



historically speaking

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE HOWARD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Spring Issue 2004

Howard COUNTY'S Silver Star Recipients

Part three in a series
of three.

Some of the most memorable individuals have a gleam in their eye, an infectious grin and a way of conversing with you that challenges you and makes you feel better about yourself. Lieutenant General Clarence Irvine had all of those qualities plus an undaunting sense of adventure that enabled him to take risks others only dream of.



Lieutenant General Clarence Irvine—aviation pioneer, statesman, engineer, logistician, and Howard County native. Photograph courtesy of the Howard County Historical Society.

Clarence Shottidge Irvine, Bill as he was known to his friends and family, was a career soldier who served 41 years in the U.S. Military. Irvine was a highly decorated soldier, who over the course of his career, was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster (2nd award), Distinguished Flying Cross with oak leaf cluster, and Air Medal with oak leaf cluster, Bronze Star, Air Defense Service Medal, European African Middle East Campaign Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal.

General Irvine was eulogized with highest of praise by Lieutenant General Kenneth W. Schultz, USAF Ret., who wrote, "Bill Irvine was one of those persons who crowded so much into one lifetime...contributed so much to Aviation, the Air Force, to industry and national defense by his genius for productivity and his personal magnetism to promote his pioneering intuitions. This dear friend was indeed a soldier, an aviation pioneer, a statesman, unique businessman, engineer, logistician, and more. Bill never grew old and maintained his youthful exuberance for life right to the end."

Clarence Shottidge Irvine was born December 16, 1898, south of Farwell in the Kelso precinct near Oak Creek, in rural Howard County, Nebraska to James Irvine, Jr. and Margaret Jane Welsh.

Irvine married Mrs. Marie White Kelso in 1925. She had one son, Robert Kelso, who was later adopted by Clarence Clarence and Marie divorced October 24, 1942.

On December 16, 1947, he married Ruth Saltzman in Washington D.C. Ms. Saltzman and Bill worked together through the last part of WWII and

for a time thereafter.

Irvine and Ruth had two children, James and Jane. Ruth died December 29, 1973 in California.

On May 4, 1974, Clarence married Carol Pierpont Jones. On September 7, 1975 General Irvine died at the age of 76 and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

It's not clear where, or if, General Irvine ever graduated from high school. His name was not found among the graduates of Saint Paul High School. Living near Farwell, it is probable that he attended there.

Some people have indicated that "Mut"—as some of the locals knew him—never graduated high school, but quit school. Others have indicated that he ran away to join the army and others indicated that he had so much orneriness inside that a judge gave

him a choice to either join the service or face jail.

In any case, this local boy turned out okay and was highly educated and all that energy channeled in the right direction with his military career.

Records indicate that Irvine was first inducted into the Grand Army of Indiana on November 21, 1914. Irvine enlisted in the regular army in 1918 and served as an airplane engine mechanic.

His top-ranking fighter pilot skills caught the eye of the Air Corps and, because he was the top aerial gunner at the time, the Air Corps selected Bill for the assignment of flying in early silent movies. Two early aviation epics we know that he flew in were "Wings," which won the Motion Picture Academy's, "Best Picture," in 1928. The other epic film was "Hell's Angels."



Above is Colonel Irvine with his signature cigar in mouth and the members of the hand-picked crew that flew the Pacusan Dreamboat on her record-setting flights. HCHS photo.

Before WWII, he shared pioneering the flying of the B-17 Flying Fortress and in 1939 he set an international altitude record of 34,025 feet. In 1942, he became executive of the production division directing the engineering, production planning, and development process so that our nation had aircraft to fight with. During this period, he was a key figure in developing the four-engine bomber and fighter production programs—programs that were vital to the winning of WWII.

Early in 1943, he was assigned to Army Air Force headquarters in Washington as special assistant for aircraft production and later as chief of the very heavy bomber program. In these jobs, he was deeply involved in the production and modification of the B-29 Super-Fortresses. He spent tours in England and North Africa conducting bombing tests under combat conditions. From there, he went to China to participate in the planning for bases for the B-29 strikes. In 1944, he went to the Pacific as deputy chief of staff of the 21st Bomber Command. He participated in bombing raids over Nagoya.

He voluntarily participated in three missions dropping supplies for prisoners of war.

Irvine's engineering skills and superior performance qualified him for perhaps one of his most important tasks of the war—getting materials and production facilities organized for building the first atomic bomb carriers inside the B-29s.

After the second World War, he remained in the Pacific and Far East as deputy chief of staff of the Pacific Air Command and later went to the Strategic Air Command at Andrews Field,

Maryland. In 1946, now a Colonel, Irvine would establish two long-distance flight records flying from Guam to Washington, D.C. and Honolulu to Cairo via the North Pole. In addition, he set a new record from Los Angeles to New York of 5 hours, 27 minutes. His best known flight was in 1946 in the "Pacusan Dreamboat" from Honolulu non-stop to Cairo in 39 hours 36 minutes.

In late 1948, Irvine was assumed command of the 509th Strategic Bomb Wing at Walker Air Force Base, Rosewell, N.M.

On January 2, 1950, Brigadier General Clarence Irvine, assumed command of the 7th Bombardment Wing Operations, Carswell Air Force Base, Texas, from Colonel Fisher. Irvine was now commanding a wing of B-36 Stratosphere bombers. During this time, much of his effort was spent in re-engineering and modifying the B-36 Stratospheres strategic bomber to increase its combat effectiveness.

Irvine also acted as commander of the 8th Air Force. He later commanded the 19th Air Division at Carswell. Irvine's term as a commanding officer was a successful one and another milestone on his way to an even greater assignment.

During the Korean War buildup General Irvine returned to Wright Patterson Air Force Base. He became deputy commander of the air material command for production and weapons systems. It was his job to get the new jet bombers and fighters off the production lines and into combat units. He was active in almost every major Air Force production program with particular emphasis on the B-47 and B-52 bombers. His work with bomber

aircraft never stopped as he continued right to the end working with Rockwell International on the development of our current B-1 bomber.

After his many years in the fields of production, engineering, and maintenance, it followed that he was the logical choice to become the deputy chief of staff, material, Headquarters U.S. Air Force. As deputy chief of staff, Lieutenant General Irvine was one of the statutory deputies of the chief of staff, U.S. Air Force, reporting to and representing the chief of staff for management of Air Force and Reserve Forces activities in the fields of material and services.

Even after military retirement and in civilian life, Bill was proud of his uniform which we had reason to be. He had many distinguished medals presented to him for his great service to our nation. He established many records: best gunnery pilot in the Air Corps; world-records for speed, load carrying, altitude and endurance with WWII bombers.

Later in his career, Bill was a natural bridge between what the military wanted and needed and what industry and engineering could produce. Throughout another whole career in industry with AVCO and Rockwell, he went on adding to the productivity of this great nation and the well being and ever increasing standard of living for Americans. His advice was sought and he freely gave it, whether in the offices of company presidents or in the military offices of the Pentagon.

Guest writer of this article was Mick McDowell of Saint Paul, Nebraska.

Those incredible “Arts and Crafts” bungalows.

By Ron W. Sack

The Haggart house...the Trimbath house...the Paul house...the list goes on and on. I love the “Arts and Crafts” style, and these are some of my favorite homes. Ralph and Beulah Haggart’s house at 515 Sixth Street is a great example of the “Prairie” style home. Today, it is owned by my cousin and her husband, Becky and Don Knox.

Another great “Prairie” example is the Sorensen house south of Nysted. “Arts and Crafts” bungalows are plentiful in Howard County. Two well-preserved examples in Saint Paul are the Trimbath house at 822 Sheridan Street and Paul house at 723 Sheridan Street.

The Arts & Crafts movement had its roots in the Mid-19th century in the United Kingdom with the designs and works of such individuals as William Morris, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and Richard Norman Shaw. The movement gained followers in the east coast of the United States through the efforts of Gustav Stickley, Elbert Hubbard, and the Roycrofters, and many major architects at the end of the 19th- and early 20th-centuries.

Architects, artists, potters, metal workers, designers, and other craftsmen embraced this new style of design. They thought the Victorian era was far too elaborate. This group understood the importance and power of simplicity. One way to counter the Victorian era was to bring simplicity back into the home. Homes, furniture, pottery, lighting, and fabrics were all simplified. Nature was



Residence of W.S. Paul, St. Paul, Neb.

also brought inside the home. Colors and organic forms from nature were included—both inside and out. It was a very sophisticated form of design...and soon the bungalow caught on.

My good friend, Linda Paul Thompson, has fond memories of the bungalow built by her grandfather W.S. Paul at 723 Sheridan. Today it is owned by Lyle and Linda Rasmussen. The home boasted some of my favorite features of the “Arts and Crafts” home: an expansive front porch and screened-in back porch...both of which still survive.

“Oh, the porch,” exclaimed Linda Paul Thompson. “It was awesome when I was a kid. There was a swinging ‘chair’ there. The front porch also included a swing chair. The side yard had the most exquisite old-fashioned lilac tree.

My grandmother’s half-sister lived in the house and cared for her when she was older and ill. Aunt Nell Worden was like having an extra grandma. She took us to town to Johnson’s 5 & 10 to buy stuff and made the most incredible lemon cupcakes. We just loved sitting on the back porch with her because

Interior of the W.S. Paul home in Saint Paul. Courtesy of Linda Paul Thompson.

it was almost always cool there.”

Linda found these notes in her grandfather’s diary which describe, in detail, the building of the house. “The W.S. Paul house was built in 1915. Excavators started on May 3, concrete was poured in the basement on May 11, and the studs were raised on June 5. Shortly after that, the windows were installed on July 22. On September 5, Grandpa Paul and his brother installed the electric light fixtures and on September 28 they started moving in.”

His diary also notes that on October 3 he “had dinner and lunch in our new home and slept in our new house for the first time tonight.”

Additional entries in the diary included the following: “Final costs for the home was apparently about \$2,390, excluding electric light fixtures. The footprint was 24’ x 28’.”

Grandpa Paul apparently did work on it also. He noted that on July 21 he “Stayed up until midnight installing tile in the bathroom...”

Posen and Farwell history surfaces.

By Ron W. Sack

During one of my outings to visit postcard and stamp dealers, I uncovered a piece of Howard County postal history. It is an envelope with the post office change of Farwell, Nebraska to Posen, Nebraska.

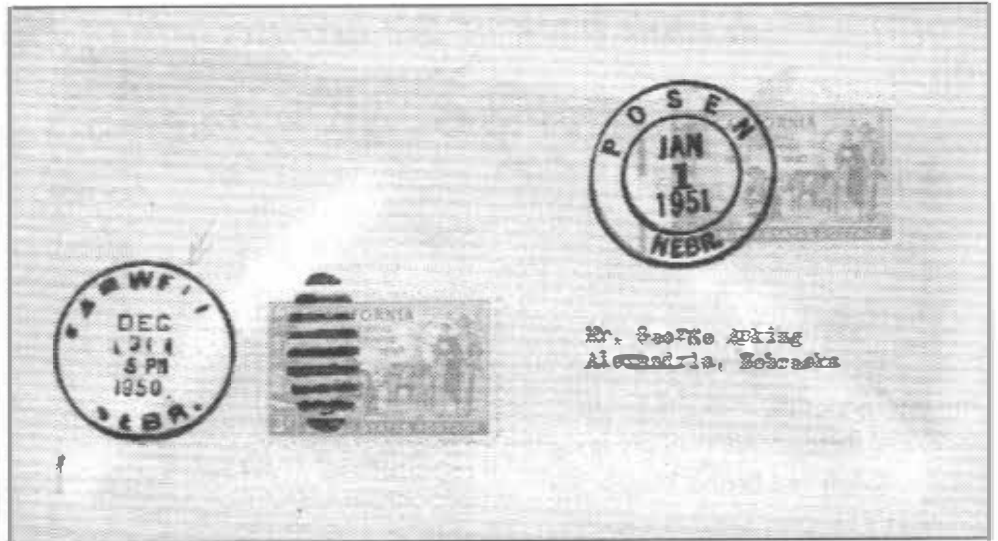
The lower left stamp is canceled with the name of "Farwell" and is dated December 31, 1950. The upper right stamp is canceled with the name of "Posen" and is dated January 1, 1951.

A December 28, 1950 clipping from the *Howard County Herald* touted the headline "Herald Goes To Farwell For The Last Time." The article states that the precinct has always been known as Posen since the town's founding in the 1880s. This article continues to state that the original town was founded by the late Mr. and Mrs. Adam Lorkowski and was located on the northwest edge of the present town on Highway 92. It was moved to the top of the hill following a fire and flood damage.

Controversy arose between the names of Posen and Farwell, even though the Burlington Railroad always used the letter "P" for its call letter for their station.

At the end of the 1950 calendar year, postmaster Ed Borzych, a grandson of the original founders, would "remove from the post office window the name of Farwell and replace it with Posen."

Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, a book which deals in the history of Nebraska's towns, stated that the post office and town were eventually changed back to Farwell, as it now stands today.



A rare look at two Howard County postal cancels on one envelope. The lower stamp is canceled with the "Farwell" name and is dated December 31, 1950. The upper stamp is canceled with the "Posen" name and is dated January 1, 1951. Courtesy of Ron W. Sack.

Many photographs surface on Saint Libory... thanks to our wonderful supporters.

By Ron W. Sack

We are so grateful to all of our supporters who continuously donate valuable photographs to add to our expanding collection. The photograph shown with this article depicts Saint Libory resident Elsie Hundelt operating the Saint Libory switchboard in her home.

This image was donated by her daughter, Sr. Martine Hundelt, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Additional photographs donated by

Hundelt will soon be on display in the depot with the exhibit which honors the pioneers of Saint Libory, Nebraska.



A look back at the architecture of Howard County.

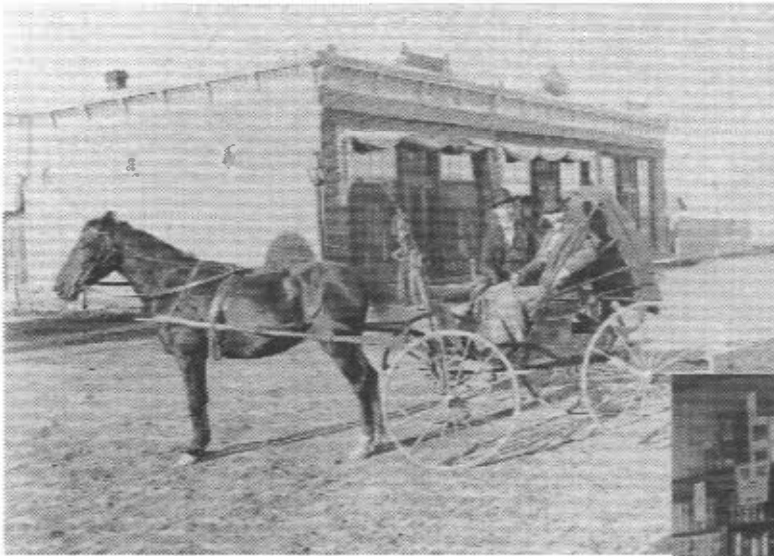


Photo at left: Elba's main street in 1900 and the Elba Store which was owned by Peters. Photograph courtesy of the C. V. Svoboda family.

Photo below: Interior of the Peters Store in Elba. Courtesy of the C. V. Svoboda family.



Photo above: The famous Nysted Danish Folk School. H.C.H.S. photograph donated by the Niels Nielsen family.

Photo at right: Saint Paul's Howard Avenue. H.C.H.S. photograph donated by the Richard and Lillian Haggart.



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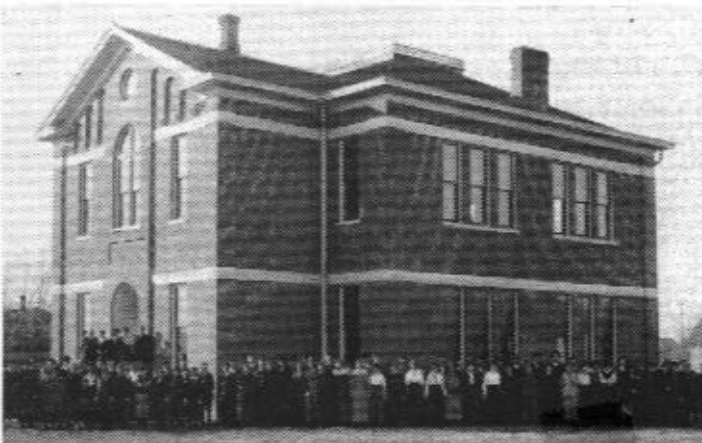
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Inside the next issue of this newsletter...

Our "Summer" issue will showcase several examples of outstanding architecture in Howard County. The issue will also showcase some rare photographs of the former Saint Paul Business College. Please renew for 2004 if you haven't already!



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PUBLISHER:
 Howard County Historical Society

EDITOR:
 Ron W. Sack

LAYOUT AND DESIGN:
 Ron W. Sack

CIRCULATION:
 500+

MAILING ADDRESS:
 P.O. Box 1, Saint Paul, NE 68873

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Photograph on mailing side: Saint Libory switchboard operator Elsie Hundelt.