

## **Averill, Paschal**

Mr. Paschal Averill (Avril) was born in Herrison, Belgium in 1808. In 1854, he and his wife, Louise, and their children, Mary Jane and Narcissus, came to America and settled in Illinois. The climate in Illinois was damp and cold and since Paschal suffered from rheumatism, the Averills migrated to Douglas County, Kansas in 1857 where they farmed.

Narcissus and Mary Butell Averill had five sons; Ulysses, Louis, Joseph, Charles and Frank; two daughters; Julia and Rose. Narcissus was a hardworking and prosperous farmer with plenty of ambition as he was the owner of 1,040 acres in Franklin Township, Franklin County, and 160 acres in Miami County. At the time the family settled in Kansas, Narcissus was 12 years of age.

He remained with his parents until 23 years of age and received his education in the common schools, He then purchased 160 acres of wild prairie land in Franklin Township and from this property he improved a valuable homestead. He devoted himself entirely to agricultural matters and had little leisure for participation in politics, although he was staunch in his allegiance to Democratic principles.

Narcissus's children all attended school until they reached the age of 14 to 15. The only language they could speak when they first entered school was French. As soon as the boys were old enough to walk and capable of grasping objects securely, they were gradually introduced to the farming life. Being a large family, the children had very little spending money of their own and the boys earned theirs by hunting rabbits in the wintertime. They were paid from two to five cents per rabbit. These rabbits were usually shipped to Kansas City and sold. In the summertime the boys did odd jobs when not needed on the farm.

When the boys were twenty years old, each had his own horse. In those days, the younger set was just as daring with their horses as the teenagers are today in their cars.

Besides hard work, the Averills enjoyed sports. The Averill brothers had a horseshoe pitching team and would challenge other family teams by holding regular pitching matches. Neighbors came from all around to play croquet on their lawn. Another form of relaxation for the whole family was barn dancing.

The family gathered with nearly everyone else in town on Saturday afternoon or evening. It was not uncommon to walk to town. The family's first transportation was a spring wagon. About twice a year the Averills ventured to Ottawa. This was an all day trip and the children would be especially good so they would not be left at home. One event they did not miss was the Ottawa Fair which was really a spectacular in those days. There were all breeds of horses, cattle and makes of carriages to be seen. The main attraction was horse racing. There was also a great display of farm products, agriculture exhibits, quilts, paintings and home economics products. Admission to the fair was 50 cents each.

When night would come, the wagons and horses would start homeward after an exciting and exhausting day. Children would fall asleep in the back of the carriage or on mother's lap. One little girl got so carried away in dreamland that she fell out of the wagon and it ran over her; however, she was not hurt for the wagon was not heavy.

Descendants of Narcissus Averill now residing in this area are Donald (Larry and Belva Hicks) and Maurice Lynn (Karen Todd).