

BRAVE MOTHERS HELPED TO BUILD SOUTHWEST

Mrs. W.S. Kenyon of Jetmore Pays Eloquent Tribute to the Pioneer Women at the Duncan Crossing Ceremonies

This moving tribute to the pioneer women of Hodgeman County was paid Sunday at the Duncan Crossing Ceremonies by Mrs. W.S. Kenyon of Jetmore:

There is an old Methodist hymn which begins: "Who are these arrayed in white?" and the answer is given in the second stanza, "There are they that bore the Cross."

This it seems to me aptly applies to our pioneer women. They bore the cross of privation and hardship all the stony way that transformed a bare and treeless plain into a paradise. The land that once vibrated to the tread of thundering herds of wild buffalo is now covered by thriving cities and happy homes. Men and women toiled painfully and ceaselessly to achieve this, and to women no less than to men, is due the praise and the honor. Not only in sponsoring the finer and sweeter things--the spiritual, educational and social side of life, but in the actual filling of soil and building of homes, woman's hand was manifest.

In paying this tribute to pioneer women, one's mind turns naturally toward the aged, those who have endured the march. But looking back, one sees a dim and shadowy host of those who fell by the wayside; the girl bride, the young mother, these whose mortal eyes caught no gleam of the glory of today. Theirs are the early graves in our cemeteries, yet some sleep in unknown and forgotten places. As a poem in the 18th McGuffey's reader has it, "Many a nursing mother then, and new-born baby died."

What a pity that no record has been kept of all these brave souls, that their names might be preserved in some county archives as an inspiration to future generations. While knowledge of them is incomplete, this memorial seems incomplete without some personal mention.

In the western part of Hodgeman County, there are remembered Mother Sinclair, whose pat of butter was never too small to divide with a sick neighbor; Mrs. Myers, Mrs. Charles Jackson, the first teacher at Jetmore, Mrs. Faulkner, all of whom have passed on, and Mrs. Ghent and Mrs. Hamm who still remain.

The Jetmore vicinity gives us Mrs. Eliza Owens, whose cheerful philosophy bore her through the loss of husband and son in the smallpox rage, and remains a beneficent legacy to her friends; Mrs. Frusher, Grandma Barker, who said when we had more faith we would raise better crops; Mrs. Herbert Barker, Mrs. Raser, Mrs. W.G. Haun, Mrs. Roughton whose children in various walks of life call them blessed; Mrs. Cain; Mrs. Pratt; Margaret Best, who blessed every place she lived by planting a tree; Joanna Hunter, still attending to business at ninety; and one who sits among us, but does not hear these words of praise, Elizabeth Haun, whose light in her homestead window, beckoned every traveler to shelter and food without money or price.

Moving to the eastern part of the county, come the names of Grandma Hull, Mrs. Welsh, Mrs. McDermott, Mrs. Himer, Mrs. Shook; and nearer of today's activities, Mrs. Bowie, Mrs. Simons, Mrs. Charles Ruff, Mrs. Button, Mrs. Choate, Mrs. Matteson, and our own Julia Eakin--how many times her spirit passed under the rod when the family circle was shortened by the hand of death, and yet she kept her faith in God and humanity and with life's western sun shining in her face, she could say, "I am happy."