Biography of John Wells Millspaugh

The following was originally intended as an appendix to Alvy Ray Smith, *Edwardian Riggses of America I: Elder Bethuel Riggs (1757–1835) of Morris County, New Jersey, and His Family Through Five Generations* (Boston: Newbury Street Press, 2006). It was removed for space considerations.

A book in the Family History Library in Salt Lake City entitled *Life of John W. (Wells) Millspaugh, 1818–1858*[1] contains several parts of relevance to this work. The first part is a photocopy of a printed article about a military man, "Fightin' Joe" Wheeler, and is disregarded here. The second part is a typescript of 20 pages, not including its title page, which page says, "Life of John W. (Wells) Millspaugh, 1818–1858, New York to Iowa, Dedicated to His Children & Descendants." Pages 1–16, the biography of John W. Millspaugh, are transcribed by me below. Pages 16–19 contain the autobiography of Leonard Armstrong, which appears separately. Clearly the (original) transcribers considered the Millspaugh biography to be the second part, or "chapter," of their book. Finally there appear two family group sheets, for the families of James and Cynthia (Corwin) Millspaugh, and of John Wells and Harriet A. (Armstrong) Millspaugh.

The transcribers were two researchers recognized by me as long-time contributors to the history of Bethuel Riggs and related families: Anna Isabel Mortenson Porter and Rose D. Kyle. Anna was loaned the original book, from which the (original) transcriptions of pages 1–19 were made, by Calvin Enos and Ruby (—) Stone, where Enos Stone was a descendant of Leonard and Rebecca (Riggs) Armstrong.

I transcribe the Porter–Kyle transcription below. Anna Porter attached a note to the following biography which reads, "Book loaned me by: C. Enos Stone, 181 Reta Dr., Grand Junction, Colorado." Calvin Enos Stone was a direct descendant of John Wells Millspaugh.

1. Porter, Anna I. M., and Rose D. Fisher Kyle. *Life of John W. (Wells) Millspaugh, 1818–1858*. Elfrida, Ariz.: 1967. Bound typescript. FHL 921.73 W564t.

Life of John W. Millspaugh

Dedication

To my children, who from infancy I have watched with tenderest solicitude, this little volume is affectionately dedicated.[2]

Part I.

John W. Millspaugh, the sixth child of James and Cynthia Corwin Millspaugh, was born in Orange County, New York, April 9, 1818.

The father was a teacher of vocal music, also a shoemaker, engaging in the latter occupation when his time was not taken up by his profession. His voice was remarkably fine, and the same talent was developed in Edward, the eldest son of John and Harriet Millspaugh. His voice was so near a reproduction of his grandfather's as to be mistaken for it by an old pupil who, hearing Edward singing in an adjoining room, said: "I hear James Millspaugh, my old teacher, singing."

The same gift has been transferred to several of the grandchildren.

Both parents of John were educated and refined. His mother was a cousin of Hon. Thomas Corwin, of Ohio, who was a prominent politician in the Whig party, a member of congress from his district, and who made himself felt by his powerful intellect and will, softened by his genuine humor.

John resembled his mother in features, and from her inherited his amiability of temper. The intellectuallity [sic] of both of his parents seemed to be given him by heredity in a marked degree.

At an early age of four, John, with the rest of the family, started in a wagon for Ohio.

The chubby little fellow was perched upon a high seat in front and was protected from the wind and sun by the cover of the typical mover's wagon, which consisted of hickory bows by cloth, the production of the family loom, woven by the hands of the mother.

With the enterprise which characterized the intelligent emigrant they pushed out to what was then the western country to find the hidden wealth, to clear the woods or forests, and seek new homes. After a journey

2. It is not known who the author of this biography is, perhaps a son or a daughter or some other person quite close to the family, but it is clear from the content that it is not an autobiography.

of three weeks, they arrived at Wheeling, W. Va., and there sold the horses and wagon and purchased a family boat, which made them a temporary home while they floated down the Ohio river.

The craft was simply a flat-boat with a comfortable house for family use and a stable for stock, separated only by a partition. A steering oar in the rear, with a couple of oars in front, were used for guiding the boat. Little John remembers how timidly he stepped upon the plank, by which means the prospective occupants were safely transferred to their novel quarters.

The attention of the family was attracted by the numberless gray squirrels, which were migrating from Virginia to Ohio across the river, upon coming in contact with the boat, unceremoniously, climbed up and friskly [sic] shook their water-soaked fur, seemin[g]ly well pleased to find themselves in so royal a place. The crew set about driving them into the water. John's father, in trying to evict one of the little intruders, lost his footing and fell into the water, much to the alarm of wife and children. But being at home in the water, he soon made his appearance and nimbly landed upon the boat. With the exception of being well soaked, he was none the worse for his impromptu bath.

They were several weeks making the journey, leisurely floating down stream by day, anchoring both ends of the boat to trees by night. If the sky was clear and there was good moonlight, they would avail themselves of both and travel by night. The roof of the house-boat was found by the family to be a delightful place for sitting when the weather was favorable. At last, early in the autumn in 1822, they debarked at the mouth of the Little Miami river just above Cincinnati, then but a small town.

When John was fifteen years of age, his father bought a woodland farm in Clearmont [Clermont] County, Ohio. Then began the arduous task of cutting and clearing the timber to make room for the crops, which must be grown to maintain the family. The rich leafmold was turned by a wooden plow. The necessities for the family grew in the fertile Ohio Valley. The maple tree furnished the sugar; the wild bee the honey; and crab-apples, plums, and wild berries, the table delicacies until fruit could be grown. The triangular beechnut, and unexcelled hickory nut whiled away many a cold winter evening, as the family gathered about the ample fireplace, where snapped and sputtered in a joyous manner the hickory logs, sending out a fragrant odor and an air of welcome and good cheer.

Tea and coffee were considered among the luxuries. The wheat was cut with a sickle, threshed with a f[l]ail, carried to the mill in a sack on horseback. By law, the miller was allowed one-eighth of the grain for grinding. The bread was baked before the fire-place in a reflector or in a brick oven. The broom of those days was made of a hickory stick, cut the length of the ordinary broom. Beginning at the top, the stick was shaved downward until the upper part was of proper size for the handle. The splinters were turned down and bound securely about the lower end.

The childhood and youth of John were spent in the usual way of boys of the time, unless it may have been that the ambition of his parents for their children was much in advance of the ordinary pioneer, and the opportunities which the country schools then afforded were eagerly sought.

At the age of twenty, he learned to manufacture chairs by hand, in which occupation he continued until the Cincinnati chair factory began making them by machinery, and he could not compete with them in prices. Mrs. Millspaugh still has, as a memento [sic], a chair made by his hands and presented to her during the days of their courtship.

When Mr. Millspaugh reached his majority, he joined an organization known as the Washingtonian Temperance Society, having early learned to dislike the prevailing custom of the use of liquor. He was boarding with a brother-in-law, a deacon of the Baptist Church. Ebin Turpin owned a distillery in the vicinity and wished to employ Mr. Millspaugh to work the distillery, but he declined, saying the occupation would be distasteful to him. The proprietor offered him higher wages, but he replied:

"I cannot, at any price, engage in the manufacture of liquor." The brother-in-law and Mr. Turpin ridiculed what they called his fanaticism, but with the unflinching firmness to which he adhered to the right later in life, he stood unmoved by argument, and was told by his sister's husband to seek another boarding place. He lived to see both men succumb to the appetites they had formed.

A letter written at Scotchtown, N.Y., March 26, 1830, by his grandparents, Eli and Dorothy Corwin, to his parents in Ohio, may show that early in life, this principle was instilled into his heart. A portion of the letter reads thus: "We are glad to hear that knowledge is increasing amongst you by the preaching of the gospel and missionary exertions. We hear that the Rev. J. M. Rowland has organized a church in your town of eight members. We learn that the temperance societies are organizing in your state

Temperance societies are beginning to be formed amongst us and we are endeavering [sic] to root out the monster. Who would not lend a helping hand? We have lately had three deaths from intemperance. Tompkins Owens was found dead near Stonyford bridge lately. Last Saturday morning, Shoemaker John Brown's wife was found dead in her bed by intemperance, and many around are seen to be going to destruction as fast as they can."

Being desirous of acquiring a more liberal education, he learned the carpenter's trade, which enabled him to lay by money with which he attended an academy established by James H. Parker, at Mount Hygiene, near New Richmond, Ohio.

Miss Armstrong was also educated within its walls, who, like Mr. Millspaugh, was eager for the acquaintance of knowledge. Here began a frien[d]ship which culminated in marriage of John W. Millspaugh and Miss Harriet Armstrong, June 25, 1843. From the home of Miss Armstrong, where the marriage ceremony was performed, the bridal party went to Mr. Millspaugh's home where a reception was given them. While on their way they passed the home of U.S. Grant, a hewn log-cabin with a huge chimney outside, but little did they dream of the bright future that awaited this hero.

After the death of Mr. Millspaugh's parents, he assumed the care and education of his younger sister, Charlotte, sending her to Parker academy, where she received a liberal education. She is the only surviving sister at the present time.

Mr. Parker, who had been president of the Parker Academy for fifty years, visited his daughter, the wife of Rev. Carrier, pastor of the First Baptist Church at Winfield, Kansas, in the summer of 1888. Mr. Millspaugh met him at the Chautauqua Assembly conversing with him for some time before recognizing him.

Mrs. Millspaugh's father sold his large tract of land in Ohio and bought six hundred acres of Indiana land, giving each of his children forty acres. To this tract near Booneville, Ind., Mr. Millspaugh and his young wife journeyed in 1846. Mr. Millspaugh with Mr. Spellman and Mr. Holbrook, his brother-in-laws [sic], formed a partnership in a flouring mill, known as the Custom Merchant's Mill. Mr. Millspaugh conceived the idea of putting the flour into hundred-pound sacks, buying the cloth in quantities, directly from the factory and hiring women and girls to make them.

The mill proved quite a lucrative investment; but as the supply of flour exceeded the demand, it became necessary to send the surplus to the Ohio River to be transferred to other points. The road from the mill to the river was in the rich loam, and much of the year no heavy loads could be carried over it. Mr. Millspaugh with others, formed a stock-company and built a plank road to the river.

With true public spirit, he assisted in organizing a church and academy at Booneville. He was always identified with the movements that appealed to his sense of justice; and his honest heart was sorely tried at the grievous wrongs he saw perpetrated on slaves, fleeing from Kentucky to Indiana.

He, with several of the abolitionists, saw the sheriff of the county parading in the public square a half-starved negro with a rope attached to one of his legs. The anti-slavery element were justly indignant and demanded an explanation of the sheriff's acts. He replied with oaths and threats. It was near sundown and the abolitionists succeeded in drawing the crowd to a corn field while the negro mysteriously disappeared. Mr. Millspaugh, assisted by the organized anti-slavery people, though much less in numbers than the pro-slavery men, had successfully hidden him. When morning dawned, the houses of the "black abolitionists" were searched, but failing to find the slave, they suspected a young lawyer of knowing where he was, and bribed him into revealing the hiding place. The sheriff lodged the black man in jail before his friends knew what had happened. It is needless to add that by certain suggestive remarks on the part of the indignant anti-slavery men, the traitorous attorney sought another location and ever afterward absented himself from the village.

Eliza, spoken of in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," crossed the river into Ohio when Mrs. Millspaugh was a little girl. Her father attended the trial, prosecuted by John Joliff, a half-brother of Mrs. Millspaugh, who took the case without a hope of renumeration [sic], but the citizens of Cincinnati amply paid him for his services. Mr. and Mrs. Millspaugh often met the Beecher girls of the Lane Seminary fame.

Mr. Millspaugh took the contract for building the court house at Booneville, Ind., which structure is still standing. He and his partner went to Cincinnati to procure materials for the building and on their return trip on the river, they met a Southern gentleman who was in search of a lady to take charge of a female seminary in the South. Upon learning that Mrs. Millspaugh had been a teacher, he agreed to pay her a yearly salary of

$1,200 and furnish a comfortable residence. But the family of little ones was first on the mother's mind and consequently the offer was rejected. Unfortunately, Mr. Millspaugh and his partner contracted cholera on the boat, and not knowing the danger of contagion, several took the disease at Booneville and some deaths occurred.

At this time, the means of communication were quite limited. In 1848, between Cincinnati and Plainville, Ohio, Mr. and Mrs. Millspaugh took their first trip by rail. The cars were much less comfortable than now, and the rough track was built of wooden rails, capped with strap iron. It took an hour and a half to make the journey of twelve miles.

In 1855, Mr. Millspaugh decided to look for a home that would be more healthful, and accordingly sold his milling interests, and in company with his two brothers-in-law, Riggs and Spellman, loaded horses, furniture, and all on a steamboat. They traveled down the Ohio to its mouth, thence up the Mississippi to Alexandria, just below the mouth of the Des Moines river. Here the wagons were put together and when the families had been comfortably quartered in a school house, which they had obtained permission to occupy, the men started on a prospecting tour over the beautiful prairies of Iowa, where nature had been lavish with her gifts.

They lay like a sea of rolling green, flecked here and there with violets and golden buttercups and numberless other varieties. One who has never seen a vast expanse of prairie in the early spring before the invading hand of industry has disturbed the sod, has missed one of the fairest sights that the Divine has painted on nature's canvass [sic].

Coming from the woodlands of Indiana, the prospectors could but feel the vastness of the land to which they had come, and with such environments the Western man has become distinguished for his broad views which he cannot, if he would, prevent with so much vastness about him.

The land office was located at Des Moines which was only a suggestion of a city. After spending a month sightseeing they found a desirable location at Mount Pleasant and bought thirty-nine acres of land, dividing it equally among themselves. A large barn was first built where the three families lived until brick houses could be erected. Imaginary partitions consisting of chalk marks separated the families.

Many novel and annoying experiences which the early settlers encountered, were not escaped; but, "though some days must be dark and dreary," yet in due time their respective homes were completed and the

furniture brought from the East gave the home a familiar look, although amid new faces and new scenes.

As all communication must be by stage, it being so early for railroads there, a plank road was built from Mt. Pleasant to Burlington, a distance of twenty-eight miles. With so much energy and public spirit, the state did not long remain without more rapid means of transit and it was but a short time until the C. B. & Q. railroad was completed, bringing with it from the East rapid immigration.

Mr. Millspaugh engaged in selling lumber and brick. The streams were yet unbridged, and Mr. Millspaugh took contracts for building four bridges that gave employment to a good many men and proved a paying investment for the contractor. The same year he also built several dwelling houses.

But the field not being large enough, he looked elsewhere for business. Accordingly, he sought a place where he might engage in his old occupation of milling, being a very competent millwright. He found the mill he wanted on the Skunk river at Oakland. Mr. Spellman and Mr. Riggs at first discouraged him, but, after looking over the situation they formed a partnership with him. They bought the establishment, sawmill and gristmill combined, and a half section of partly wooded land for $18,000. The three homes at Mt. Pleasant were given in part pay and the rest in cash. The sawing of the lumber paid a good dividend on the investment. The flouring mill consisted of four run of stones and was very renumerative [sic]. After the timber had been pretty thoroughly cut and sawed, they dispensed with the sawmill and in its place a woolen factory was fitted up. A competent man by the name of Osborne from Ohio was employed to take charge, and all kinds of work pertaining to that branch of industry was done from the carding of wool to the manufacture of yarn and cloth. Wool at that time was worth from sixty cents to one dollar a pound.

At the time that Mr. Millspaugh and his partners took possession of the mill at Oakland, there was a ferry across the river just above the dam. The boat was old and unsafe and in trying to cross the swollen river full of floating ice, with six men on board, lodged in mid-stream and could be moved neither forward nor backward. By his coolness and daring, Mr. Millspaugh and one companion succeeded in rescuing all. He then established the ferry below the dam, and built a new boat that his two sons, Frank and Aubrey, managed, securing safety to the public.

JOHN WELLS MILLSPAUGH

Part II.

At the time of Lincoln's first election, party spirit ran high, causing intense excitement. Mr. Millspaugh, being familiar with military tactics, organized a company of militia, and was elected captain. There were rumors that the Confederate general, Greene, who was committing depredations in Missouri, would, no doubt, invade Iowa. Mr. Millspaugh was ordered to keep a sharp lookout for him, but, not deeming it necessary to take the company with him, he set out with two loyal men to investigate.

The first night in camp, they learned that there had been an engagement at Athens, a few being killed and wounded, but that Gen. Greene had been routed by Col. Moore. News of the attack had reached his home and, in addition, the report that Mr. Millspaugh had been killed. Part of the company set out in great haste to learn the fate of their captain, arriving in Athens at midnight. The Captain being awakened by the familiar voices of the men assured them of his safety.

The next morning, after being cared for, they started on their trip. After marching for sometime, they met a company of men who, like themselves, on account of rain, had no colors displayed and who were also without uniforms. Looks of inquiry were exchanged, not knowing whether they were friends or foes. But the Captain, hurriedly drawing his men into line and mounting a fallen tree hurrahed for the Union. A response of like tenor proved them to be friends, who, who alarmed by the long absence of their comrades had come out to re-enforce them. Each squad of men continued its march, and with the exception of being mistaken for rebels while wading the Des Moines river, Capt. Milispaugh's tired and ragged men reached home without further adventure.

After resting and better equipping the militia, Mr. Millspaugh again started in pursuit of Greene, furnishing a team and wagon for carrying supplies. Mr. Riggs volunteered as driver. They crossed over into Missouri and joined Col. Moore; the Union force then numbering twelve hundred men. They arrived at Palmyra, but by some delay, the supply train failed to meet them depriving the soldiers of food for nearly two days. Capt. Millspaugh laughingly asserts that he never tasted so good a biscuit as the one he paid fifty cents for. They were entertained by a colony of Germans. The women worked half the night bringing water and preparing food for the famished soldiers who had marched all day in the dust with scarcely any water. Col. Moore asked for quarters for his men in a large nearby vacant

warehouse. The owner refused, but upon being allowed only ten minutes in which to reverse his decision concluded that "discretion was the better part of valor" and the doors were opened.

Joining Gen. Pope, they pushed on, taking residents for guides who were encouraged to give truthful statements by being assured that if their information proved false they would be instantly shot. Halting at the farm house one night, Pope inquired of the men who came to the door how far it was to Gen. Greene's camp and how the General prospered. A woman, from within, very indiscreetly said, "Gen. Greene is such a good man that we are helping him all we can. He has sixteen hundred men and more coming all the time, and he will be successful." This was just what Pope wished to ascertain. After arresting the father and son, they pushed on rapidly to Greene's camp, which they found deserted, evidently in much haste, for it was well provided with supplies both for the men and the horses. They pursued and forced Greene to cross the Missouri river. Now, that the services, for which they had been ordered out, were satisfactorily performed, nothing remained but to disperse and go home. Col. Moore provided transportation on the Mississippi river for Capt. Millspaugh and his men.

Upon their return to Oakland, they were duly honored by the citizens and the legislature of Iowa voted the captain $500 for his services. The captain pressed his claim in the senate, for he had furnished team, wagon and driver on the expedition, but, although recognizing its justness, that body failed to pass the bill. The Captain, with his love of humor, dryly remarks in a letter addressed to an Iowa senator, touching upon this subject, "It is customary in loaning a hat for contributions to have it returned."

Mr. Millspaugh now sold his share in the mill at Oakland and went to Mt. Pleasant and bought a home adjoining a Presbyterian Female Seminary where the daughters had a good opportunity for an education.

After having established the family, he wished to enlist in the Union army; however, the thought of leaving his wife with the care of a large family prevented him. But when James Buchanan declared there was nothing obligatory upon the government to keep the states dissevered, he appealed to his wife, with the same love of country that her husband bore, consented to his enlistment saying, "I can get along during your absence. Your country needs you." This evidence of womanly heroism is fitly expressed by Thomas Buchanan Read:

JOHN WELLS MILLSPAUGH

"The wife who girds her husband's sword,
'Mid little ones who weep and wonder,
And bravely speaks the cheering word,
What though her heart be rent asunder;
Doomed nightly in her dreams to hear
The bolts of war around him rattle—
Has shed as precious blood as e'er
Was poured upon the field of battle."

After the birth of their youngest son, April 27, 1862, whom Mr. Millspaugh, in his loyalty, named Union, he enlisted September 2, 1862, in Co. H. 37th Iowa Vol. Infantry. He was active in recruiting a company whose wish it was that he should be captain, but he declined in favor of William Henshaw who had served in the war of 1812. However, he accepted the appointment of first lieutenant, and his brother-in-law, Alfred Riggs, second lieutenant, both receiving their commissions from the governor of Iowa.

The 37th Regiment consisted of men not under forty-five years of age, and, consequently, exempt from military service. They were appropriately called "The Gray Beards." They repaired to Muscatine, Iowa, and these fine, stalwart men were in striking contrast to many of the boyish soldiers, who, under the rigid discipline of military life, become men prematurely. Honor to all, whether old or young, who went from comfortable homes to lives of hardship and uncertainty.

The first rebels that the Gray Beards encountered drew forth remarks of surprise like this: "If the Yanks have many such regiments as this, we might as well stop fighting and go home."

They remained in Muscatine three months preparing for active service and in December 1862, were ordered to St. Louis and quartered in Benton Barracks. Lieutenant Millspaugh and one hundred men were sent to guard McDowell College that was used for a prison and situated near the present site of the Union depot. While stationed here, the Lieutenant was taken seriously ill with quinsy. Mrs. Millspaugh and son, Edward, went to take care of him, but her services were hardly needed, so faithful was Lieutenant RIGGS.

The wife of a Confederate general who resided in St. Louis, assisted by several other women, had made her house the headquarters for smugglers and Southern sympathizers. They were arrested and the house became

their prison. The duty of guarding them devolved upon Lieutenant Riggs and Millspaugh, and proved very unpleasant, for the women were always free to speak their minds.

For a time during the summer, the Lieutenant guarded a bridge on the Raleigh and Missouri Pacific Railroad, twenty miles from Franklin. On July 4th, the citizens gave the soldiers a picnic and contributed freely for their enjoyment. One free-hearted farmer appeared upon the scene bearing a dressed hog on his shoulder, while another brought a twenty-gallon jug of whiskey. This the Lieutenant declined accepting. Mr. Millspaugh's fearless address, during the course of the festivities, when the people demanded a speech, upon the issues of the day could hardly be appreciated by those present who were of rebel inclinations, but was vigorously applauded by the Unionists.

About this time Lieut. Millspaugh was intrusted with one of the most responsible positions that he held during the war. Eighty rebel officers were placed under his care who were to be taken from St. Louis to Sandusky, Ohio, to be placed in the prison on Johnson's Island. A special train was provided for the purpose, consisting of six coaches, with six guards in each coach. One prisoner jumped from the train and escaped. Upon arriving at Chicago, it was with difficulty that the guards could force back the copperheads who, when the soldiers were ordered to make a bayonet charge upon them, declared that it was a pretty free country when a man could not speak to his friends.

The journey was a hard one as the Lieutenant and his assistant were obliged to go through the cars often to count the prisoners, and during the journey of two days, on account of a defective engine, had been lengthened to four, they had slept but little.

The Confederates were intelligent and affable gentlemen and expressed their gratitude for the kind treatment they had received. And one who, even under the circumstances could not repress his love for a joke said that he would like to return the Lieutenant's kindness under the same circumstances, adding, "This Northern country is fine. All you need is the nigger to work it."

After getting his receipt for the transfer of the prisoners he returned to St. Louis and was ordered to capture two deserters from the Union army who were recruiting men for the Confederates near Alton. He captured one with little difficulty, but was warned that the other would fight. Hav-

ing located him, he took two men and went to his house, placing one at each window, while he knocked at the door.

A voice from within inquired what was wanted.

"I have some business with you," replied the Lieutenant.

"You cannot see me tonight," was the response.

A movement within indicated that he was trying to make his escape from a door on the other side of the house. The Lieutenant ran around just in time to get a shot in the face that blinded him, and from which he lost the sight of one eye. The deserter escaped in the brush and was afterward captured.

In 1863, the old penitentiary at Alton was converted into a military prison. It was surrounded by five acres of ground enclosed by a stone wall fifteen feet high and six feet in thickness. The Lieutenant was appointed provost marshal in charge and $10,000 worth of supplies, consisting of clothing, stoves, and eatables were placed in his hands. They did everything they could to make the prisoners comfortable. Those who can remember the winter of 1863 can but look back with horror upon the sufferings of many of the Union prisoners in the South who were denied the privilege of cutting and burning the timber which grew in such abundance at the prison. At Alton, the thermometer was often 20 degrees below zero, it being necessary to carry hot coffee to guards every half hour to keep them from freezing.

Five hundred prisoners were quartered on the third floor and with the fertility of mind comes from confinement and inaction, they devised a plan of escape. They were supplied with ticks filled with straw for beds. Some of these they cut into strips sufficiently strong to carry the weight of a man. The rope thus made was one hundred feet long. Then making a hole in the roof, they attached one end to the chimney and the other end about the body of one of the prisoners and lowered him to the ground in safety. The guard detected him, although in the night, and ordered a halt, and the disappointed fellow was lodged in a cell.

The Lieutenant instituted a search but the rope was nowhere to be found. The prisoners all claimed to know nothing about it. The guards were instructed to lock the doors and to withold food and water until the rope was delivered. The men lost their breakfast and dinner time came but no rope was seen. About four o'clock, a voice called out, "Capt. Millspaugh, here's your rope," and someone threw it down. The prisoners

were then marched to the large dining room and bountifully served with the same food that the government issued the Union army men.

Rather a singular attempt at escape was made at another time. In spite of a good sanitary conditions as could exist, many deaths occurred among the prisoners. The undertaker came in each morning bringing several empty coffins that he deposited on one side of the gateway, while the ones containing the bodies ready for burial were placed on the other.

Two young prisoners, anticipating escape, carried two of the coffins containing the bodies of the deceased to the side occupied by the empty ones, putting in their stead two empty ones in which they deposited themselves. These caskets were pine boxes with a board at the top fastened lightly with nails. As an old man went out daily without a guard to bury these bodies, they thought they could easily gain their liberty. No doubt they would have done so, had it not been that on this particular occasion one of the surgeons had ordered the socks taken from the feet of the dead to help supply the need of those articles.

Unfortunately, the boxes containing the two live men were searched first. The superstitious old fellow was much terrified to see the first corpse jump out of the box and run for cover, but when the second performed in the same manner he flatly refused to go on with his duties; but upon being assured that the rest were actually dead, he, rather gingerly, finished his task.

The Colonel dryly remarked: "There must be a funeral if the two men so much desire it," and Mr. Millspaugh set out to find the resurrected men. He found but one and he was placed in a coffin the next morning and the cover tightly nailed down. He was then carried out, when the Colonel dryly remarked: "Undoubtedly his friends would like to have a last look at their comrade." He was brought again within the enclosure and when the top was lifted he jumped and ran amid the shouts and jeers of his fellow prisoners. While attempts others made, they all proved equally unsuccessful.

A convenient and comfortable house having been furnished for the Lieutenant's headquarters during his stay in Alton, Mrs. Millspaugh and family came and spent the winter of 1863 with him. Mrs. Millspaugh thought the children would profit much by the experience.

From Alton the Gray Bear[d]s were sent to Memphis, Tenn., going from Alton to Cairo by rail over the Illinois Central Railroad, and from

Cairo to Memphis by boat. They were quartered in a public park that surrounded an orphan asylum, and beautifully shaded by a natural grove of Magnolia, with its glossy evergreen leaves and fragrant, pure white blossoms. This institution was under the management of a loyal Pennsylvania woman, who, at the breaking out of the Civil War had been deserted by the disloyal board, but, with the aid of the older children, still carried on the work. The officers found it an excellent boarding place.

One of the members of the board had quite a quantity of sugar in hogsheads which he sold to her at three cents per pound to apply on her salary that had been unpaid since the beginning of the war. With shrewd financial ability she sold her sugar to the soldiers at an advance of twenty-five cents a pound. While nearly every other place in the city was subject to molestation, the asylum and park were never disturbed.

The 37th Iowa and two other regiments surrounded the city, the pickets reaching a distance of fifteen miles.

During the month of August there were ten consecutive days of rain that necessarily caused a great amount of sickness, and the Lieutenant was not spared. When barely able to be around, General Forrest planned a grand surprise and rode through the Union picket lines, taking advantage of the fog of early morning for his attack. He rode into the houses where the Union officers were staying and captured several. The pickets were drawn in one mile from town and no one allowed to cross without a pass. Lieutenant Millspaugh, acting as Adjutant, was ordered with his regiment into the city, although advised by his physician to remain quiet. The excitement caused by the raid seemed to act as a tonic and the Lieutenant felt no evil effects except a little fatigue. Company H, of the Gray Beards, guarded important bridges near the city and the 8th Iowa protected a prison where many Confederates were kept. Forrest made his attack upon the prison, hoping to liberate the prisoners, but was promptly repulsed and driven back from the city.

In 1864 the Gray Beards were ordered to Indianapolis, making the trip as far as Cairo, Ill., by boat. The captain of the boat had become a Unionist as a matter of expediency, not of principle, as, until the Federal troops had taken possession of the boat, the stars and bars floated [d]efiantly from the head-mast. He gruffly received his passengers, assuring them that they could not go up on deck as the fire from the engines would burn

their clothing. The Colonel, however, gave the men permission to go above and make themselves comfortable.

The steamer went slowly, and after two days the supply of wood gave out, The captain demanded a guard to be sent out to reconnoitre for fear of "bushwhackers," who made it exceedingly uncomfortable for the Federalists on the Mississippi. The Colonel seeing that the captain intended to cause unnecessary delay, sent one hundred men under Lieutenant Millspaugh, who took a circuit through the woods while the negroes carried the heavy sticks on board, running as fast as their legs could carry them. The mate knocked one black fellow into the river and was informed by the Colonel, in no very mild terms, that no more cruelty would be tolerated during the trip. The boat was due to arrive at Cairo in the morning, but did not reach there until noon. The soldiers asked for breakfast and the captain replied that the supplies were out. The Colonel went below, and, in a remarkably short time, breakfast came up unusually well cooked.

From Cairo the regiment traveled by rail to Indianapolis, Lieutenant Riggs remaining in the city too sick to go farther. Lieutenant Millspaugh was sent to Cincinnati, where he again took the responsible position of guarding prisoners. Thirty of the inmates were the noted conspirators who met at Windsor hotel in Canada and there laid plans to liberate the Confederate prisoners at Camp Douglas, Chicago and at other points, and who were arrested in Chicago in 1864.

There can be no higher compliment paid a man than to be placed in such important positions as Lieutenant Millspaugh filled from the beginning of his career. He could not have filled these had not his superior officers imposed great confidence in his integrity as well as his ability.

The keeper who had been in charge before Lieutenant Millspaugh, had shown no quarter and had kept the prisoners heavily fettered. But the Lieutenant, by firm but kind treatment, won them over to him, and after all had signed a written parole not to attempt to escape and promising good behavior, he took off the chains during the day.

Among the prisoners was Colonel Anderson, of Kentucky, a hot-headed Southerner, whose wife applied one day for permission to speak to her husband. She was shown into the office and the Colonel brought down. They chatted pleasantly for a time in the presence of the Lieutenant, when suddenly they commenced a hurried whispered conversation which was instantly cut short. The wife soon after retired and the Colonel

was returned to his quarters. Before night one of the conspirators, Colonel Marmaduke, asked permission to confer with the Lieutenant in the office. In a few well-chosen words he warned Mr. Millspaugh of impending danger, but, upon being closer questioned, would only say: "This will cost me my life if I am found out." That night the guards were tripled and extra men, resting on their arms, occupied the office and corridors. The next morning, when the Sergeant was making his rounds, Colonel Anderson, by some mysterious movement, secured the Sergeant's revolver and shot himself. The excited Sergeant fled to the office and told what had happened. When the Lieutenant asked the cause of his rashness, he said: "Last night I vowed to leave this prison, dead or alive. Some one betrayed me; I know not whom." He was taken to a hospital and his wife summoned, but he lived only twelve hours. After his death, Colonel Marmaduke disclosed the plot. Colonel Anderson and six others were to overpower, disarm and kill the guards above; enter the office and take the Lieutenant and guards below, and make their escape. Marmaduke had been taken into their confidence, but remembered with gratitude the kindness received from the hands of Mr. Millspaugh, and his promise not to escape, which he held sacred.

The Lieutenant speaks of his last painful duty at the prison and would gladly have it obliterated from his memory, but military orders must be obeyed. One poor, ignorant fellow, more unfortunate than the rest, who had been an accomplice in the hands of shrewd men, was sentenced to be shot. President Lincoln's warm heart was touched and he postponed the sad duty, but at last the time came when it must be done. The priest accompanied the unfortunate man to the place of execution where, with hands unbound, he knelt beside his own coffin and was shot and buried.

Mr. Millspaugh's last service in the war was to guard the Indians at Davenport, Iowa, who had been connected with the massacre in Minnesota. The camp was bounded on one side by a lake into which these great swarthy fellows would wade and catch turtles, which they cooked and ate with much evident relish.

If a stray dog chanced in camp they at once took chase and it seldom escaped, usually making them a savory dish.

Mr. Millspaugh had case not to cherish friendly feelings toward these Indians. David Holbrook, a warm friend of his early manhood, went to the scene of the massacre with horses and wagon to assist in giving the

bodies of the dead decent burial. He found one woman who had been scalped, but who was still living. They supposed hostilities had ceased and camped for the night. Under the cover of darkness, and before they were aware of it, the Indians came up and shot their horses. They hastily concealed themselves behind the bodies of their fallen animals and, for twenty-four hours Mr. Holbrook discharged the weapons that the others loaded and kept the enemies at bay until help arrived. In the skirmish that followed Mr. Holbrook was missed, was found by Mrs. Millspaugh's brother, Richard Armstrong, among the dead.

During all of Lieutenant Millspaugh's service he held the respect of his men and superior officers, and at Davenport, Iowa, on the 24th of May, 1865, he received his honorable discharge. He returned to Mt. Pleasant and sought the quiet and retirement of home life. Later he moved to Salem, Iowa, and there remained until the death of Mrs. Millspaugh's parents.

Part III[.]

Dr. Hawkins, who afterward married Mina, Mr. Millspaugh's oldest daughter, went to Kansas in 1870 and took up two claims in Cowley County – one for himself and one for his prospective father-in-law. In February, 1871, Mr. Millspaugh left Iowa for Kansas going as far as Emporia by rail, which was then the terminus of the Santa Fe Railroad. Here he was met by several young men who had driven through, and after loading the wagons with flour and provisions, they set out on foot for Cowley County.

The western country was in a lawless condition. Criminals fleeing from [j]ustice sought refuge here. While at Emporia the company were told that life and property were unsafe, and were shown the new made graves by the roadside of some who had recently been killed. But they were not easily frightened or discouraged and reached their destination with no thrilling adventures. Mr. Millspaugh and Dr. Hawkins built a house on the latter's claim, and, in the summer of 1871, Mr. Millspaugh built the first ferry at Oxford, though at that time there was nothing to indicate a town.

Many buffaloes were then running over the western plains and, attracted by the novelty which the hunt would afford and a desire to replenish their supply of meat, several of the young men, accompanied by Mr. Millspaugh, set out in June, 1871, on a buffalo hunt. The first night they camped on the Ninnescah river in Sumner County, where they shot two antelope, finding the meat of very delicate flavor. They crossed the old

Texas cattle trail, where the grass was completely destroyed to the width of one hundred feet by the immense herds driven over it on their way to Kansas City.

Coming to the top of a little sand hill Mr. Millspaugh, by the aid of his field glass, could see ten or twelve miles and in the distance there was a large herd of buffalo quietly grazing. As the hun[t]ers neared the herd Mr. Millspaugh had a good opportunity to study the habits of the animals and to notice the fine instinct they displayed. When the herd moved from one place to another they walked leisurely along, one after the other, wearing deep paths where they were accustomed to tread. Mr. Millspaugh observed that the older and larger males stood out some distance from the herd, seeming to be on guard; for if there was the slightest cause for alarm, which, no doubt, was detected by the scent rather than by sound, they would drop their heads and rush to the herd, and these, too, assuming the same attitude, would begin a mad stampede, before which nothing could stand if the herd was large.

Leaving Mr. Millspaugh and one companion in camp to prepare bread, the rest of the party set out. During the day, he saw a small herd of buffalo near the camp and concealing himself behind a little sandy elevation, waited for them to come within range. Just as he was ready to shoot, a shot from the opposite direction started them directly toward them. He thought death was inevitable, but discharging six shots into the head, was much relieved to see them change their course about a rod to one side of his hiding place.

Night came on, but no hunters returned. Mr. Millspaugh and his companion fired guns, hoping to attract the attention of their friends whom they feared were either lost or had been surprised by the Indians, but to no avail. The next morning they started out with horses and wagon to look for them. After 10 a.m. they sighted three men, or Indians, they were unable to tell which. It proved to be the company of enthusiasts.

Soon after starting on the day before they had killed and dressed a buffalo and covered it with prairie grass, thinking to get it on their return. They pushed on until, before they were aware of it, the sun was setting. Then they camped for the night, and at dawn set out in search of the camp and their companions. They had gained some experience, but had lost their buffalo meat and, strange to say, had also lost their relish for the hunt, unless the whole party were together.

Before they returned, home, they succeeded in killing ten buffaloes, and the flesh when salted and smoked made many a palatable dish at their bachelor headquarters.

The following September, Mr. Millspaugh returned to Iowa to get his family. Doctor Hawkins and Miss Mina Millspaugh were married and set out immediately for their new home, where the Doctor found patients, awaiting his return. He had little rest night or day and in a short time was taken with a congestive chill from which he did not recover.

On the 1st of March, 1872, Mr. Millspaugh, with his two oldest boys then at home, Frank aged sixteen and Aubrey fourteen, started with a wagon and three horses for Kansas.When the wagon was loaded and waiting at the door, Mr. Millspaugh said to his wife, "If you object to this trip, we will give up our plans for the West and remain in Iowa," for he knew something of the hardships of the women in a new state. But with the same strength and decision of character she had always manifested when the good of the family was in question she preferred to make the sacrifice.

When the men had traveled but a day, the snow fell to the depth of one foot, and Mr. Millspaugh told his sons they might return home and come on the train with the rest of the family, but the sturdy boys remained with him. Although the journey was long and wearing, it filled the desire in their boyish hearts for adventure.

Upon their arrival in Cowley county they lived in the house with Mina until other plans could be made. They set to work planting fruit trees on the farm of Wm. Martin.

The family came on in April and at a meeting held in Mr. Millspaugh's house the township was organized and named Vernon.

While Mr. Millspaugh was in Iowa, his claim was jumped by T. B. Myers, but the matter was adjusted by the dividing the land equally between them.

The boys went to breaking the prairie and in the midst of their work, one of the horses died. They heard of nine head of oxen that were for sale, and induced their father to buy them, giving his note for $250 at 30 per cent. Mr. Millspaugh bought the claim owned by his daughter, Mina, and the boys broke two hundred acres for themselves and over eight hundred acres for other farmers. They received three dollars an acre for their work and boarded themselves in a little house built on runners that they drew

around from place to place. When the breaking was done the oxen were fattened and sold for $50 per head.

In the spring of 1873, Mr. Millspaugh took a contract for building a flouring mill for the firm known as Blandon & Bliss. Swedes were set to work building the foundation, but, unfortunately, the firm engaged in a lawsuit and Mr. Millspaugh was appointed receiver by the court. Mr. Blandon put an injunction on proceeding with the work, but Mr. Bliss got this dissolved. In speaking of it, Mr. Millspaugh says, "While I was trying to build a dam, Blandon's lawyers were down at the river furiously damning me."

He proceeded with his work, Judge Campbell fining him five dollars for contempt of court, which the citizens paid, so eager were they for completion of the mill. Mr. Bliss afterward bought Mr. Blandon's share and settled the dispute. While Mr. Millspaugh was working on the mill at Winfield, his son, Frank, was attending school there. He moved the little house on runners down and boarded his father and himself.

At that early time cordial sociability existed among the settlers, although they were widely separated. The young people from Winfield frequently went out to Mr. Millspaugh's. Mrs. Millspaugh remembers one social event when twelve were expected to spend the evening. A luncheon had been prepared, but when the party arrived, there were forty instead of twelve. Miss Mary was seriously annoyed at the prospect of so few loaves for so many, but the matter must have been happily adjusted, for this was only the beginning of many merry times.

After a few years of successful labor, Mr. Millspaugh sold his farm of two hundred and forty acres for $7,500 and purchased the one owned by Mr. Martin, eating of the fruits first planted of the orchards which he and his sons planted.

In speaking of the grasshopper year of 1874, he says, "It might have been worse." He had raised and stored in his grainary between two and three hundred bushels of wheat, and had growing fifty acres of corn just earing when the grasshoppers came in such numbers as to partially obscure the sun. The corn was swept away in three days. Frank and Aubrey tried to cut some to save for fodder, but the grasshoppers flew with such force into their faces they were obliged to give it up. A young orchard was completely stripped of its foliage. The married children in Iowa sent generous supplies. Mr. Millspaugh received word that a box of freight from

Cincinnati was awaiting him at Witchita. He sold a cow and was thereby able to pay the freight of sixteen dollars, but the value of the contents was one hundred dollars. These gifts were shared with their less fortunate neighbors.

It is a ple[a]sant sight to see the placid face of the old gentleman as he tells of the kindly dealings of Providence in that year and the one following that was a year of plenty.

During the battle for temperance, he esteemed it a privilege to give his talents, time and moray to help create the right temperance sentiment among the people. The liquor element, backed by money, left nothing undone to defeat prohibition. But the anti-liquor people organized, arranged a plan of work, divided the territory, and assigned men to have charge. Mr. Millspaugh had supervision over the townships of Ninnescah, Beaver and Vernon. It was arranged that the town getting the greatest number of temperance votes according to population should be presented with a twenty-five dollar banner by George W. Bain, the great temperance orator of Kentucky.

With the assistance of his oldest son, Edward, Mr. Millspaugh went to school houses and delivered temperance lectures and sang temperance songs that with his heart so enlisted and with Edward's fine voice, seemed like an inspiration to the people. Mr. Millspaugh had three hundred cards printed with choice temperance songs that were used at the meetings. Mr. Holloway, who had also taken territory, sent for them to come and help him. Edward had an appointment to lecture at Udall, but before the night arrived, he was taken sick and died in the strength of his noble young manhood, be-fore he knew that the good seed that he had helped to sow brought forth such a rich harvest.

Amid great enthusiasm, the votes were counted and it was found that Vernon was the banner township. Mr. Bain, in a very complimentary address, presented the banner to Mr. Millspaugh, as the representative of the honored district.

After a life of such usefulness and honor as is vouchsafed to few, Mr. Millspaugh has grown old gracefully with his head silvered with the frosts of four-score years, tells of the motto he has followed through life: "To think is to decide. To decide is to act. To act is to achieve. To act conscientiously is right."

JOHN WELLS MILLSPAUGH

Mr. and Mrs. Millspaugh's children all lived to maturity but two who died in infancy. The family all did honor to the careful training of their parents by becoming useful and respected citizens. Edward's children and widow are living in Burlington, Iowa; Mrs. Mina Bliss resides at Floral, Kansas; Mrs. Dorothy Bull is living in Winfield, Kansas; Mrs. Olive Higham lives in Burlington, Iowa; Mrs. Mary Ripley (deceased) leaves three children and husband who reside in Burlington, Iowa; Frank Millspaugh is engaged in farming at Attica, Kansas; Aubrey Millspaugh is a traveling salesman for a boot and shoe firm; Rolla Millspaugh is also engaged in the boot and shoe business in St. Joseph, Mo.; Union Millspaugh is interested in mines in Missouri; and Mrs. Lulu Haight lives in Perryburg, N.Y.

The lives of both Mr. and Mrs. Millspaugh, so well spent, have left their impress upon the lives of others "who rise up and call them blessed." And looking out upon the golden sunset of receding life, this loved and honored couple are impelled to say:

"Only waiting 'til the shadow are a little longer [g]rown,
Only waiting 'til the glimmer of the day's last beam is flown,
'Til the night of earth is faded from the heart once full of day,
'Til the stars of heav'n are breaking thro' the twilight soft and gray."

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Mrs. J. W. Millspaugh passed away March 10th, 1902, aged seventy-nine years. She was the mother of twelve children and had been a pioneer in two states. She and Mr. Millspaugh had lived together sixty years – She had always done her own work and prepared dinner with her own hands the day she died. She was one of those good old-fashioned mothers who are the salt of the earth – always ready with help in sickness and with an unfaltering faith in herbs and tears. There is not a road in Vernon township that she has not traveled over at night on her way to bring healing and help to some sick neighbor, during the last thirty years. The two old people lived an ideal and happy life. They had their comfortable little home with its garden, chicken yard, barn and cow pen, and their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren living about them. For the past few years, since his hearing and eyesight began failing, she had been both eyes and ears to her husband. A couple of hours before her death she had

finished writing a letter and reading it over to him – she was taken with the pain which quickly carried her away. She was in many respects, one of the most remarkable women the writer has ever known. To know [s]uch grand old-fashioned mothers is to understand fully why this is the greatest nation this world has ever seen.

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(This was handwritten in the back of the Book) –

V. K. Phar had a daughter Sarah Jane – when he married Zelia Jane Armstrong Phar. She was called "Aunt Jane" by her half-sisters and her half-brothers. She married B. F. Millspaugh.

Leonard Armstrong married Rebecca Riggs whose father Bethuel Riggs was a Revolutionary Soldier. Their daughter Zelia Jane Armstrong married Vicissimus Knox Phar. Their three children were Annie Marie Phar, Ella Frances Phar and William Wallace Phar. The eldest daughter never married – died in and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The son William, married Aldora Rogers – their two children – Elizabeth and Roger died in early maturity.

Ella Frances Phar married Enos Pray Griffin in 1875. They raised three children – Max, Anne & Zelia. Ella Phar Griffin died in 1912.
Enos Pray Griffin died in 1931.

Both are buried at Fairbury, Nebraska.

Max Griffin married Ruth Thomas.
Anne Griffin married Elmer King.
Zelia Griffin married William Stone.