

Aaron Watkins



Aaron Watkins was born December 31, 1839 in Madison County, Ohio. In his youth his parents moved to Logan County, Illinois. There he lived until 1861 when he enlisted in his country's service, in Company H of the 7th Regiment of Illinois Volunteers. At the close of his

three years enlistment he reenlisted and served until the close of the Civil War. He was wounded October 3, 1864 at Altoona Pass. The wound was so severe that he did not recover from it while he lived.

In 1868 he was married to Elizabeth Montgomery. With his family he continued to reside in Illinois until 1878 when he came to Kansas. He lived for many years near Sunnydale, Kansas before moving to Sedgwick. Sunnydale was a little hamlet of about 50 people just east of Valley Center. Aaron & Elizabeth had four children: Joseph, ?, ?, and Benjamin.

Aaron Watkins was 64 years old when he was killed in a runaway accident while passing his old home place near Sunnydale. The day before, Aaron had decided to hitch the wagon to the horse and take a trip to visit his children and grandchildren. Mr. Watkins first drove over to the home of his daughter, Mrs. Adams, east of Sunnydale. He spent the night there. In the morning he set out for the home of his other daughter, Mrs. McQuown, on the west side of town.

Along the way, as he came down the hill near the old home place at Sunnydale where he had resided so many years before moving to Sedgwick, the horse started to run. A resident of Sunnydale heard the runaway horse approaching and was an eye witness of the accident. Mr. Smith saw Mr. Watkins sitting back in the seat

holding the reins listlessly as the runaway horse approached. Either he was too badly frightened to attempt to control the horse or else he was affected by a slight stroke of paralysis, according to the witness. The horse was not running very rapidly, but when the old Watkins place was reached the horse left the road and turned in, happy to be at the old home again. At this turn, however, Mr. Watkins was thrown from the buggy, striking his head against a tree in the yard. Death was almost instantaneous, as he breathed but twice after Mr. Smith reached him. Aaron Watkins died Wednesday morning, August 2, 1905.

Aaron's body was brought at once to the home of W. A. Griffin in Sedgwick, with whom Aaron and his wife were living. The funeral was held in the home the following day, on Thursday, August 3. The services were conducted by Rev. Eldred. Aaron's body was laid to rest in Hillside Cemetery with GAR honors by the Stevenson Post. The GAR, Women's Relief Corps, and a large crowd of friends and relatives accompanied his remains from the home to the last resting place. - dmc

TAKEN FROM:

MEMORIES IN STONE:

Life & Death In Early Harvey County, Kansas

by **Darren McMannis
& Kelly Krotz**

Publishing Date: February 2008