ambassador Health Care Center. In a newspaper account about her 110th birthday, she attributed her longevity to a higher power by saying, "Jesus has taken care of me. If it wasn't for Him, I don't know what would have happened."

According to the 1920 Arkansas Soundex under Howard Parks, black, age 36, Ashley County, his wife Emma was listed as age 30, born in North Carolina, with son Pater, age 12, daughter Geneva, age 10, and son O.V., age 7, all born in Arkansas. If this is the same Emma Parks, the census data suggest she was born in 1890, reducing her reported age by ten years. For history, see article in December 24, 1990 *Omaha World Herald*, and obituary in May 7, 1993 *Lincoln Journal*.

Glen D. Post, claimed to be age 114, died April 6, 1988 at Columbus, Franklin County, Ohio, with interment in Eastlawn Cemetery of that city. The son of Darceis and Ada Bennett Post, he was reported born on March 16, 1874 in Hayes County, Nebraska, according to his death certificate and social security records. It is known from records with the Department of Veterans Affairs that he served during World War I in 1918 and 1919. He then moved at some point to West Jefferson, Madison County, Ohio, and there

worked as a night watchman for the community, paid by merchants, not by the Village. Local officials recalled he was known as a teller of tales, and that he had resided in the community as late as the 1950s. He then relocated to nearby Columbus, where he became married to Velma Marie Newell sometime in the 1970s. At his death, services were conducted at the chapel of McNabb Funeral Home, and an obituary reported his surviving relatives were his wife, a daughter, six grandchildren, 26 great grandchildren, 45 great great grandchildren, and three great great great grandchildren.

Post was interviewed in 1976 for a bicentennial project of Watkins Memorial High School at Pataskala, located just east of Columbus. The resulting article was reprinted in the September 1998 newsletter of the West Jefferson Historical Society, and in it he was reported as stating he located in West Jefferson in the 1920s, where his second wife's family lived, and the couple had three children. He also reported that he was sheriff of Hayes County, Nebraska from 1889 to 1903, and served in the U.S. Medical Corps during the Spanish American War. In an article in the July 17, 1987 *Columbus Dispatch*, he reportedly stated that as a child he met the outlaw Jesse James, that he picked cotton, mined coal, and worked on the railroad, and was quoted as saying that "chewing tobacco, and my young wife, that's what keeps me going."

According to the 1900 Arkansas Soundex, under Darius N. Post, Fulton County, Afton Township, both Darius and his wife Ada were listed as born in Pennsylvania, son George was born 1885 in Illinois, son James was born 1887 in Illinois, son William was born in 1890 in Illinois, son Glenn D, age 7, was born March 1893 in Nebraska, son Samuel was born 1895 in Arkansas, and son Arthur, age 2, was born 1897 in Arkansas. The 1920 Nebraska Soundex revealed D. N. Post, Richardson County, Salem Precinct, and his wife Ada, were born in Pennsylvania, and son Arthur, age 22, was born in Arkansas.

Records at Hayes County, Nebraska Courthouse reveal no one named Post ever served as sheriff. And though his death certificate revealed he was a sheriff in Madison County, Ohio he was not employed in that capacity. Information with the Department of Veterans Affairs reveals that Glen Post was born March 16, 1892. That, along with his listing in the 1900 Arkansas Soundex as being born March 1893 in Nebraska, clearly suggests he reached the age of 96. For history, see articles and obituary in July 17, 1987 and January 14, 1988 and April 7, 1988 *Columbus [OH] Dispatch*. See also short obituary in April 9, 1988 *Lincoln [NE] Journal*.

Solomon F. Rickner, thought to be age 115, died May 28, 1936 at St. Paul, Howard County, Nebraska. Reportedly born on February 18, 1821 at Klecknersville, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, he was one of at least five children of Daniel and Seah Rickner. As a young boy, he and his family relocated elsewhere, and were known to have resided in Branch County, Michigan about the mid-1850s, where they cleared away forests and sold the land. There he was married to Mary Sixberry of Wooster, Ohio, and two of the couple's children were raised to adulthood: daughter Cora Corbett and son William. Solomon was employed for a time with the Michigan Central Railroad, but sometime in the 1870s, he moved with the family of his father-in-law to Nebraska, settling on land between Bellwood and Rising City in Butler County, Alexis Township. He reported the family then moved back to Michigan for about two years, then returned to Nebraska to settle at Hooper, Dodge County, where Solomon operated three different businesses, after which he moved his family to the original land in Butler County.

His family moved again, this time to Keya Paha County, settling on a farm near Newport, where his wife died in 1899. From about 1901 to 1909, he lived with his daughter's family at Seattle, Washington, then they returned to the Columbus, Nebraska area, residing there until about 1913, when they moved to a farm in Howard County between Cushing and Palmer. In 1932, he and his daughter's family moved to nearby St. Paul. Solomon enjoyed tending to a large garden during his elderly years, and maintained his memory and eyesight. At his death, Solomon's surviving relatives included a brother, daughter, eight grandchildren, 29 great grandchildren, and one great great grandchild.

Genealogical research reveals the Daniel Rickner family resided in Moore Township, Northampton County, Pennsylvania before 1840, though it is not clear where Solomon was at the time. The family was not found in Pennsylvania records for 1850. The author examined the 1860 Federal Census for Michigan, Branch County, city of Sherwood, enumerated on July 27th of that year, and under Daniel Rickner, age 65, farmer, born in Pennsylvania, were listed his wife Seah, age 47, Reuben, age 33, John, age 22, Solomon, age

21, all born in Pennsylvania, and Edward, age 3, born in Michigan. The author also examined the 1870 Federal Census for Michigan, Calhoun County, Eckford Township, and found Solomon Rickner listed as age 32, born in Pennsylvania, wife Mary at age 22, born in Ohio, and daughter Della at age 4, born in Michigan. The 1880 Nebraska Soundex reveals Solomon F. Rickner listed as age 40, and the 1885 Nebraska Census reveals he was listed at age 47, farmer, Butler County, Alexis Township, wife Mary, age 36, and son Willie, age 6. The data from census records suggest Solomon could have been born about 1838, which means he was probably about age 98. For history, see article in July 13, 1933 *David City Butler County Press*, a feature in the March 30, 1935 *Nebraska Farmer*, and an obituary in the June 3, 1936 *St. Paul Phonograph*.

Edward T. Smith, thought to be age 108, died on February 20, 1990 at Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska. Interment was in Fairview Cemetery in Lincoln in the same lot as his sister Effie Carter and other relatives, reveal records managed by Wyuka Cemetery. According to his death certificate, he was the son of Edward Smith and Amey Craig, born on February 11, 1882 at New Orleans, Louisiana. In an obituary of his sister Effie Carter published in the December 8, 1970 *Lincoln Star*, surviving relatives listed were sister Edith Calhoun, and brothers Edward Smith of Omaha and L. Kenneth Smith and Charles Smith of Lincoln. Her father was listed as Mike Douglas, her mother as Amey Craig.

Records with the Veterans Administration reveal he served in World War I from January 22, 1917 to December 18, 1918. Reportedly, he spent much of his life in New York City as a carpenter, bricklayer, and plasterer. He stated that he moved with his wife to Omaha in 1952, but was listed as a retired person in the Omaha City Directory from 1972 to 1985, where he was a member of the Friendship Center, and had a pacemaker implanted at St. Joseph Hospital. After that, he relocated to Lincoln to live with a daughter.

He raised at least two daughters to adulthood: Hazel Sims and Clintonia Venegar. His death certificate reveals he was widowed, but there is no mention of his wife's name. While in Lincoln, he belonged to the Newman United Methodist Church and the Madonna Day Care Services. At his death, Edward's surviving relatives included two daughters, nine grandchildren, and many great grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

The author found persons named Edward Smith entered in census records in Nebraska and other states, but could not determine accurate identification. According to the Social Security Death Index, his social security number 508-05-8645 was issued in Nebraska before 1951, and he was listed as being born on February 11, 1892 and dying on February 20, 1990. This suggests that he may have been age 98. For history, see obituary in February 23, 1990 *Lincoln Journal*.

Little Wolf, claimed to be age 122, died August 14, 1961 at Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska. According to a newspaper account he was a member of the Hunkpapa Sioux tribe, born on December 23, 1838 at Standing Rock, North Dakota, the son of Chief Rain-in-the-Face and Little Flower, though his death certificate, on which he was listed as informant, reveals he was born at Deep Gulch, North Dakota, his father was American Horse, his deceased wife's name was unknown, and his legal name was Robert M. Smiyth. His claim that he was the son of Chief Rain-in-the-Face brought a complaint by a member of the Sioux, who asked the Commissioner of Indian Affairs at Washington, D.C. to silence him. Other claims of Little Wolf, who called himself a Chief, included being a star with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, being a close friend of such Hollywood stars as Marilyn Monroe and Mary Pickford, and teaching Jim Thorpe how to become a top athlete while both were students at Carlisle Institute in Pennsylvania. While living in Omaha for an unknown number of years, he sold newspapers, tended a parking lot, and handled rents for a rooming house at 1409 Cass Street. He was also a janitor.

According to the 1920 North Dakota Soundex under Little Wolf, Dunn County, Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, there was a person by that name listed as age 42, living alone. The 1900 Nebraska Soundex listed another person named Little Wolf, Thurston County, Winnebago Precinct, who was recorded as age 10, born in 1890 in Nebraska, and enumerated with Little Bird. Research by the National Archives and Records Administration located student records for William Little Wolf, who arrived at Carlisle in 1907 at age 23, and another student named William Little Wolf, who arrived at Carlisle in 1915 at age 14. Little

Wolf, or Robert M. Smiyth, who eventually lived in Omaha had reported he attended Carlisle from 1900 to 1906,

It cannot be determined on the evidence found just what his birthdate may have been or whether he had any connection with those listed on census records or records of Carlisle School. There are at least two persons with the same name included in biographical references on Native Americans. There was Little Wolf, a warrior who spent much of his life battling enemies of the Cheyenne, and his lifespan dates are estimated as 1794-1886. Another person named Little Wolf, known as O-Kum-Haket who was a Cheyenne that fought in the Battle of the Rosebud, lived from about 1850 to about 1928.

For history of Little Wolf (Robert M. Smiyth), see articles in the May 30, 1954 *Lincoln Sunday Journal & Star*, the January 30, 1955 *Omaha World Herald Magazine*, and the August 8, 1971 *Sunday World Herald Magazine of the Midlands*. For an obituary, see August 15, 1961 *Omaha World Herald*.

An unknown person, age 107, died on March 30, 1993 in Douglas County, Nebraska, born November 2, 1885, according to statistics provided by the Nebraska Health and Human Services System. However, Nebraska Statute 71-649 limits conditions for release of names. Mortuaries in Douglas County replied to the author's inquiry, but could not locate identification. A search of the Social Security Death Index via internet on www.ancestry.com did not provide identification either.

SUMMARY

The statistical and anecdotal evidence presented in this report of the very longest-lived centenarians in the history of Nebraska support the body of scientific research that suggests genetics is a major longevity factor. It is less clear why Nebraska ranks 3rd per capita in the nation for proportion of centenarians in its population, though the state is located in the northern region of the Great Plains and Midwest states that contain the highest per capita ranking for centenarians.

The causes may be related to the vitality in the genetic pool contributed by those who settled in the state in the 19th century, and to the amount of regular physical activity required by the lifestyles of the individuals included in the 101 verified accounts. Almost all lived a significant portion of their lives in a rural area.

It is no surprise that only 12 of the 101 accounts involve males, making 88 percent of Nebraska's longest-lived the female gender, and that the vast majority, regardless of gender, remained in good health physically and mentally throughout their lives. Nearly all endured some form of stressful event involving loss of a spouse or family member and relocating place of residence, in some cases several times, due to changes in employment or family need.

As for education, almost all attended elementary school for varying amounts of time, and some continued to the high school level. A dozen gained some form of post secondary formal schooling, with only three (Mead, Russell, Walker) graduating from college. This finding is in accord with what various studies have reported, perhaps because college attendance had not become a common practice until the post-World War II era.

Because of a mobile society and differences in population, it is not very meaningful to report which counties were home to the largest number of Nebraska's longest-lived. However, it is accurate to report that, for varying lengths of time, ten resided in Adams County, including two who reached age 111, and ten resided in Lancaster County.

To date, the oldest person to reside in Nebraska was Clara Herling Huhn, age 113 and 327 days, of Colfax County. The oldest man was Luther L. Goding Sr., age 111 and 157 days, of Adams, Clay, and Douglas Counties, who lived all but several months of his life in the state.

Others who resided at least 110 years in Nebraska include Mabelle Bauman of Holt and Douglas Counties, Clara Bangert Kirchner of Webster County, Bertha Radil Knezacek of Saline, Valley, and Howard Counties, Catherine Zubrod Kral of Adams, Franklin, and Webster Counties, Mary Fowler Norris of Cass County, and Helen Stetter of Cherry County.

Nebraska's supercentenarians age 110+ have matched or surpassed authenticated longevity records of all nations except for France, Japan, the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Australia.

Regardless of gender, level of formal education, field of endeavor, or residence, the biographical accounts suggest the existence of difficult-to-measure traits such as adaptability, common sense coping strategies, determination to overcome obstacles, and independent-mindedness, all lifestyle factors. In the opinion of the author, most accounts reveal some degree of quiet heroism at certain points of the centenarians' lives.

There are, of course, many differing views about the aging process that contain some truths. During a recent PBS television documentary, the daughter of Lady Bird Johnson, widow of U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson, reported that her mother has advised that "growing old is not for the faint at heart."

The anecdotal evidence in the biographical entries in this report also allows the reader to reflect on lyrics in the song "The Secret of Life," composed by James Taylor, which conclude that "the secret of life is enjoying the passage of time."

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Last but certainly not least, I wish to pay tribute to all the family members throughout the history of Nebraska who have contributed to information published in newspaper obituaries. Without their quiet dedication, the author would have been limited to producing little more than a roster of names of persons of exceptional longevity.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author has offered this publication in memory of his parents Rose Altman and Henry F. Kral, who owned and operated a farm west of Wilber for 37 years, and raised three children. Henry served during World War I as an airplane mechanic and instructor at Issoudun, France airfield, and was an innovative farmer who terraced his land in 1951, a member of Rural School District 97 school boards, and a county agriculture leader. During retirement years, he was president of the Farmers Elevator Company from 1962 to 1964, and served as president of the Wilber City Council from 1961 to 1971. Rose was a mother dedicated to her family's education and welfare with a meticulous appreciation for preserving history. Both were role models of parenting and achievement. Henry died in March 1977 at age 81, Rose died in June 1988 at age 92. For a biography of the Kral family, see the September 20, 1995 *Wilber Republican*. Like all newspapers, it has been preserved on microfilm at the Nebraska State Historical Society.

A 1953 graduate of Wilber High School, E.A. Kral received his bachelor and master degrees from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, where his personal papers are now housed, and where he has established the E.A. Kral Endowment for the Support of the UNL Archives. A high school English teacher in California and Nebraska for 30 years, he conducted research in the development of reasoning, and published his findings in the May/June 1997 issue of *Skeptical Inquirer*. He has also published many historical articles on local and state subjects which are indexed at the Nebraska State Historical Society, where the Kral Photo Collection of over 900 photos is housed, which preserves for public use images of subjects, events, and persons of local and state origin. A recent publication was the 40-page supplement to the December 5, 2001 *Wilber Republican* titled "Saline County, Nebraska's 101 Centenarians and 160 Marriages of 65 Years or More — 1854 to 2001."

Presently conducting research on nationally distinguished Nebraskans, he has published entries in *American National Biography*, Supplement 1 (Oxford University Press, 2002), and has placed his "700 Famous Nebraskans" on the websites of the Nebraska State Education Association at <http://www.nsea.org> and of the Nebraska Press Association at <http://www.nebpress.com>. Additionally, he has published lengthy biographies on artist Jim W. Cantrell, civil engineer Charles H. Purcell, movie star Robert Taylor, geologist and town founder Prof Charles Dana Wilber, and theatre actress Irene Worth.

After January 2004, he published, along with author Jean Sanders, a combined total of over 30 profiles of nationally distinguished Nebraskans in *The Crete News*. Profile selections were based on the Internet document "700 Famous Nebraskans," which is annually updated on the website of the Nebraska State Education Association.

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