

MIDWEST HISTORICAL & GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

ALERT

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Inside this issue:

- Latest Library Additions
- Items of Interest
- Calendar of Events

THE BABY IN THE PARKING LOT

The little grave rests atop a berm just south of the F parking lot at the Cessna Plant on K-42. It has been carefully tended through the years by the Cessna groundskeepers. A black iron fence protects it. The gravestone itself is framed by decorative river rock. At some point, someone has left some bunches of artificial flowers, now tired and worn. A brave little branch of Rose of Sharon has rooted on the north side and is making a good attempt at growing. The stone lies, rather than stands, but its engraving is still quite clear: "Lyn son of Mollie F. Wyckoff, died Jan. 24, 1881, aged 3 mos. & 23 D's. Budded on earth to bloom in Heaven."

In 1955, during the creation of the Cessna parking lot, the headstone was found by an engineer. Cessna decided to preserve it.



There have been several urban legends surrounding the grave. One is that the baby's family would not sell the land to Cessna unless the company promised to care for the grave. But Cessna already owned the land when the grave was found. Another legend is that the mother and baby were traveling on a covered wagon trail when the baby died. But there is no covered wagon trail near the gravesite, and they were not traveling anywhere; they lived there.

Actually, the grave is on what used to be Wyckoff land. Sylvester and Letitia Wyckoff came from Vinton

County, Ohio to Kansas with their ten children, including Mollie, in 1872. They settled on the quarter section near Hoover Road and 31st South, according to an 1882 plat map. Mr. Wyckoff was a war hero. He had fought for the Union, was wounded twice, and taken prisoner once. In the early 1880's he served as Justice of the Peace in Waco Township.

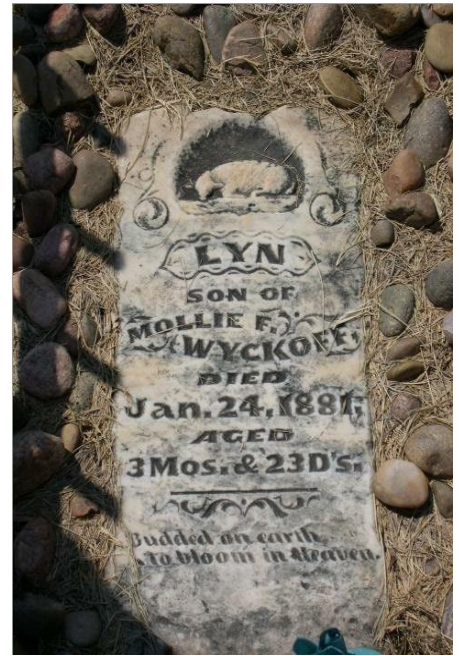
Apparently, Mollie became pregnant at age 16. She was unmarried. According to family lore, the father's name was Brown. It may be no coincidence that the next farm over was owned by Frank Brown. At any rate, Mollie's pregnancy would have caused quite a scandal for the upstanding Wyckoff family.

There is no way of knowing how baby Lyn died, but even under the best of circumstances, the infant mortality rate in those days was high. Yet from the sweet little gravestone, it can easily be assumed that he was loved.

According to a Marriage Index of Sedgwick County, Mollie married a young man named L. Purley Purkey in 1886. At some point, they moved to New Albany in Wilson County. There seems to be no records indicating that Mollie and Purley had any children. Ancestry.com shows Mollie died in 1902, but no obituary or record of her burial site has been found. Her parents and a sibling are buried at Seltzer Cemetery, near Harry and 143 rd, and it is known that Purley died around 1925 near New Albany. How ironic that hundreds of aircraft employees drive past little Lyn's carefully tended grave every day, but there is no trace of his mother's.

June Johnson

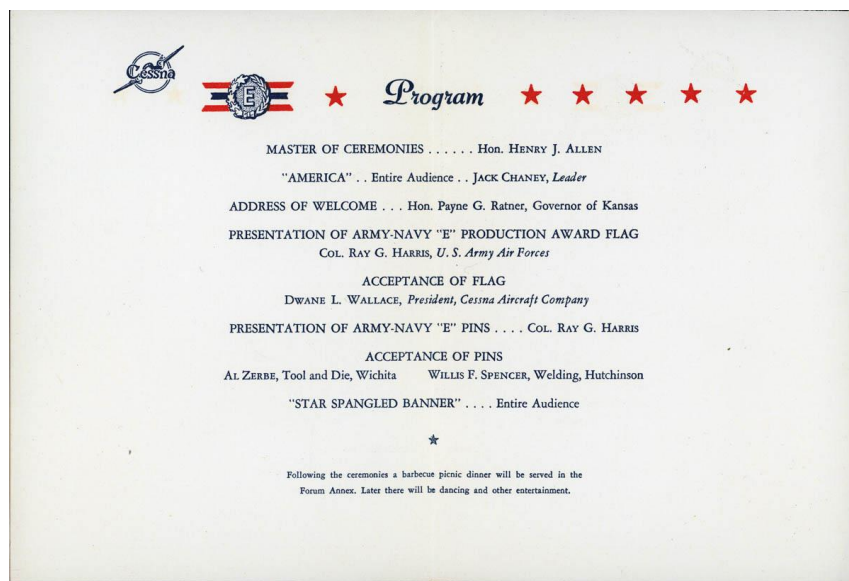
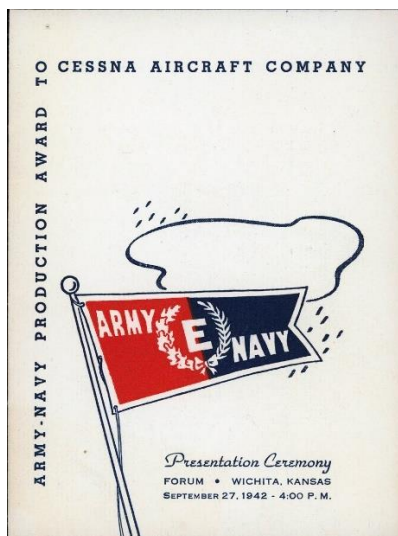
Thanks to Mike Maxton and Richard McCrea for their sources. Also used: *Historical Atlas of Sedgwick County Kansas & Cutler's History of Sedgwick County.*



NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR LIBRARY COLLECTION

Free Findahome	R-210 281 1988-7
Free Findahome	R-210 281 1988-5
Free Findahome	R-210 281 1986-12
Free Findahome	R-210 281 1982-6
Free Findahome	R-210 281 1982-7
History of Perth, Kansas	R-210 SU 39
Iota Kappa Cook Book	R-210 SG 284
Mulvane: City of the Valley, Past and Present	R-210 SG 283
The Long Line Kansas Skinner	G-H 172
Families are Forever: Winzer/Wirth Family	G-W 137
A History of Pillar Point	R-370 112
Mulvane	R-210 SG 282
A School like no other: the Independent School: First 26 Years	R-210 SG 281
Trial by Fire: The Hillsboro Mennonite Church Fire 7 March 2004	R-210 MN 21
A History of the Kansas Bench and Bar	R-210 170
Heritage of Care: A History of the Mennonite Bethesda Society	R-210 MN 20

FROM THE ARCHIVES...



Cessna Aircraft Company, "Army-Navy Production Award to Cessna Aircraft Company Presentation Ceremony," *MHGS Digital Collections*, accessed July 26, 2022, <http://mhgswichita.org/om/items/show/10282>

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Please see the Google calendar or our Facebook page for details.

GENEALOGY ROUNDTABLE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP	DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
Second Tuesday @ 1:30 to 3 pm Led by Julia Langel	Fourth Tuesday @ 1:30 pm Led by Twila Ackley Brown
PHOTO MYSTERIES	
Third Tuesday @ 1:30 to 3 pm Led by Rex Riley	

Midwest Historical and Genealogical Society

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