

**THE LIFE OF
MARY NEILL WHITELAW**

1840-1925



**A DOCUMENTARY BIOGRAPHY WITH AN
APPENDIX OF NEILL FAMILY DOCUMENTS**

By
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2004

With Grateful Acknowledgement of Contributions by:

Margaret Ruth Fluharty
Dot Shaw Harrison
Anne Smith Kepner
Bill Whitford
Mary Elizabeth Williams Enerson
Jean Young

And Special Thanks to:
Sue Cashatt, current owner of the old Whitelaw home in Kidder, MO

PREFACE

This document is in two parts:

1. A **“documentary biography”** of my great grandmother, Mary Neill Whitelaw (1840-1925), a nineteenth century Scottish immigrant who lived and raised a family in Kidder, a small town in northwest Missouri.
2. **An extensive Appendix** containing letters, newspaper articles, and other material relating to Mary Neill Whitelaw’s family of origin and to her origins in Scotland.

The main purpose of the documentary biography is to pull together all available material on Mary Neill Whitelaw in a chronological format. I have stuck closely to the documents available and have not tried to embellish or speculate on aspects of Mary Neill Whitelaw’s life about which the written record is silent. Thus, the coverage of her life is uneven, depending as it does on the sources available. There is much more material concerning her later years (1900-1925), when her children were adults and writing letters, than about her earlier ones

The material for the documentary biography comes mainly from the estate of her granddaughter, Mary Elizabeth Williams Enerson, who died in 2002, leaving a large archive of family letters and memorabilia. Much of this material she inherited from her mother, Ruth Whitelaw Williams (1872-1950), Mary Neill Whitelaw’s daughter. I have prepared and made available to all family members an electronic file of all of Ruth Williams’s family letters. See *Dear Sister, Whitelaw Family Letters to Ruth Whitelaw Williams and Her Daughters: 1900-1961*. The current document, the biography of Mary Neill Whitelaw, builds on the earlier compilation of letters, as it contains excerpts from letters specifically about Mary Neill Whitelaw, or letters she herself wrote.

Other sources of information include other papers in the Williams family archive, letters from various descendants containing memories of Mary Neill Whitelaw, and an oral history by my father (John Moreland Whitelaw, a grandson of Mary Neill Whitelaw) which contained family anecdotes on his grandmother. Anne Kepner kindly contributed photos of Mary Neill before her marriage and of her brothers.

The Appendix contains material from the Williams family archive about Mary Neill Whitelaw’s family of origin: her parents, John and Margaret Moreland Neill, and the eight brothers and one sister who immigrated to the U.S. with her in 1859. These letters, obituaries, newspaper articles, family genealogical charts, and other material about Mary Neill Whitelaw’s family of origin create a rich context for understanding Mary Neill Whitelaw. They are also valuable in themselves as a documentary history of a Scottish immigrant family; they describe how the various members fared as they made a place for themselves in the U.S. and Canada. These documents also bring to life events in American history, such as the Civil War letters of two of Mary’s brothers who were Union soldiers.

Several family descendants, particularly Esther Shaw, Dot Harrison, and Jean Young, have made journeys to Scotland to learn more about our family’s origins there. Accounts of their travels and photos are also included in the Appendix. These documents shed light on the physical and economic environment from which our Neill ancestors emerged.

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INTRODUCTION

Mary Neill Whitelaw was born in 1840 in Perthshire, Scotland, to John Neill, a farmer and blacksmith, and his wife Margaret Moreland. In 1859 she immigrated to the U.S. with her parents and nine brothers and sisters, after her father built an iron fence on a nearby estate to earn money for the family's passage. The family settled on a farm near Portage, Wisconsin, where Mary Neill met and married John Whitelaw, also a Scottish immigrant. The young couple moved to Kidder, Missouri, where John established a hardware and lumber business. They had nine children, eight of whom lived to adulthood. As adults, all the children left Kidder but the oldest, Maggie, who remained with her parents in the family home. John and Mary Neill Whitelaw had seventeen grandchildren, who visited their grandmother during large family reunions in the summer. The Whitelaws were members of the Congregational Church and prominent members of the community. Mary Neill Whitelaw died in 1925 and is buried in Kidder Cemetery.

Descendants will be interested in the life of Mary Neill Whitelaw for several reasons. All of us are curious about our origins. We know that in many ways we are the product of our parents, grandparents, and more distant relatives, who not only pass along to us their physical qualities through their genes, but also their values, dreams, understandings about family roles and relationships, and ways of dealing with life's difficulties and joys. Knowledge of Mary Neill Whitelaw's life can give us an appreciation of this rich legacy of Scottish and family traditions that she, her husband, and their eight children have bequeathed to those who have followed them.

Certainly a very valuable and tangible legacy Mary Neill and John Whitelaw left to future generations was their commitment to education. Though she had probably received only the equivalent of a grade school education in Scotland, and her husband a little more, all of their children had the opportunity to attend secondary and post-secondary school. Two of the daughters were school teachers, one son graduated from Yale University, and another from Rush Medical College. These achievements came from stringent priorities within the family. "Mother says she would rather educate a child than buy an Auto. She never desired personal pleasure" (letter from Maggie Whitelaw to Ruth Williams, 1917). It is remarkable that, at a time when college education was relatively rare, in the 1920s and 1930s, all of her seventeen grandchildren, including all the girls, obtained a college education. Many of them became teachers. All of us who descend from those grandchildren can be grateful for this strong tradition emphasizing the importance of an education for both women and men.

Mary Neill Whitelaw's life is also of interest because she was an extraordinary person. From reports of those who knew her, she appears to have been unusually competent. She had many hardships in life – immigration, which in those days meant permanent separation from the people and the land of the home country – establishing a home as a young bride in a town far from her family, giving birth to nine children with limited help from family or the medical profession, experiencing the death of one child at an early

age, and meeting the daily challenges of endless chores which comprised the life of a rural housewife in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She navigated these difficulties with a combination of practical good sense, humor, great love of family, and spiritual strength. Her life can be understood as an inspirational example of how a competent, loving person successfully ran life's course.

Knowledge of Mary Neill Whitelaw's life is also a lesson in American history. She lived through a major transition in the social and economic history of the U.S., its transformation from a primarily rural, agricultural economy, centered in the East and the Midwest, to an industrial one that spanned the entire continent. When she arrived in the U.S. in 1859, a future of farming or running a small business in a town or village close to a railroad was an obvious choice for a young person starting out in life. Horses and railroads were the primary means of transportation. Life revolved around community and church events. During her life, the settled existence of small-town and rural America began to disappear, as exemplified by the decline of Kidder, Missouri, her home town. Some of her children grew up to live in large cities, and the automobile replaced the train as the primary means of transportation in their lives. She lived through two major wars: immediately upon arriving in the U.S. in 1859, two of her brothers enlisted in the Union Army and fought in the Civil War. She also lived to see America's involvement in World War I, which she viewed with ambivalence. She "hated war" and had little love for England, which had traditionally oppressed the Scots. By reviewing these historical events through the eyes of our ancestor Mary, as she experienced them, we can gain a fuller appreciation of the past not only of our family but of our country.

As I have immersed myself in the life of Mary Neill Whitelaw, I have become aware of a quality I call "The Neill Charm." This quality is more than surface charm, and perhaps the word "charisma" describes it better. It refers to a fundamental generosity of spirit. Mary clearly impressed those around her with her warmth, empathy, honesty, good judgment and talent for connecting with others. From the obituaries of her brothers in the Appendix, it appears that many of them shared these qualities. The obituaries refer to intelligence, personal service, the ability to make friends everywhere, hard work, "a loyal friend and neighbor, genial, kindly, and dearly beloved," "prominent in the affairs of the township and county and willing to help in every community enterprise." These testimonials appear to this reader, at least, to go beyond the usual hyperbole expected in obituaries, to identify a quality of personal grace shared by several of the Neills.

**DESCENDANTS
OF
JOHN AND MARY NEILL WHITELAW**

Readers of this biography may be unclear about their personal link to Mary Neill Whitelaw. These pages are intended to help readers find “their ancestor” and thus their direct connection to Mary Neill Whitelaw; they also serve as an easy reference to the cast of characters in this work. It is divided into three sections: The Children; The Grandchildren; and The Great Grandchildren.

THE CHILDREN

The Whitelaws had nine children, eight of whom lived to adulthood. Although all but two married and had children, only three have descendants today: John Jr., Mary, and Henry.



Maggie M. Whitelaw, b. 1867; lived in the family home all her life and cared for her parents; owned a millinery shop in Kidder until 1910 and continued to sew clothes as a business; also was an expert needle woman and quilter; never married; died 1945, Kidder, MO.



William Neill Whitelaw (Will), b. 1869; B.A. Yale University, math and social studies teacher and principal in schools in Everett and Seattle, WA; member of the Congregational Church; loved gardening; married to Dorothy; one son, John Willis Whitelaw; died 1944, Seattle, WA

John Whitelaw, Jr. b. 1870; educated at Kidder Institute and Drury College; worked in the family hardware business and then farmed in Lawrence and DeSoto, KS; married to Bertha Bell; three children [pictured, l.to r.: Neill Gordon, Eleanor Bell (Whitford), John Moreland, Bertha Bell Whitelaw, John Whitelaw]; died 1961, DeSoto, KS.



Ruth Ella Whitelaw (Williams), b. 1872; educated at Kidder Institute, a school teacher in Missouri and Wisconsin; married Owen Williams, a hardware store owner in Cambria, WI; three children [pictured, l. to r. step-son Garvin, Ruth Jeanette, Owen Williams, Mary Elizabeth, Ruth Williams, Margaret Emma]; died 1950, Cambria, WI.



Henry N. Whitelaw, b. 1875; educated at Kidder Institute, Warrensburg College, and Rush Medical College at the University of Chicago; M.D. with a practice in Oakesdale, WA and later in Corvallis, OR; married to Mary Macklin; three children: [pictured: Henry and Mary Macklin Whitelaw with (left to right) Helen Margaret (Smith), Jean Macklin (Young), and Mary Neill (Rieke)]; died 1957, Corvallis, OR.



Mary Beulah Whitelaw (Shaw), b. 1877; educated Kidder Institute, school teacher and talented musician; married Theo. Shaw, a farmer in Kidder and later Cameron, MO, who died in 1915 leaving her a widow with six young children [pictured, back row: Charles, Lucy (Garner), Ralph; front row: Mabel, Margaret Ruth (Fluharty), Mary Shaw, Esther]; died 1946, Cameron, MO.





James Whitelaw b. 1878; educated Kidder Institute; worked in and later managed automobile dealerships in Spokane and Bothell, WA; owned apple orchard in Spokane; married Mae Kelsey; one son, James Robert. Died 1945, Seattle, WA.

Robert Whitelaw, b. 1880; died age 10 months, Kidder, MO.



Ralph Whitelaw, b. 1882; attended Kidder Institute; itinerant dairy and farm worker; married Edna; no children; died 1951, University of Kansas Hospital; buried in Kidder Cemetery.

THE WHITELAW GRANDCHILDREN IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF BIRTH

John and Mary Neill Whitelaw had 17 grandchildren, born between 1900 and 1916.



Mabel Susan Shaw b. 1900, high school teacher of English and Latin in Kansas and Missouri, never married.



Ralph T. Shaw, b. 1903, teacher, Texas, married to Harriett Wetherall, two children, (Ann, Jane).



Neill Gordon Whitelaw, b. 1906, B.A. Park College, M.A., Ph.D. University of Wisconsin, physics professor, Presbyterian College, Clinton, South Carolina, never married.



Mary Elizabeth Williams Enerson, b. 1906, B.A. University of Wisconsin, ran the family hardware store in Cambria, WI., married to Clifford Enerson, no children.



Mary Lucinda (Lucy) Shaw (Garner), b. 1906, B.A., married to Hugh Garner, three children, (Marilou, Roberta Sue, Jeanie) lived on a farm in Osborn, near Cameron, MO.



Ruth Jeanette Williams, b. 1908, B.A. University of Wisconsin, fashion retailer, Chicago, Ill, never married.



Eleanor Bell Whitelaw (Whitford), b. 1908; B.A. Park College, M.A. in Education, University of Chicago; married to Albert Whitford, an astronomy professor; three children (William, Mary, and Martha), lived in Madison, Wisconsin and San Jose, California.



John Willis Whitelaw, b. 1908; B.A. University of Washington, administrative worker in a public utility in Seattle, never married.



Charles Russell Whitelaw Shaw, b. 1909; B.S.in Education, Iowa State University; teacher of vocational agriculture, Rockport, Missouri; married to Betty Jo Williams; three children (Theodore, Dorothy, Errett).



Margaret Emma Williams, b. 1910; B.A. University of Wisconsin, drama teacher, Madison, WI, never married.



John Moreland Whitelaw, b. 1911; B.A. University of Wisconsin, MSSA University of Chicago; social worker and social work professor, Portland, OR, married to Alvis Ruth Love, three children (John, Susan, Nancy).



Esther Beulah Shaw, b. 1911; B.A.; federal civil service; worked for the Pentagon in St. Louis, MO.; never married.



Helen Margaret Whitelaw (Smith), b. 1911; B.A. Oregon State University, teacher, married to Clifford Smith, two children (Jean, Anne), lived in Corvallis, OR.



Mary Neill Whitelaw (Rieke), b. 1913; B.A. Oregon State University, teacher, Oregon State Legislature Representative, married to Forrest Rieke, three children (Forrest (Joe), Mary Mac, John).



James Robert Whitelaw, b. 1913; B.A. University of Washington, aeronautics worker, Seattle, WA, married, no children.



Margaret Ruth Shaw (Fluharty) b. 1914; B.A. Georgetown University, civil service worker; resides in Seattle, WA, married to Wynn Fluharty, three children (Gay-Wynn, David, Sherman).



Jean Macklin Whitelaw (Young), b. 1916; B.A. Oregon State University, high school teacher of home economics and family life, resides in Seattle, WA, married to Gordon Young, two children (James, Robert).

THE GREAT GRANDCHILDREN

John and Mary Neill Whitelaw have living descendants through three of their children: John Jr., Henry, and Mary (Shaw).

Family and Descendants of

John Whitelaw Jr. Back row: John Moreland, Eleanor Whitford holding Martha, Alvis (married to John Moreland), Albert (married to Eleanor), Bertha & John Whitelaw, Neill Gordon; front row: Mary (dau. of Eleanor), Susan (dau. of John Moreland), John Moreland Jr., William (son of Eleanor). Missing: Nancy (dau. of John Moreland, born 1947) – see next picture.



Back row: Bertha Whitelaw, Bill Whitford, Mary Whitford, John Whitelaw, John Moreland Whitelaw Jr., Susan Whitelaw; Front row: Nancy Whitelaw, Martha Whitford.



Family and Descendants of Henry Neill Whitelaw. Back row: Helen & Clifford Smith, Gordon Young, Henry Neill Whitelaw; Middle row: Jean (dau. of Helen Smith), Jean Young, Mary Rieke, holding Mary Mac, Mary Macklin Whitelaw, Forrest Rieke; Front row: James (son of Jean), Forrest (son of Mary), Anne (dau. of Helen), Robert (son of Jean). Missing: John, son of Mary, born 1949 – see next Picture.



John Moreland Whitelaw,
John Whitelaw holding the hand
Of John Whitelaw Rieke, John
Moreland Whitelaw, Jr



**Family and Descendants
Of Mary Whitelaw**

Shaw . [Pictured front row:
Jane Shaw, Dorothy Shaw;
Middle row: Chas. Errett
Shaw, Ann Shaw, Grandma
Mary Whitelaw Shaw holding
Jeanie Garner, Sue Garner.
Back row: Ted Shaw,
Marilou Garner.] Missing:
Margaret Ruth Shaw
Fluharty's children, Gay-
Wynn, Sherman, and David.

Pictured below: Mary Shaw
with daughter Margaret
and granddaughter
Gay-Wynn.



MILL O'TOR, SCOTLAND: 1840-1859

Mary Neill Whitelaw was born at Mill-of-Tor, Perthshire, Scotland, on December 9, 1840, the fourth child and first daughter of John and Margaret Moreland Neill. She grew up in a large family, as her parents had eight more children after she was born.

John Neill, her father, was born in 1804 at Larbert, near Falkirk, Stirlingshire, Scotland. He received some education, and was able to read, write, and do arithmetic. He was trained as a farmer and later completed a three-year apprenticeship with a blacksmith. Subsequently, he started his own blacksmith shop in Mill-of-Tor.



Mill O Torr millstones

Mill-of-Tor (or Mill o' Tor) is famous as the setting for Sir Walter Scott's poem, *Lady of the Lake*, written in 1810. In 1980, Dot Harrison, great-granddaughter of Mary Neill Whitelaw, made a journey to Scotland, and reported that a local guide "showed us the mill stones and explained that it was an "undershot" mill on the Firth of Tieth. He gave us directions to three graveyards in the area. We found all three, but could not decipher any family names as the stones were so eroded." Her pictures are at right and below.

Mary Neill Whitelaw's Family in Scotland



Firth of Tieth running through Mill O Torr



Cemetery near Blair Drummond

In 1834 John Neill married Margaret Moreland, and they started their family. Their family bible, now in the possession of descendents of their son Hugh Neill, reports the births of their children. Note that there are two Hugh Neills. The first died at age three, from drowning in the River Tee, and the Neills used the name again for another son.



Nameplate on the inside front of the bible:

*John Neil
&
Margaret Moreland
1837*

James Neill born at Mill of Tor the 8th of October 1835 and was baptized in the Parish Kindardine 18 of October in Monteath by Rev. Gray

John Neill was born at Mill of Tor March [?] 15th 1837. Baptized the 26th same month and parish

Hugh Neill was born at Mill of Tor March 1st 1839. Baptized the 24, same parish.

Mary Neill was born at Mill of Tor Dec. 9th 1840. Baptized the 27th same parish.

William Neill was born at Mill of Tor Mar. 28 1842. Baptized the 17th of April same parish.

Ann Neill was born at Mill of Tor Mch 27th 1844. Baptized the 14 of April same parish.

Hugh Neill was born at Mill of Tor August 26th 1846. Baptized the 13th of Sept. same parish

Henry Neill was born at Mill of Tor March 26th 1849. Baptized.

David Middleton Neill was born at Mill of Tor Feb. 2, 1852. Baptized the 22 of Feb.

Robert Neill was born at Mill of Tor April 4 1854. Baptized.

Alexander Gray Neill was born at Mill of Tor July 2, 1856. Baptized

Thomas Simpson Neill was born at East Brierlands August 23 1858. Baptized same parish.

Ten of these children survived to adulthood (the first Hugh and Thomas, the last child born, died young). The Neills were able to provide each child with an education; however the children were also expected to learn a trade and to begin earning as soon as possible. Several of the sons worked in their father's blacksmith shop.

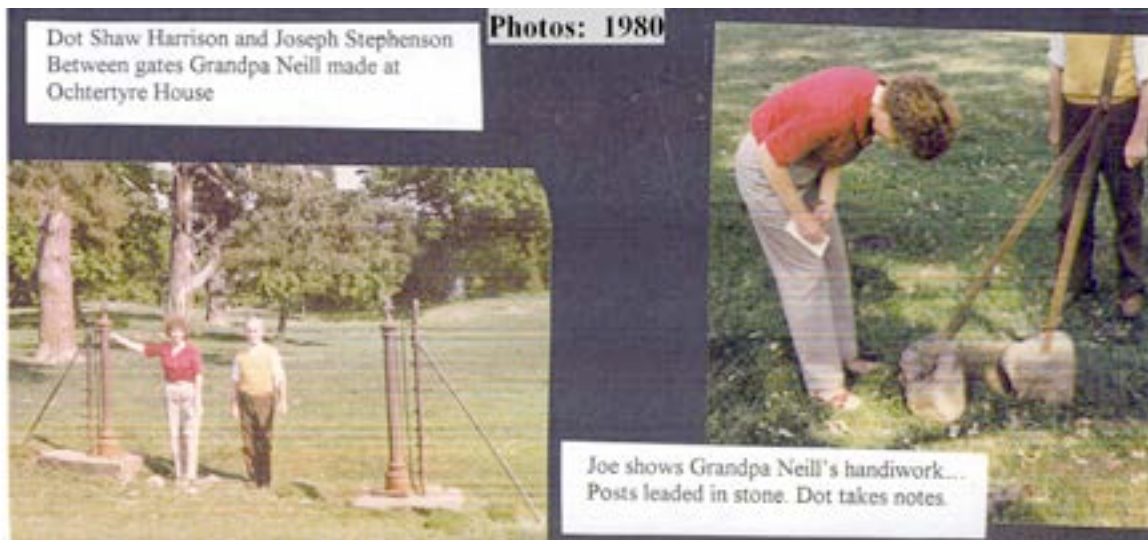
According to his obituary, John Neill, in addition to working long hours as a blacksmith, also practiced veterinary medicine among horses and cattle, “and often, after working at his forge, from four in the morning until ten at night, has he gone to the relief of some farmer’s animal. Much as these nocturnal visits cost him in sleep and fatigue, he was always ready for his work in the morning. For these services he would never take pay; but time and again have his countrymen and neighbors, rich and poor, shown their appreciation and esteem by valuable presents and social compliments.” (Obituary of John Neill).

OCHTERTYRE AND EMIGRATION: 1858 - 1960

In about 1858, when he was in his mid 50's, John Neill and his wife Margaret decided to emigrate to the U.S. with their children, some of whom were now young adults. To earn money for the voyage, John Neill contracted to build an iron fence on a wealthy estate in the area, called Ochertyre. This estate is mentioned in Sir Walter Scott's poem, Lady of the Lake (1810), when Fitz-James is riding back to Sterling from Loch Lomand:

They rise the bannered towers of Doune
They sink in distant woodland soon
Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire
They sweep like breeze through Ochertyre.

Dot Harrison, great granddaughter of Mary Neill Whitelaw, visited the Ochertyre estate in 1980. A guide told her that the fence "was meant to last as the iron posts were 'leaded in stone.'"





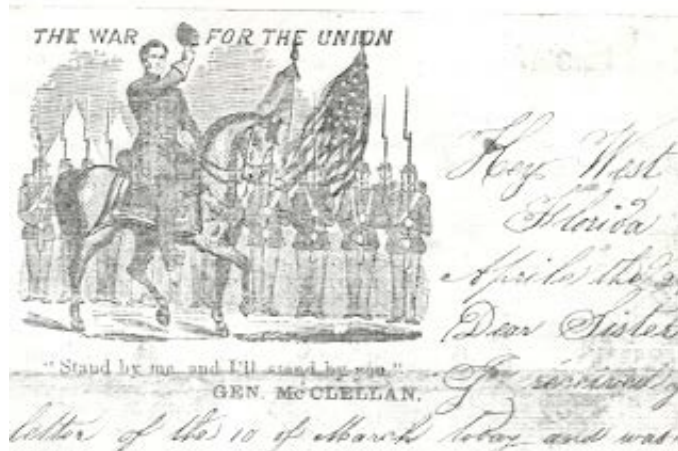
Emigration

In 1859, the family set sail from Glasgow, and after a two week voyage, landed in New York. They went to Auriesville, N.Y. and remained there a year, during which time John Neill went to Caledonia, Wisconsin, and bought an 80 acre farm. In 1860 the family moved to Wisconsin, with the exception of two sons who enlisted in N.Y. regiments of the Union Army, then fighting the Civil War. [Pictured – Mary Neill as a young woman.]

The Civil War

Mary Neill saved very few letters from her brothers and sisters which have survived. Four of them are from two of her brothers, James (one letter) and William (three letters), who were soldiers in the Civil War. Both were with New York regiments, so it is likely that they enlisted in 1859 or 1860, when the family first landed in New York. In the letters, James, who had children, expresses concern for the fate of his children if he should be killed.

William was injured and underwent surgery on his leg. Both brothers survived the War. See the Appendix for transcripts of these very interesting letters.



Mary Neill Whitelaw's Memories of Scotland

Mary Neill Whitelaw has left no record of her feelings about leaving her native land and relocating in America. We do know that she remembered the flowers there with fondness. On a trip to Seattle in 1905, she observed: "The flowers are splendid the same kinds that we had in Scotland. Flowers here such as rosewood broom and polyanthus[,] the hydrangeas are immense. Blue White and Red." (letter to Ruth Williams, Aug. 28, 1905). Her granddaughter, Esther Shaw, remembered her grandmother telling her how "every square foot of Scotland was used for growing something useful; bushes were fruit bushes, shade trees were fruit trees, and vegetables often grew when you would expect flowers." (Esther Shaw's account of her trip to Scotland, 1955).



Her other recorded memories of life in Scotland concern war. Her son Ralph reported that during World War I, his mother would "peck the Germans after some especially disastrous English defeat. It's impossible for her to be neutral and I fear she has "contempt" for England's ability any more and feels sure that if the 'Campbells' were available now as of yore that Germany would bend the knee. I hear her sometimes reciting, 'The Campbells are coming, Oh, Ho! Oh Ho!' Some of the war tragedies really hurt her though, she takes them so seriously and she frequently says she wishes the papers would not print so much of it, but still she is eager for it and tells us of many things which we overlook." (Ralph Whitelaw to Ruth Williams, Feb. 7, 1916).

Another memory linked to war may help explain why the family decided to emigrate. Right after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941, Mary Whitelaw's daughter Maggie wrote: "Somehow the strong faith in God that Mother had has been in mind so much. We all need it in this terrible time but O how she hated War. Her early memories were of a foreign war and often I heard her tell, her mother was willing to leave Scotland so her boys would not have to go to war and they got right into it when they came to America." (Maggie Whitelaw to Ruth Williams, Dec. 10, 1941).

MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN: 1866-1900

Mary Neill married John Whitelaw, also a recent immigrant from Scotland, in Caledonia, Columbia County, Wisconsin, June 14, 1866, by a Justice of the Peace named Michael Cochran. (Photo at right: wedding picture of John and Mary Whitelaw). She was 26, he was 31.



They immediately moved to Kidder, a small town in northwest Missouri, where John established a lumber and hardware business. They built a substantial house there and raised eight children (a ninth child, Robert, died in infancy.)



The children were:

Maggie M.	b. 1867
William (Will) Neill	b. 1869
John Jr.	b. 1870
Ruth Ella	b. 1872
Henry N.	b. 1875
Mary Beulah	b. 1877
James	b. 1878
Robert	b. 1880
Ralph	b. 1882



Old Whitelaw Home, Kidder, MO. 2001

BIRTH REGISTRY IN THE WHITELAW FAMILY BIBLE

Births

Maggie M. Whitelan born 3^d May 1867
William Huff Whitelan 7th March 1869
John Whitelan 11th Dec^r 1870
Lizzie Ella Whitelan 10th Dec^r 1872
Henry H. Whitelan 27th April 1873
Mary Sarah Whitelan 16th April 1874
James Whitelan 28th Dec^r 1875
Robert Whitelan 15th Nov^r 1880
Ralph Whitelan 2^d Nov^r 1882

PICTURES OF THE GROWING FAMILY



Maggie Whitelaw 1875



Mary Neill Whitelaw c. 1875



Will Whitelaw 1875



John Whitelaw 1875



Henry Whitelaw 1875



Ruth Whitelaw 1875



Maggie, John, Henry, Mary, Ruth, Will and John & Mary Whitelaw c.1878



Maggie, Mary & Ruth Whitelaw, c. 1890, Kidder, MO



Four Whitelaw brothers in baseball uniforms.
Left to right: John, Will, James, Henry



Will, Henry, James, John, Ralph Whitelaw c.1890 Kidder, MO



Mary, Ruth & Maggie Whitelaw, 1890s, Kidder, MO

Family Reflections on Mary Neill Whitelaw as a Mother



James Whitelaw, 1913: We were discussing at our breakfast table how mothers generally lose their appetite for anything good of which there is insufficient for all, and Doc[Henry] said in Scotch, “I much prefer the burned” and we laughed with tears in our eyes at this characteristic expression of mother’s. (Letter to Ruth Whitelaw Williams)



Ralph Whitelaw, 1913: When away I always had a mental picture of her plodding around house carrying slop here and there, dodging around picking up odds and ends for no particular purpose that I could see except just to be doing and I find her still very true to life. (Letter to Ruth Whitelaw Williams)



Will Whitelaw, 1928: Mother used to say, “You’ll all agree in less room yet!” Well, I guess we’ve got plenty of “room” now. As one gets older I think they dwell on early days and associations more, don’t you; and those past days take on most attractive hues as they are retrieved in “memory’s fond page.” I believe I’d even endure one of old Mr. Cover’s grunting prayers if I could attend a Y.P.S.C.E. [ed. Note: Young People’s Society for Christian Endeavor?] there again or sit up to a big breakfast of oatmeal with real milk and hot cakes with real sorghum. . . Say, I wish I had a piece of mother’s gingerbread and a glass of milk, or some apple cobbler and sauce on it, or even some milk toast and fried eggs. Say, they were good! . . . Oh, we had a wonderful home, Ruthie, with wonderful parents and the best things of life after all and I’m glad we had it whatever life brings us in these latter days. “Home is where the heart is” no doubt, but our home was a real success just the same and we’re all the better of it, now and, I hope, in eternity. (Letter to Ruth Whitelaw Williams)

Will Whitelaw, 1930: I still can hear mother’s voice singing around the kitchen,

“My faith looks up to Thee
Thou Lamb of Calvary Saviour Divine”
and also

“Must Jesus bear the cross alone
And all the world go free,

No, there's a cross for everyone,
And there's a cross for me.

I know now what she was singing about – I didn't then – but if she could bear all she went through and trust Him tho he slew her, I surely ought to carry my light load cheerfully and sing with those I've loved:

“Faith of our fathers, Holy Faith,
We will be true to thee till death.”
(Letter to Ruth Whitelaw Williams)

Will Whitelaw, 1940: “Mother loved flowers, I remember – I think she must have seen in them something of the spiritual life's beauty also, and perhaps that is what made her own life of sacrificial service so beautiful.” (Letter to Ruth Whitelaw Williams)

Ralph Whitelaw, 1946: I have been wondering what to do about the old cradle we had at home. I brot it over here for lack of anything else to do with it and I don't think anyone else wants it unless you do. If you think you want to give it storage room I can crate it and send it up there to you and if not I'll just have to store it somewhere here. It's pretty badly dilapidated as you know it would be after being kicked around and stored in the woodhouse so many years at home and of course it's only sentiment that makes anyone keep it longer. John took a long look at it over there and then walked off without saying anything so I concluded he didn't want to fool with it. About all it's good for anyway is to make one sad looking at it and while I no doubt I cried plenty in it while a baby I find now that it still has the power to make me feel like crying when I look at it and allow myself to think back.” (Letter to his nieces, Mary, Ruth, and Emma Williams)



Henry Whitelaw, 1950: Somehow, most of my real pleasant memory goes back to childhood in a home of very simple living - kerosene lamps (your mother hated to clean the doggoned things, as a girl, and I often induced her to skip out and neglect them, to her sorrow later) – no refrigeration (placing food and milk in a bucket in the well) and with some tough experiences in well clearance – no radios, but how we could yell and sing. Bare feet all summer , with Sunday shoes that hurt till we got home – no bicycles – stick horses and homemade wagons with no ball bearings and no paved streets – calico dresses and overalls with little enough underneath. Well, those were indeed happy days with mother trying to get us to wash our feet at night when we had fallen asleep on the grass and were in glorious oblivion – not caring if our feet were clean for bed or not – and mother finally washing them and with a little heavier than love pat on our bottom to get us off to bed at all. Now, I wonder who today would think that was fun – no one of course, but we knew no better so just made our own fun. I don't long for the days again so much but I sometimes long for the mother who put cream on my sunburned back when I went swimming in “birthday swimming suit,” who pulled off my mittens and shoes and warmed my frozen digits when I didn't have sense enough to know when I had skated

long enough or had played to exhaustion in the snow.” (Letter to his nieces, Mary, Ruth, and Emma Williams)

John Moreland Whitelaw, grandson, recalling stories his father, John Whitelaw, told about his mother, Mary Neill Whitelaw, 1973.



There was the episode with Uncle Henry drinking the adifidity [?] It seems like there was an old custom way back then that in the spring of the year, after the winter and so forth, that it was a good idea to sort of purge yourself of all these kinds of accumulated wastes and so forth that you had gotten over the winter and this adifidity was kind of a liquid that was just horrible tasting stuff that somehow was supposed to purge you a bit of all the evils that you had accumulated through the winter. At Grandma and Grandpa Whitelaw’s apparently along in the spring they would pass the adifidity jar, I guess it was a big quart or half gallon Mason fruit jar or something, round the table and everybody was supposed to take a spoonful or two at each meal before he ate. Well, Uncle Henry apparently, impatient as he was as you can remember, some of you met him, on one occasion when this thing was being passed around, he just lifted up the fruit jar and drank everything that was left in it. It was almost full at the time he did this. Well, I guess this horrified Grandma, she was afraid that he was going to be sick or what was going to happen to Henry, it shook everybody up. It has always been a great family story about the time Uncle Henry just up and drank everything that was left in the adifidity jar. Well, nothing ever happened, he was just as good as ever afterwards and so forth. So anyway, as I recall, they didn’t have any more adifidity that spring. It had shaken Grandma and so forth, she wasn’t about to risk anybody else, probably just thanking the Lord that Uncle Henry had come though without any fatal effects.

Well, there is one other little episode in rearing that Whitelaw children and whatnot that I just kind of thought I’d mention that always kind of struck me as being very funny. Because Grandma was such a loveable, conscientious and really efficient and effective person, capable in all ways. Really, she was quite a person. But they used to tell this one and it embarrassed her and made her apologetic to her death, really. Way back, the whole family was asleep, all the children, Grandma and Grandpa in their bedroom, they were on the ground floor. Well, she heard this disturbance out by the front door, the front porch. She got up and went out there and began hearing this, “Mother, Mother, Mama, Mama.” She sort of recognized the voice and opened the door and there was Uncle James who apparently had gone to sleep out in the barn or some place. Of course, what was so embarrassing to Grandma was that she couldn’t believe that she had put all the children to bed and got the family tucked in for the night and had missed one of her children. All she had to do everyday and whatnot, I suspect that Uncle James was always a little bit active or something, but it is kind of surprising that she missed him. But maybe she just realized that he, but she was just so embarrassed whenever this story was told that I just thought I would include it in the record here because it just shows what a loving mother can overlook when she is so burdened as poor Grandma Whitelaw was.



SELKIRK GRACE

Some hae meat
and canna eat,
and some wad
eat that want it;
but we hae meat,
and we can eat,
and say the lord
be thankit

Alvis Whitelaw, wife of Mary Neill Whitelaw's grandson John Moreland Whitelaw, 1992 I was interested in your mentioning the old Whitelaw house. I remember it very well. There was an embroidered motto from Rob't Burns on the dining room wall – "Some hae meat and canna eat" etc. etc. Aunt Maggie was living there when we visited. (Letter to Charles and Betty Shaw.)

THE EXPANDING FAMILY: 1900-1916

By 1900, the Whitelaw children were young adults, and during the next decade and a half, as would be expected in the course of family life, the family became both smaller and larger. It diminished in that all of the adult children left home and moved away from Kidder, except for Maggie, the oldest, who remained in the family home until her death in 1945. John Whitelaw sold the hardware store in about 1910, at the age of 75. Two deaths punctuate this period of family history: John Whitelaw, the family patriarch, died in 1913, at age 78, while visiting his son Will in Seattle, Washington.

In 1915, unexpectedly and very tragically, Mary Whitelaw Shaw's husband, Theo, died of pneumonia during a major flu epidemic. He left Mary a widow with six children, the youngest under a year old. As Mary Shaw's mother, Mary Neill Whitelaw was a major source of support to this young family. She frequently stayed at the Shaws' home to help out in times of sickness, and her Shaw grandchildren often made extensive visits to their grandmother's home in Kidder.

The family also grew, however, as the adult children married and started families of their own. As they moved away, family members communicated through letters. This period of family life is well documented, therefore, with letters from Mary Neill Whitelaw and her children to their daughter and sister, Ruth Whitelaw Williams, who saved most of her correspondence. In order to illuminate Mary Neill Whitelaw's character as fully as possible, I have included transcriptions of most of her letters from this period. Mary Neill Whitelaw used very little punctuation in her letters, with the effect that her writing seems to mirror her speech, and the reader feels that she/he can almost hear her talking through the written page.



Mary Neill Whitelaw

Mary Neill Whitelaw's concerns during this period are the marriages of her children, the establishment of their households and careers, and the birth of grandchildren. Note that these letters do not provide a complete account of all births and other major family events of the period: their inclusion here is intended to shed light on Mary Neill Whitelaw as a person, and not primarily as a complete chronicle of family history.

Pictured: The Family home in Kidder, about 1900, as the children were beginning to leave home. Upper porch, left to right: Mary, Maggie, Henry, Ralph. Lower group, left to right: John (Junior), James, John (Senior), Janet Wilson (his sister), Mary Neill, William, Ruth



Just for fun: Susan Whitelaw and Dot Harrison, standing where their grandparent's stood a century ago (Susan-John Whitelaw, Jr.; Dot – Mary Whitelaw Shaw)

Family Reflections on the Emigration of the Whitelaw Children from Kidder

The departure of grown children from the family home to distant places was a pattern in the Neill and Whitelaw families. The parents of both John and Mary Neill Whitelaw had left Scotland and settled in Caledonia, Wisconsin with their children. When grown, most of those children, in turn, had left Caledonia. Mary and John had moved to Kidder, Missouri, and they had sisters and brothers throughout the west and Midwest, including Oregon, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Alberta, Canada. Even though the departure of young adults was an expected family event, her children believed that Mary Neill Whitelaw felt some sadness and loss as her children moved far from home.



When her youngest son, Ralph, left home in 1917, he wrote to his sister Ruth: “I feel somewhat guilty in being here on her account for I’m afraid she feels a little deserted by her kids and I hate to give her any chance to feel that they are lacking in loyalty. I’ve got to put myself in a somewhat better position of independence though and I think I see a better future here than I could realize at Kidder.”

Maggie, living at home with her parents, expressed concern that her brothers and sisters had left and were unable to visit as frequently as she thought desirable. In 1925, she wrote to Ruth about the awkwardness she felt in the town because her brothers and sisters could not visit more often: “A woman. . .called me last winter over the phone and asked how we were, ‘Have any of the boys been home lately? Well! I would think they would come.’ Of course it hurt me for I knew her inference but I did not tell her so.”

In 1900, the situation of the Whitelaw children was as follows:



Maggie, age 33, owner of a millinery shop in Kidder; living at home and caring for her parents; unmarried.

Will, age 31, graduated from Yale University and teaching school in Everett, Washington; unmarried.



John Jr., age 30, living in Kidder and working in the family hardware and implement store; unmarried.

Ruth, age 28, teaching school in Missouri; unmarried.



Henry, age 25, attending Rush Medical College in Chicago, Ill.; unmarried.

Mary, age 23, married to Theo Shaw in 1899 and living in Kidder; one child, Mabel, born in 1900.





James, age 22, living in Kidder and working in the family hardware and implement store; unmarried.



Ralph, age 18, living in Kidder, unmarried.

In 1900, Mary Neill Whitelaw's mother, Margaret Moreland Neill, was dying in her home in DeKorra, Wisconsin, and Mary went to Wisconsin to be with her. In this letter to her daughter Ruth, teaching in a small town in Missouri, she describes the situation with her mother. She also declines to advise her daughter on how to proceed with a courtship, a "hands-off" approach to parenting adult children which she favored.



1900, Dear Daughter Ruth, . . . I think you would find a busy time if you went home on Saturdays from what they have written me but I want you to stick together the best you can until I return I think I never left things in worse shape no preparation whatever did I make but I console myself that you are all older now than you were hope your Father could enjoy [unreadable word] visit but he is not used to doing house work and visiting [section cut out of letter]



Well Ruth I hardly know what to make of Grandma's case, [Mary Moreland Neill] she fails a great deal and yet she holds out wonderfully tries to talk a great deal when the nerves rise and to go round measuring and pulling and trying to open doors but she has got so weak that she is just as liable to fall as can be so we have to have her up until she becomes exhausted and then she will sleep for 12 or 18 hours so hard and no medicine to make her either it seems as though tired nature must give out I just don't see how to leave Aunt Ann alone with her and so am giving her all my time. . . . Ruth I want you to do what you think right about your visitor you know that I think you can manage your own affairs best and I have to wait results. I am glad you succeed so well with your school and hope great things for you I must bid you good bye from your affectionate Mother Mary Neill Whitelaw.

In 1903 two Whitelaw children got married. John Whitelaw, Jr. married Bertha Bell, a young teacher at Kidder Institute. He continued to work in the family hardware business. In December, Ruth married Owen Williams, a hardware store owner in Cambria, Wisconsin, a widower with one son, Garvin. Ruth had a wedding in the family home and moved permanently to Cambria. Mary Neill Whitelaw wrote to her daughter soon after the wedding.



Dear Daughter Ruth , I feel it to be my duty to write to you this eve having received two letters from you in the first place I will ask you to excuse pencil the ink got spilt today hence the pencil well we are about as you left us only fewer in number and it seems quieter because when I want to talk I cannot go upstairs but must go to the neighbours or call Mary up she has always been good to

answer me. . .and says she is coming in the first warm day but this was a nice warm day I hope they are coming tomorrow for I have not seen them since the day after the wedding you said Will's letter was good was the letter all he sent you James says he must be making more money than he spends I think so to but perhaps you will think I am to inquisitive tell me what you like and if you don't it will be all right I think Henry enjoyed his visit with you folks very much was glad to hear that he looked well it makes me uneasy to hear that the boys are sick and away from home now Ruth I want you to let us know just how things are when you have got through your boxes I mean if there was any waste it makes our hearts glad to hear of your warm Welcome and that you are so happily situated I knew you would find enough to do to fill your mind when you went to keep your house but it is the best thing to do after all may God speed your efforts and may you both be happy is the sincere prayer of your mother and I do not forget Garvin either I hope it will be a happy home for him also. . . .from your loving mother Mary Neill Whitelaw

*This letter, written in **September 1904**, alludes to Ruth's visit home during the summer, a pattern of summer visiting she was to maintain for as long as her mother was alive.*

Dear Daughter Ruth sitting here alone I thought the best thing was to write you a few lines. Father is taking his nap the boys [James and Ralph] gone to Johns to dinner [her son, John Jr. and wife Bertha] and Maggie gone to junior so you see why I am alone. Father received your letter and we were glad to know that you and Garvin were safe at home once more. I know it seemed good to be there again. I was sorry to see people going not feeling as well as when they came but all have reported well after they have

gone. . . . I hope none of you will feel worse for having come and we certainly feel better because you did. . . . Affectionately from your Mother Mary Neill Whitelaw

In 1905, John Jr. 's wife, Bertha, Ruth, and Mary Shaw were each pregnant.

Dear Ruth, I have been trying to arrange something about patterns for you but could not see Mary until yesterday the weather has been so cold she could not come in but now I must send what we have gathered the little shirts can be bought ready wove woolen is worn so much nowadays and if you do not know here to buy we do here and can mail to you if you will tell us what you need or want to buy we send you these to look at and form your own opinion of them. Well was glad you were as well as you spoke of Bertha has to lie in bed a good deal nowadays the doctor thinks if she rests that way for this month she will be stronger after that time she was going to have us all for thanksgiving dinner but had to give it up so we all eat in our own homes and are just as well off she feels worst about it but if John and she get through their job they will be happy people and we will all be glad for them the rest of the family are all well as far as we know and you were all right in addressing Will to the old place he has not told us any other yet he has taken his letter to the Congregational Church there looks like he felt at home. . . . I will have to close for this time. Your Affectionate Mother Mary Neill Whitelaw



Three grandchildren were born during 1906: Neill Gordon Whitelaw in February, Mary Elizabeth Williams in May, and Lucy Shaw in September. James Whitelaw married Mae Kelsey and settled in Spokane, Washington.



January 18, 1906, Dear Daughter Ruth, I feel it my duty to write you a few lines. . . . We are all well only your father complains of his shoulder it was quite lame this morning but in John's absence he will be in the shop. I do not doubt but that Mr. McDonald and Ralph could do it if your Pa could think so but he will not until he has to so we let him do the [part?] that he likes best. I think this mild damp winter is productive of rheumatism. My own leg is not free of it. Saw Theo Shaw yesterday they were well only Baby is getting his last double teeth, two are cut and two more to come which keeps him rather peevish but he is doing very well if he does not get to many bumps as baby's are apt to sometimes [refers to Ralph Shaw, Mary Shaw's son]..

Well we had a letter last Sunday telling of James having been laid up for a week with a sore throat so you know that was his trouble every winter but according to Mae's writing she and the doctor did more for him than I ever did and so he is well again and I hope he will keep well for Mae's sake as well as his own. She is very courageous girl but she



may be where she will need it all but I hope and pray that all will go well with them. . . . I will close this time your loving Mother Mary Neill Whitelaw



March 26, 1906, Dear Ruth Maggie received your letter this morning written Sat'r'y and when I read it I said it was familiar to the family to have swollen feet and limbs you know I always had and you must remember Aunt Ellas the best thing you can do is to rest them as much as you can I think from what you have told us you have kept on your feet now it is time for you to rest and get your girl as soon as you can get her because things of your kind happen sooner the first time as a rule I think I'd rather have it sooner than later. Too, perhaps you do not drink much I would not worry to much about kidney trouble for I am in hopes that your troubles will be over when you are delivered. We are apt to think our troubles are greater than we can bear but he that hath promised will surely fulfill only trust him and be of good courage is the prayer of your mother [*refers to Ruth's late stage pregnancy*]. . . . Ruth you will have to excuse my short epistle for it is chore time. With much love to you and yours I remain your Mother Mary Neill Whitelaw

April 13, 1906 Dear Ruth, We are thinking about you a great deal just now but we have been crowding things the last two weeks [*Ruth was within two weeks of the birth of her first child, Mary Elizabeth Williams*]. Well your father was delegate to the Association [*of Churches*] at Brekinridge last He went on Wednesday. Came to Hamilton Thurs. morning. I met him there and we visited aunts M and E until Friday [*Whitelaw relatives*]. . . .

Henry has no doubt told you of his good luck in getting in to the Presbyterian Hospital work we had a letter to that effect last Sunday [*his medical residency*]. He wanted us all to rejoice with him so he will not leave Chicago this summer . . . Ruth you must excuse haste for there was no one but me to write this time. Lovingly, your mother M. Whitelaw



Nov. 25, 1906 Dear Daughter Ruth, it is a long time since I have written you but you will have to excuse me for I am not much of a writer. I have wrote to Ralph and to James within this month and now it is your turn I am always owing letters. Well this is a very rainy Sabbath. Father and Maggie went to service this morning and in the evening no bells ring which means no service so we three are sitting at home reading, and writing not much like the time when you were all at home but such is this life and we are so thankful that we are well and comfortable we have had a new Art Garland stove set up in our sitting room and we burn hard coal. It is quite a labour saver for me and we enjoy it very much. I have Henry's and Mary Elizabeth's picture in the bookcase where I can look at them every time I come in the room. I think they both look just about right but I could tell better about baby, if I could see her it is lots of comfort to know that she is getting along so well and you seem to be pretty well too. . . .

The letters in 1907 reflect Mary Neill and John Whitelaw's increasing disability with age, concerns about the health of the grandchildren, career news of the sons, and a glimpse of the daily round of life in small town Kidder, which included attention to seasonal home-grown produce, church activities, and such special community events as the annual Chautauqua, a series of cultural events lasting several days each year.

March 20, 1907 Dear Daughter Ruth, it seems to be the best thing I can do this morning to write you a few lines. Well we [?] in the place of hope yet and might be a great deal worse than we are. Your father goes to the store every day and takes care of his horses and cow night and morning. His aches trouble him some but I think he is as well as we can expect for a man of his years. I took a cold about two months ago and a lameness set in in my right arm which has never left entirely. It seems to be easy for me to catch cold and yesterday I seemed to take another spell of it but by taking a good sweat and some medicine I am better today. Well you know we are just getting older. Your father's lameness has been with him for years now but the weather is gradually getting fine with us and we will soon be planting our garden. Now we have had letters from Will and James this week. They are all well. . . .

Just phoned to Mary she says they are all well and Baby [Lucy Shaw] has got a tooth that makes me think. You asked how Neill Gordon [John and Bertha Bell Whitelaw's son] teeth came in once. He got upper side ones first and middle ones after. I hope Mary Elizabeth has got her middle ones cut now for it upsets the little ones to be cutting teeth you would be surprised to see how well Mary's Lucinda grows and Neill is taking 2 or 3 steps at a time. .. I must close to get dinner. Your affectionate mother, Mary Neill Whitelaw



John & Mary Whitelaw & six grandchildren, c.1906, Kidder, MO

[In the picture above, grandchildren: Mabel Shaw, Mary Elizabeth Williams, Neill Gordon Whitelaw, Ralph Shaw (standing), Lucy Shaw. Grandparents John and Mary Neill Whitelea]

July 29, 1907 Dear Daughter Ruth, . . We have had Chataqua going on in [unreadable word] as you know John and Bertha and Father and I went the day before the folks went away and heard LaFollottes address he is a fine speaker and gave us a fine address. . . .

Mary and family were to church a week ago and she played the piano and they all sang like old times she tells me that the baby *[Lucy]* has cut 2 upper teeth and is not very well they are well the rest of them. . . .

There are a good many sick babies nowadays tell me how Mary Elisa gets along. Father always misses her when he goes to milk the cow she was such a darling I find that you did not take all that belonged to you I find a hand looking glass upstairs and 2 of your best diapers rolled in a paper and laid in my wood box only found them yesterday shall I send them Well Chataqua is broke up with a good heavy rain and we have cooler weather now Johns folks are well we have seen no cherries in the market this season but are glad we have last years Peaches and we will have a taste of grapes at least. John brought us a taste of new Peaches from KC last week. They were good you see we are always provided for well Ruth I could write all night but your Father has gone to bed and I would make my letter short. . . with love and best wishes I remain your mother Mary Neill Whitelaw.

August 7th, 1907, Dear Ruth you must think I started fair but soon failed although I mean to write more often while M *[Maggie]* is gone we have had a good deal of sickness here among the neighbors as well as ourselves. Neill Gordon has been the worst the Dr. called it inflammation of the Bowels with him but he is gaining now summer complaint is prevalent in all its forms Father and I have got through pretty easy only we take good what we eat and do not work too hard we had a few cold wet days early this month so cold that just about getting on heavy underwear when it changed and it is now so warm we almost want to go without clothes. I have slept good nights so far but have had a bad gathering *[?]* on the second finger of my left hand which caused me some pain but is getting pretty near well now. Haven't told Maggie about anything she thinks too much about us if you write her don't say we have sickness *[Maggie was visiting Henry, James, Ralph & Will in Washington]*. . .



O Ruth I forgot to tell you to use the green lice of your ramble Sulphur sprinkled over the leaves would do it good when will I be done finding things you left today I discovered 2 pairs of new made bleached muslin drawers in my Bureau drawer which I think must be yours. You see I received your card to night and you did not say how Owen was I take it he must be better am glad Baby has cut that tooth that I looked for so long kiss her for me. . . . Mary's folks were all well this morning but quite busy in the hay field will soon get done now. I hope your help girl will be a good one and that rest will get you stronger. . . . As ever your Mother Mary Neill Whitelaw

August 20th, 1907 Dear Ruth, I know you will be thinking your letter is long in coming and I know that delays are dangerous the times I think I am going to write are many but when I do it is done hurriedly I thought I would write before Bertha but you may have hers first yet – saw them Sunday. Neill G is much better it come pretty near [unreadable word] his walking but he can stand alone and stop [unreadable word] yet but he eats so hearty of that he likes I think he will soon pick up again but O he is so cross it is hard for him to see any one but Papa and Mama. Mary and the children were in to church on Sunday which make us all feel glad for all of us have been ailing with some little thing but now that rains and more cool weather has set in we think we are going to be better . . . A letter from Maggie written the 11th says that she did not go out with the rest of the

family to see the fish and stove works that day for she had to get ready to leave Everett [Maggie was visiting her brothers, Will, James, Henry, and Ralph in Washington] but could learn to live there fine thinks everything is lovely especially Dorothy



and Will's home [Dorothy was Will's new wife] if it were not to see Ralph now that she had seen Mae and James she would not have gone to Spokane. James sends us a card the 13th stating that they are at Bremerton having a ride [?] in the Battleship Nebraska so that is part of their visit about Seattle. Henry goes back to Everett with Wills folks from there he cannot have his exams to make a full fledged doctor in Washington until January which is rather disappointing to him but Will says there will be something he can do there. Henry finds he needs warm clothes in Everett he has had to doctor his colds he is getting acclimated well Ruth there is too much for me to tell I hope they are writing you and don't forget to write us a card we are glad to know how you are all getting along hope Owen will get relief soon and wish you had of steady good girl you need the help. Thank God for his goodness to us all from your loving Mother Mary Neill Whitelaw



Sept. 2nd, 1907, Dear Ruth, I got rather busy last week and knowing that Bertha was writing you I waited well we had a letter from Maggie yesterday stating that she would leave Spokane for home the 9th or 10th of this month she has been visiting Ralph at Halton she says he looks well and says his work is not hard for him and he wants to save money his 4 dollar a day job was with a thrashing company and stops about now and Mr. Kelsey pays him 40 dollars a month after this he said he would come to Spokane for a visit about the 7th so Maggie went to Spokane last week and would meet Henry and Ralph at Jameses. James and Mae had gone

home ahead cant just tell what Henry will do yet talks of spending his time between Everett and Seattle. . . .

Mable Shaw started to school this morning it rained hard here last night hardly knew how they would get to school but it has cleared up and the children were brought I hope they will have a good year of school and Mable be able to continue at it we are all well my boils are got along well now and Neill Gordons sickness has left him for the present. I never saw a child gaining faster eats hearty and walked from the sitting room into the kitchen to find me yesterday. I was surprised he was a little shakey but will not be so long I think it will be cooler from this on Mary's folks are all well and Baby is as good as ever.



Kidder merchants gave a barbeque last week so we all went to the Park to see the races and the prizes awarded one afternoon was enough for us and we are glad it is got along with your father received your letter and will answer sometime I hope your girl remains and that you are all tolerably well my love to Grandma Williams as well as to yourselves kiss M.E. for me affectionately

Mother Mary Neill Whitelaw [ed.note – this picture of Main Street in Kidder was taken after 1907, as in 1907 Kidder had no electricity].

Sept. 29, 1907 Dear Ruth, some time has passed since I received your letter of the 19th but I am not going to let the month pass without writing again how quick time goes past although we all keep well a multitude of things keep us all busy. This week it is the Kidder Association of the churches. We have to open our houses the way it is raining today don't look like it would be a full meeting but it has rained now 3 days and our meeting begins Tuesday. . . .



Mary's family were all into church this morning and got a good wetting going home. . . . Mabel [*Mary's daughter*] has been to school every day for four weeks she has eat dinners with us and gets along finely the children are all better since cool weather set in. Neill Gordon gets quite fat runs around and says "How do Granma" I wish I could see M. Elizabeth walking and glad she does all right and I am sure she can talk enough [rest of letter missing]

This is nearly the last letter Mary Neill Whitelaw wrote to her daughter, Ruth. By 1910, she had turned over the letter writing duties to her daughter Maggie, who maintained the position of hub at the center of family letter writing. The letter is undated but was probably written in 1909.

June 27 [undated, probably 1909] Dear Ruth your letters come so often and so many of them that I am compelled to take the pen again I really can't say how long it is since I have tried so you see I neglect them all having those beside me that are so good about writing for me but am always glad to hear from any one of my children and thankful that they get along as they do although I do wish that Ralph would write more often. Well I think that your little girls are going to be big ere I see them again you know I almost think I have seen Baby because she resembles you so much at least that is my opinion. *[Ruth's second child, Ruth Jeanette Williams, was born in 1908.]* . . . We are eating new potatoes and peas and they are good. Wish you were here to eat with us.



Thank you for sending Alex and Lizzie's letters I was glad they thought so much of one of mine as they did of you but their letters are so full of trouble of which we all have enough I would like to hear how she is getting along had she done different sooner it would not be so hard with her now she ought not to have worked in the harvest field when she had children and a home to take care of as for his not going to see John I'm sorry to hear of it John was always a brother to me I am not going back on him now *[Alex and John were Mary Neill Whitelaw's youngest brothers]*. We have all got enough at our own door.

Well Ruth I hope you will keep in a doing way your Father keeps pretty well this summer much better than he was in the spring, and there are many things that need his care so he and I think that we can do best here at home at present the rest of the family are all well as far as we know. . . I will have to close for this time as ever your loving Mother Mary Neill Whitelaw your father says he will write you sometime.



child, Helen, was born in 1911. He settled in Oakesdale, Washington, and established a medical practice there. Also in 1911, Mary and Theo Shaw and their four children moved to a farm in Cameron, MO, about ten miles from Kidder. Theo's death in 1915 was described earlier.



An increasingly difficult family problem was presented by the binge drinking of the youngest sibling, Ralph. Now in his late 20s, he maintained a pattern of hopeful starts in various jobs, inevitably followed by a period of disappearance for several months because of a binge. Family letters exhibit extreme reticence on the subject of his drinking, referring only to his disappearance and their inability to find him for periods of time.

DEATH OF JOHN WHITELOW: 1913

The Whitelaws made two extensive trips during their retirement years. In 1907 and again in 1913 they made a tour starting with Wisconsin, to visit Ruth and Whitelaw and Neill relatives, continuing on through Minnesota and South Dakota to visit Mary's brothers, and then visiting their sons in Washington. By the time of the 1913 visit, James and his wife Mae lived in Spokane, where he worked for an auto dealership, Henry with his wife Mary and daughters Helen and Mary lived in Oakesdale, and Will, with his wife Dorothy and son John Willis lived in Seattle. They were accompanied by their daughter, Maggie, on both trips. During the second of these trips, John Whitelaw died suddenly while they were visiting son Will in Seattle.

Visit to Cambria, Wisconsin, in 1913. The family is gathered on the porch of Ruth and Owen Williams' house. From L. to R.: Owen Williams, Ruth Whitelaw Williams, John Whitelaw, Mary Neill Whitelaw, Ann Neill Robertson (Mary's sister) Robert Whitelaw (John's uncle, seated), Maggie Whitelaw, Susie Johnson (Robert's daughter), and Margaret E., Mary E. & Ruth J. Williams.



July 24, 1913
Seattle, Wash.
From Maggie Whitelaw
To Ruth Whitelaw Williams



Dear Sister – . . .
Yesterday we took lunch and ate on University grounds. Then spent a while in the Museum. The Alaska, Yukon Exposition was held on these grounds and many of the buildings still stand they are used for different departments of the work. The exhibits in the museum came from the collection at the Ex. We did not get all through it, as father was not very well, Mother too had a pain in her head. They both are improved today. I guess we are queer company, but we have to take things slow or just go home. . . .
Love, Maggie

Aug. 19, 1913
Seattle, Wash.
From Dorothy Whitelaw (Mrs. Will Whitelaw)
To Ruth Whitelaw Williams

Dear Sister Ruth and Family, On me falls the writing you that which I wish no one had to do. Father died today very suddenly of heart failure. Was seeming so well and has been so ever since he came. . . .No pain nor suffering. Very quietly. Dr. says due entirely to heart failure caused by severe attack of indigestion. . . . Mother Whitelaw is a dear brave woman. You don't know how sweet she is with it all. So brave and dear. . . . Lovingly, Dorothy



REUNIONS AND HOMECOMINGS: 1914-1920

After her husband's death, Mary Neill Whitelaw continued to live in the family home in Kidder, with her daughter, Maggie. Over the next six years or so, she was able to maintain her usual routines: church, attendance at community events, raising chickens, gardening, sewing and quilting, and helping her daughter Mary with the care of her six children.

Family Descriptions and Reflections on Mary Neill Whitelaw in Old Age



Mary Whitelaw Shaw, 1915: As yet mother has never said to me that she would go with me to Wis. When we've talked about it she has said that "she was not going to take a trip this summer and that if the children want to see me they know where to find me." She told Henry when he was talking to her about it that "nobody liked to stay at home any better than she did" and he told her we all knew that. She invariably refers to what happened before (*her husband's death in Seattle*) and we all hate to urge her too strongly. (Letter to Ruth Whitelaw Williams.)



Maggie Whitelaw, daughter, 1915; Mother received your letter yesterday and she enjoyed and appreciated your remembrance (*for her birthday*), Mary, Lucy and John's sent her letters too, she looked them over in the morning but was quite busy for we had a little gathering in the afternoon, and in the evening she came and sat in the

big chair with all the letters in a fan and enjoyed reading them. She says the apron will be very nice and she thinks the pattern of crochet is pretty and wants to know who made it. The ladies who came over were [names of Kidder ladies] . . . Some brought fancy work, but they had a visit and seemed to enjoy it. We served sandwiches (sic), crabapple pickle and tea, fruit salad with whipped cream, angel food and devils food cake. Mary, Ralph and I bought some carnations and gave each one, and mother has a nice bouquet. She thought we were foolish to buy the flowers but I am sure she has enjoyed them too, and she was glad to give them to the ladies. . (Letter to Ruth Whitelaw Williams.)



Ralph Whitelaw, 1916: As mothers private secretary is off on vacation at present (Maggie was gone to visit her brothers) her mantle has evidently fallen on me for mother says "We just must write to Ruth, now you get busy and do it!" so whether you care for

it or not you'll have to submit this time. . . . Mother keeps fairly well I guess outside of a few stiff places she got off and on from falling but I think she is in a fair way to recover completely from them now. Regardless of advice she persisted in taking chances until she finally got one fall that jarred her relations in Ireland more or less and since then she has been willing to use some precautions and as long as she got no permanent injury from



it possibly it may prove a god send in the long run. She imagines herself so thoroughly capable in some things that it requires actual experience to the contrary in some things to make her believe that she is still not the same “bonnie lassie” who imported from Scotland so long ago . (Letter to Ruth Whitelaw Williams.)

Maggie Whitelaw, 1919: G’ma is making a quilt these days. She can work on it out on the porch and she likes it. She has been better since her bad week and it is cooler now, so we can all sleep better or more comfortable. (Letter to Ruth Whitelaw Williams.)

Visits from the Shaw Grandchildren

Mary Shaw, with her six children, lived in nearby Cameron, MO. These children knew their Grandmother Whitelaw very well and made extended visits to her home in Kidder. Two of these grandchildren, Charles Shaw and Margaret Shaw Fluharty, recalled these visits.

Charles Shaw, 1991. “My father died of pneumonia when I was 6 and Esther 4 and we were sent to live with Grandma Whitelaw and Aunt Maggie for a month. When I was 8 – 12 I would be sent to Aunt Maggie’s to help with garden and house-cleaning. The worst of it was taking up the parlor rug. A black man Asta Prettis [sp.?] was hired for that and we beat and shook and swept. (Letter to Sue Cashatt).

Margaret Shaw Fluharty, 1992 “I spent many summer days with my Grandma Whitelaw and Aunt Maggie. The porch, garden, pear trees, flowers, and side walk, chicken yard, wisteria vine were very familiar. There was a rope swing in the pine tree and we played croquet day after day in the side yard. I’m sure you have made wonderful improvements to the house. To me it will always remain as I remember it. . . . The pear trees there at the Whitelaw place in Kidder produced abundantly. There was just a ‘lake of gold’ under the trees. My sister, Esther, and I would help pick strawberries and blackberries and always got to go get the mail at the Post Office.” (Letter to Sue Cashatt.)

Family Letters and Essays on Summer Reunions at Grandma's House

Except for the Shaw grandchildren, the other eleven grandchildren lived in other states – Wisconsin, Kansas, and Washington – and were able to see their grandmother only during occasional family vacation trips back to the old family home in Kidder. The following letters and essays were written by the “Williams Sisters,” daughters of Mary Neill Whitelaw’s daughter Ruth Williams of Cambria, Wisconsin. They describe the experiences of the generation of cousins, as they got together during these summer holidays. These accounts, written by children, describe juvenile activities. These activities are significant, however, in that they laid the groundwork for instilling in the grandchildren a sense of family connection and a web of relationships that remained important to them throughout their lives. Although, in these accounts, the juvenile authors do not refer in detail to their grandmother, she provided the context for their experiences there. Her generosity, empathy, and hospitality were magnets that drew the family home from distant parts, and gave her grandchildren lifelong memories of rich family traditions.

The first essay describes a 1917 summer visit of the Williams sisters to Kidder, where they saw their Grandma, Aunt Maggie, and their Shaw cousins, and to Lawrence, Kansas, to see their Uncles Ralph and John and their Whitelaw cousins.

Story by Mary Elizabeth Williams, age 11 July 16, 1917

Mother and we three sisters started for Missouri. Many happy events occurred between July 6 and August 16th, but the most important was August 18th, this being the birthday of my youngest sister, Emma, and our cousin, Esther. The Monday morning dawned bright and sunny. The ten o'clock train brought our guests and from that time on fun was ours. Aunt Mary and Aunt Maggie soon began preparing dinner.



Grandma went out doors to pick some flowers and soon came in with a lovely boquet [sic]. When dinner was ready we were called into the dining room. All doors were closed, the shades were down, and the room was almost dark, save for the light given by the tiny candles.

Aunt Maggie had ready a beautiful frosted birthday cake which was placed in the center of the table. It was surrounded by flowers which grandma had picked. Seven candles were on one side in rose holders and on the other were six in lily holders. Between them in red hot candies were the words:

EMMA 7
1917
ESTHER 6

Potatoes and gravy, fried chicken, sliced tomatoes, salad, fruit, and ice cream with candy and cake was our menu. There were thirteen candles on the cake and the birthday was the thirteenth of August. Aunt Mary told us about a speaker at the Chatauqua who said that thirteen is not such an unlucky number as some people think for the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians contains thirteen verses, and the word LOVE occurs thirteen times. That afternoon was a pleasant one. I took several pictures of the birthday girls, we played croquet with our cousins, Lucy and Charles, and rode on Betty, the horse.



Esther Shaw & Mary's Williams c. 1917



Whitelaw/Williams/Shaw cousins on a horse

The last day at grandma's passed quickly and the next morning we took the five o'clock train for Lawrence, Kansas to visit Uncle John's family who lived near there. The scenery was beautiful and we saw the Missouri and Kansas rivers. They had not finished threshing out there and we slid down the straw stack. We also climbed to the top of the silo. Uncle Ralph let us ride on King, their gentle

old horse. The next morning a wagon load of [words missing] rode over to the "little yellow house" as it was called where the wheat was kept. We took off our shoes and stockings and played in the grain while Uncle John and Uncle Ralph worked around the house. That afternoon we started on our journey home.

We enjoyed our trip immensely
And in future days had fun
Thinking o'er our pleasant visit
And the things that we had done.

1920 Summer Reunion



In the Summer of 1920, Henry Whitelaw brought his four year old daughter, Jean, to Kidder to visit her grandmother and other relatives. Ruth Williams brought her two younger daughters, Ruth Jeanette and Margaret Emma, who wrote letters to their father and sister back home in Cambria. The Kansas and Cameron, MO cousins also joined the reunion.



Margaret Emma Williams, granddaughter of Mary Neill Whitelaw (age 10): . . . We get candy every day. Don't you wish you were here to eat some. . . . Esther wares her hair in curls as Margaret Ruth ware hers when we were here before. Margaret Ruth has her hair bobbed as Esther did. . . . With love, Emma

Hairdos: Esther (curly) & Marg't (bobbed) hair Kidder 1920

Back row: Lucy, Mabel, Mary, and Charles Shaw; Henry Whitelaw Front row: Jean Whitelaw (Henry's daughter); Esther and Margaret Shaw

Ruth Jeanette Williams, granddaughter of Mary Neill Whitelaw, age 12: Uncle John's and Aunt Mary's were over yesterday. There were 19 to seat. Eleanor Bell is staying here this time until Wednesday. She and I are going over to Cameron tomorrow. Lucy is very fat. She weighs 87 lb. Eleanor weighs 82 lbs. Uncle Henry and Jean [Henry's four year old daughter] and Aunt Maggie went home with Uncle John's this morning. *Left to right: Mary Neill Whitelaw; Margaret Emma Williams, Maggie Whitelaw, Jean Whitelaw (Henry's daughter), Ruth Jeanette Williams, Henry Whitelaw*



Henry Whitelaw's visit to Kidder 1920



Jean is a happy little girl big mouth and round face, curls and beautiful expression in her eyes very loving. Wasn't sorry to leave Mama "I'm going to see my grandma Kidder Missouri."

From Ruth Jeanette Williams: We discovered the typewriter yesterday and have been having a lot of fun with it, lately, Eleanor (*Whitelaw Whitford*) wrote a letter yesterday on it, we cant make capitals on it, Eleanor and I are going to Cameron today it rained a lot here last night, all of Eleanor's and my clothes were wet, Emma (*Margaret Emma Williams*) slept on the couch last night, the moving pictures are tonight, I learned how to make hairpin lace yesterday, Eleanor taught me, I like to do it I made over a yard yesterday, yellow and white Esther (*Shaw Garner*) may come here with Emma while I am at Cameron, Margaret Ruth has that green silk dress made up very prettily now, it is trimmed with pink, they dyed it a little darker green, I got some pink and blue crochet cotton to make hairpin lace with, Lizzie Sornburger and Eva Chubuck (*neighbor girls*) came over here last night and we had ice cream it was kind of salty but it was good I expect that Lucille will come here sometime this morning

Uncle Henry (*Whitelaw*) is coming home here Friday, did you receive any mail from that puzzle company I answered Neil (*Neill Gordon Whitelaw*) ran the car all the way from de Soto here and back Saturday I got some garters with springs in them yesterday Grandma let Emma and I grind the corn a few days ago we wore the dresses Rena sent us Sunday to church Mary Cannon was our teacher, we have a lot of fun sliding on the banister how much fruit have you put up now Mama made an apron yesterday we had lots of maionaisoe [sic] I think I will come back here about Friday with Uncle Henry when he comes home from Kansas with love Ruth Jeanette Williams p s Emma

One Happy Day
Ruth Jeanette Williams, age 12
July, 1920

On Saturday Eve we were waiting very impatiently for uncle John's to come from Desoto Kansas, a distance of about one hundred miles. It was seven o'clock and they had not come. Then Aunt Mary phoned over from Cameron to tell us that they had not reached here yet. It was eight, nine and still we waited. At last we gave up and went up stairs. Just as we reached the top of the stairs the phone rang loudly. It was Aunt Mary and the folks had just reached her place. By twelve they were at Grandma's and we all went to bed. There were fourteen to sleep there that night and three of us girls slept on the floor on a feather bed.

In the morning I was awakened by hitting my head against the low window sill, which was not a pleasant beginning for a happy day. We went downstairs and ate breakfast and then went back upstairs to dress for church. My cousin took us to church in the car and after church we went to Sunday school. There were five cousins in one class. The lesson was of David and Goliath.

After church we went back to the house. My aunt and four cousins had just arrived. We twelve cousins had a merry time till dinner. Tingaling: it was the dinner bell calling us to the table. Some of the boys ate at the ironing board table and others at the table. There were two birthday cakes, one for my cousin Eleanor and one for four year old Jean. She said "Oh! Mines the one with four little candles with roses under 'em." The blessing was repeated and then we started. There was chicken and vegetables, biscuits, gravy and raspberries, peaches, ice cream and cake. We all did justice to it and then went out doors.

Soon we went in and had a program. Jean sang two little songs and then went to take her nap. After this we played the Victrola and Piano. We took a walk up to the academy [Kidder Institute] where we looked at the buildings. When we returned we had a lunch of lettuce sandwiches, ice cream and cake after which my aunt went home with her six children but the cousins from Kansas stayed.



We then went to the garden and looked at the green peaches and pears wishing they were ripe but we got apples instead. Soon after dark we finished the ice cream and at about nine thirty went to bed.

Pictured, back row: Ruth Jeanette Williams, Eleanor Bell Whitelaw, Lucy and Charles Shaw. Front row: John Moreland Whitelaw, Esther and Margaret Shaw

The friendships among cousins established during these summer reunions extended into adult life, as these pictures show.

Left and below: Margaret Emma Williams, Margaret Ruth Shaw, and Esther Shaw.



Queen's Carriage 1917 Kidder, MO



Queen's Carriage 1942, like 1917



Lucy Shaw & Eleanor Whitelaw



Whitelaw & Williams Cousins

Pictured left to right: Ruth Jeannette Williams, John Moreland Whitelaw, Margaret Emma Williams, Eleanor Bell Whitelaw, Neill Gordon Whitelaw, Mary Elizabeth Williams, 1932.

LAST YEARS: 1921-1925



In later life Mary Neill Whitelaw became increasingly disabled, and suffered from a series of falls. She also became somewhat disoriented. She died peacefully in her home on August 17th, 1925, and was buried in Kidder Cemetery, next to her husband. Ruth Whitelaw Williams traveled from Cambria, Wisconsin, to Kidder to be with her mother at her death. The following are excerpts of letters from her and from her daughter, Ruth Jeanette, to Owen Williams and the other daughters in Cambria, describing the death and the gathering of the family for the funeral.

Aug. 13, 1925 Dear Owen . . .If only we could see mother a little better, but guess we must not hope for it. She sleeps much with medicine . . . Mother has called and called for all the boys and has said such good sweet things to me I'm so glad I came before too late. . . . This is a beautiful home but without mother about is so strange and begin to realize as never before. Oh, what shall we do without her. Then

how thankful we should be to have her so long. . . It is hard to see her so weak when she was always pushing the work. (From Ruth Williams)

Aug. 18, 1925 Dear Folks. . . .Uncle James is coming so the funeral cannot be until Friday afternoon or Saturday morning. Uncle Henry could not get away nor Uncle Will. . . . They are trying to find Uncle Ralph (*Ralph had also disappeared at the time of his father's death.*) They found out he had been in some dairy but had left and that he was in another K.C. dairy. . . . Love, Ruth Jeanette [*Williams, granddaughter of Mary Neill Whitelaw*].



August 20, 1925 Dear Folks, They have now taken dear old mother into the east room, where she bore me, so it seems the time will be short to see her. I must be thankful for coming but much more sober thought of mother than I ever had for she had always made everything brighter. . . .Such beautiful hands. . . .Love to all, Mother [*Ruth Whitelaw Williams*]

APPENDICES

- IV. Mary Neill Whitelaw:**
Last Will and Testament
Obituary
- V. The Neill Family: Mary Neill Whitelaw's Parents and Siblings**
John and Margaret Moreland Neill Family – Family Chart
Later Careers of the Neill Family
Handwritten Chart of John and Margaret Moreland Neill Family
Typewritten Transcript of the Handwritten Chart
Handwritten Chart of the David and Robert Neill Families
Transcript of Handwritten Chart of the Henry and William Neill Families
Transcript of Handwritten Chart of the Hugh Neill Family
Obituary of John Neill (1804-1880)
Civil War Letters of Mary's Brothers James and William
Robert Neill (1854-1933): Letter and Obituary
Ann Neill Robertson (1844-1922) Letter
John Neill (1837-1922): Biographical Essay
Hugh Neill (1846-1927): Newspaper article
Agnes Firmage (Hugh Neill's daughter): Newspaper article
Eddie Neill, son of Hugh Neill, letter concerning the Neill family Bible
Photocopy of the front page of the Neill family Bible
Transcription of the front page of the Neill family Bible
Neill Brothers Reunion: Newspaper article
David Middleton Neill (1852-1925): Newspaper articles and obituary
Henry Neill (1849-date of death unknown): Dedication program of Henry Neill School, Newspaper article
Alexander Neill: Letter to Ruth Williams
Mabel Shaw Letter of Memories of Neill Relatives
- VI. Scotland**
Letter from Miss or Mrs. Fisher of Ochertyre, Scotland, to Mary Neill Whitelaw, 1861
Esther Shaw's account of her trip to Scotland, c. 1955-60
Dot Shaw Harrison's account of her trip to Scotland, 1980
Letter from Esther Shaw to her siblings, about 1980
Jean Young's note to Mary Enerson and Margaret Williams, with a map of Stirling, Scotland, 1984
Eleanor Whitford's note explaining the map of Stirling
Jean Young's map of Stirling, Scotland

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF MARY NEILL WHITELAW

October 23, 1925

Typewritten testament of Mary Whitelaw

I, Mary Whitelaw, of the County of Caldwell and State of Missouri, for the purpose of making that disposition of my entire estate, both real and personal, which I wish to have take effect at my death, do make, publish and declare this to be my last will and testament, and do hereby revoke all other and former wills and codicils to will and testamentary dispositions heretofore by me at any time made.

First; I direct that all my just debts, my funeral expenses, the expense of my last illness, and the cost of administering on my estate be paid.

Second; I give and devise to my daughter, Margaret M. Whitelaw my home in the Town of Kidder where I now live, namely Lots Seven (7), Eight (8), Nine (9), Ten (10), Eleven (11) and Twelve (12), in Block Thirty-eight (38), in the Town of Kidder, in Caldwell Co. Missouri, subject, however, to the right of my daughter, Mary B. Shaw to occupy said home with her, my said daughter Margaret M. Whitelaw, so long as my said daughter, Mary B. Shaw shall remain single and unmarried; Provided, also, that in the event my said daughter Margaret M. Whitelaw should not survive my said daughter Mary B. Shaw, then, in that event, my said daughter Mary B. Shaw shall have the right to occupy said home so long as she remains single and unmarried.

Third; I give and bequeath to my daughter Mary B. Shaw the sum of one thousand dollars.

Fourth; I give and bequeath to my daughter Margaret M. Whitelaw all of the household and kitchen furniture and furnishings that I may have and own at the time of my death.

Fifth; All of the rest, residue and remainder of my property and estate, of whatever kind and wherever situate, not herein disposed of, including the thirty acres of land now owned by me and described as follows; The West Three-fourths of the North-east Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section Twelve (12) in Township Fifty-seven (57), of Range Twenty-nine (29), in Caldwell County, Missouri, and including any other land or personal property that I may own at the time of my death I give, bequeath and devise in equal shares, share and share alike to my children namely; Margaret M. Whitelaw, William M. Whitelaw, John Whitelaw, Ruth R. Williams, Henry N. Whitelaw, Mary B. Shaw, James Whitelaw and Ralph W. Whitelaw.

Sixth: I hereby nominate constitute and appoint my daughter, Margaret M. Whitelaw, as executrix of this, my last will and testament, and direct and request that she be not required to give any bond or security for the discharge of her duties as said executrix.

Seventh: In the event that the said daughter, Margaret M. Whitelaw, should not be living at the time of my death, it is my will that my daughter Mary B. Shaw shall act as executrix of this my last will and testament, and in that event I request and direct that she be not required to give any bond or security for the discharge of her duties as such executrix.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand this 8th day of November, 1921 (signed) Mary Whitelaw.

The following instrument was on this 8th day of November, 1921, signed by the above named Mary Whitelaw and by her published and declared to be her last will and testament in our presence, and we at her request and in her presence and in the presence of each other, hereunto subscribe our names as attesting witnesses. Walter E. Trice. Mrs. Eunice Riddell. Filed this 23rd day of October, 1925. Ira D. Beale, Judge of Probate.

OBITUARY OF MARY NEILL WHITELAW
Local Kidder Newspaper

MRS. MARY N. WHITELAW

Mary Neill Whitelaw, the daughter of John and Margaret Moreland Neill, was born at Mill-of-Torr, Parish Kincardine, Perthshire, Scotland, on December 9th, 1810, her age at the time of her death being eighty four years, eight months and eight days. She was the fourth child in a large family, eleven of whom moved to America in 1859 and settled near Orrisville, New York, later removing to a farm near Portage, Wisconsin. There she met and married John Whitelaw, formerly a well known merchant of Kidder who passed on in the year 1913, and sadly has been missed by her in the succeeding years. However, in a quaint expression of Mrs. Whitelaw she gave her real appreciation of her surroundings. She said, "I have lived in Kidder all my married life and have never lacked for good neighbors or friends."

Their first family home was established in Kidder, Mo., on the site of the present Methodist parsonage and a few years later at the location now occupied by the family residence. She was the mother of nine children of whom one, Robert, died in infancy and eight survive, being Maggie M. Whitelaw of Kidder, William N. of Seattle, Wash.; John, of De Soto, Kansas; Mrs. Ruth E. Williams of Cambria, Wis.; Dr. H. N. Whitelaw of Oakesdale, Wash.; Mrs. Mary B. Shaw of Cameron, Mo.; James Whitelaw of Spokane, Wash.; and Ralph W. Whitelaw of Kansas City, Mo. There are seventeen grandchildren. Mrs. Whitelaw knew the trying ex-

periences of pioneering in Wisconsin and in the earlier days of this community when even native Indians still remained. She carried through a patriotic woman's part in the days of the Civil War when several of her brothers were engaged and wounded in the Union cause. Five of her brothers survive.

A clear sense of duty to God and home and country, an untiring willingness to serve church, family and the needy, and a fixed determination to maintain the standard of clean living in the community have been the outstanding features of her character. Her church affiliation was with the Congregational denomination at Kidder, and its welfare and all its activities were most near to her heart until the end. Death came gently on last Monday, August 17th, succeeding a nervous shock resulting after she had fallen to the floor in a momentary faint.

In this connection the children of Mrs. Whitelaw who have been living in distant places have asked us to express their appreciation of the interest and kindness shown toward the deceased, by neighbors and friends in recent years. Such unselfish goodwill is not always repaid directly, but it is an object lesson which makes the world better everywhere by its inspiring example. The entire family joins in reciprocating the feeling of neighborly good-will which has been evident throughout the years of residence in Kidder.

Funeral services were conducted by her pastor, Rev. William P. Ames of Hamilton.

APPENDIX II
THE NEILL FAMILY: MARY NEILL WHITELAW'S PARENTS AND
SIBLINGS

JOHN AND MARGARET MORELAND NEILL FAMILY

John Neill

b. Aug. 11, 1804 Larbert, Stirlingshire, Scotland
m. July 25, 1834 Margaret Moreland
To USA 1859
d. June 23, 1880 Caledonia, WI

Margaret Moreland Whitelaw

b. 1814 Mill o'Torr, Scotland
d. Oct. 17, 1900 Caledonia, WI



CHILDREN

James

b. Oct. 8, 1835 Mill o'Torr, Scotland
d. USA



John

b. March 15, 1837 Mill o'Torr, Scotland

m. June 1, 1870 m. Martha Caldwell

d. Jan. 1922 USA

Children: John C. (m. Annie Hyslop), William K. (m. Nellie Folsom),
Henry H. (Ella Aries), Margaret.



Hugh

b. 1839 Mill o'Torr, Scotland

d. drowned as youth

Mary

b. Dec. 9, 1840 Mill o'Torr, Scotland

m. John Whitelaw

d. Aug. 17, 1925 Kidder, MO

Children: Maggie, Will (M. Dorothy Ellis), John (m. Bertha Bell), Ruth (m.
Owen Williams), Henry (m. Mary Macklin), Mary (m. Chas. Theo.. Shaw),
James (m. Mae Kelsey), Robert, Ralph (m. Edna)



William

b. March 28, 1842 Mill o'Torr, Scotland

m. (1) Agnes (2) Maggie

d. USA

Children: W.C. (m. Alice?), Robert (m. Minnie), Agnes (m. Harry Gove)



Ann

b. March 27, 1844 Mill o'Torr, Scotland

m. Robertson

d. Sept. 1922, Wisconsin

Children: Sabra (m. Towne), Margaret (m. Jamieson), Isabell

Hugh

b. Aug. 16, 1846 Mill o'Torr, Scotland

m. Elizabeth Marshall

d. Jan. 1927 USA

Children: Agnes (m. James Firmage), Margaret (m. Chris Johnson), Elizabeth (m. Robert Williams), Ellen,
John (m. Lorene Twogood), Edwin (m. Celene Gilberson)

Henry

b. 1849 Mill o’Torr, Scotland
m. (1) Isabelle McMillan (2) Josephine
d. Aberdeen, S.D.
Children: David, Bessy, Henry Jr.



David Middleton

b. Feb. 2, 1852 Mill o’Torr, Scotland
m. 1875 Alice A. Brady
d. Dec. 23, 1925 Red Wing, MN
Children: Marguerite (m. A.W. Bollum), Victor, Edward



Robert

b. April 4, 1854 Mill o’Torr, Scotland
m. March 5, 1878 Sarah Pearson
d. June, 1933 USA
Children: Beulah (m. Williams), Alice (m. Riddell)



Alexander Gray

b. July 2, 1856 Mill o’Torr, Scotland
d. Oct. 7, 1930 Alberta, Canada

Thomas Simpson

b. 1858 East Brierlands
died in infancy



LATER CAREERS OF THE NEILL FAMILY

The Neills prospered in the U.S. John Neill, the father, eventually owned an 800 acre farm in Wisconsin. He and his wife, Margaret Moreland Neill, are buried in DeKorra Cemetery. Hugh Neill settled in Minnesota and then in Montana. Robert Neill was a farmer in Minnesota, and Alexander, the youngest brother, was also a farmer, but settled in Alberta, Canada. Henry Neill achieved prominence as a newspaperman and educator in Aberdeen, South Dakota, where an elementary school was named for him in recognition of his service on the school board. David Middleton Neill was a prominent businessman in Red Wing, Minnesota, and ran unsuccessfully for the state legislature. Ann Neill Robertson, Mary’s only sister, remained in Wisconsin near her parents’ home and raised a family. She maintained a close relationship with her sister Mary.

HANDWRITTEN GENEALOGY CHART OF THE JOHN AND MARGARET MORELAND NEILL FAMILY (ed. Note: I had to divide the chart in two in order to scan it, but have provided overlap with each half. The handwritten version is followed by a typed transcript of the same chart).

John Neill* m.
 b. Aug. 11, (1804-1880) June 1834
 b. at Larbert near Falkirk, Stirlingshire Scotland July 2

Bairn

James	John	Hugh	Marry	William	Ann	H
b. 1835, 10/8 Mill-of-Tor	b. 1837, 3/15 Mill-of-Tor d. Jan. 1922 as youth	b. 1839-3/1 drowned as youth	b. (1840-1929) Mill-of-Tor m. John White-law 1866 for children & descendants, see John White-law family. d. 8/17/1925	b. 1842, 2/28 Mill-of-Tor	b. 1844, 3/27 Mill-of-Tor d. 1922 Capt. m. Robertson	b. 1844, 3/27 Mill-of-Tor d. 1922 Capt. m. Robertson
Capt. James Neill wrote in March, 1865 from Camp Sheridan, Va. He is in a N.Y. regiment and hopes very much to be discharged soon.	In 1865 John writes he has escaped the draft again. John is with the family in Caledonia. Later moved to the Prairie.		entisted in N.Y. regi- ment. One letter written from Key West, Fla. on note-paper of Gen. McClellan. Another letter from University Hospital in New Orleans, 1863. Loves being a soldier the severe indurries put him in hospital. In 1872 went west with Hugh via Desota in covered wagon.		Lived De Ka wis.	

(a)
L

* In 1858 he removed from Blair-Drummond where he had resided & in wire fencing on the Ochtereye estate, he succeeded in lay-
 Ochtereye is "Lady of the Lake" (scote) country.

* John Neill, his wife and all children came to U.S. in New York in 2 weeks. Went to Antiesville, Montgomery Co, I

m.
1834
July 25

Margaret Moreland * (d. 1900) - Oct. 17
Mill-of-Torr
Parish of Kinkardine
Perthshire
b. 1814

Bairn Shire

John	Hugh	Henry	David Middleton	Robert	Alexander Gray	Thomas Simpson
b. 1844, 3/27	b. 1846, 8/26	b. 1849	b. 1852, 2/2	b. 1854, 4/4	b. 1856, 7/2	b. 1858
Mill-of-Torr	Mill-of-Torr	Mill-of-Torr	Mill-of-Torr	Mill-of-Torr	Mill-of-Torr	East Brierlands
d. 1922	d. Jan. 1929	d. 1925, Dec.	d. 1925, Dec.	d. 6/1933	d. 7/10/1930	(died in infancy)
m. Robertson	m. Isabella McMillan (1st wife) Henry Jr.	m. Isabella McMillan (1st wife) Henry Jr.	m. Isabella McMillan (1st wife) Henry Jr.	m. Isabella McMillan (1st wife) Henry Jr.	m. Isabella McMillan (1st wife) Henry Jr.	m. Isabella McMillan (1st wife) Henry Jr.

Subra R. Towne
Marg. Jamieson
Isabell
Lived in De Korra, Wis. in 1925.
Went west with William in 1872. Settled in Lyon Co. that year. Held a town or county office for 18 successive years. Is a mighty good Republican.
Hugh + Elizabeth Neil moved in 1915 to Windham, Mont.
Lived in De Korra, Wis. in 1925.
Went west with William in 1872. Settled in Lyon Co. that year. Held a town or county office for 18 successive years. Is a mighty good Republican.
Hugh + Elizabeth Neil moved in 1915 to Windham, Mont.

Henry taught school for a while.
In 1913 he lived in fled Wing Minn. he has been was to go working for to Carlota Brother John to give talk, but is going to give talk, but is going to school in the fall.
Son Ed lived in Aberdeen
21's Sons (Twins) live in Windham, Mont.

As in Drey letter business in written Portago, Wis. in 1872.
In 1913 he lived in fled Wing Minn. he has been was to go working for to Carlota Brother John to give talk, but is going to give talk, but is going to school in the fall.
Son Ed lived in Aberdeen
21's Sons (Twins) live in Windham, Mont.

(a) Harold Towne, (son of Subra) lives in Lodi, Wis.

Lizzio? - see Helen Sumner's letter 8-10-25-'81

resided for 24 years to Ochertyre where by a fortunate contract ended in laying up enough means to bring his entire family to us. to U.S. in 1859 in steamship Edinburg Capt. Cummins Landed in Montgomery Co. N.Y. for first year, then bought farm in Caledonia, Wis. (1860).

Transcript of the John and Margaret Moreland Neill Family Chart

FAMILY GROUP

This information obtained from the attached chart.

Husband's Full Name. John Neill

Birth: 11 Aug. 1804 Larbert, near Falkirk, Stirlingshire, Scotland

Mar.: 25 July 1834

Death: 23 June 1880

Residence: Bairthshire. In 1858 he removed from Blair-Drummond where he had resided for 24 years to Ochterryre where by a fortunate contract in wire fancying on the Ochtertyre estate, he succeeded in laying up enough means to bring his entire family to U.S. Ochtertyre is "Lady of the Lake" country.

John Neill his wife and all children came to U.S. in 1859 in steamship Edinburg, Capt. Cummins. Landed in New York in 2 weeks. Went to Auriesville, Montgomery Co. N.Y. for first year, then bought farm in Caledonia, Wis. (1860).

Wife's Full Name. Margaret Moreland

Birth: 1814 Mill-of-Torr Parish of Kinkardine, Perthshire

Death: 17 Oct. 1900.

Children

James

Birth: 8 Oct. 1835 Mill-of-Torr

Capt. James Neill wrote in March, 1865 from Camp Sheridan, Va.

He is in a N.Y. regiment and hopes very much to be discharged soon.

John

Birth: 15 March 1837. Mill-of-Torr

Death: Jan. 1922

In 1865 John writes he has escaped the draft again. John is with the family in Caledonia. Later moved to the Prairie.

Hugh

Birth: 1839

Death: Drowned as youth.

Marry

Birth: 1840

Mill-of-Torr

Death: 17 Aug. 1925

Married: John Whitelaw 1866 (for children and descendants, see John Whitelaw family.)

William

Birth: 28 March, 1842 Mill-of-Torr

Enlisted in N.Y. regiment. One letter written from Key West, Fla., on note-paper of Gen. McClellan. Another letter from University Hospital in New Orleans, 1863. Loves being a soldier, tho severe injuries put him in hospital. In 1872 went west with Hugh via DeSoto (Kansas) in covered wagon.

FAMILY GROUP - John Neill Family, continued

Ann

Birth: 27 March, 1844 Mill-of-Torr

Death: Sept. 1922

Married: Robertson

Sabra R. Towne Harold Towne, son of Sabra, lives in Lodi, Wisc

Marg. Jamieson

Isabell

Lived in DeKorra, Wis. in 1875.

Hugh

Birth: 16 Aug. 1846 Mill-of-Torr

Death: Jan. 1927

Went west with William in 1872. Settled in Lyon Co. that year.

Held a town or county office for 18 successive years. Is a

mighty good Republican. Hugh & Elizabeth Neill moved in 1915
to Windham, Mont.

Henry

Birth: 1849 Mill-of-Torr

Married: Isabella McMillan (1st wife). Henry Jr.

Henry taught school for awhile.

David Middleton

Birth: 2 Feb. 1852 Mill-of-Torr *d. 1925*

Was in drug business in Portage, Wisc. In 1913 he lived in Red
Wing, Minn. Was to go to Carleton to give talk.

Married: Lizzie ?

Son Ed lived in Aberdeen. Ed's sons (twins) live in Winddom, Mont.

Robert

Birth: 4 April 1854 Mill-of-Torr

Death: June 1933

Letter written in 1872 from Caledonia says he has been working
for brother John, but is going back to school in the fall.

Alexander Gray

Birth: 2 July 1856 Mill-of-Torr

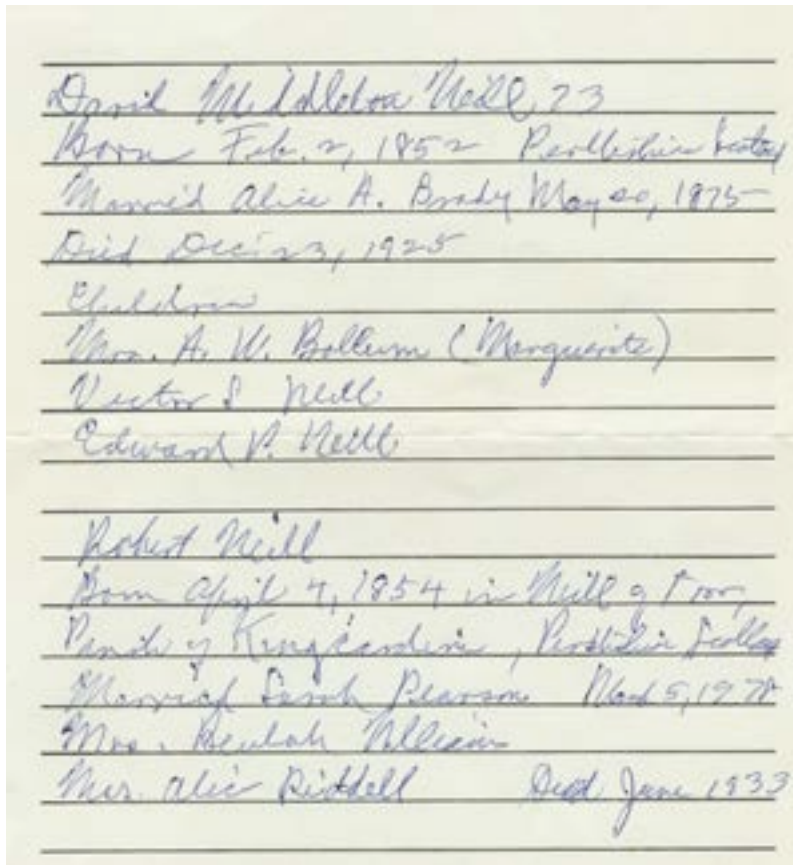
Death: 7 Oct. 1930

Thomas Simpson

Birth: 1858 East Brierlands

Died in infancy.

Hand written Genealogy charts of David and Robert Neill Families



Transcript of Handwritten Genealogy Chart of the William and Henry Neill Families

William Neill married Agnes – 1st wife; Maggie – 2nd wife
Agnes and William had 3 boys who died very young.

Following children were born to William and Agnes

- 1) W.C. Neill married Alice?
Children: Marion, Jean, Betty, Rose, William
- 2) Robert Neill married Minnie; Jo – second wife
Children: Marjorie, Clarence, Ileen
- 3) Agnes Neill married Harry Gove
Children: Neill drowned in Lake at Waseca; Marguerite moved to California

Henry Neill married Isabelle McMillian; Josephine – 2nd wife
Children

- 1) David – worked for James Firmage
Children: Noel – was in movies, Margaret
- 2) Bessy
- 3) Henry Jr.

Transcript of Handwritten Genealogy chart of the Hugh Neill Family

Hugh Neill married Elizabeth (Marshall)

Children:

- 1) Agnes (Neill) married Firmage (James)
- 2) Margaret (Neill) married Johnson (Chris)
- 3) Elizabeth (Neill) married Williams (Bob)
- 4) Ellen died 1877
- 5) John Neill
- 6) Edwin Neill

Agnes Neill married James Firmage

Children:

- 1) Lillian (Firmage) Carlson
- 2) Hugh Firmage married Betty Culp
Child: Jean Firmage married Marvin Larson and had 3 children
- 3) Isabel Firmage married Albert Schneider
Child: Kathleen (Schneider) Larson and had 2 girls
- 4) Kenneth Firmage married Gena Tostengard
Child: James David Firmage
- 5) Evelyn Firmage married Abe Franck

Margaret Neill married Chris Johnson

Children:

- 1) Royal – died as a baby
- 2) Vera Johnson married Albert Piper and had a child, Ruth, who married Orville Grave and had a child, Darrell Piper
- 3) Dwight Johnson married Ellen who died from burns
- 4) Alice Johnson married Swanson - Schneider; had 4 children

Elizabeth Neill married Robert Williams

Children:

- 1) Wallace Williams married Agnes and had James Williams; Wallace had a second wife, Helren

John Neill married Lorene Twogood

Children:

- 1) Edwin Neill married Judith
- 2) Donald Neill
- 3) Hugh and Howard Neill
- 4) Maxine Minor

Edwin Neill married Celene Gilbertson

Children:

- 1) Celene married (no name given)
- 2) Helen married DeClerq

**1880 OBITUARY OF JOHN NEILL (1804-1880) FATHER OF MARY NEILL
WHITELAW (local Caledonia, Wisconsin, newspaper, written by one of his sons)**

THE GRAIN GATHERER

Death of John Neill, of Caledonia

"God's finger touched him and he slept." One by one, the old landmarks of human activity fall. In early days they knew of events that linked them to the still remoter scenes of the past, and even as these were beacon lights to them reaching far back into the experience of the ages and sending a gleam of light into the misty haze of an unknown future; so now, their life has left its impress upon the scenes in which they mingled and, passing away, bequeathes rich lessons to those who remain behind.

The subject of this sketch, John Neill, was born, August 11, 1804, at Larbert near Falkirk, Stirlingshire, Scotland; and died June 23, 18~0, in the seventy sixth year of his life, at Caledonia, Columbia county, Wisconsin. His school days were spent in his native parish of Larbert, and his education consisted mainly of a knowledge of the rudiments of arithmetic, the Psalms of David and the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. At an early age he began work on a farm for William Whitehead of Rose Hill, where he remained until Nov. 1824, when he was apprenticed to Charles Mitchell, a blacksmith, at West Kerse, near Grangemouth. Three years later he completed his apprenticeship and for several years he worked with different masters as a journeyman blacksmith.

In 1833 he started a blacksmith shop of his own at Mill-of-Torr Parish of Kinkardine, Perthshire, where a year later, July 25, 1834, he married Margaret Moreland, his ever after, life long companion, and where were born to them all their children. Here the battle of life began in earnest. A young, yet large family to support; their education to be paid for; a trade that required great physical endurance and yielded small return for labor, all made exhausting draughts, upon his means and his frame. He was a muscular man, constitutionally strong, never knowing what sickness was, until that came which carried him off, and then it was more wasting pain than disease. But during the quarter of a century that the necessities of a large family made such urgent demands upon him he was blessed with a healthy family and a loving, untiring and faithful wife. His children received a good education, and some of them had grown to manhood and learned the trade of their father. He was skilled also in veterinary practice among horses and cattle, and often, after working at his forge, from four in the morning until ten at night, has he gone to the relief of some farmers' animal. Much as these nocturnal visits cost him in sleep and fatigue, he was always ready for his work in the morning. For these services he would never take pay; but time and again have his countrymen and neighbors, rich and poor, shown their appreciation and esteem by valuable presents and social compliments.

About a year before he came to this country he removed from Blair-Drummond where he had resided for 24 years to Ochteryre, a short distance, where by a fortunate contract in wire fencing on the latter estate he succeeded in laying up means sufficient to bring his family to this country. To leave such a home and such a country and such time-honored associations, was hard indeed, and can be better imagined than described. The historical interest and natural beauty of the neighborhood can be faintly gathered from Scott's "Lady of the Lake," as the poet describes the rapid ride of Fitzjames after his combat with the Gael:

"Along thy banks, swift Teith, they ride;
And in the race they mock'd thy tide;

Torry and Lendrick now are past,
And Deanstown lies behind them cast.
They rise, the banner'd towers of Doune,
They sink in distant woodland soon;
Blair-Drummond sees the liof strike fire,
They sweep like beeze through Ochteryre;
They mark, just glance and disappear
The lofty brow of ancient Kier.
They bathe their courser's sweltering sides,
Dark Forth! Amid thy sluggish tides.
And on the opposing shore take ground,
with splash, with scramble, and with bound.
Right hand they cleave thy cliffs, Craig-Forth,
And soon the bulwark of the North;
Grey Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career look'd down. II

Bidding adieu to such a country and a last farewell to all the friends he held dear except his own family, he set sail from Glasgow to New York, May 7, 1859, in the steamship Edinburg, Capt. Cummins. Two weeks from that day he landed at New York, and immediately after went to Auriesville, Montgomery Co., N. Y., where the family remained nearly a year. In the fall of 1859, he came west and purchased the present farm in Caledonia, and in the spring of 1860 the family removed hither also, with the exception of two of the sons and a daughter. The two former remained about a year longer in the state of New York, when the war breaking out they enlisted in N. Y. regiments, and the sister followed her parents to Wisconsin. The original farm of 80 acres which he bought on credit was dense with young trees; but putting his available means into fencing and a little stock, he, with the assistance of his large family of boys, by hard work and judicious economy, was not long in clearing off both the brush and the debt. In a few years the farm had increased to 800 acres, clear of obligation of any kind. Then his children grown to manhood began to leave him and make homes of their own. He then sold most of his land, retaining only the 80 acres on which he first settled and a timber lot.

He has worked little at his trade since coming to this country, giving all his time and labor to his farm which he cultivated very successfully. He was always an early riser. During the twenty years he lived on his farm in Caledonia, or until the time he was unable longer to walk, he was in the habit of rising at daybreak and walking to the back of his farm every morning to see if all was right. Few men have seen the sun rise so often. These walks he kept up throughout the year except when the deep snows of winter prevented. He would return from them, kindle the fire and then read until the rest of the family arose. He was a great reader. He took a man's place in the harvest field every year until within two years of his death. Of strong convictions and impulses, he was yet tender-hearted and kind. If anyone belonging to the family were absent he would not rest until they returned, if they remained beyond the usual time. His was a home life; public he had none; never desired it. He was conscientious, honest, and outspoken, and if he owed a dollar, was always uneasy until it was paid.

The disease of which he died, prostratic disease, seized him first, slightly, about five years ago and passed away; but two years since returned more seriously and lasted until exhausted nature could no longer hold within its material grasp the buoyant spirit which winged its flight to blissful eternity. "The dust returned to the earth as it was; and the spirit unto God who gave it."

The deceased was a member of the Presbyterian Church, and always found great comfort in the thought that he was saved by the blood of Jesus. Often while on a bed of pain he would in agony repeat the first verses of the 22nd Psalm; but when reminded that there were brighter words of cheer in the sacred record he would immediately repeat the 11th, or 103rd Psalms, the latter especially from the 13th verse. These he had learned when a child at school and all the changes of nearly three quarters of a century could not efface them. After he had repeated them his face would brighten, his sufferings became less acute, and he would fall into a contented and even happy mood. His natural strength and energy were hard to subdue. He would rise up and walk to the door almost every hour of the day; and even on the day of his death he rose at 11 o'clock in the forenoon and died at ten minutes past nine in the evening.

He leaves a wife, the companion of his wedded years, and ten children – eight sons and two daughters – besides numerous grandchildren, to mourn his loss. The funeral obsequies took place at his late residence, on the 24th inst; the large concourse of people who came to pay respect to his memory, assembling under the shadow of the orchard trees he had planted, and uniting with the sorrowing friends in paying their last tribute of respect and love to a husband, father, and a friend. The Rev. D. P. George of Caledonia officiated and preached from Luke 7 chap., 13 verse – “Weep not.” The remains were then borne away and buried in Crawford Cemetery.

Go, rest, weary one! The anvil shall ring no more under the stroke of thy once powerful arm. No more shall we see thee under the heat of the mid-summer sun, wipe the sweat of honest toil from thy burning forehead! No more shall we see thy silver locks glisten among the golden waves of yellow grain! Thou too, hast become ripe for the harvest and art gathered in! No more shall we hear thy tottering step or welcome voice as thou wast wont, after hours of anxious waiting, to greet our return home. And still thou art waiting for us beyond the golden shore! The beast of the field shall miss thy call. The very tree transplanted by thy hand will yield a cooling shade to others, while the lowly grass and creeping vine will be all that gives life and tenderness to the cold clay that hides thee from our sight. Farewell, a sad farewell!! When the dawn of Resurrection morn comes, thou too wilt be there, ready, as thou wert ready here, waiting for us there, as thou hast waited for us here.

CIVIL WAR LETTERS OF MARY'S BROTHERS, JAMES AND WILLIAM

Mary Neill Whitelaw saved a few letters from her brothers and sisters which have survived. Four of them are from two of her brothers, James (one letter) and William (three letters), who were soldiers in the Civil War. Both were with New York regiments, so it is likely that they enlisted in 1859 or 1860, when the family first landed in New York. James, who had children, expresses concern for the fate of his children if he should be killed. William was injured and underwent surgery on his leg. Both brothers survived the Civil War. Their letters are reproduced below.

**From William Neill
(age about 18-20)
To Mary Neill
Key West Florida
April the 24th
(probably 1860 or 61)**

Dear Sister, I received your letter of the 10 of March today and was very glad to hear that you was all in good health as your letter found me enjoying the same blessing. Father stated in the letter he sent to me that he and Mother was rather sickly and it raised my spirits to rec'e your letter and to hear that they was well again. I sent an answer to the letter Father sent me the very day I got his letter and it must of got lost on the way. I am sorry but I shall try again.



I like my occupation better than I did to milk cows it suits me very well to go out every morning to practice target shooting and I am getting to be a very good shot with an English Enfield riddle (sic) for that is the kind we have with the 3 square bayonet this is a small Island about ten miles long and between 3 & 4 miles wide and there is about 3,000 soldiers on it. It is mostly inhabited with Spanish and English and English money is the best money here. I spoke of getting discharged about the first of April but we think different now we don't expect to get discharged in two or three years now as they are enlisting for the regiment in Albany now but I like it first rate and I don't want to get away at all this climate is very hot and no winter the inhabitants here don't know what frost is and some of them will ask the colour of snow and we are apt to tell them it is black you talk of laying on the bords but I would rather lay on the soft side of an oak plank than to be a drowsing on a feather bed in this hot climate. We take and spread our blanket under us and take our clothes off and lay all night without anything over us and then we will sweat we have a good deal of guard duty to do here we have to have a patrol guard to go through the city to see what is going on for the inhabitants are all sessionists (sic – secessionists) here besides picket guard and camp guard and they keep us pretty busy all the time.

I was sorry that I will not see you before you went west but I could not get a furlough my (illegible word) and you was gone 3 days before I got it if I had known you was going so quick I

would run away and seen you before you went but I did not know it (*possibly refers to the family migration from New York to Wisconsin in 1860; if so, this letter was probably written in 1860-61*). We are all expecting to leave here soon for somewhere else but we don't know where this is a great place for scorpions and snakes black and green ones this is a nice place to live along the sea shore we can go in a swimming every day if we want to but only in the morning before sunrise or in the evening after sun set as the doctor won't allow us any other time.

You said you sent a paper along with the letter but I have not received it. I would like to have got it for we have little news here and I love to read them to see how things move along tell Mother that I am well and in good spirits and I hope that she enjoys herself as well as I do and tell Father that I hope he has received my letter before this time and tell John to write to me when you receive this and let me know how all the boys gets along and tell Hugh to write some times to me and I will much oblige him in writing to him I suppose you must of heard before this time of the fight of Island (illegible word) in New Orleans it was a very hard fight and a great many lost on both sides. I send my love to Father & Mother and all of my Brothers & Sisters hoping that they may live till I return if god spares me I will close by saying good bye so no more at present but I remain your loving Brother, William Neill. Write soon as possible.

**From William Neill
To Mary Neill
Headquarters 81st Reg't Comp. II (N.Y.)
Pensacola, Florida, (Date illegible, possibly 1862)**

Dear Sister, I received your letter the 21st of this month and was glad to hear from you and that you was all well as this leaves me enjoying the same blessing. I was also happy to hear of Mother's receiving my likeness she will see the changes that Soldiering has made on me although I have been very healthy since I left for the war. The change of climate makes great alterations in the appearance of a man in the course of ten months hot sun shine as I have endured since I left New York State along with so many others but it has worked greater changes on some other men than it has on me – it has sent some of them to there (sic) grave. You must return Ann my heart felt thanks for being so mindful as to wait until I will return to dance at her Wedding but she may lose a good Husband by being so slow so she would better have done with it at once and I will dance abroad for the ceremonies at home. I received letters from James B. Neill to James Leighton about [illegible number] weeks ago with there likeness in them which I admired very much and they were in Alexandria [?] then we received marching orders this morning for to go to New Orleans and from there to Storm Mobile [?] which we dread affuly (sic) as it is very strongly fortified and we expect that they have got heavy reinforcements there so we will be knocked around for a spell again sailing from one place to another. I am almost as much a Sailor as a Soldier on the waters about half the time the Admiral Farregut of the fleet wanted us to go with him to the taking of Mobile and so we got marching orders this morning and so we are all packed up to embark at a minutes notice there has been a great time enlisting men in the regulars Services in the 2nd Artillery out of the (Volunteers?) and there is a good many gone out of our regiment into them but I thought that I would get through with this engagement before I would look up another I think after the war is over that I will have enough of it for a time if god spares me till then.

I think that I will come out west and see you all once more for a short time if God spares me to get out of the army. There is a Vermont Regiment here now and they are dying off very fast they can hardly get men enough that is well out of there Regement to bury there dead and it is an afful (sic) sight to see a lot of young men look as they do. I have never fell in with any Wisconsin Reg't yet but I expect to fall in with some of them on this expedition for there is some of them to

New Orleans Give my best respects to all enquiring Friends, and to my brothers and Sisters and to my Mother and Father and tell John and Hugh to write to me more (illegible words) from your Brother William Neill

**From William Neill
To Mary Neill
University Hosptial
New Orleans La
Sept. 3rd 1863**

Dear Sister Marry, I received a letter from you sometime ago but have been unable to answer it any sooner on account of a small accident that happened to me by a fall I fell and sprained my ankle and between that and my wounds it completely layed me up for a while and the Doctor would not allow me to exert myself in the least so I had to postpone writing until I



got a little over my sores I am some better now. I can get around on crutches again which is much better than to lay in bed all the time and my wounded leg is getting much stronger now I had it

operated on about 2 weeks ago and had some more bones and one piece of lead taken out of it and it healed right up after they was taken out of it and the Doctor tells me that I will have a good leg yet that I will be fit for a Soldier yet but I am of a different opinion for there is so much bone gone but we must trust In God come what will (illegible word).



Will Neill

[page missing] The Major would of shot him if his Pistol had went off when he got on the (illegible word) he took off his hat and addressed us saying fellow Soldiers I shot Major Bullin and am willing to die for it but if he has shot me there would have been nothing done about it. It fair well I am ready and he then kneeled down on his knees and died like a Soldier. It is an awful sight to see a man executed but I would do the same thing if I was put in the same predicament. I send my love to you and to all the rest hoping that this will find you all in good health as it leaves me the same good bye for this time from your ever loving Brother William D. Neill. P.S. address William Neill University Hospital New Orleans Ward G [pictured: William Neill and his family in later life.]



— CIVIL WAR

**From James Neill (age 30)
To Mary Neill
Camp Sheridan, Va
March 11th 1865**

Sister Mary, I hope you will forgive me for neglecting to write you so long. I have no apology to offer only a great scarcity of anything interesting to write. News are very scarce with us with one exception which is War news. This you of course can see in the Newspapers long before they would reach you in a letter from me. I have been in fine health since my return to Duty from my Western Visit – my Spirits are in good Trim excepting an occasional longing to be out of the Service and to enjoy once more the Quiet & Happy life of a Western “pioneer.” My time in the Service is fast drawing to a close. I am determined to serve my Country faithfully until its expiration. It is a duty I owe and which I certainly ought to fulfil. May God give me health & Strength to enable me to do my duty & boldly (sic) sustain the Cause of our adopted Country. There will be a day when the names of the brave Soldiers who have fought & Bled fighting for Freedom & liberty will stand first in the Page of our Country’s History and I know if I should fall that you & mine will have

consolation in pointing to my name and saying my Brother was one of them. Enough of this Dear Sister. I sometimes have Strange thoughts – thoughts that make me Sad when I ruminates upon them. I often think of my Dear Children at these times and wonder what will become of them if I should be taken away from them. I know that as long as they have an Aunt Mary that they will not go Hungry. God Bless them. Dear as they are to me, I shall freely & willingly leave them if my country’s cause needs my poor services.

I wrote to Father, John, Billy & Annie since I returned. I received a letter some days ago from Brother John in answer to the letter I sent to father. I was very glad to hear that you were all in fine health & likewise to learn that Brother John had escaped the draft once more. I think it will be the last time he will ever need to run the Gauntlet. The Federal Armies at present are marching through Rebellom at their pleasure and I think will very soon capture all the Soldiers left to protect it and drive them over the (?eines) of our country to parts unknown until its expiration.

Dear Sister, you must excuse me at this time for this “no news letter” I will give you a better one as soon as I can collect something worth writing. Give my Respects to all the family likewise my children tell them I am well. Remind me to all my new formed acquaintances in “Caledonia.” Give them my Warmest Love. Hoping we may all meet again at some future Day. Write soon, from your Brother, Captain J.B. Neill 153 Reg’t N.Y. 19 Army Corps

ROBERT NEILL, LETTER AND OBITUARY



1872 Letter from Robert Neill (1854-1933) , brother of Mary Neill Whitelaw

This letter was written when Robert was about 18. The family had been in the U.S. for five years, and Mary had been married for four years. The letter is of interest for several reasons: it clarifies that both William and James survived their tours of duty in the Union Army during the Civil War, and also provides information on the early careers of David and Henry Neill.

**Oct. 13th, 1872
Caledonia, Wisc.
From Robert Neill
To Mary Neill Whitelaw**

Dear Brother and Sister, At the request of Mother I take the pen in hand to give you a little of the particulars which have been taking place here since last you heard from us. We are all well at present, only, Father and Mother are growing older and feebler each day, and less able to tend to the dutys and cares of this world,

and I think it is about time they were giving up those toils and hardships for a more retired and quiet life.

Brothers William and Hugh in company with two other gentlemen, started out on a trip for the West, in search of homes for themselves and Families. They went in a wagon by way of DeSoto on the Miss. river, until they reached Austin, when one of there horses died, which must have put them in quite a perplexed state of mind as to how they were to proceed, we have heard nothing further from them, so that you see we are quite in the dark as to what they are doing now. The horse that died belonged to William which was rather a heavy loss for him poor fellow.

Henry has gotten a school to teach at \$75 per month. Davy is still at the Drug bisness (sic) in Portage. Alexander has rather a bad cold at present, but he is getting better. I have been working to (for?) John all summer but my time will be out in three weeks, when I intend to go to school for the Winter. We have had no word from James for some time, but the last letter we had from

him said that they had been very bad with the Fever and Ague for over a twelve months; Cousin James Watt and his wife, who work for brother James, have also been vary bad with the Billious fever, a Cousin of ours (Uncle Hugh's son) is in Canada he wrote to James Stewart (?) to see if he could give him Father's address he wishing to ask his advice with relation to wages and whither he could do better in the states, but as yet he has received no answer, and I think the letter has been lost or he is very tardy in writing.

The crops around here turned out a great deal better than farmers anticipated, although it is nothing extra, the ground is being rapidly turned up to the sun by the ploughman, corn is being husked, and the potatoes dug and in general, everything is being prepared forth coming winter.

Mother thinks you are very careful of your pens and she says she would like if Mary would only write a few lines to her, and send them in your letter (the letter of John Whitelaw, Mary's husband?) and this she is to do with her own hands. Please write soon. Feeling thankful for the Lords kindness to us all I remain your Affectionate Brother Robert Neill

**Jan. 29, 1933 Obituary of Robert Neill , printed in the Balaton, Minnesota Press Tribune
Pioneer Resident of Lyon County Passes Away**

Robert Neill had lived in Lyon County for a period of fifty-five years.

Robert Neill, prominent citizen of this community, died at his home at midnight on Thursday of last week following a long illness. He was born April 4, 1854 in Mill-of-Torr, Parish of Kingcardine, Perthshire, Scotland, one of fourteen children, ten of whom lived to a ripe old age. Mr. Neill is the last of these children.

At the age of five Robert Neill emigrated to America with his parents, settling first in New York state and in 1860 moving to Portage, Columbia County, Wisconsin.

On March 5, 1878 he was married to Sarah Peason and that same spring moved with his wife to Minnesota and took a homestead in Lyon County where he lived until 1910 when he retired moving to Balaton.

He was a member of the Easter Presbyterian Church where he was a trustee and for some time superintendent of the Sunday school. He was later an elder of the Balaton Presbyterian Church.

Besides his wife he leaves to mourn his death two daughters Beulah Williams and Alice Riddell, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Sunday afternoon at one o'clock at the home and at one thirty o'clock from the Presbyterian Church, Rev. S. G. Williams conducting the services. Special music was given by a quartette composed of Rev. Williams, P.J. Hughes, Sanford Goltz and Clair Mattson, accompanied by Mrs. L.E. Town.

The floral offerings were many and very beautiful, a token of love and esteem from his many relatives and friends.

Rev. Williams used the text taken from II Timothy 4 ch. 6, 7, and 8 and used as his central thought, "I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith." These ideas were very well exemplified in the life of Mr. Neill, who was a true Christian, loyal friend,

and neighbor, genial, kindly, and dearly beloved by his fellow workers in the Presbyterian Church and community. In his younger days he was prominent in the affairs of the township and county and was always willing to help in every community enterprise. His memory will dwell long in the hearts of his associates.

ANN NEILL ROBERTSON LETTER

1875 Letter from Ann Neill Robertson (1844-1922), sister of Mary Neill Whitelaw

Ann, Mary's only sister, was very close to Mary Neill Whitelaw, though they saw each other only rarely after Mary married and moved to Kidder.

**From Ann Neill Robertson
To Mary Neill Whitelaw
DeKorra, Wisconsin
March 8th, 1875**

Dear Sister, I received your short but welcome letter & was very glad to hear from you also to hear you were all well as it found us all in good health you wanted to know how my children got along learning. Sabra learns very fast but Isabell does not learn quite so fast she was sent almost [illegible word] to school they are both doing very well for there age this has been a very hard winter for them going it has been so stormy and so cold they never lost a day with the storm or cold. I was over to Father's since I received your letter and Mother told me to write you from her if it is not possible for you to come and bring all the children with you to hire a girl for a month. If there Father is at home and (two illegible words) them with there Father and the girl she would like to see you all but she would be satisfied I think if she saw you. They were all well at home but feeling as though they were left all alone since John moved away to the Praire they had a letter from old country from Mary Morland that night we was there also Mother had one from Hannah She has got a son six weeks old they were all well in Lemont, Father had a letter from Old Danel Van Horne he writes a very good letter for such an old man his family is all dead he has had his trials poor old man barniless? And John A are both dead but Mother said she would send you the letter he has had so many friend died I could not begin to name them all. I within a couple of yours they had some word before this letter I think it was from (illegible name) that the old Lady was nearly Blind but the old man did not say anything about her sight in fathers letter. Mattie (?) sent hers in Fathers not Mothers thinks she would not could see it. Mary if ever you are spared to come to see us all you will see quite a change in us all those that have seen you say you look just as you used to I think you must have changed some in 9 years. I would like to see you and the children very much James is going to work his own place this summer he went west last spring to see the western Country we think a good deal of the place where Robert Robertson is he liked very well where the Boys are to but winter are so hard he thinks some of going west some time but I do not care about going as long as father and mother is alive and I do not think he would ask me to go if I did not want to we can make a living here and have always Plenty to eat here and that's all we need. Sabra sends a letter to Maggie she is a better writer than her mother. Give our best respects to John not forgetting lots of love for you and the children. Your sister Annie Robertson



**1914 Biographical Essay of JOHN NEILL (1837-1922) BROTHER TO MARY NEILL
WHITELAW Source: A History of Columbia County, Wisconsin. Ed. J. E. Jones. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1914**

John Neill

The history of the Neill family in Columbia County, Wisconsin, goes back to the year 1859. Mr. John Neill [Mary Neill's brother], now living retired at Lodi, is one of the few citizens whose recollections cover all the changes and developments in the farming and industrial life of the county since that early time. He has himself lived a busy and honorable life, and stands high in that community where the name has been pronounced with esteem and respect for three generations.

Mr. John Neill is a Scotchman, and was born in Perthshire, Scotland, March 15, 1837. His parents, John and Margaret (Moreland) Neill [Mary Neill's parents) had a large family of thirteen children, eight of whom are yet living. John Neill Sr. was a blacksmith, and worked at that trade in Scotland for many years, after he established his home and in that manner provided for the wants of his increasing family. Finally in May, 1859, he emigrated to America, and in the fall of the same year moved to Columbia County, Wisconsin. In the town of Caledonia, he bought eighty acres of land, and the rest of his life was spent there chiefly as a farmer. The senior Neill was a man of strong character, and through his industry prospered so that he always kept himself and household well above the line of want.

John Neill Jr. [Mary Neill's brother] grew up in a household in which the number of children made it necessary for the oldest as soon as possible to begin earning for themselves, and while his education was of a substantial sort, he early put aside his books in favor of the more practical training in the blacksmith shop of his father. He worked as a journeyman blacksmith in the old country, until past his majority, and in the month of October, 1857, took passage on a vessel bound for the United States. His first employment was in Montgomery County, New York, where he remained until the fall of 1859, and then accompanied his father westward to Columbia County, Wisconsin. For many years he had his shop and did general blacksmithing and repairing for a large custom and at the same time conducted his farm in the town of Caledonia.

In the spring of 1875, Mr. Neill moved to a new location on the prairie in the town of Arlington, where he had his home for nearly thirty years. In the fall of 1873 he had bought the one hundred and sixty acres on Arlington Prairie at thirty-three dollars an acre. A few years ago that land was sold for one hundred and ten dollars an acre, which set the high mark for farm land prices in Columbia up to that date. In the spring of 1904, Mr. Neill moved to Lodi, where he has since lived, and is now retired from the more active labors of life.

Mr. Neill on June 1, 1870, was married to Miss Martha Caldow, a daughter of William Caldow. Mr. Caldow was one of the pioneers of Columbia County. To Mr. and Mrs. Neill have been born

four children: John C. who married Annie Hyslop, of Dane County, and now lives in Portland, Oregon, engaged in the real estate business; William K., who married Nellie Folsom and is engaged in the grain elevator business at New Sharon, Iowa; Henry H. who married Ella Aries and is now in the real estate business at Portland, Oregon, and Margaret. Mr. Neill began his battle with the world owning scarcely a dollar. All his life he has worked hard, and success has come to him directly as the fruit of his own affairs and at the same time, credit should be given to the loyal cooperation of his wife. He is a Republican. . . contributed liberally to all laudable public enterprises and churches. . . member of the Presbyterian Church, and he and his wife are recognized as among the best people of Columbia County.

No Date: HUGH NEILL (1846-1927) BROTHER OF MARY WHITELAW NEILL

Hugh Neill appears to have had literary interests. He is the author of the first part of this article. He also wrote the obituary for his father, John Neill, reproduced in this Appendix. Hugh Neill and his wife Elizabeth Marshall Neill moved to Windham, Montana, in 1916, with their two sons, Edward and John. Both before and after this move, he resided in Minnesota; he was a "pioneer farmer" in Lyons County, MN, and retired in Marshall, MN, near his brother Robert.

From an unidentifiable newspaper article, left in the Williams sisters estate.. First paragraph illegible. Years ago I went up to the door of a factory in New England. On the outside door I saw the words, "No admittance." I went in and came to another door over which were the words, "No admittance." Of course I went in and came to the third door inscribed with the words, "No admittance." Having entered this I found the people inside making pins, beautiful pins, useful pins, and nothing but pins. So over the outside door of many of the churches has been practically written the words "No admittance." Some have entered and have come to the inside door, and found the words, "No admittance." But, persisting, they have come inside, and found us sounding out our little niceties of belief, pointing out our little differences of theological sentiment – making pins!

"Angels ascending and descending," But most distinguished was Bethel Tor that famous dream which Jacob had, his head on a collection of stones. He had no trouble in this rocky region in finding [some text missing] leave them to their own sagacity. We ride down amid mud cabins and into ravines where the horses leap from depth to depth rocks below rocks, rocks under rocks Whoa! Whoa! We dismount in this place, memorable for many things in Bible history, the two more prominent a theological seminary, where of old they made ministers, and for Jacob's dream. The students of this Bethel Theological Seminary were called "sons of the prophets". Here the young men were fitted for the ministry, and those of us who had the advantage of such institutions will everlastingly be grateful, and in the (illegible word) of saints, which I read with especial affection, and the doctors of divinity who blessed me with their care.

I thank God that from these theological seminaries there is now coming forth a magnificent crop of young ministers, who are taking the pulpits in all parts of the land. I hail their coming, and take these young brothers to shake off the somnolence of centuries, and get out from under the dusty shelves of theological discussions which have no practical bearing on this age, which needs to get rid of its sins and have its sorrows comforted. Many of our pulpits are dying of humdrum. People do not go to church because they cannot endure the technicalities and profound explanations of nothing, and sermons about (illegible words) new term will make twelve years on the (5 illegible lines)

the county seat, when Marshall could have had the office at any time for the asking. The re-election was thrust upon him; which is a rare event in modern politics. Under his administration the county has paid its debts, and has thousands of dollars in the bank. Hugh is a Scotchman for all he is worth, and would wear a kilt and go barelegged only for the atmospheric pressure of a Minnesota winter. He sticks to barley soup, the haggis, and Scotch whiskey with true loyalty, and dances the Highland Fling to a nicety. Hugh was born in Scotland 43 years ago, came to America in 1859, stayed a year in New York, went to Wisconsin, and came to Lyon county (Minnesota) in 1879 where he has held a town or county office for 18 successive years. He is a mighty good Republican.

Agnes Neill Firmage (1872-1972 or later), daughter of Mary Neill Whitelaw's brother Hugh: Newspaper article commemorating her 100th birthday, in which she shares memories of her pioneer girlhood.

Lyon County **INDEPENDENT**



Filled with Local News and Pictures

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 1972

OUR FORTY-FIRST YEAR -

ONE SECTION - 24 PAGES, NO. 59

545 Candidates Up

Two Minneapolis Men Nabbed by County Officers

Two Minneapolis area men were taken into custody Wednesday by Lyon county sheriff officials and Minnesota police.

One of the men, Roger Moffatt, has been turned over to Hennepin county authorities on charges of theft and receiving stolen property there.

Moffatt and Edward Cameron were surprised by a Minnesota resident about 2:30 a.m. Wednesday while they allegedly were attempting to steal some tires at the Dero Standard station in Minnesota.

After they fled the scene, they were located on a farm 12 miles west and three miles north of Marshall.

One was found hiding in a barn about 4 a.m. and the other was found about 5:15 a.m. in a grove of trees, according to John Temasek, Lyon county sheriff. Both were quite hostile and resisted arrest, he said.

Bomb Threat at Tracy School



Mrs. James Furmage will Reach Century Mark May 24

BY VIRGINIA FRIES

Mrs. James Furmage, lifelong Marshall area resident, will celebrate her 100th birthday next Wednesday.

All five of her children will help her mark the occasion with a quiet celebration at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Al Schneider in Marshall. At another family gathering Sunday, relatives from Montana and Michigan will also honor her. The birthday cake will be her favorite, angel food.

Mrs. Furmage was born at Portage City, Wis. in 1872 and came with her family that same year to Sodus Township where her father, Hugh Neill, and his three brothers homesteaded and.

She still has vivid memories of her childhood on the prairie and recalls them as good years. "It makes my heart ache when I think back to the things we used to do," she says. "It was such a routine life, but we surely enjoyed it. I know that children we certainly enjoyed life," she adds.

Mrs. Furmage, the eldest of five Neill children, remembers bitter cold winters when they wore heavy knitted socks over their shoes because they had no overshoes or boots. She also remembers watching from a window as clouds of rashes darkened the sky and wiped out crops. "It seemed as if we lived the same as ever that year, but they ate up all my mother's parasol but the same," she says.

In order to get to the little country school, she attended, she had to walk

alone over two miles of lonely prairie. As a safeguard against her getting lost, her father plowed a furrow from their home to the school. It was not unusual for her to walk five miles with her father to the Lyons Presbyterian church, she adds.

"My Dad was a wonderful man," Mrs. Furmage says. "He was a jack-of-all-trades. He did some blacksmithing and so many things. He had a strong imagination. He was great at making up things, trying to amuse the children and had many a game," she smiles. Mr.

(Continued on Page 2)

Janet Wyffels Named Lyon- Lincoln Scholar

Janet Wyffels, Marshall, has been selected as a recipient of the Lyon-Lincoln Scholarship at Southwest Minnesota State College for the 1972-73 academic year.

The Lyon-Lincoln scholarship is sponsored by the Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc., in recognition of outstanding high school graduates from the counties of Lyon and Lincoln in Minnesota.

Miss Wyffels is one of eight high school seniors this spring to be named a recipient of the Lyon-Lincoln Scholarship. She lists as her activities choir, Latin Club, FHA, American Field Service and intramurals.

Furmage

(Continued from Page 1)

Neill served for several years as county commissioner from his district. "He did many things that helped the settlers in those times," Mrs. Furmage remembers. "We missed an awful lot when my father died," she adds.

The family worked hard to create their home where they had found nothing but prairie. Mr. Neill farmed and milked "quite a lot of cows," Mrs. Furmage says. "Mother raised a large garden and later raised chickens."

Even when they were through with their routine work, the women kept their hands busy knitting. "We always carried our knitting with us. I was about

10 or 12 when I first knit, not any older, I would knit everything I can think dresses, skirts, hoods of all kinds and mittens.

In spite of all the work, there was time for children's games like ring-round-the-rosy and parties at the homes of friends for the young people. Christmas was the most important day of the year.

"We always had stockings hung up on the fireplace," Mrs. Furmage says. "In the morning when they opened their stockings, there was a wild time." The gifts she remembers best are homemade dolls stuffed with sawdust and dressed by her mother. For Christmas dinner, the nearby relatives would gather at one home.

"We generally had some kind of meat, chicken when we got to growing chickens. We always had vegetables. Mother was a great hand to grow vegetables. She would put them in the cellar, sometimes in sand. Mother was great at experimenting. We used to have wild grape pies. We would take wild grapes, you know, make a sauce and then we'd make pie. It was very good. Mother was very adept at making things," she adds.

When she was about 19 years old, she married James Furmage and after a year in Marshall, the young couple began farming in the same section of land where she had grown up. Again, Mrs. Furmage did her share in creating a home. They farmed and raised five children.

If young people were to ask her advice for living, she would refer to her father's advice to his children. "Tend to your work every day at the right time. It's much easier than to let things go." And "be always believed in 'Do unto others as you would be done by'," she adds.

Next Wednesday, the little pioneer will celebrate her 100th birthday and remember her childhood on the prairie as good years.

Letter from Eddie Neill, grandson of Hugh Neill, to Irene (probably another descendant of John and Margaret Moreland Neill), 1976

Stanford, Montana
March 19, 1976

Dear Irene:

I am enclosing a photo copy of the family history from the old bible that I have. I am also enclosing a typewritten copy of the old original script as it is not very plain on the copy. I believe that you will be able to make out the later additions that we have entered since we inherited the bible. It includes my Grandfather Hugh Neill and wife also their family. Next is my father John Neill and wife and their family. These we brought it up to date with my family.

I am real proud of the family bible and treasure it as one of my most valuable possessions. I have it in my will as going to my oldest son John and on to his son. As I believe it should be passed on to the decedents with the Neill name.

Some other information that may be of interest to you that I have found out from my old aunts Agnes Fimage and Elizabeth Williams befor their deaths.

The original John Neill and Margret Moreland were married about 1834 the exact date is not known. He was a Blacksmith by trade. They had 13 children all born in Scotland, some of whom died young. Note there are two Hugh Neills, the second one being my grandfather. They came to the United States approximately in 1859. They settled in New York state for a short time. Then in 1860 moved to Columbia County Wisconsin near Portage. John Neill died there and is buried in Dekorra Cemetary 8 miles south of Portage. Margret Moreland Neill then moved to Sodus County Minn and lived with our Grandfathers Hugh and Robert Neill. She is buried in a cemetary near Tracy Minn. *near Portage, WI. called DEKORRA.*

My Grandparents Hugh and Elizabeth Marshall Neill moved to Windham Montana ~~1916~~ in May of 1916. My father John and his brother Ed came out at the same time. I was the only child and 4 years old when we moved and have lived here every since the last 23 years at Stanford Montana. My wife Judith Strong Neill and I were married in Oct of 1934 She is a native Montanan. We have four Children all married two boys and two girls. We have 6 Grandchildren at present. We lost one Grandson in a plane wreck over two years ago.

I hope that the above will be of use to you. I'm sorry that the photo copys are not very legible. There is no charge on them. If I can give any further information please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

Eddie Neill

Photocopy of the Front Page of the Neill Family Bible

Parish of White

1115 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 8th of October 1711 ...
 1120 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 15th of ... 1716 ...
 1125 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 23rd of ... 1721 ...
 1130 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 27th of ... 1726 ...
 1135 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 29th of ... 1731 ...
 1140 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 31st of ... 1736 ...
 1145 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 1st of ... 1741 ...
 1150 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 3rd of ... 1746 ...
 1155 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 5th of ... 1751 ...
 1160 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 7th of ... 1756 ...
 1165 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 9th of ... 1761 ...
 1170 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 11th of ... 1766 ...
 1175 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 13th of ... 1771 ...
 1180 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 15th of ... 1776 ...
 1185 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 17th of ... 1781 ...
 1190 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 19th of ... 1786 ...
 1195 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 21st of ... 1791 ...
 1200 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 23rd of ... 1796 ...
 1205 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 25th of ... 1801 ...
 1210 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 27th of ... 1806 ...
 1215 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 29th of ... 1811 ...
 1220 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 31st of ... 1816 ...
 1225 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 1st of ... 1821 ...
 1230 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 3rd of ... 1826 ...
 1235 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 5th of ... 1831 ...
 1240 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 7th of ... 1836 ...
 1245 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 9th of ... 1841 ...
 1250 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 11th of ... 1846 ...
 1255 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 13th of ... 1851 ...
 1260 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 15th of ... 1856 ...
 1265 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 17th of ... 1861 ...
 1270 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 19th of ... 1866 ...
 1275 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 21st of ... 1871 ...
 1280 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 23rd of ... 1876 ...
 1285 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 25th of ... 1881 ...
 1290 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 27th of ... 1886 ...
 1295 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 29th of ... 1891 ...
 1300 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 31st of ... 1896 ...
 1305 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 1st of ... 1901 ...
 1310 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 3rd of ... 1906 ...
 1315 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 5th of ... 1911 ...
 1320 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 7th of ... 1916 ...
 1325 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 9th of ... 1921 ...
 1330 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 11th of ... 1926 ...
 1335 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 13th of ... 1931 ...
 1340 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 15th of ... 1936 ...
 1345 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 17th of ... 1941 ...
 1350 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 19th of ... 1946 ...
 1355 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 21st of ... 1951 ...
 1360 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 23rd of ... 1956 ...
 1365 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 25th of ... 1961 ...
 1370 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 27th of ... 1966 ...
 1375 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 29th of ... 1971 ...
 1380 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 31st of ... 1976 ...
 1385 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 1st of ... 1981 ...
 1390 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 3rd of ... 1986 ...
 1395 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 5th of ... 1991 ...
 1400 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 7th of ... 1996 ...
 1405 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 9th of ... 2001 ...
 1410 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 11th of ... 2006 ...
 1415 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 13th of ... 2011 ...
 1420 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 15th of ... 2016 ...
 1425 Nell was born at Hill of ... on the 17th of ... 2021 ...

Transcription of the Front Page of the Neill family bible

Bairn Shire

James Neill born at Mill of Tor the 6th of October 1835 and was baptized in the Parish Kinkardine 18 of October in Monteth by Rev. (?) Gray

John Neill was born at Mill of TorWrch (?) 15th 1837. Baptized the 26th same month and parish *Died Jan 1922*

Hugh Neill was born at Mill of Tor March 1st 1839. Baptized the 24, same parish *Drowned as a boy Dec*

Wm Henry Neill was born at Mill of Tor Oct. (?) 9th 1840. Baptized the 27 same parish *Died Aug 17, 1925*

William Neill was born at Mill of Tor Mar. 28 1842. Baptized the 17th of April same parish

Ann Neill was born at Mill of Tor Mch 27th 1844. Baptized the 14 of April same parish *Died Sept 1922*

Hugh Neill was born at Mill of Tor August 26th 1846. Baptized the 13th Sept. same parish *Died Jan 1927*

Henry Neill was born at Mill of Tor March 26th 1849. Baptized

David Middleton Neill was born at Mill of Tor Feb. 2 1852. Baptized the 22 of Feb. *Died Dec. 1925*

Robert Neill was born at Mill of Tor April 4 1854. Baptized *7/2/54*

Alexander Gray Neill was born at Mill of Tor July 2 1856. Baptized *July 11, 56*

The first name of the next child I can't make out. *Died July 19, 1890*

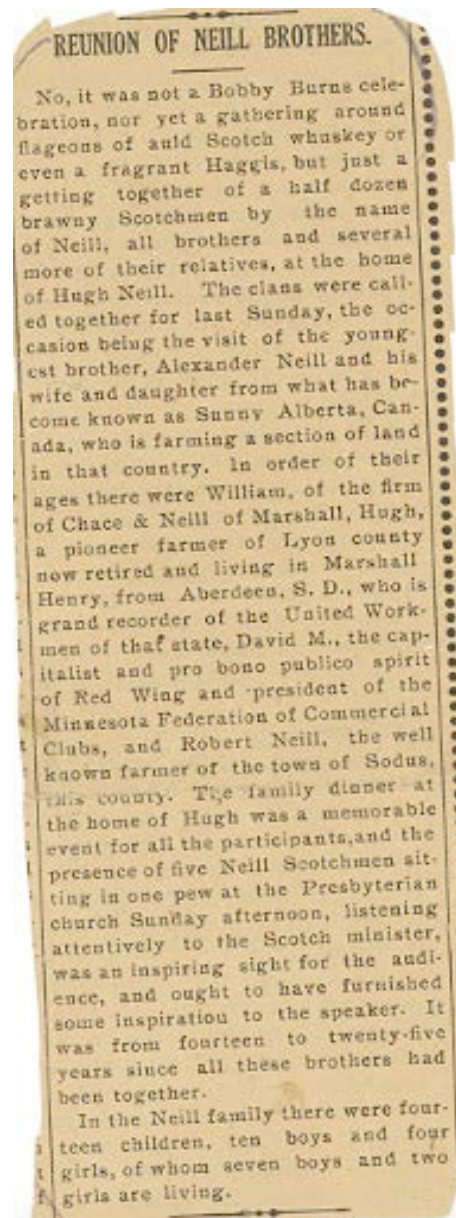
T. Gordon Simpson Neill was born at East Brierlands August 23 1858. Baptized same parish. *died in infancy*

On the inside of the front is the nameplate
John Neill
&
Margaret Moreland
1837

I assume this must be the year that they bought the bible.

Neill Brothers Reunion

The following article refers to a reunion of five of the Neill Brothers, in Hugh Neill's home in Minnesota. The date of the reunion is not known, but it was sometime before 1925, when David Middleton Neill died.



David Middleton Neill (1852-1925) Brother to Mary Neill Whitelaw

Various articles and obituaries

David Middleton Neill was a prominent member of the Neill family. He ran a telephone company in Minnesota and ran unsuccessfully for the state legislature.



Dec. 23, 1925

Prominent citizen of city and state is heart victim

Dies suddenly at Home Today Without Warning; Seized While Shoveling Snow

Was Prominent in Phone Circles of the Northwest

Founder of Red Wing Telephone Co., President of State Assn. and Successful Businessman

D.M. Neill, well known Red Wing citizen and prominent in telephone circles not only of the state but of the nation, died suddenly shortly after 11:30 o'clock today as the result of a heart attack which came without any preliminary warning.

Mr. Neill, as was his custom, was out shoveling snow from the walk in front of his home on East avenue when he was seized with the attack. He managed to get into the house but died within a few moments. When medical aid reached the home he had already passed on.

Apparently hale and hearty in every way and keeping fit through physical exercises and general activity, Mr. Neill's death came as a severe shock to his wife, relatives and many friends. He had always prided himself on his health and the fact that the passing years left him without much of a mark. He was 73 years of age last February.

Mr. Neill's long life has been one of activity, not only in the telephone field, but in a social and civic manner as well. He founded the Red Wing Telephone Co. in 1904 and served as its

manager and president for many years until it was finally taken over by the Tri-State company. At the time of his death he was president of the Minnesota Independent Telephone Association and, during the past 20 years, was a director of the national organization at various times. He served the Tri-State company as commercial manager for several years.

Locally he was connected first with the Betcher Lumber Co., as retail yard superintendent, and later became manager and then president of the Red Wing Manufacturing Co. He organized the library board here and was at one time a member of the board of public works. He was a candidate for the legislature from this district during the war times and at one time was candidate for nomination as lieutenant governor of the state.

Mr. Neill was president of the Minnesota Federation of Commercial Clubs in 1908 and 1909.

Mr. and Mrs. Neill celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of their marriage here last May at which time Mr. Neill said:

“There isn’t any set formula for 50 years of successful married life. Just behave yourself and work hard.” The sentence probably stands out as a fitting passing remark from a man who had worked himself up to positions of responsibility and trust through years of service.



D. M. NEILL LAID TO REST—MANY JOIN IN TRIBUTE

D. M. Neill, prominent Red Wing resident, whose sudden death on Wednesday, came as a shock to the community, was laid to rest at Oakwood cemetery Saturday following services at Christ church. The edifice was filled with business associates of Mr. Neill, who had played such an important part in building up the city, and sorrowing friends, who came to pay their last tributes.

Rev. Jos. N. Barnett officiated and the church choir sang appropriate numbers. The casket was banked with many and beautiful floral offerings, which testified to the esteem in which Mr. Neill was held.

Among those at the services were several of the leading officials of the Tri-State Telephone company, with which Mr. Neill was associated for several years, and other leaders in the telephone field.

Honorary pall bearers were G. W. Robinson, W. H. Putnam, C. A. Rasmussen, W. C. Krise, C. A. Sargent and Hiram Howe. Those who acted as active pall bearers were, C. S. Sautzer, E. H. Foot, Sam'l H. Lockin, J. C. Crowley, Roy T. Wilder and P. M. Ferguson.

D. M. NEILL, 73, DIES AT RED WING

Leading Figure in City's Industrial Development Collapses While Shoveling Snow

Red Wing, Minn., Dec. 23.—D. M. Neill, 73 years old, an outstanding figure in Red Wing's political, civic and commercial activities, dropped dead in front of his home today while shoveling snow. Heart disease caused his death.

Mr. Neill was a former president of the Red Wing Telephone Exchange, at one time superintendent of the retail yards of the Betcher Lumber Company, manager and president of the Red Wing Manufacturing Company, organizer of the telephone company, once president of the Minnesota Federation of Commercial Clubs, a former member of the Johnson memorial commission and a candidate for lieutenant governor.

Mr. Neill was born Feb. 2, 1852, in Scotland and came to Portage, Wis., and later to Ortonville, Minn., where he engaged in the lumber business.

From Ortonville he came here as superintendent of the Betcher Lumber Company. Later he became manager and president of the Red Wing Manufacturing Company, dealers in furniture.

In 1904 Mr. Neill organized the Red Wing Telephone Company in competition with the old Northwestern Company and so successful was this venture that two years ago the two consolidated and Mr. Neill took charge.

In 1908 he was president of the Minnesota Federation of Commercial Clubs and later became active in state politics.

Surviving him are his widow, two sons, Edward and Victor, and a daughter, Mrs. Margaret Sullum.

DAVID M. NEILL, COMMUNITY BENEFACTOR

By Jens K. Grundahl

The memory of the late David Middleton Neill will be cherished long by those who knew him best. He had been so long identified with the interests of Red Wing that there was no occasion or movement of consequence in which he did not participate. His long experience in private and public enterprise had so ripened his judgment that many looked to him for helpful guidance in the solution of important problems. Not only was his judgment, based on a high degree of intelligence, as well as long experience, trusted, but his honesty was unquestioned.

To such fundamentals, which are necessary in a man if he is to be really successful and be gauged as a "big man" in the community, Mr. Neill added a personal charm which meant zest and sunshine at every gathering, large and small. He was pastmaster at pleasant and piquant repartee and in bringing to the same viewpoint men who differed widely on matters at issue. Very few meetings adjourned short of harmony where Mr. Neill was present.

Stepping out of a line of manufacturing, which at that time held forth little immediate promise, he broke through the shell by force of necessity and initiative and made a marked success in the telephone business, a field of endeavor, yet new and strange to him, meeting in competition the well-oiled telephone "trust" of these days.

Recognized for his ability as a leader and his willingness to do whatever the community might ask of him, he was made the head of the old Commercial club and other organizations. As president of the commercial clubs of the state he made friends everywhere. "He was a hale fellow well met"—a man among men.

In things patriotic he always took a leading part. One of his sons served in the Spanish-American war, another in the World war, both of them in a manner to add another flash to his eyes when the Flag went by. For years he was president of the Memorial Day association. In matters of charity Mr. Neill was never wanting. His heart, his pocket-book and his personal energies always stood in line for service.

Mr. Neill was not without his opponents. Who follows actively the course of his convictions over a long period of years in any community escapes not the jibes of those with closed minds or selfish motives. Happy is the one who, after a long life of usefulness, goes to final rest with as many heart beats of sincere affection, as the friend and fellow citizen we shall miss so much—David Middleton Neill.

The clipping on this page, dated Nov. 1, 1918, refers to D.M. Neill's unsuccessful campaign for the Minnesota State Legislature.

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Red Wing Republican
Red Wing Printing Co.
Publishers,
Entered at the Postoffice at Red Wing,
Minn., as Second-class matter.

FRIDAY, NOV. 1, 1918.

D. M. NEILL FOR REPRESENTATIVE.

The candidacy of D. M. Neill for Representative appeals strongly to all who know Mr. Neill and recognize his ability and particularly those who appreciate a man who works early and late in patriotic, pro-war activities. There are few men indeed who have taken the opportunity and made the sacrifices that Mr. Neill has to serve the Government in this crisis. Incidentally, Mr. Neill sent a son to the Spanish-American war and he sent a son to France, in this war.

Mr. Neill has been connected with public life in many ways so long and knows men in the state so well that he will go to the legislature equipped to do as good work from the very beginning as other men could not be expected to do until they had had the experience of at least a session or two. It reflects on no one to say that there is no available man in this district as qualified as is Mr. Neill for this position.

We were pleased to note the following compliment paid Mr. Neill by our contemporary, The Red Wing Daily Eagle, when Mr. Neill entered the race in early summer, and we fully concur in these sentiments:

"Mr. Neill is truly a representative Red Wing man. He has taken a keen interest in the business, civic and political life of the community. He always stands square-footed on subjects of public importance, a trait for which he is generally admired.

"His candidacy at this time is largely the result of the loyalty movement in the community, and he was prevailed upon to file through the efforts of his friends rather than through his own personal ambitions.

"In the business life of the city Mr. Neill is recognized as one of its leading men. Through his efforts the R. W. Telephone Co. was built up to the successful enterprise that it now is. When complaints over a single 'phone system were at their height, Mr. Neill conceived the idea of a city and country system that would link city and country together. Consequently, he worked for the establishment of many country lines in the surrounding territory and secured the necessary franchise for a city exchange. The present exchange, tying up city and country most efficiently, is the outcome of the movement set on foot by Mr. Neill.

"He is recognized a loyalist without a blemish, having taken an active part in patriotic and soldiers' veterans' movements of all kinds. He was an energetic worker in the last Liberty loan campaign as well as in previous ones. He is chairman of the Goodhue county America First league."

Political Advertisement.



D. M. Neill
Candidate for
Representative to the Legislature
ASKS YOUR SUPPORT.

Issued by D. M. Neill in his own behalf.

1933 HENRY NEILL (1849-date of death unknown), Brother of Mary Neill Whitelaw

Henry Neill remained in close touch with Mary, and she and her husband John visited Henry in Aberdeen, South Dakota, during their two trips to Washington to see her sons. Henry Neill was an educator and newspaperman. In recognition of his service on the local school board, an elementary school was named for him in Aberdeen in 1931.

DEDICATION PROGRAM of the



HENRY NEILL SCHOOL

DEDICATION PROGRAM AT EIGHT O'CLOCK
OCTOBER 29th, NINETEEN HUNDRED and THIRTY ONE

The Building Will Be Open for Inspection from Six O'clock to Eleven

THE HENRY NEILL SCHOOL.

The Henry Neill elementary school, which was started in April, 1931, was completed and ready for occupancy five months later on the twentieth day of August. The erection of the school had become a necessity for two reasons: first, Morning Heights had been added to the city; second, the rapid growth of the senior high school had made it essential that additional room be supplied.

The school was built at an approximate cost of sixty-three thousand dollars, which sum includes the cost of built-in features. There was no bond issue to raise the amount. Moneys that had accumulated from interests on sinking fund warrants over a period of years were used for the erection of the building. This is one of the few school buildings in South Dakota that have been financed without a bond issue.

Henry Neill School was designed primarily for elementary purposes. It has eight classrooms, a modern and well-furnished office, a kitchen, a conference and rest room, a gymnasium-auditorium, a nurse's room, shower rooms, storage rooms, and janitor's quarters. The classrooms are all large, well lighted, and have been planned to take care of freedom of activities on the part of the children. All rooms for kindergarten to third grade, inclusive have room toilets. The kindergarten and first grades have well planned activity rooms. All rooms have spacious and well ventilated cloak rooms. Black boards, bulletin boards, chalk rails, built-in storage cabinets and book cases are designed for utility. The floors are covered with Moul Tile, an asphalt composition which is durable, noiseless, warm, and easy to walk upon. The light fixtures are thoroly modern and the best that money will buy.

HENRY NEILL

"I am exceedingly proud and pleased at the honor bestowed on me when the new school in Aberdeen was named for me", said Henry Neill in an interview here yesterday. "It is a fine compliment and the last thing in the world I expected."

Mr. Neill was in Missouri at the time a letter from Charles J. Dalthorp, Superintendent of Schools, informed him of the naming of the school.

Serving on the Board of Education for eleven years, from 1916 to 1927, is only one of the many services performed by Mr. Neill for this community. In all the eleven years he missed but one meeting. In commenting on this, he said, "I went to the station to meet a friend and completely forgot about the meeting."

Since 1909, Mr. Neill has served as Grand Recorder for the A. O. U. W. of South Dakota. Due to ill health he resigned from both this position and the school board in 1927.

While on the Board of Education, Mr. Neill had a part in the planning and building of every school in Aberdeen with the exception of the high school which was already built. The Adams, Garfield, and McKinley schools were four room structures but Mr. Neill may be identified with the addition to these schools. Mr. Neill, at eighty-two years of age, though not actively associated with any educational work today is still tremendously interested in the school problems of today.



Henry Neill

Name New School For Henry Neill



Aberdeen's new school building to be constructed in Morning Heights addition received the official name of Henry Neill school by action of the school board last evening.

Henry Neill, for whom the building is to be named was selected for the honor, board members stated, because of untiring service given to the city school system as a board member from 1916 to 1927.

At present Neill is living in Missouri with his son Robert, a chemist. He came to Aberdeen in 1909 following a long service in Dakota territory as a newspaper man at Big Stone and Madison. For a number of years he was recorder for the A. O. U. W. lodge.

J. W. Henry, architect, submitted details of the new building to the board for correction and observation. The full board was in attendance, O. M. Tiffany having returned from Pierre for a brief time.

Board members acting on re-elections for one year of officials and heads of departments at the city schools, named W. E. Dunn, principal of Central high school; C. P. Stinson, principal of Roosevelt Junior high; William Gruhn, principal of Simmons Junior high; Ruby Adams, elementary superintendent and H. C. Daubenberger, director of athletics.



Alexander Neill (1856-1930), youngest brother of Mary Neill Whitelaw, settled on a farm in Alberta, Canada. Letter to Ruth Whitelaw Williams, 1926.

Bittern Lake, Alberta
Jan. 15, 1926

Dear Cousin Ruth, I received your letter announcing Bro. David's death. It came at a time in which we are all in deep mourning for my son Hugh who accidentally shot and killed himself while trying to unload his shot gun. We do not know how it happened as no one saw him do it. . . . It is very sad to think about and after all this sad affairs comes my Bro David's death to put us in double mourning in the Christmas and New Year time it is a very sad holy day for us. I send you a local paper with Hugh's death announcement in it . I had letters from Bro Robert, Henry, and Mrs. Christ Johnson informing me of bro David's death besides the local papers of Red Wing and Balaton.

Bro Robert is in very poor health and his doctor does not think he can live much longer. Bro Hugh Neill of Montana is in declining health also. He is 79 years old so it begins to look like our Brotherhood will soon be extinct. . . . I will now close this sad epistle. This leaves us all in good health so trusting it may find you all enjoying the same blessing, Gods greatest gift. I remain you loving Uncle Alex. G. Neill, Bittern Lake, Alberta, Canada

Obituary (hand written transcription, found in Ruth Williams papers)

Alexander Gray Neill July 11, 1938 at Bittern Lake.

Friday July 11 Alex Gray Neil passed away. Born at Mill of Tor Scotland July 7 1856 he came to Portage Wisconsin at age of two years. In 1898 he left Portage and settled on a farm one and a half miles S.E.. of Wetaski [?], Wisconsin and three years later 1901 moved to the present homestead seven miles southwest of Camrose. His wife predeceased him in 1920. Deceased leaves two sons and one daughter: Joseph David, living at home, Robert Morrow and Mrs. Raymond Sawyers, Sedgwick. A brother in law, William Morrow resides one mile south west of the homestead. Two brothers reside in Minnestoata. Funeral services were held Wednesday afternoon. Rev. J.G. Gardiner officiating. Interment was made in the Camrose cemetery.

Mabel Shaw (1900-1973), granddaughter of Mary Neill Whitelaw wrote a letter to Mary Elizabeth Williams Enerson (1906-2002), her cousin, concerning the Neill side of the family.

**Mabel Shaw
Cameron, MO
Nov. 24, 1969**



Dear Mary E.,

I'll bet you think me the most ungrateful wretch who ever came down the pike to not have answered your prompt and interesting letter concerning our Whitelaw relatives. . . . I surely did enjoy your information about some of the grandparents' brothers and sisters. . . . On Grandma's side of the family of course I recall Aunt Anne very well because she visited with Grandma and Auntie some time after Grandpa's death. When I went thru the letters of Congratulations etc. that my parents were sent at their marriage I found one written by Mary Roberson for Grandma Neill who could no longer write for herself. It was this same Mary's husband, a Mr. Stone I believe his name was, who came

with Aunt Anne for Grandpa's funeral. I don't know for sure, but I think his wife was pregnant and they didn't think Aunt Anne should travel alone. Uncle David Neill has always been the one I think of first of Grandma's brothers. He, too, I saw first at Grandpa's funeral. He seemed such a hearty, handsome person I was quite impressed. At that time he was a candidate for Lt. Governor of Minn. and gave all of us his campaign picture. I don't think he won. A few years later he sent Grandma his son's photo in W.W. I officer's uniform. Uncle Dave came again at Grandma's death so I feel I knew him best of her brothers. In fact I met only one other of Grandma's brothers – Uncle Hugh – and his wife Aunt Lizzie when I was in school at Madison. Your parents brot them to see me one Sun. I always feel a little confused about it but I think that was his name. He didn't look like Uncle Dave. In fact facially he looked a great deal like Uncle Will Whitelaw in his last years. Cousin James Neill of Marshalltown I do recall when we were still living on the Kimble place. He and Grandma came out for dinner and he gave Mother that purple feather duster that saw duty at various plays both here and at Osborn as Lucy has it now. Really I dare say you are tired of my vague bits of memory of these relatives. . . . Much love to all of you, Mabel



APPENDIX III SCOTLAND

Letter from Miss or Mrs. Fisher, a Scottish friend of Mary Neill Whitelaw. Written from Ochertyre, Scotland, June 9, 1861

Dear Mary, It is with great pleasure that I write to you to let you know that I received both of your kind letters and was happy to hear from you. I know that you must be very angry at me for being so long in writing you, I could not expect any other thing but I know that you will forgive my unkindness to you when you receive this. I was always lazy to begin but I will try and give you some of the news that is going on here. I am always at home and we are the same as when you left. We are living in our new cottage now. I may say there has been no change amongst us but the death of my grandfather. He died about one year since but I must begin and let you know how things are. We are getting (illegible word) about Ochertyre they have done a good deal of improvements here about our old friend (illegible initial) Stirling has left but they have old Nancy yet. Christina Statler is a good length now. She is the mother of a good sound boy and they call it John Shearer but she has not made out a husband yet but Shearer is praying for it. It is one year and 4 months old now. Margaret McKerrecher (?) is serving in Ochertyre House now she has her compliments to you she hopes you will write to her. Elisa and Maggie is always in the house yet our old friend Lizzie Thomson is dead and there is no one living in Strong gate but Archy and (illegible word) she is very poorly now. Mrs. O'Hare and (illegible word) is still alive yet. She is a very fine lady now. She and Mrs. Thomson is always going about yet. Mr. and Mrs. McKay you would know no difference on them since you left. Hubert Ferguson is always as fat as ever. Ann (illegible name) was saying to me one day coming from church that it was a shame for me never to have wrote to you. Christina Allan is still with them yet just the same as when you left. No more here. So I must first begin again and see if I have any more news to give you. I think if I saw you one hour I would tell you more than I would write in a fortnight but I will do the best I can. Mrs. Graham sends her compliments to you she is staying at Gallmans. They are well the lay (?) she would take it (illegible word) kind of you to write to her for she (illegible word) to her about you. Mrs. McLaren sends her compliments to you and she thinks you very ungratefull to her for you promised to write to her and you have not fulfilled your promise to her. Christina (illegible last name) is living in Glasgow now and her father and mother is there. Before she left Ochertyre she said I was to be sure and tell you when I wrote you that Easy (?) was married and had got a black silk dress. William is always at the mill of Torr and Hamilton is the miller there. I nearly forgot to tell you that Andrew Thomson is always living with Mrs. Graham he is quite stout yet. I think that is all the news that I have at this time but I will have more the next time when I write you. I hope if you ever write again that you will give me an account of what kind of wages you have and what kind of fashions you have in America. I wonder if you have any garibaldi hats or any crinoline petticoats. When you write to Ann give her my kindest remembrance, give my kindest wishes to them when you write. Remember us all to your father and your mother tell him that we often, often speak about the smith and wonder that he never wrote to us. Tell him to be sure and write to the Fishers and let them know how he is getting on and they will think it very kind of him. Tell him that we will soon be over to claim a night's lodging from him. Give my mother's kind love to your mother and remember me. Do not think that it was forgetfulness that I was so long in writing you, it was carelessness so no more but believe me Dear Mary ever yours affectionate friend M (?). Fisher.



Esther Shaw's account of her trip to Scotland. Esther was Mary Whitelaw Shaw's daughter and Mary Neill Whitelaw's granddaughter. She visited Scotland sometime between 1955 and 1960.

Shaw Trip taken sometime between 1955+1960 prob.
Esther's account of her trip with Midwest Tours that dealt with Scotland.
Excerpt from a Round Robin letter. *(Among the 6 Shaw children)*

You can't imagine how joyous it was to land in England - see English signs and understand what people were saying. At Newcastle a bus, with a Scotch driver, met us and stayed with us until London. We drove from Newcastle to Bim Edinburgh. Scotch landscape impressed me as dull grey stone buildings, low grey stone fences or walls winding over the fields. This dullness is brightened by vivid blue, white, red and orange flowers. Small yards were often entirely filled with flowers or vegetables with only a narrow path close to the house. It reminded me of G'ma Whitelaw's telling me how every square foot of Scotland was used for growing something useful; bushes were fruit bushes, shade trees were fruit trees, and vegetables often grew when you would expect flowers. From Edinburgh we made a bus trip to the Trossachs, passing Lochs Vennachar, Achray and Katrine.

Mabel had written me that if I were in "The Lady of the Lake" country I would be near G'ma Whitelaw's birthplace; that she lived at Mill O'Torr - which is close to Ochtertyre Castle or House; that "according to Uncle Henry Neill when he wrote g'pa Neill's obituary the only way G'pa Neill (a blacksmith) got cash enough at one time to get his numerous family to America" was he got the contract for putting an iron fence around the Ochtertyre Castle grounds. This castle or manor house is mentioned in Scott's Lady of the Lake when Fitz-James is riding back to Stirling from Loch Lomond and Elen's Isle. (Quote)"They rise, the banner'd towers of Donne; They sink in distant woodland woon Blair Drummond see the hoofs strike fire They sweep like breeze through Ochtertyre".

Neither Bert, the bus driver, nor anyone else I asked had ever heard of Ochtertyre, but when I reached the Trossachs, I asked a woman at the Inn. She said it was a house about 5 miles from Donne. (Actually it is between Donne and Stirling). I relayed this information to Bert, who gave me the map to study. We came to a castle like building set far back from the road and I thought it must be Ochtertyre. So I stopped at a house to ask, and the woman said "No, that was Blair Drummond, but that Ochtertyre was on down the road and that I'd see the sign". In answer to my question she said Och. still had an iron fence around it. Well, we found the sign and the house. The house was some distance from the road, so we didn't go up to it, although 3/4 of the 32 tour people wanted to see it by that time. When I get a picture they took of me and the sign, I'll send it along; I doubt if the house shows.

Of course I picked heather (both white and purple) and I'd send it along but it's falling to pieces. We saw the bridge over the Forth, largest in the United Kingdom.

Esther said the driver was especially nice to her when he learned of her Scotch back ground, possibly because she was the only one of Scotch ancestry. Most of them were Scandinavian. Esther said she had the singular distinction of being the only one on the tour "sans camera", but she saw and heard a lot while they were trying to get pictures, and she got lots of post cards.

SCOTLAND

When Bob and I arrived in Scotland in the summer of 80 we had the information you see in Esther's letter in the Robin. Armed with this knowledge we walked into a pub located between Edinburgh Castle and Holyrood House and asked the barkeep if he knew of someone who could help us find Ochertyre House and Mill O' Torr. He pointed out two fellows who were totally engrossed in a cricket match on the "telly". We said we didn't want to bother them while they were busy and we'd wait, but he laughed and said, "Oh, no, they've been watching it for two days, it's time they took a break!" I explained to them about Grandpa Neill building the fence at Ochertyre House which helped pay for the passage of Grandma Neill to America. They exclaimed, "Oh, doncha know lassie, that would be MAC Neill you should be sayin." And in fact they did give us excellent directions.

When we arrived at Ochertyre House the caretaker was there getting ready to open it up for "The Lady". He said we couldn't come in as she was not there, but that he would show us around the grounds. We were disappointed that he said he didn't know about the fence or the Mill O Torr, but he knew of someone who might. About that time, a station wagon came roaring up the lane. Low and behold, it was Joseph Stephenson, the very person who might know something as he had lived there 50 years. The caretaker flagged Joe down who changed his plans immediately. He was going "skirling" with two pretty teenagers and he sent them on their way. He piled in with us and we went down the lane to his house where he showed us his skirling stone that he kept by the front door of his cottage. On the way he had us stop the car by a herd of cattle grazing in a meadow. He told us he knew exactly where the "gate" of the _____ fence was because he had ruined his tractor on it years ago. He said it was meant to last as the iron posts were "leaded in stone" We then drove on to the Mill O Torr. He showed us the mill stones and explained that it was an "undershot" mill on the Firth of Tieth. He gave us directions to three graveyards in the area. We found all three, but could not decipher any family names as the stones were so eroded. It was serendipitous for us to meet Joseph Stephenson as I don't believe any other soul knew this information or would have been so interesting. Next time, I'll take some dates as that is the key that unlocks the door to our history.

*Net Shaw Harris
daughter of*



Dot Shaw Harrison and Joseph Stephenson
Between gates Grandpa Neill made at
Ochertyre House



Joe shows Grandpa Neill's handiwork...
Posts lead in stone. Dot takes notes.



Mill O Torr millstones



Firth of Tieth running through
Mill O Torr



Lane leading to Ochtertyre House



Ochtertyre House 1980



Crest on Ochtertyre House

1980 Letter from Esther Shaw to her family Robin, discussing Dot Harrison's photos of Scotland

Perhaps it will help explain the pictures if I quote what I read to her on the phone from my 1955 trip account. "Mabel had written me that if I were in the Lady of The Lakes Country, I would be near Grandma Whitelaw's birthplace, That she lived at Mill O' Torr which is close to Ochtertyre Castle or house. That according to uncle Henry Neill when he wrote Grandpa Neill's obituary the only way Grandpa Neill (a blacksmith) got cash enough at one time to get his numerous family to America was he got the contract for an iron fence around the castle grounds. This Castle is mentioned in The LADY OF THE LAKE when Fitz-James is riding back to Sterling from Lock Lomand and Ellisis Isle"

They rise the bannered towers of Doune

They sink in distant woodland soon

Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire

They sweep like breeze through Ochtertyre.



Now, of course, I'm thinking that gatepost and piece of fence were some of great Grandfather Neill's work.

If Dot does write a summary I wonder if she'd entrust her negatives to the mail so we could make pictures of the prints we'd like to have.

Gay-Wynn sent me a good picture of Ochtertyre House after she was there.

Oct 23, '84

Dear Mary and Margaret -
 I thought you would
 like a copy of the map I
 found (with a great deal of
 help from an interested young
 man in the Bureau of Registry
 in Edinburgh) of the exact
 location of Mill of Torr and
 Ochtertyre. We could not
 drive so we couldn't go
 out to find it but you
 will note it is not far
 from Stirling if you
 realize this surely map
 is much enlarged. The
 man said it is a farm
 on a country road.
 Love settling in after a
 wonderful 5 weeks of
 Long Jean



 HOME PRODUCED PURE FOOD ENERGY

Letter from Jean Young to Mary Elizabeth Williams Enerson and Margaret Emma Williams, 1984. Enclosed was a map of Stirling, Scotland. (see next page for a reproduction of the map.)

Note on back of map of Stirling

Mill-of-Torr. Where the Neills lived in Scotland until the last year before they sailed to the U. S. The last year was spent on the Ochtertyre estate; there John Neill (father) had a contract to build an iron fence on the estate and in this way he earned enough money to bring his entire family to the U. S. in a steam ship named the Edinburg, Captain Cusmins, and the trip to New York was made in two weeks in 1859. Ochtertyre is in "Lady of the Lake" Country. (note on back of map - probably Eleanor Whitford's handwriting.)

