

Family Is More Than a Word

By Lori Halfhide

I have shared the stories of several Orphan Train Riders who arrived in Clyde, Kansas, on the 13th of October, 1911. I've told you about Holly Stoll, who changed his name to Hallie Garwood, and became a farmer north of Clyde, raising a family there. Also on that train was little Paul Young, a freckle-faced, ginger-haired toddler who was taken by Boyd and Effie Clithero and raised to adulthood in Concordia. Helen and Alfred Weinhold were aboard the Clyde train, both taken by J. Ed Simmons. Helen remained with them until she married, calling Clyde home.

Two sisters were also aboard the 1911 Clyde train, Mabel and Edna Ashdown. Mabel was 13 and Edna was 11, the two youngest children of George Walter and Mary Elizabeth (Farrell) Ashdown. The Ashdown family lived in Brooklyn, New York. Their children were Margaret (b. 26 August 1893); William (b. 28 November 1894); Walter (b. 9 November 1896); Mabel (b. 28 July 1898), and Edna (b. 17 May 1903). George Ashdown was a carriage maker and carpenter. In late 1908 or early 1909, George was arrested by Detective O'Connor. On March 24 of 1909, he appeared before Judge Fawcett in the Kings County Courtroom and Judge Fawcett sentenced him to 4 to 6 years at Sing Sing Prison. I haven't figured out what the charge was. It was just a few letters, difficult to read. It looks like "Ver G L 2d." There were no newspaper accounts of the arrest or the trial that I have been able to find. The prison admission paper gives a very detailed physical description of George and his actual signature is at the bottom.

At home, Margaret and William were old enough to work and help out since they were teenagers. But even with that income, Mary couldn't support the entire family. Women just didn't have opportunities to hold good paying jobs in the early 1900's. With a broken heart, she surrendered her three youngest children; Walter, Mabel, and Edna over to an orphanage.

In the 1910 census Walter, Mabel, and Edna are found in the Industrial Association Home in Brooklyn, listed as pupils. Walter was 13, Mabel was 11, and Edna was just 8 years old. In later years, Mabel didn't speak much about her time in the orphanage. She did tell her daughters that at times, strangers would bring in boxes of used shoes. The shoes would be dumped on the floor and it was a scramble to find a new pair. Most of the time, the shoes did not fit correctly, and this led Mabel to have difficulty with her feet when she got older.

Mabel and Edna were sent to the Children's Aid Society for placement in early October of 1911. They boarded the train on the 11th of October and arrived in Clyde, Kansas, on Friday the 13th. Mabel was selected by P.C. Hill and Edna was taken by C.A. Sterling. Neither of these placements worked, and in 1913 Dr. C.C. Jones, area agent for the CAS was called. He came to Clyde from Marion and picked up the two girls and took them home to Marion. He had been the mayor of Marion and lived there for many years. He knew everyone and often took children who needed different homes, finding them homes among his many friends in and around Marion. We are unsure at this time who Edna went with, but Mabel received an amazing home with Sherman and America Padgett. The Padgetts were in their mid-forties, had been married for over twenty-five years, and had never been blessed with children. Mabel was loved and cherished.

On Wednesday, Decem-

ber 14, 1921 at 5:30 p.m., Miss Mabel Ashdown, "better known as Mabel Padgett," married Clarence Bell at the home of the bride. Their first home was on the Padgett farm. Mabel and Clarence became the parents of two daughters, Lois and Ruth.

Shortly after her marriage, Mabel's older brother Bill located her with the help of the Red Cross. He was living in Detroit, Michigan, where he had moved from New York after his marriage. All of the siblings were able to reconnect. Walter was still living in New York; Margaret in Hollywood, California, and Edna in Illinois. Margaret came to Kansas to visit Mabel and we have wonderful photos from their visit.

Mabel (Ashdown) Bell passed away in Marion on the 14th of January, 1960. She was 61 years old.

Margaret Evelyn Ashdown married Frederick Roth in Brooklyn on the 22nd of July in 1917; they never had children. Between 1935 and 1940, they moved to Hollywood, California, where Fred was an electrician for a movie studio. In 1961 they left California and moved to Clearwater, Florida, where Margaret passed away on the fifth of May, 1971.

William Henry Ashdown married Hazel Tomenzak before 1920 and moved to Detroit, where he worked in an auto manufacturing plant. William and Hazel were not blessed with children either. Later in life, William left the auto factory and became a sales representative for the Fuller Brush Company. After several years, he was a supervisor in the company. In 1958 he retired and the couple moved to St. Petersburg, Florida, where William passed away on the 31st of January, 1989.

Walter never left New York either. He enlisted for service during World War I on the seventh of December, 1917, in Brooklyn. Walter served his country in the European theater for a year and a half and was honorably discharged on the third of September, 1919. Walter married Marcella Smith on February 20, 1920, in Brooklyn. They had four children: Richard, Miriam, Robert, and Irene. Walter worked as a plasterer. He died on May 21, 1962, in New York City.

Edna rode the train with Mabel and after a short stay in Clyde, went on to Marion. Edna has been difficult to trace, but we find her living on St. Louis Avenue in Chicago in 1930. She was a newlywed, living with her new husband Frank Marco and her newborn son Nicholas. Frank was a restaurant manager. They became the parents of three children: Nick, Marlene, and Frank. Edna passed away in January of 1998.

I was unable to find either



Mabel Ashdown as a young girl. (Photo Courtesy Jacqueline Cusick, great-granddaughter).



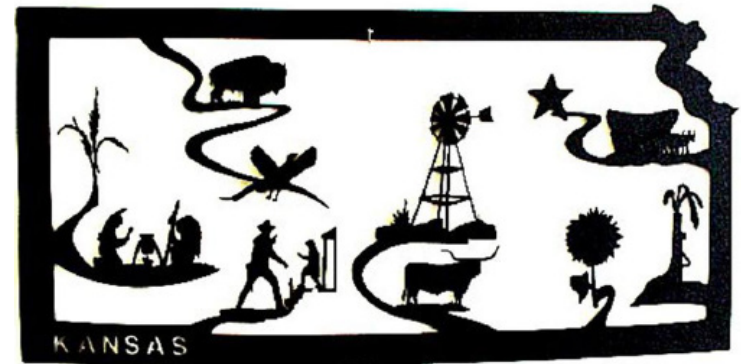
Mabel and her daughters with her sister Margaret. L to R: Lois Bell, Mabel (Ashdown) Bell, Margaret (Ashdown) Roth and Ruth Bell. (Photo Courtesy Jacqueline Cusick, great-granddaughter).

of the Ashdown parents after the family fell apart. The prison admission records said that George's wife Mary was living at 302 Gates Avenue in Brooklyn, in care of Charles Farrell; however, I couldn't find them in the census.

The Ashdown children spent their teens in different homes, in different states.

With concentrated effort and determination, they found each other and remained in close contact the rest of their lives.

As most Orphan Train Riders discovered, family is much more than a word – it's a feeling of warmth and love that neither time nor distance can change.



Kansas Profile – Now That's Rural

By Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University

Adam & Maggie Pounds, Simple Abundance Farm

"How big is your farm?" "It's about 4-by-8." "Oh, 4-by-8 acres?" "No, 4-by-8 feet." That imaginary conversation sounds like an unlikely discussion between Kansas farmers, but it illustrates how one young couple got their start in urban farming. They started raising microgreens on a 4-by-8 sheet of plywood. Now this innovative young couple is expanding their operation to provide local food while serving their community.



Ron Wilson

Adam and Maggie Pounds are the founders of Simple Abundance Farm in South Hutchinson, Kansas. Adam grew up at Hutchinson and went to Wichita State. Maggie went to high school at the nearby rural community of Buhler, population 1,289 people. Now, that's rural. She went on to Bethel College.

Adam and Maggie met through friends and ultimately married. "We caught the travel bug," Adam said. They worked a summer at Estes Park and then in Key West, Florida doing eco-tourism. Adam and Maggie are also talented musicians, playing guitar and multiple folk instruments. "Maggie sings like an angel," Adam said.

The young couple traveled and played music. While visiting friends in the Pacific Northwest, they decided to focus on the principles which were important to them: Community, intentional living, healthy food, and an active lifestyle. They apprenticed at an organic farm in Washington state.

"As you're traveling, you see life through a different lens," Maggie said. Their passion for a healthy, local food system grew. They moved back to Kansas to put this into practice.

In winter 2014, they started growing microgreens in South Hutchinson. "Our whole farm consisted of a 4x8 sheet of plywood," Adam said. Seeds were planted in compost on trays. Plants were harvested very young. "Microgreens are tender, nutty, and tasty," Adam said. They now have a high tunnel for additional vegetable production.

They produce sunflowers, peas, radishes, arugula, spinach, salad greens, kale, and more. "We use natural and sustainable methods to produce high yields on a minimal amount of land while protecting the environment," Adam said.

Back when they were still interns but wanting to start a farm of their own, Maggie and Adam were on a farm tour in the northwest. While in one grower's home, they saw a cross-stitch design on the wall that said "Simply Abundant." The term clicked for both of them. When they got back to Kansas, they named their place Simple Abundance Farm.

The "farm" is a specialty crop operation on less than an acre in the city of South Hutchinson. "We are urban, so we're very convenient for our consumers," Adam said. "The city has been really great to work with us."

"They've been an amazing addition to our Reno County Farmers Market," said Pam Paulsen, K-State Research and Extension - Reno County horticulture agent. "We are huge advocates of farmers markets," Adam said. They have also opened what they call the Farm Stand, which is a self-service market for their farm crops and other local products year-round. "Our customers get a key code so they can pick up products at their convenience," Adam said.

They are now building a commercial kitchen which will enable them to produce shelf-stable products such as sauerkraut and kimchi. They're also joining the Kansas Department of Agriculture's "From the Land of Kansas" program.

Meanwhile, they're caring for their two-year old son Arlo. "We call him quality control, he's out there in the dirt," Adam said.

Maggie is president of the newly-formed Central Kansas Young Farmers Coalition. She also recently lobbied for the farm bill with the National Young Farmers Coalition in Washington, D.C.

"We need to support one another, whether a farmer or consumer, to forge a path for local food production," Maggie said.

For more information, go to www.simpleabundance-farm.com.

How big is your farm? This innovative young couple got a start on a 4-by-8 sheet of plywood. Now they are producing a wide variety of fresh and flavorful produce. We salute Maggie and Adam Pounds – and Arlo too – for making a difference with their approach to urban agriculture. Their farm ground may be small, but their vision is tremendous.

THEN ... And Now

Anyone wanting to recommend someone to be featured in the *Then and Now* column, please submit your request to jaylowell@nckcn.com or call the Blade-Empire at 243-2424 Monday thru Friday, 8 to 5 p.m.



Mabel Ashdown and Clarence Bell in their wedding portrait (left) and Mabel and Clarence's 40th Anniversary portrait. (Photos courtesy of great-granddaughter Jacqueline Cusick).

