



## Imagine the Toothbrush!

These molars (photo below), belonging to now extinct American mastodons, have recently been donated to the community museum by Joe Smith, formerly of Dawson, and are on display at the museum. His father, Charles Smith, found the larger set a number of years ago in a rock pit near Preston in eastern Richardson County, and Joe found the other set in a bank of the South Fork of the Nemaha River southwest of Dawson.



**Mastodon Molar Teeth**  
(Measurement of right tooth approximately five by eight inches)

Mastodons, which became extinct about 11,000 years ago at the end of the Pleistocene Epoch, lived in forests and woodlands,

ranging widely over the North American continent. Their teeth were well-suited to browsing on leaves and twigs and occasionally grazing on grass.

They were related, though not closely, to mammoths and elephants. They could reach more than nine feet in height and weigh as much as five tons, and their tusks could measure 15 feet in length. Like mammoths and unlike elephants, their bodies were covered with thick hair. Their heads were flatter than those of the mammoth, and their ears were smaller than elephant's ears. Their teeth were quite different from those of either relative, and probably weighed about nine pounds each with their roots.

It is not known why the mastodons became extinct, some scientists attributing their demise to over-hunting by early man while others cite changes in climate at the end of the last ice age.

The teeth are certain to draw considerable attention and bring visitors to the museum. We are grateful to Joe for his donation to the museum.



Artist's concept of a Mastodon

Two articles below are from *Folklore of a Pennsylvania Colony in Nebraska*, Elma Heim Larimore, 1955  
Fascinating stories of our ancestors and early life in Nebraska—reprint available

## When two cultures meet



Joseph Gross

When Grandma Regina (Mrs. Jacob G. Heim) was young, her father, Joseph Gross, taught the German school she and the other children of the community attended. When she had finished with this school there had been an English school started in the valley in compliance with a new state law. She wanted very much to attend this English school for one year. However, her parents said no, she must now stay at home and learn to spin. Many years

later, when her children were going to school, it was an English one—German schools were no longer conducted. Then Grandma learned to read English along with her children though she never learned to write it. She wrote German very well and even after she was 80 years old wrote very interesting letters to her sisters in Pennsylvania.

Grandpa Jake had very little schooling but could read and write and always knew how much money he should receive when something was sold. He read aloud to the family a great deal, always in German, of course. The Bible was read (in German) every morning. They subscribed to a German newspaper printed in the U.S. and

had some German books gotten as premiums and gifts. However, he so hated to write that he even signed his bank checks with an X.



Jacob G. & Regina Gross Heim

## Generational talent

Jonathan Heim, who was the fourth child of Jacob G. and Regina Heim,

liked to work with tools and was handy at fixing and building things around the farm. As a youth, when the family purchased a new sewing machine, he made a jigsaw out of the old hand-powered chain stitch sewing machine. His talent for mechanics was passed on down to his three sons, Howard, Wesley, and Arthur. Jonathan and his wife, Louisa Shafer, who lived on the original home place, also raised three daughters, Mattie (Vermaas), Pearl (Kirkwood), and Edith (Thacker). A son, Clarence, passed away at the age of three.



Jonathan Heim

[Joseph Gross, 1808-1898; Jacob G. Heim, 1832-1914; Regina Gross Heim, 1834-1920; Jonathan W. Heim, 1861-1934]

**THE COLONY PENN****EDITOR**

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Shirley Heim Pierce

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provider and employer.****Charol and Dan Pleiss****President's Letter**

SPRING – the world awakes from its winter sleep. Much has happened at the museum/community building since our 2014 reunion/dedication. Class reunions have been held; family reunions; Thanksgiving celebrations and Board meetings—other than the Penn Colony meetings. This structure has and is serving the Dawson community.

We still have loans to repay for the building and some of the equipment. If you are considering making a contribution to the Penn Colony from an IRA account and are over age 70, consider making it directly from the IRA account—could save you more than just the amount of your contribution. This is an area that has been addressed by Congress in the last days of the last few years, but don't let that stop you—make your contribution early—it will help us make our loan payments.

The Penn Colony needs your help. We need a volunteer to take over John Fiala's genealogy work. John has this set-up on a computer program and will train his successor. We have a tremendous amount of family tree information and want to keep it current going forward. We need a volunteer to take over as webmaster—writing and editing articles and submitting articles for publication on our web site. Bob Williamson will help to train this volunteer.

Regarding our museum artifacts, we are acquiring a computer program and related hardware specifically designed to record museum acquisition and the history related to them. Shirley Pierce is looking for a volunteer to help her with this task.

As our museum continues to grow and develop, we are in need of volunteers to assist with the set-up of displays. We are acquiring a shipping container for additional storage and plan to move items from storage to the museum site and to be displayed in the museum.

If you are available to help in any way, please contact me, and your talents can be put to good use.

Thank you for all of past support.

—Dan Pleiss

**DONATIONS**

The following funds have been received since the last issue of the newsletter was published. Donations received after March 17, 2015 will be reported in the next newsletter. If you would prefer your donation to be listed anonymously or be unpublished, please indicate your preference.

Thanks to all who contribute in any way to support the Pennsylvania Colony.

**Museum donations:**Heim Cemetery Association, \$3,000  
Wayne & Dee Young, \$250**Museum furnishings:**

Joe and Michelle Heim, 75 place settings of china, glasses, kitchen utensils, and towels. Purchased by Joe and Michelle from the Humboldt Masonic Lodge and donated for use at the museum/community building. LaRue Coffee, coffee brewer, pot, and pitcher. Richard and Marilyn Ogle family, three roaster ovens.

Dan and Charol Pleiss, four wall-mounted display cabinets, bulletin board, kitchen supplies.

**Tables & chairs fund:**

Frances Whited, \$500

**Donations by groups using community building:**Glather family, \$100.  
Phillips Family, \$50.**Matching gift:**

Sprint Foundation, \$250. (Matching employee contribution – Wayne Young)

**Other donations:**Doug Brown and Gail Korell, \$1,750  
Carolee Heim, \$100  
Shirley Pierce, \$100, in honor of Margaret Ruth Brown**Grants:**Richardson County Visitors Committee,  
\$2,300, donation for shipping container for museum storage space.**The Wisdom of Solomon**

My grandmother, Mrs. Samuel F. "Lizzie" Heim, once told me that when she was a little girl, there was quite a bit of competition between her and her younger brother, Jacob, especially when it came to which one got the bigger piece of pie. Their mother, Rosina Heim, tired of their squabbles one day and said, "Lizzie, from now on, you will cut the pie into pieces, and your little brother Jake will get first choice." That ended the squabbles.

—kmh

# Remembering Grandpa—Samuel F. Heim

by Keith M. Heim

At a recent church dinner, I sat at a table with an elderly couple. When their grandson, a cute little boy about five years old, arrived, he gave his grandpa a lingering hug and jumped up on his lap.

I thought, I certainly don't remember ever hugging my grandpa Heim! Granted, my father's family was not of the demonstrative type, and displays of open affection were frowned upon and rarely seen. But there was something about "Gramp," as we called him when out of hearing, that kept us at a respectful distance—an innate sense of dignity that kept you on your best behavior.

His physical appearance, of course, had something to do with it (see photo)—he was just over six feet tall, and in his mid eighties, straight as a ramrod. He was slender—the result of his evident self-discipline—and wore a flowing, white mustache. His expression was generally sober, and he looked at you intently through round, steel-rimmed glasses. His voice had a rasping quality, and his accent occasionally betrayed his Pennsylvania Dutch



Samuel F. Heim (right) with grandson Lowell (ca. 1930); Elizabeth (Lizzie) watches from the porch.

upbringing: the word "nothing" became "naw-thing," rhyming with the word "awe," and I decided that God must sound like him.

He was a very intelligent man who went straight to the point. Although he did have a sense of humor at infrequent moments, life was a serious, no-nonsense proposition characterized by frugality, hard work, and a strict sense of morality. Although he was not mean or dishonest, he was one sharp individual, and you'd better have your ducks in a row if you dealt or disagreed with him. A story my older brother Lowell liked to tell amply illustrates this: When the county road grader passed by his driveway, he did not raise his blade, leaving a drop-off which gave Gramp a jolt when he drove out. He asked the driver several times to lift the blade there, but he continued to plow out a mini-cliff. Finally, Gramp buried a huge rock at the critical spot, and when the blade hit it the next time the road was graded, the driver got a jolt to remember. And he remembered to raise the blade after that! *(continued on page 4)*

## Dull pages of history become real —Keith M. Heim

The Thirty Years War, which devastated Europe from 1618 to 1648, seems to modern day readers to have been an insignificant thumbprint on the pages of history. Yet, it is of interest and significance to modern Penn Colonists since it affected our ancestors of that era. Although one of the major causes of the war, which involved the German states and nearly every country in Europe, was religion, other causes involved national ambitions, dynasties, and economics.

The common people, especially in Germany, suffered from the ravages of competing armies as they raged across central Europe.



Walddorf church

Armies in those days lived off of the land, plundering and pillaging as they went, leaving famine, death, disease and destruction in their wake. Animals, crops, and food supplies were confiscated, leaving its legion of victims to fend for themselves. When the war finally ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, Germany lay prostrate. Its slow recovery took many years.

The reality of these wars of long ago struck me when I visited Walddorf, the home of the Heim family and other Penn colonists in the 17th century. Researching in the records at the local church there, I came across several notations written to explain gaps in the records: "Pages torn out by the soldiers," "On flight from the soldiers," "Records burned by the soldiers." In one ledger, the margins of the pages were charred.

One can only imagine the plight of our families as the violence of war engulfed and destroyed their daily lives!

*Brothers John and Gottlieb Heim, bachelors, who were among the first Penn colonists who came to America in 1804, had been imprisoned in Germany for refusing, for religious reasons, to join the army. They took their faith with them to prison, often singing hymns to pass the time, a favorite of which was the old Lutheran hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."*

## Third time wasn't the charm either

In our last issue, we published a photo of the old grist mill/saw mill at Dawson, speculating that it was a photo of the first mill, which was built in 1868 by Joshua Dawson and his son, Elijah. However, an article by Thomas McGuire in the Historical and Business Review Edition of The Dawson Herald, published in 1936, shows a different but very similar picture of the mill, indicating that it was the second mill, built shortly after the original building was destroyed by fire. No photo of the first mill could be found. The second mill, built in 1892, suffered the same fate as the first, burning to the ground about a year later.

Actually, there was a third mill! It replaced the second and was used until 1911 when the silting up of the Nemaha River and its frequent flooding stopped operations. The land and building were sold to Daniel Riley, who used it as a barn until it too burned down in the mid 1920s.



The second mill

Dawson's Mill was a vital part of the commercial growth of the new village of Dawson and served as a social focus point in the life of the community for many years. One wonders if another factor in the eventual demise of the milling industry was the obvious rising cost of fire insurance! **—kmh**

## Remembering Grandpa *(continued from page 3)*

Gramp kept up with the markets through the daily paper and was a shrewd and successful farmer and businessman. Our grandparents' home was only a short distance up the road from our house, and we kids frequently went up there to ask Grandma for a freshly baked sugar cookie or read the funnies in the Lincoln paper. If we were reading the paper when Gramp came in, he might simply say "I want to read the paper," and it was immediately surrendered. If we were sitting on his daybed, he might say, "I want to lie down there," and we quickly found another place to land—no questions asked. Grandchildren were not to be humored or overindulged. Sometimes when we asked Grandma for a cookie, she said "no." In retrospect, I believe it was not a bad thing to have been turned down now and then.

**For a description of the Sam Heim home, see *The Colony Penn*, April 2012 edition.**

Although Gramp was a stern, imposing figure, especially to a young boy, I had a great deal of respect for him—and even affection. You knew what he stood for and where you stood. He was a good man, if not the cuddly type.

Almost every afternoon when we kids went up there after school, he or Grandma would ask, "What did you learn in school today? Our typical answer, "Nothing," probably was not encouraging to either of them. They placed a high value on education.

In the living room, or "front room," which was closed off except when company came, was an Edison, an early relative of the Victrola of the 1915 era. It had several dozen records of hymns and music of that era. When it was sold after his death, there was hardly a scratch on any of the records—no grandkid ever got to touch the machine! If you wanted to listen to a record, Grandma had to play it for you. It seems a little incongruent that he always had to turn on the battery-powered radio next to the daybed in the late afternoon to listen to "Little Orphan Annie."

On summer evenings, Grandpa and Grandma often sat in the swing on the front porch as it was getting dark. My brother Ken and I often sat on the edge of the porch and listened to them talk mainly about younger days back in Pennsylvania. Ken had a closer relationship with Grandpa than I did, perhaps because he was more mechanically inclined than I was and better at working with his hands. I remember Grandpa showing us how to cut green Box Elder twigs to make sliding whistles. However, I don't think he was ever very fond of our penchant for naval armaments races! There was a

big, cement stock tank down by the upper barn, and we would vie to see who could get the most battleships on the water. These usually consisted of a board, sharpened on one end for a bow, and a couple of smaller blocks nailed on top for a superstructure. What probably alarmed Gramp was that the railings on the decks might consist of two or three dozen of his new six-penny nails! We built the ships in a shop located just off of the threshing floor of the nearby Pennsylvania Dutch bank barn. We kept the big double doors facing Gramp's house open just a crack so we could see if he was coming to catch us at it. When we saw him, we dropped everything and scurried down the ladder in the back hay mow and went home. I have no doubt that he had long since figured out who the naval buffs were, and I don't know why he didn't intercept us down at the sea shore when we launched our boats.

Grandma was a kind, gentle woman who accepted the subservient role of wives their Dunkard upbringing mandated. No doubt, she shared the same social and religious values as her husband. She worked hard, doing without, and raising six children. In the fall of 1942, Gramp returned to the house from the orchard one morning and found Grandma lying unconscious on the daybed. She died of a stroke a few days later, October 28, 1942, at the Humboldt hospital. She was just a few months short of her 80th birthday.

Gramp remained in the family home after her death, and his daughter Adah James came to live there for a while. When she was not there, Gramp would walk down the road to our house and eat supper with us. He owed his trim figure and spry disposition to the fact that he ate just so much and nothing more. If Mom happened to bring out a favorite dessert of his that he hadn't anticipated, he would not eat it.

Gramp passed his 86th birthday in November of 1945. Not long after that, he had a cyst removed and refused to stay a couple of days in the hospital—for older people of that generation, the hospital was where people went to die. Promising to go home to bed, he went out in the cold and cut down walnut trees the same afternoon. He had a relapse, then pneumonia, and died at the Humboldt Hospital January 8, 1946. That was sixty-nine years ago. I used to think he would outlive me.

He was buried next to Grandma and a few feet from his parents near the front gate of the Heim Cemetery. Typically, his tombstone runs crossways to most of the rest of the stones in the cemetery! That says a lot!

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**How they talked . . .** We have a few more expressions to add to our collection of sayings peculiar to our families or the Pennsylvania Dutch, a running feature in our newsletter. If you have some to add, please send to the editor.

- **Quicker'n scat.** Very quick
- **A hair past a freckle.** A smart answer to "What time is it?"
- **For cryin' out loud!** Expression of strong emphasis.
- **Beats me!** I don't know.
- **I'll bet!** Response of agreement, but probably expressing doubt or disbelief.
- **What's your name? Puddin' Tame. Ask me again and I'll tell you the same.** Children's saying. Puddin' Tame may have referred to the devil, so probably meant "none of your business." Might date from Shakespeare's time.
- **More'n likely.** Probably true.
- **They were goin' a heckin'.** Going fast.
- **Hoity toity.** High falutin', possibly stuck up.
- **It's all to the good.** Works out best; possibly meant exceeding something.
- **She can't sing for sour apples.** Bad singer!
- **Not on your life!** Certainly not!
- **Conniption.** A fit of anger, hysteria. A tantrum.
- **All right for you.** You did it, and I'm going to get even (a kid's expression).
- **A tough row to hoe.** Difficult.
- **Put near or Pert near.** Almost; probably "pretty near."
- **Kablooie.** Describing an explosion; onomatopoeia!

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**Photo credits:** Page 1: Keith Heim (teeth); Internet (mastodon); Colony archives (individuals). Page 2: Shirley Pierce. Page 3: Keith Heim (Sam Heim, church); Joe Smith (mill). Page 5: Lorrie Novak (group); Keith Heim (piano). Page 6: Dan Pleiss.

## Colony cousin flies the friendly skies for United

Quoted portions are excerpts from an article in the *Pawnee Republican* newspaper, February 11, 2015, by Reporter Ray Kappel. Lorrie is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Hayward, and her lineage is intimately connected with the Penn Colony, including such names as Burr, Eckard, Kiess, Wagner, Kerr, and Stoltz.

“Lorrie Novak’s favorite mission as an Air Force pilot was flying into Damascus, Syria in 1986 to pick up released hostage Fr. Lawrence Jenco and the negotiator Terry Waite. (Waite was later held hostage himself for four years). ... She was part of the crew on that flight as she has been on countless others.”

Lorrie attended Grand Avenue Country school, and graduated from high school in 1980. She “left Humboldt High School for the Air Force Academy because she wanted to be a pilot. She had been around airplanes for a long time as her mother’s two brothers were engineer types who built and flew model airplanes in the 1930s. ... some of them had wingspans of 8 feet.

“... She was on active duty in the Air Force for eight years, spending four years in Germany and two in Japan. She flew Medivac missions, the military medical arm.”

Lorrie said “electrical fires were her biggest fear and one happened during a flight in Spain while in the Air Force. By the time they got the plane in for landing, there was smoke coming from the cockpit.”

Lorrie is now a pilot with United Airlines. She “flies out of Chicago for United to mostly places in Europe. She doesn’t have much time for sightseeing as she has to be ready to fly after landing in 24 hours. ... Her favorite town is Munich but likes London, though she said it is very expensive.

“The plane she is flying is a Boeing 767. Typical routes are besides Munich and London, Paris, Brussels, Rome, and Frankfurt.”

“... The biggest change has been in security since she started flying. She said she can’t really talk about that, but there is a lot more security than what you see. The TSA agents that pat you down are a small part. She goes through the same process of being patted down and her luggage searched, though not in front of the public, before she is allowed on the plane.”

Lorrie’s husband Mark was “in the Air Force at the same time but they didn’t date until after she was training to be an airline pilot. Their paths crossed, began dating, and married in 1991.” They have two children, Nick, 15, and Natalie, 12. They live about three miles northwest of Dawson.

Lorrie “loves flying because of the challenge and the view.

“ ‘When you get up above the craziness down here, it’s beautiful up there,’ she said.”



In the photo above, Lorrie (right) poses with crew members and actress Michelle Pfeiffer, who agreed to have her picture taken because it was an all-woman crew.

## Time for a Light Lunch

Christian “Christly” Heim and his wife Rosina had seven children, and a bunch of us “colonists” are descended from them through three of his children, Elizabeth (Mrs. John Shafer), Rosina (Mrs. John J. Heim), and John “Johnnie” Heim.

Christly might be aptly described as a “renaissance man,” reading widely from a large collection of his books, unusual for that day, in the fields of religion, mathematics, and the sciences. His mechanical bent led to his inventing a piano, barometer, sundial, and what might facetiously be called an “astronomical dinner bell.” (For more about Christly Heim, see the June, 1999 issue of *The Colony Penn.*)



Christly Heim’s piano

The “dinner bell” consisted of a small mirror imbedded in the window sill. His grandson, Ephraim Shafer, remembered it this way: “It was about the size of a penny. When the sun shone on it, a light was cast on the opposite wall, and as the sun traveled across the sky, the light traveled across the room. At a certain place, a string was fastened across the ceiling and when the light from the looking glass struck that string, it was dinner time—noon. Many a grandchild found this a fascinating thing to watch.” [Excerpt from *Folklore of a Pennsylvania Colony in Nebraska*, Elma Larimore.] —kmh

## Sadly Noted

**Earl Dean Elwonger**, 91, passed away in Lincoln on November 22, 2014. He was a son of Clarence and Alva Elwonger. An engineer, he was a graduate of Dawson High School and the University of Nebraska. He is survived by his wife Ernestine, children Leslie Elwonger and Linda Stark, and brother Clifford of Falls City. [Wagner family]

**Lynn A. Georgi**, 82, passed away January 10, 2015 at Fairbury, Nebraska. He was born to Henry and Bernice (Ilf) Georgi on September 13, 1932 at Dawson. He is survived by his wife Evelyn of Fairbury; son Michael of Hebron; daughter Cindy Rosener of Fairbury, four grandchildren; one great grandchild; and brother, Gary Georgi of Temecula, California. [Sippley, Gross family]

**Dorothy Ione (Heim) McArtor**, 90, passed away January 29, 2015 at Grant, Nebraska. She was born October 11, 1924 to Linden and Viva Heim. She graduated from Dawson High School, winning a Regents Scholarship to the University of Nebraska. In 1946, she

married Jim McArtor, who died in 1983. She is survived by her son, Mike (Tanya) McArtor of Grant, and her daughter, Merry Pat (Al) Boslough of Brighton, Colorado, as well as six grandchildren and three great grandchildren. [Jonas & Ida Heim family]

**Sherry (Knocke) Rock**, 49, passed away July 21, 2014, at Newark, Delaware. She was the daughter of Norma (DeWeese) Jensen and Mervin Knocke. She is survived by her children, Brady and Lindsey, sister Vicky Ingram, brother David Knocke, aunt Martha DeWeese Hoig, and four nephews.

**Janette Elnora Wickham**, 69, passed away November 21, 2014 in Poland, Ohio. Born June 5, 1945, she was the daughter of Henry and Elnora (Stratton) Mack. Her husband, Terry L. Wickham, passed away October 27, 2010. She is survived by three daughters, Nanette (Lonnie) Ankrom of Salem, Valerie Wickham of Austintown, Ohio, and Sally Wickham of Tulsa, Oklahoma, sister Donna Bright of Ralston, brother Charles Mack of Verdon, seven grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

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### PENN COLONY REUNION—AUGUST 8 & 9, 2015

Mark your calendars for this year's Penn Colony Reunion the second weekend in August. This will be the first year we gather for most events at the Henry Heim home north of Dawson. Saturday is set-up of displays, board meeting, and the watermelon feed. Sunday is the picnic and annual meeting following the mini-breakfast and church service in Humboldt. **We look forward to seeing you there!**

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**Special Thanks:** Penn Colony's president, Dan Pleiss, not only keeps tabs on all things happening in our group, and at the Penn Colony museum at Dawson, he also finds time to use his carpentry skills for our benefit, as shown below. Thanks for your hard work, Dan!

### New display cases for the Museum



Using the trophy case donated from the old Dawson school as a "pattern," Dan Pleiss built two additional wall type display cases. He says, "I delivered them to the museum on the day after Christmas. Michelle Heim and Marilyn Ogle, even before the installation, looked them over and requested two or three more!" Meanwhile, Dan also made a donation box to replace the plastic jar we've been using for a few years (left).

### My Prairie Home

By Evelyn Ulmer as a young girl, 1920-30s

O sing of the mountains blue and gray,  
Sing of their lofty heights.  
But give me the midwest plains, always  
With their common peaceful sights;  
With a tiny hill rising here and there,  
Blue green with its grass and trees;  
With the marvelous blue of the clear, clean air  
And the distance one always sees.

Give me the wind that sweeps the plains  
Be it dusty, hot or cold.  
Give me the sweep of the summer rains  
And the shriek of the north wind bold.

Oh sing of the mountains where romance abides  
Sing of their lures and gains  
But give me a place where nothing hides.  
A place in the midwest plains!

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