

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR ANCESTORS ...

RESTLESS PIONEERS

**Samuel Wilson
King
(1827 – 1905) &
Margaret Taylor
Gerrard
(1831 – 1892) /
Albert James
Rymph I
(1851 – 1926) &
Luella Maria
King
(1861 – 1949)**

— Bradley Rymph

VISITS TO RYMPH FAMILY HOMESTEAD, HARPER COUNTY, KANSAS:

**Multiple trips through childhood, also June
15, 2013 (Bradley Rymph, with siblings
and parents)**

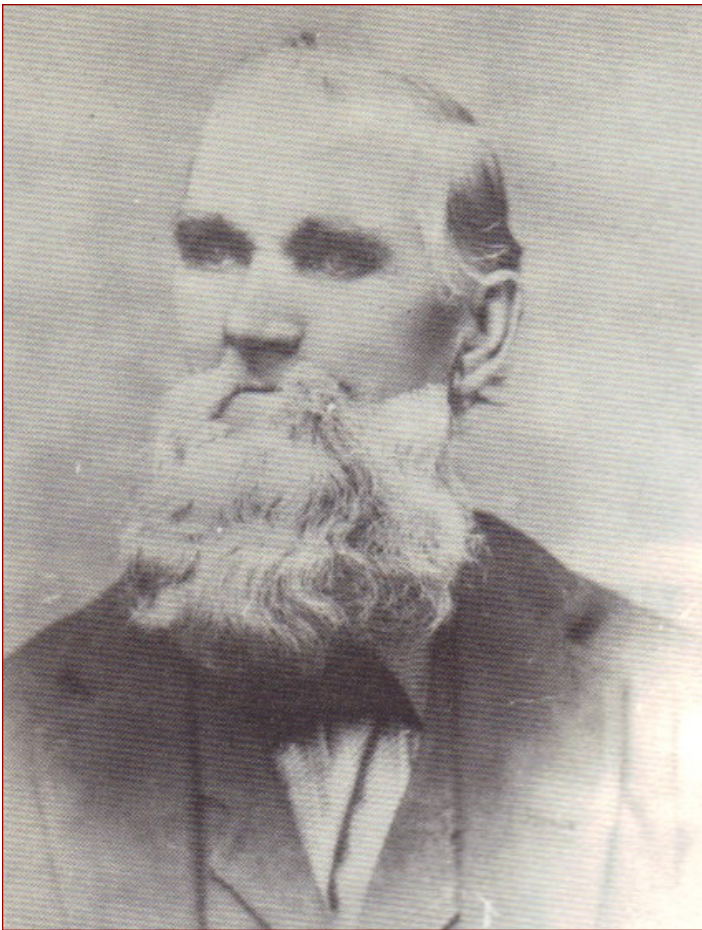
*Original text © 1996 by Bradley B. Rymph.
Revised text © 2010 by Bradley B. Rymph.*

The middle and late 1800s saw the rapid settlement of the Plains States, as “homesteaders” and other persons moved west across the United States and its territories. Among these adventurous people were some of my ancestors, including **Samuel Wilson King** and his wife **Margaret Taylor Gerrard**, their daughter **Luella Maria King**, and her husband, **Albert James Rymph**.

SAMUEL WILSON AND MARGARET (GERRARD) KING: From Ohio and Eventually to Kansas

Samuel Wilson King had a restless spirit that typified many of the pioneers of his day. Born in 1827 in Ohio, he moved to Tippacanoe County, Indiana, immediately after his marriage to Margaret Gerrard in 1850. After operating a mercantile business there for a few months, Samuel and Margaret moved on to Montgomery County, Indiana. By 1867, they were living in Poweshiek County, Iowa; in 1870, in Carroll County, Maryland.

By 1876, the Kings had made the move to Kansas. They settled first in Sumner County, then in 1878 moved further west to a farm six miles northeast of Harper, Kansas. Finally, Samuel and Margaret settled down, raising their



Samuel Wilson King (left) and Margaret Taylor Gerrard.

family of six sons and four daughters on their prairie farm.

Margaret died of a heart attack in March 1892. After her death, Samuel resumed his occasional moving, seeking greener pastures. For most of the rest of his life, however, he lived with his daughter Luella Maria, her husband Albert James Rymph, and their family on their farm a few miles from the King family homestead. Samuel Wilson King died August 14, 1905.

ALBERT JAMES AND LUELLA MARIA (KING) RYMPH: From New York to Kansas

Albert James Rymph was born in 1851 in Dutchess County, New York, the area on the eastern side of the Hudson River where his great-grandparents Johannes George and Mary Barbara (Reichenecker) Rymph had immigrated and settled from Germany almost a century earlier. After growing up during the Civil War era, he married a young, local woman named Emma Marshall on February 22, 1876.

Right photo:

Homestead house of Albert James
and Luella Maria (King) Rymph
in 1910.

Photo from Levi Budd Rymph,
Come In and Sit a Spell!, 1973.

Bottom photo:

Homestead house
as it appeared on June 15, 2013



Their marriage got off to a poor start, living with their in-laws. First, they lived with his parents in their Pleasant Plains, New York, home. Albert's young bride apparently did not like this arrangement, and they moved across Dutchess County to move into the home of Emma's mother. As a couple, they had one son. George Marshall Rymph.

Shortly thereafter, Albert left for the West. The exact reasons are unknown. Family tradition relates that his health had failed him from an ailment called catarrh. It is also said that living in his mother and mother-in-law's homes was not pleasant. In any case, A.J. arrived in Sadorus (near Champaign), Illinois, sometime in 1877. He secured a job as teacher of 30 pupils in a country school there. When the school term

HOW WE'RE RELATED

Samuel Wilson King and Margaret Taylor Gerrard were my great-great-grandparents — and Albert James Rymph and Luella Maria King were my great-grandparents — through my father, Albert James Rymph.

Samuel Wilson King
(12/10/1827 – 8/14/1905)

Margaret Taylor Gerrard
(2/12/1831 – 3/12/1892)

=



Albert James Rymph
(11/29/1851 – 7/3/1926)

Luella Maria King
(11/29/1861 – 7/3/1949)

=



Levi Budd Rymph
(6/10/1901 – 12/8/1987)

Jessie Mae Hershey
(3/26/1903 – 11/15/1991)

=



Albert James Rymph
(11/9/1925 – 2/16/2019)

Edna Mae Heath
(11/5/1928 – 9/10/2022)

=

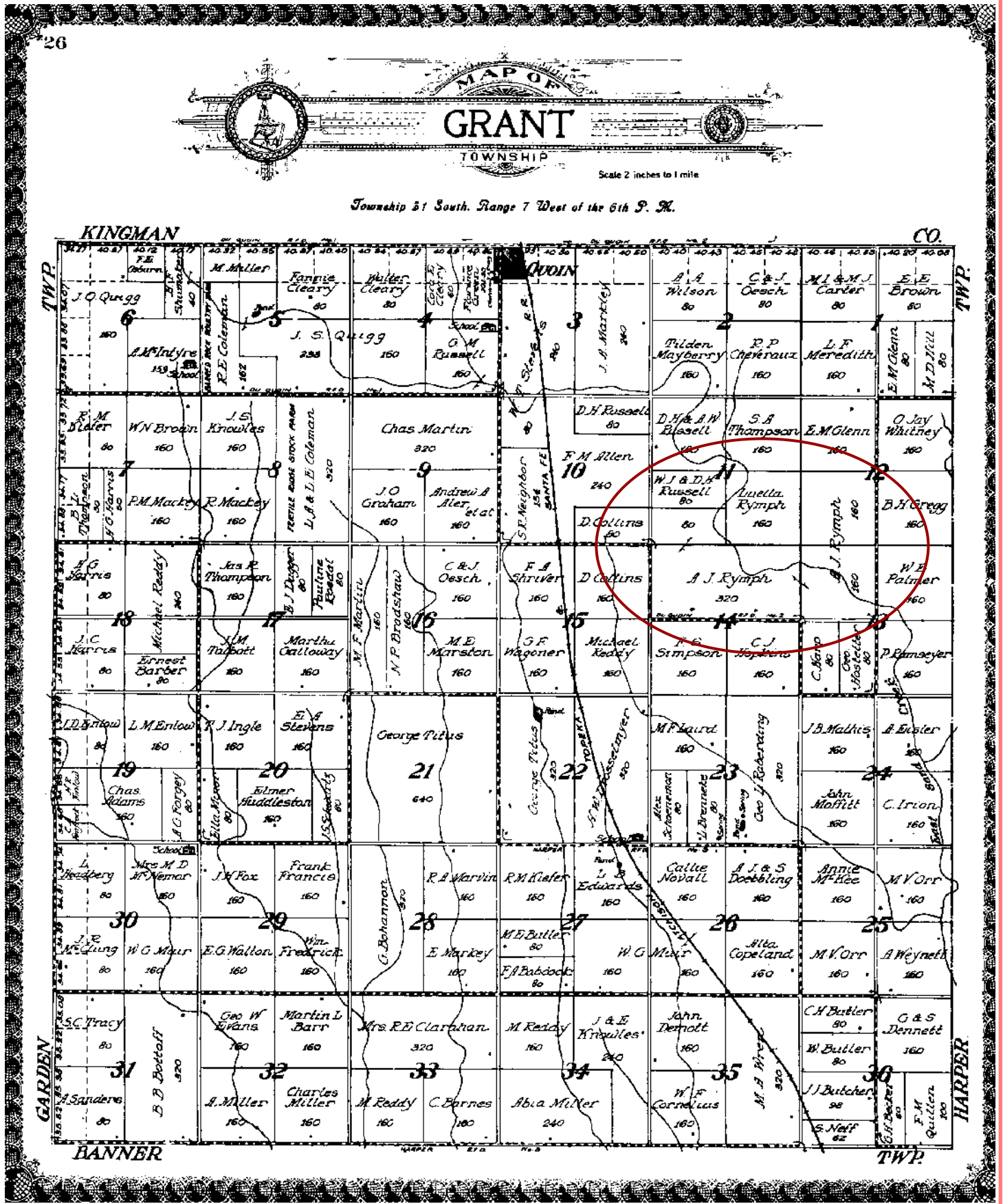


Bradley Budd Rymph
(living)

José Verzosa Baquiran III
(living)

=

Land-ownership map of Grant Township, northern Harper County, Kansas, in 1919. Burgundy oval denotes farm lands of Albert James Rymph and Luella Maria King Rymph.



Rymph lumber yard in Tribune, Kansas. Person standing in front of building is presumed to be Albert James Rymph. Photo taken 1887 or 1888.



ended, he took a train to Kansas, going as far west as Dodge City.

He returned to Illinois to teach a second term. During that term, he filed for

divorce from Emma. The divorce was granted in Champaign on September 22, 1879 (less than four years after he had been married).

The next spring, he again took a train to Kansas. This time, he got off in the newly organized town of Harper in Harper County. He filed a claim 1½ miles west of Harper. Realizing that all-important water was inadequate on that site, he sold his patent rights to that land and instead bought patent rights on land 3½ miles north in an area called Antelope Springs because of the abundance of antelope in the area.



Luella Maria (King) and Albert James Rymph in 1881 portrait. Photo from Levi Budd Rymph, Come In and Sit a Spell!, 1973.



Harper Cemetery, Harper, Kansas /

Top left photo:
Grave of Samuel Wilson and
Margaret (Gerrard) King



Top right photo:
Rymph family plot

Bottom right photo:
Grave of Albert James and
Luella (King) Rymph



With two other men, A.J. temporarily occupied a dugout about $\frac{3}{4}$ miles northwest of his homestead.

A.J. soon met Luella Maria King, who lived about 5 miles due west, and they were married September 28, 1881, at the Methodist Episcopal Church in Harper. He built a home on his homestead lands, and moved there with his bride. A.J. was an industrious farmer, and within 5 years had accumulated about 1,000 acres of land.

In 1885, one of Luella's favorite uncles, Wesley C. Gerrard, organized a group from Harper to go west to the new Greeley County, Kansas, for the purpose of organizing a new town (known as Tribune) there. In 1886, A.J., Luella, and their then-three children (Ada Mabel, James David, and John Wesley) went west, leaving A.J.'s homestead in the hands of his father- and mother-in-law, Samuel Wilson and Margaret King.

When Greeley County had been formally organized, Kansas governor John Alexander Martin appointed A.J. to the county's first Board of County Commissioners on July 9, 1888. Within months, A.J. had built a lumber yard, a bank, and a row of shops

known as Rymph Row. He also apparently had bought a significant amount of stock in the “Tribune Town Company.”

Unfortunately for Tribune, when the railroad made its way to Greeley County, it chose to bypass Tribune and instead established a watering place at the town of Horace, three miles down the road. Tribune’s economy collapsed, and to make matters worse, a severe drought hit the area. Within months, A.J. was worse than broke. And to make economic matters even more difficult, a fourth child (Albert Wilson) had just been born to A.J. and Luella.

A.J. suffered a nervous breakdown with hallucinations and believed that he needed to keep a revolver in his desk for personal protection. He was judged to be insane and sent to the state hospital in Topeka. At the insistence of her mother, Luella took her four children and moved back to the family homestead in Harper County.

At one point, the hospital sent a telegram to Luella telling her that A.J. was near death and asking where they should ship his body. Fortunately, A.J. made a miraculous recovery, and returned home to Harper County, where he never suffered any recurrence of his breakdown.

However, by that time, his debts far exceeded the liquidation value of all his real and personal property. (His youngest son and my grandfather, Levi Budd Rymph, recalled his father once telling him, “Son, years ago I learned I could not worry, and I never have!”) He spent the remainder of his life trying to regain the financial position that he had held prior to his unfortunate and disastrous Greeley County experience.

A.J. and Luella eventually had four more children — Ellen Margaret, Edith Luella, Lewis Merle, and Levi Budd. At one point, according to Levi Rymph’s genealogy, the family was “farming 1,040 acres, milking 50 cows, caring for three orchards, raising 100 head of beef cattle, 100 head of hogs, and 100 sheep. There was usually one or two hired men living in tenant houses.” In addition, the house on the homestead was moved 200 feet to the south, and a substantial addition was built.

TO LEARN MORE

Rymph, Levi Budd. *Come In and Sit a Spell!* Wichita, KS: 1973. Basic genealogy of the ancestors of Levi Budd Rymph and Jessie Mae Hershey.