


Buffalo Tales

November/December 2017



Buffalo County Historical Society

A History of 705 W. 22nd St.

By: Broc Anderson

Austin Gallentine built a one-story home at 705 West Twenty Second Street in 1884 that still stands to this day. Like this house, most homes in Kearney, Nebraska's historic Pioneer Neighborhood are enriched with history. As residents move on, they leave behind stories and add volumes to the narrative about their rural community. The Gallentines, the Atchisons, and the Crawfords families account for many of the stories leading up to the late 1950s. History at 705 West Twenty Second Street is rich not only because of the people who lived here, but also because of the importance this home and its' dwellers had in the local community.

Austin Gallentine was born on September 9, 1854 in Springfield Pennsylvania. Ten years later, the Gallentine family moved out west to Illinois to farm and raise livestock until 1884. On February 24, 1881, Austin married Ada Heaton and had three children named Eva, May, and Virginia. In 1884, the Austin and Ada moved to Kearney, Nebraska, where they built a one-story home just outside of town. Conveniently located on the outskirts, Austin also maintained his childhood fascination of riding and tending horses. In a newspaper article published by the *Kearney Hub*, Austin's daughter, Evah Atchison, recalled why her father chose life away from town to build their home:

"The home was built on a lot a quarter of a block in size and right in the middle of a corn field. Mrs. Atchison explains that her father the location, which was at the time outside the heart of Kearney, because the lots around the courthouse were too expensive."

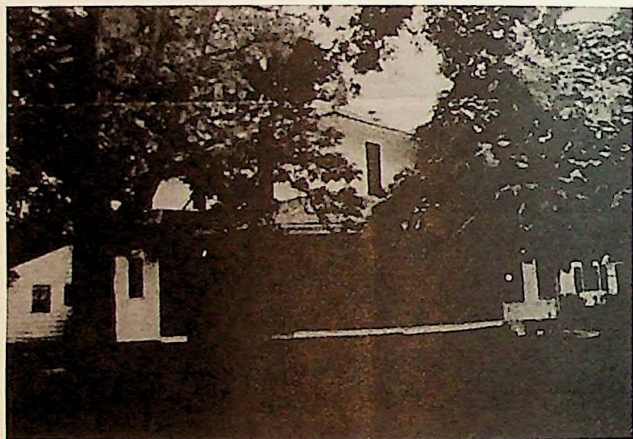
This best explains why the Sanborn Maps did not mention the estate until 1889 when other homes were built in the neighborhood. The city directory of 1889 also confirmed the address and Austin Gallentine family as the owners. An additional second floor was not added until around 1900 against the will of the contractor of building on stilts. Not only was this a dangerous task for workers, but if the stilts failed, the whole house would collapse. Another unique feature to the home is a slab of concrete and a hitching post along Seventh Avenue. The slab of concrete helped women climb down from their carriages as a stepping stool while the hitching post tethered the horse. As an important member in the community, Mr. Gallentine invited guests over for formal dinners and leisure activities while seeking investments.

As a loan officer for real estate company and an investor in his community, Austin Gallentine was a respected member in Kearney. Throughout the 1890s, several advertisements for loans on "chattels and real estate" featured Austin's name as A.J. Gallentine located upstairs in the sixth room of the Opera house. He is also mentioned in a few court cases as a plaintiff and a defendant for company properties on the west

side of town. Before his death on October 10, 1907, he served as an elected director for the First National bank and a bondsman with the Buffalo County National Bank in Kearney. When both the First National and Buffalo County National banks failed in 1894, the county treasury "began suit in the district court to recover the money (amount of \$11,800.07) deposited," in Buffalo County National. Luckily for Mr. Galletine and another bondsman, a settlement for about three-fourths the amount announced on June 29, 1896 prevented the case from going to district court.

Mr. and Mrs. Gallentine often used their residence as a place for community gatherings. In a lot of these gatherings, guests were invited to the basement for a game of billiards. Both men and women played, according to her daughter Evah. Not only did community events such as small dinners and a game of billiards, but Evah and Mark Atchison married on May 3, 1910 at the home with a Catholic priest officiating. Mark Atchison, a well-known traveling pharmaceutical salesman from North Platte, lived a quite life with little mention of him in newspapers aside from his travels. The next morning, the new-

wlyweds made their way to North Platte where they thought they were going to make a permanent home. At some between 1910 and 1915, Mrs. Gallentine had either sold or passed down the home to the Mark Atchison family. The Atchisons bore several children and lived a



Source: The Kearney Hub

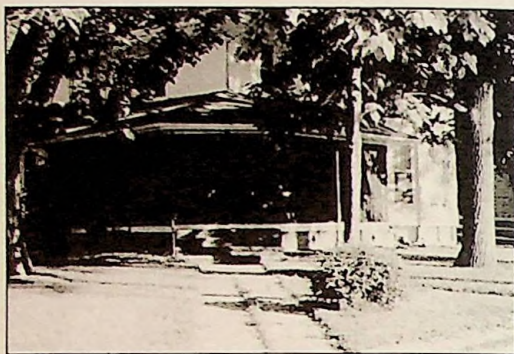
quiet life here until the end of the 1920s or early 1930s. There is little mention of their names in newspapers or other archival sources.

At the end of the Gallentine era, Austin Gallentine passed away in Albuquerque, New Mexico October 9, 1907 where he sought medical attention for his declining health. Mrs. Gallentine continued to live in the residence for a few more years. Little about his wife exists in newspapers or other historical documents, but mentioned she attended many public events by Mr. Gallentine's side. By the mid-1930's, a new family would claim homeownership at 705 West Twenty Second Street and lived at there for many more years.

Born near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on February 20, 1878, Harry L. Crawford settled near Columbus, Nebraska with his parents and two siblings in 1883. Three years later, the Crawford family moved again to Buffalo County to farm on 160 acres of land. When Harry's father died in 1890, Harry assumed farming operations until 1908 when he and his own family moved east to Chicago. He attended classes at the Barnes School of Anatomy for Sanitary Science and Embalming and practiced under experienced hands before returning to Nebraska in 1909. Having acquired a new set of skills, Mr. Crawford connected with a local mortician, A.G. Bower, and worked together as undertakers for four years. In June 1913, Mr. Crawford once again decided on a different business career path and purchased the

O.L. Miller Furniture Store in Ravenna. He continued to own the successful furniture store when he and his wife moved to Kearney in the mid-1930s.

Harry and Margaret Crawford, long-time residents of Buffalo County, moved into 705 West Twenty Second Street and re-established their home's reputation in the communi-



Source: *Historic Homes of Pioneer Park Neighborhood*

ty. Already a successful business owner in Ravenna, Mr. Crawford decided to fall back on his skills as an undertaker in Kearney. Using the first floor of his home as part of his practice, the layout of the main entry way made for a perfect fit for a mortuary with only a few beautifying changes. Mr. Crawford offered his services well through the 1940s and early 1950s where he embalmed longtime resident Mrs. Mary Alice Gunn from Kansas City. His proficiency as an undertaker allowed him membership to the Nebraska State Funeral Directors Association. Mr. Crawford's legacy is one that is profound, but his wife had also made a name for herself.

Although Margaret Crawford is commonly referred through her husband as Mrs. H. L. Crawford and little to no mention of her before or as a contributor in her husband's businesses, her participation in the community and for women's rights is substantial. By the mid-1930's, when the Crawford's first moved in, the Faith Women's Christian Temperance Union met on occasion in the home. Mrs. Crawford's spacious home was more suitable for large WCTU gatherings. As early as December of 1936, the *Kearney Hub* reported on a Christmas party:

"The Christmas party of Faith W.C.T.U. held at the spacious home of H. L. Crawford... proved to be a very enjoyable affair with a splendid number of ladies' present. The decorations were beautiful."

Eleven years later, in November 1947, the WCTU still occasionally met at 705 West Twenty Second Street. Items for discussion at their meetings are not disclosed in the *Hub*, but women periodically sang devotionals and invited guest religious guest speakers. Although not broadcasted from the Crawford residence, surely radio sponsored events by the WCTU on KGFW made for some discussions among members at meetings. Oddly enough, a Presbyterian Friendly Bible class also met at the Crawford's, but records show that the Crawford's belonged to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

705 West Twenty Second Street was home to important families in the community. First home to loan officer Austin Gallentine, who built its character and hosted numerous guests. Then to his daughter and son-in-law, Evah and Mark Atchison who lived here for only a short while. Finally, Harry and Margaret Crawford again changed the home's identity. A mortuary and a gathering place among faithful women. Nonetheless, an occasional meeting place for friends and community members alike left an imprint in the history of the neighborhood and Kearney, Nebraska.

**For sources for this essay—please contact the editor at bchs.buffalotales@hotmail.com

Coming Events:

- First two weekends in Dec. (Dec. 2-3 and Dec. 9-10) from 1-5 pm:
Open to the public: **30th Annual Christmas Tree Walk**
*** Saturday, December 2 from 12-1pm: Members Only Preview
of the 30th Annual Christmas Tree Walk.
- Our Annual "Don't Come Event" will be at the end of February
2018. For more information please contact Trails & Rails Museum.

Education notes (see website for additional details):

- *Fabulous Fridays are held on the 2nd Friday monthly at 2 pm.
Locations vary, so check the web site "Events" Tab!
- *Listen to Mardi Anderson on KGFW 1340 AM at 9 am on the last Friday
of each month for a fabulous story about Buffalo County!
- *Join the Trails & Rails Museum Blacksmiths (check our calendar under
the "Events" Tab on our website) to learn about blacksmith meetings
and/or possibly join in the fun!
- *The Archive Department will be open on Mondays from 1-4pm year-
round or by appointment. Contact bchs.archives@hotmail.com for more
information.

Volunteers, chairpersons, and sponsors are still needed. Please contact
the office for more information on supporting your Buffalo County His-
torical Society!

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you. Please submit your memories or/and stories to us by emailing them
to bchs.buffalotales@hotmail.com or sending them to the post office
box: BCHS, PO Box 523, Kearney, NE 68848.

Director's Report—Jennifer Murrish

November has been busy getting ready for the Christmas Tree Walk and
we are very excited that the Family History Center is the new starting
point for the walk. We are so very grateful for all of our volunteers. The
museum would not be where it is today without them.

The Buffalo County Historical Society and the Trails & Rails Museum
has updated our Wish List. Please go to bchs.us or stop into the museum
during business hours to view the list of items! We thoroughly appreciate
all your support!

Please note that the Buffalo County Historical Society and Trails & Rails
Museum will be closed from December 16th, 2017-January 7, 2018.
We will reopen January 8th, 2017 at 1pm.

We appreciate your support!

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**A Huge Thanks to our Silver and Gold Engineers
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(Contact Trails & Rails Museum for more information on becoming an Engineer)

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Meredith Underwood, Editor

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Trails & Rails Museum
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