LOOKING BACK in the Early Files

By Lora Stull

One Hundred Years Ago

(From the Mount Ayr Record-News, Thursday, December 16, 1925.)

A plan to get Iowa out of the mud was announced by Gov. Hamill and the Hwy Commission a few days ago that has an immediate meaning to Ringgold County. Mr. Fred R. White, State Engineer, told me in Des Moines at the meeting of the Iowa Good Road Association, that the road from Mount Ayr to the Union-Ringgold county line will be graveled next year.

In making up it's first balance sheet the Iowa budget bureau has discovered that the state owns more than ninety-two million dollars worth of property, including 22,328 acres of land. The land alone is given an estimated value of $9,419,067.

Marriage: December 5, Opal Henry and Dwight Mann.

Births: December 9, a son to Mr. and Mrs. T. McCowen..December 6, a son to Mr. and Mrs. O.D. Garland.. December 13, a daughter, Thelma, to Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Anderson.. November 26, a daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Nels Hanson.

Obituaries in this edition: William Billett, George Wesley Vogan, Unnie Case Wilson, Victoria and Selina Campbell Herron.

Seventy-Five Years Ago

(From the Mount Ayr Record-News, Thursday, December 14, 1950.)

Pfc. Jack E. Marshall, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gernie M. Marshall, of Mount Ayr, was recently awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge "for his satisfactory performance of duty during ground combat against the armed enemy in the Seoul Korea Area." Marshall and his unit, after two successful amphibious invasions and a leading role in the battle for Seoul, crossed the Ungi River in the northeast sector of Korea. They moved through snow capped mountains, to the Manchurian border and the icy banks of the Yalu River.

Carl Malone, extension economist form Iowa State College in Ames, will be the guest speaker at a public affairs meeting to be held Monday evening, Decemeber 18, in the assembly room of the courthouse. Mr. Malone is well informed on far eastren affairs and will speak on the war situation.

Marriage: December 10, Crystal Pate and Howard Whittington.. November 25, Lois German and Roland Yousling.

Births: December 10, a daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Miller.. December 1, a daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Don Bogg..December 1, a daughter to Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Dowell.. Saturday night, a son, Samuel, to Mr. and Mrs. Chester Wallace.

Obituaries in this edition were: Elmer Bowman, Jennie B. Mosier Drake, John Dolecheck, Ida Viola Glendenning Kaster, Pareoda Blanche Shaffer, James Monroe Baird, Henry Thomas Smith and Frank Rychnovsky.

Fifty Years Ago

(From the Mount Ayr Record-News, Thursday, December 11, 1975.)

Donald Wood of Ellston is the new member of the Ringgold County board of supervisors.

Mr. and Mrs. David Scott have purchased the Sheets Rexall Pharmacy in Afton. Scott started working at the store Monday, December 1, and will take possession at the first of the year.

The initial move forward installing central air conditioning in the Ringgold County court house at Mount Ayr was made last week as personnel from Dahl Air Conditioning firm from Van Meter began work in the courtroom.

Marriage: June 28, Sherri Rinehart and Rodney Adams.

Births: November 26, a son, to Mr. and Mrs. Dan Boyer..November 28, a daughter, to Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Johnson..December 1, a son, to Mr. and Mrs. Mick Still..December 2, a son, Jonathan, to Mr. and Mrs. Dick Stuck.

Obituaries in this edition were: Raymond "Lefty" Forest Vanderpool, Mary Emma Bailey Adair, Mrytle Mary Gorham Swanson, and Michael Keith Adams.

Twenty-Five Years Ago

(From the Mount Ayr Record-News, Thursday, December 14, 2000.)

The first blizzard of the winter~and really of several winters~hit Ringgold County late Sunday night. By Monday morning snow was falling steadily as temperatures plunged into the single digits. By the time the snow had stopped Monday evening, as much as 9 inches was recorded across the county.

Three Mount Ayr community high school students were selected for the southwest Iowa honor concert band in auditions Saturday. Students chosen in the auditions were Clara Terrell, Landi McFarland and Randi Sobotka.

One of the stops to get warm during the annual Christmas window walk around the square in Mount Ayr Saturday night was the Ringgold County courthouse lobby, where the Ringgold Singers caroled and the Mount Ayr community FCCLA offered refreshments.

Births: November 20, a son, Colton, to Jennifer McElvogue and Skip Mitchell.

Obituaries in this edition were: Lonnie Laverne Dehart and Bea Orning Pedersen

Ten Years Ago

(From the Mount Ayr Record-News, Thursday, December 10, 2015.)

State Champs again. Members of the Mount Ayr Community high school Sparks drill team placed first in the Class IV Pom division and second in he Class I Novelty division. Team members include: Haylea England, Ashton Quick, Kiersten Dolecheck, Laura Davison, Ryann Martin, Kennedy McAlexander, Caroline McAlexander, MacKenzie Shields and Abby Schafer.

On Tuesday, December 8, the Senior Life Solutions staff at Ringgold County Hospital got a big surprise.

Representatives from Psychiatric Medical Care were in Mount Ayr to present them with the "Program of the Year" award.

Marriage: July 11 Kayla Bender and Heath Brock.

Obituaries in this edition were: Ivan Clifford Groff, Rhoda Lois Baker Johnston, Mildred Maxine Keller Franklin, Catherine Eva Bergman Nelson, Robert Lee Rice.

Snapshots of History

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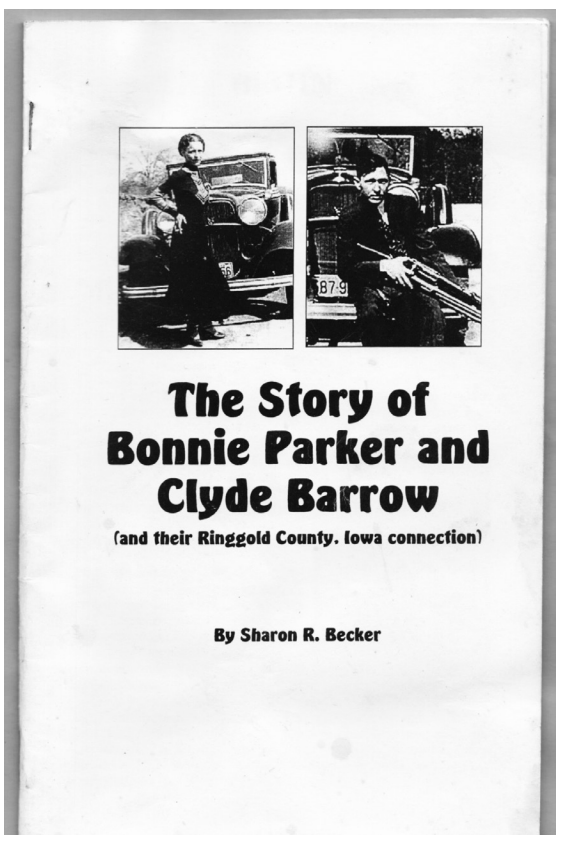
I found this booklet while looking for something else, as usual, and I haven't written about Bonnie and Clyde for awhile, so let's get on it.



Sharon Becker's booklet on Bonnie and Clyde

Sharon Becker compiled this booklet (about 36 pages) in 2010 and it was published by Paragon Publishing (Mount Ayr Record-News). The complete title is: The Story of Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow (and their Ringgold County connection). Before we get to Sharon's book, let's see what the Record-News reported in 1933.

The July 27, 1933 Record-News has a front page story giving a few details of the Barrow Gang's visit to Ringgold County. The Barrow Gang visited Caledonia Thursday morning, July 20. The gang parked one-fourth mile north of Caledonia and getaway driver W. D. Jones made three trips to the store on foot to obtain food, gasoline and medical supplies. Before the gang left, they made an attempt to burn bloody clothing on the Frank Marsh property. Mr. Marsh discovered the site and reported to Ringgold County Sheriff Leslie Thompson. By the time the Record-News article was written, the Barrow Gang had already had their famous shootout at Dexfield Park, a tourist court between Redfield and Dexter. In this shootout, Bonnie, Clyde and W. D. Jones escaped, but Clyde's brother Marvin "Buck" Barrow and Marvin's wife Blanche were captured. Marvin had been mortally wounded at a shootout in Platte City, Mo. on July 19 and he died at a hospital in Perry, Iowa on July 29, 1933. Blanche was also wounded but less seriously.

The Redding Herald of July 27 also had a brief description of the Barrow Gang visit at Caledonia and it was this account that tells us the driver purchased food, gas and bandages on his trips to the store. The Redding article gives about the same info as the Record-News.

On August 3, 1933, the Diagonal Reporter reprinted the Record-News article from July 27. That is all I could find about the Barrow Gang in 1933. There were no follow-up articles.

Sharon's booklet covers the law enforcement officers involved in the pursuit as well as former merbers of the Barrow Gang. The booklet contains many low-quality photographs.

Soon after Bonnie, Clyde and Jones escaped the Dexfield Park shootout, Jones went his separate ways. Bonnie and Clyde were gunned down on May 23, 1934 in Bienville Parrish, Louisiana by a posse made up of Texas Rangers. Bonnie was about 24 years of age and Clyde was around 25.

There are many fascinating facts about the Bonnie and Clyde crime spree and one of them surrounds the driver, William Daniel Jones. W. D. Jones was arrested in November 1933 at Houston, Texas. He was convicted of one murder and several lesser charges. He was sentenced to 15 years, but was paroled from the Huntsville Penitentiary after serving only six years. It turns out Jones was not yet 18 years old when he was with the Barrow Gang and therefore received a lenient sentence.

On August 20, 1974, in Houston, W. D. Jones was shot and killed during a confrontation with a private citizen.

There have been other historical booklets produced relating to Ringgold County history. I'm thinking of the Raymond Banner produced, "Civil War Letters Written to Nancy Jane Dewitt." Shirley Nelson House, a descendant of Nancy Jane DeWitt, provided the letters (18 in number I think) and acted as a co-editor. This booklet came out in 2000 and reproduced letters written to Miss DeWitt, a Ringgold County resident, by Ringgold County men serving in the Union Army. Some of the men wrote multiple letters so it was not 18 different men. With the digitized newspapers, some of those men might turn up in the papers. Maybe I will find my copy while I'm looking for something else.

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