

The Delaware Indian Reserve, established in northeastern Kansas by treaty in 1829, had just been occupied when young Moses Grinter, a native of Kentucky, arrived in present Wyandotte County to establish the first ferry across the Kansas River. By December, 1830, nearly all the Delaware nation had immigrated from the east and a thriving settlement began to develop.

In January, 1831, Grinter began the operation of his ferry. It was an ingenious affair which used a rope windlass to alter the angle of the hull to the current and thus was pushed across the river by water power.

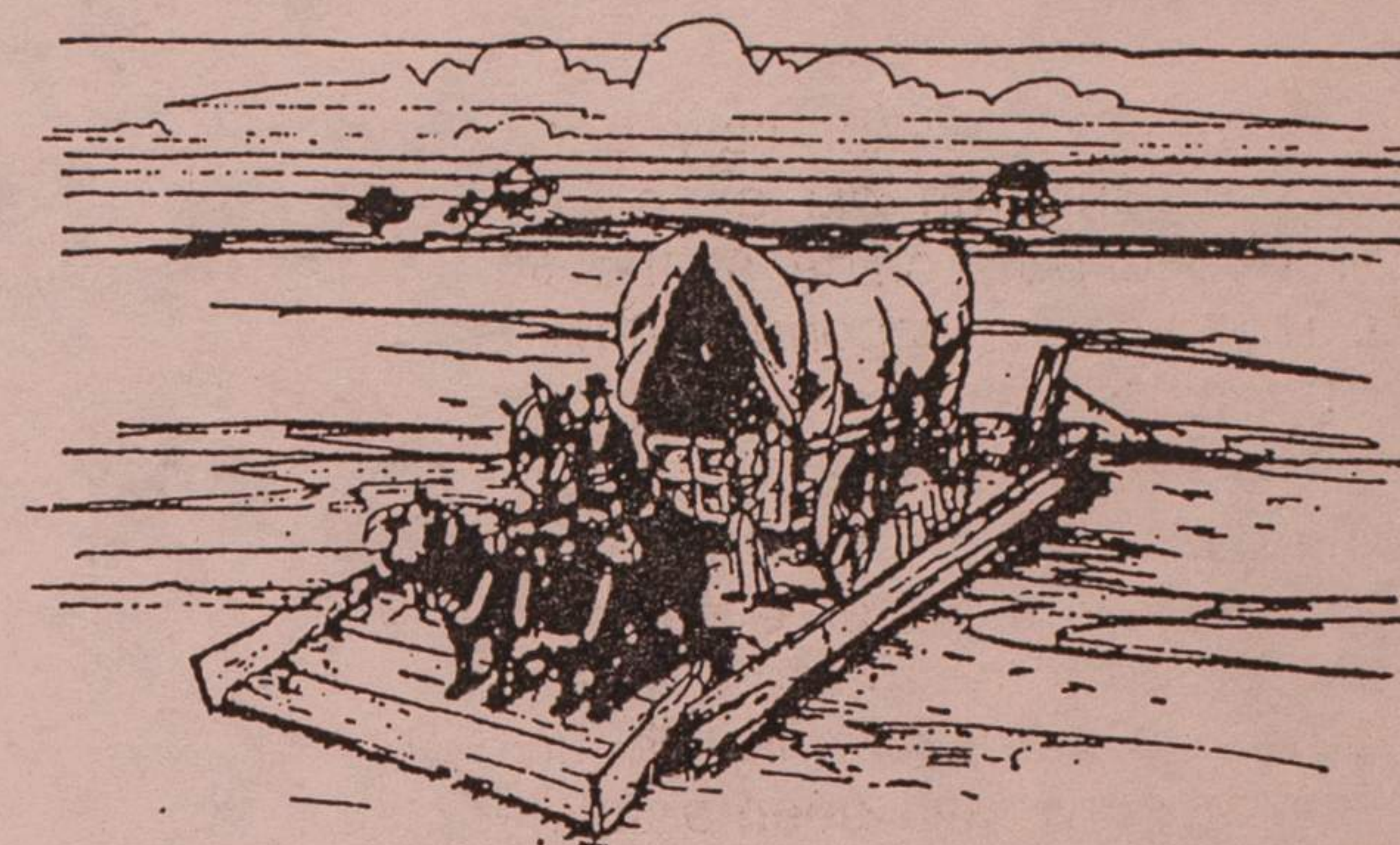
The ferry was known by several names including Grinter's, Delaware Crossing and, later, Secondine Crossing in honor of Secondine, son of the chief of the Delawares. During the 1830's and 1840's travelers on foot, horseback, and in wagons crossed for 50 cents per person or \$2 per wagon.

Many immigrants to Oregon and California used the Crossing in the 1840's and early 1850's. As

traffic increased Grinter saw a need for postal service and through his efforts the government established a post office at the ferry landing in 1850. This was the second nonmilitary post office in what was to be the state of Kansas.

It is not known whether Grinter was a civilian or a soldier at the time he came to Kansas. If a civilian, he may have come with the Indians, hired to operate the ferry so the Delaware could communicate with the Shawnee, who lived across the river. Or he may have been a soldier stationed at Cantonment Leavenworth who was detailed to provide military access to the Santa Fe Trail south of the river.

In 1836 a military road was authorized to be built from Fort Leavenworth southward along the Missouri line to Fort Gibson, in present Oklahoma, crossing the Kansas at Grinter's ferry. By 1840 the road was completed to the Arkansas River crossing in Oklahoma and during the Mexican War, 1846-1848, it was used as a feeder route to the Santa Fe Trail for the transportation of supplies to the army in New Mexico.



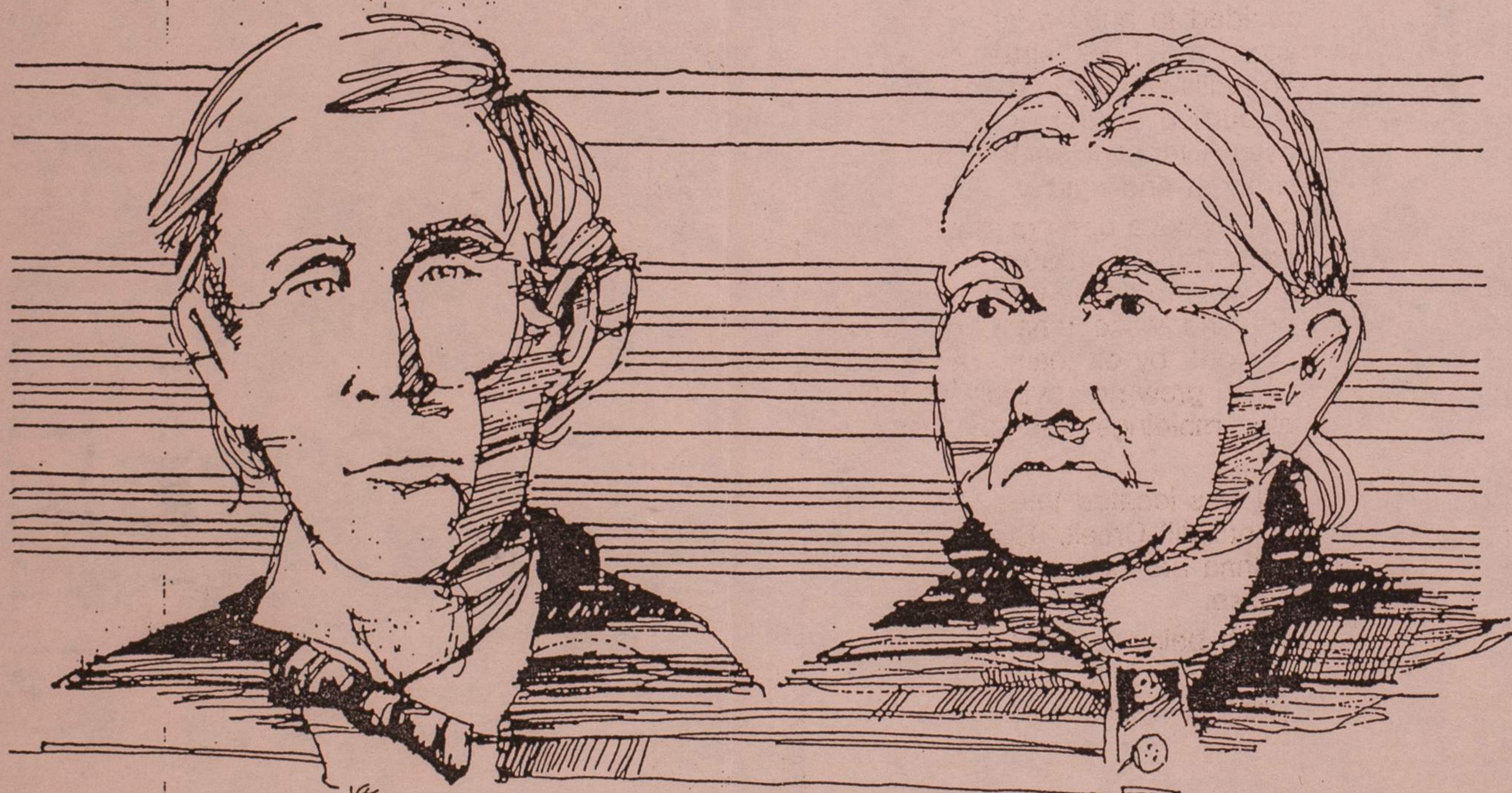
GRINTER FERRY from a sketch by Gordon and Barbara Kensler

The same year Grinter built his ferry he constructed a small log cabin near the landing. In 1836 he married Anna Marshall, daughter of an Indian trader and a Delaware woman, and began raising a family which ultimately numbered 10 children. In 1844, after a flood washed away the ferry landing and cabin, Grinter rebuilt the ferry, built a new cabin, and afterward opened a trading post. In 1857 Grinter decided to build a larger house, the present two-story red brick structure. Lime from the surrounding hills was used to make mortar. The brick was burned on the ground, using local clay and Kansas River sand, with animal hair incorporated for strength and rigidity.

Grinter House is said to have been modeled after a Kentucky farmhouse built in 1800 by Grinter's uncle. Structural timbers are native walnut. Interior woodwork is walnut and white pine which was hauled from Leavenworth by ox team. The floors are linden wood, which grew nearby. Mill work on columns and cornice moldings was done in St. Louis.

A grist and saw mill was located three fourths of a mile downstream on Mill Creek. The cemetery where Moses and Anna are buried is one fourth mile north of the house.

Grinter is credited with being the first permanent white settler in present Wyandotte County and one of the earliest in present Kansas. A gentle and



MOSES AND ANNA GRINTER