

Transcribed from A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans, written and compiled by William E. Connelley, Secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka. [Revised ed.] Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1919, c1918. 5 v. (xlviii, 2530 p., [155] leaves of plates): ill., maps (some fold.), ports.; 27 cm.

John A. Franz

JOHN A. FRANZ, of Rozel in Pawnee County, is an active farmer and spent the first thirty-one years of his life in Germany. In the month of February, 1880, he emigrated from the Fatherland and in the course of the same year arrived in Pawnee County. Few of the early settlers of this section experienced a more complete change from their former condition and environment than Mr. Franz. He had lived in a country where industrial affairs were regulated by centuries of practice and experience, came out to Western Kansas where the country was still raw and unimproved, and where civilization had to be built from the ground up. The prosperity that has followed his efforts is all the more remarkable and creditable on this account.

Mr. Franz was born August 6, 1849, in Saxony, near Erfurt. His people had lived in that section for 200 years or more and generation after generation of them had followed milling and manufacturing. His father, Eberhart Franz, was a miller and a man of considerable wealth. He married Maria Hoffman. Their children were: John A., Edward and Emilie. The only one of the family to come to America was Mr. Franz. He was reared in Germany and acquired a liberal education in what would correspond to an American high school. He also learned his trade as miller under his father. When old enough he served his time in the German army in the Light Cavalry. He was in the Franco-Prussian war in 1870-71, as a member of the Fourth Hussars. Most of his work was guard duty, performed at Gravelotte and Sedan. After he had been in service about a year he was discharged and then returned to his business as a miller.

In February, 1880, he sailed from Bremen on board the Rhine for New York. His family followed him after he had acquired settlement in Pawnee County. While his work in Germany had been as a miller and manufacturer, he had some practical knowledge of how farming was done, and in combating the special conditions of Western Kansas he was perhaps not at any greater disadvantage than most of his neighbors. He paid \$200 on a relinquishment on the southwest quarter of section 28, township 20, range 19, and began farming and stock raising. For a time he occupied the little sod house he found on the quarter section. He at once engaged in the cattle business and also broke up some land to raise feed. His initial efforts as a stockman were subject to misfortune, since he lost 200 head during the blizzard of 1885-86. He gradually recovered from that loss and in the days of the free range he grazed large herds. He also got into the wheat industry and for a number of years has grown an extensive acreage. In 1893 he had 1,800 acres in that crop. That was his crowning disaster as a wheat grower. The wheat came up but never matured, and his header never went into the fields. He refused to be discouraged by this experience, and practically every year has sown wheat. In 1917 Mr. Franz put in 800 acres, the results of which have not yet appeared. The biggest yield per acre was thirty-five bushels. The best average yield came in 1914, when he harvested twenty-eight bushels to the acre. That year he also threshed his heaviest crop, putting about 15,000 bushels through the separator. Mr. Franz recalls the time when wheat sold in Western Kansas as low as 35 cents a bushel. He never

sold any of his own wheat for less than 50 cents, and the price has been steadily increasing until it reached what was long regarded as the wheat grower's ideal, \$1 a bushel, and in recent years has ascended almost to the \$2 mark. A bushel of wheat is now worth almost as much as an acre of ground was when Mr. Franz came to Kansas.

Besides his quarter section Mr. Franz took up a timber claim and improved both of them. Out of his profits he also dealt extensively in land, buying and selling. He finally acquired 2 1/2 sections, in sections 20, 28 and 33. He was responsible for bringing this large acreage under improvements and put two sections under the plow. As farming became more and more profitable he abandoned the cattle business on a large scale. His cattle are chiefly of the Shorthorn and Galloway strains. The easiest money he ever made in Western Kansas came from buying calves and selling them as two year olds. He was frequently a shipper by car load lots to the Kansas City markets. As time went by and finances became easier he built a substantial home, barns and granary, and put two complete sets of improvements on his farm.

Mr. Franz is one of the directors of the Farmers Elevator Company at Rozel and is a stockholder in the State Bank at Burdett. When he moved to Rozel in the fall of 1909, he erected a large bungalow on his place and has made numerous other improvements. His home lacks none of the conveniences now of the best city places. His house is completely modern, heated by furnace, lighted with acetylene gas, and has running water and bath.

Politically Mr. Franz is a republican. He served as trustee of Grant Township, as school director of district No. 46, and in 1909 was elected a county commissioner and spent four years on the board. His associates during that time were Brinkman, Shady, Zook and Gilkerson. The chief work of the board during his term was the building of county roads and cement bridges.

Mr. Franz has been twice married. In 1871, about the close of the Franco-Prussian war, he married Miss Emma Zitzman. She came out to Kansas, and died about five years after they located on their claim, in 1885. Amanda, their oldest child, is now a resident of Denver, Colorado, and the wife of George DesPrisay, their children being George, Peter, Helen and Mary. Emma, wife of Luther Braley of Alva, Oklahoma, has the following children, Clarence W., Eddie, Hugh, Amelia, John, George, Maybelle, Richard and Alpha. Hugh, the third child, a farmer in Pawnee County, married Sarah Beeman, and their children are Dewey, Edith and Ralph. Amelia, the fourth child, was the wife of William Springel, living in Republic, Washington, where she died in February, 1918; they had the following children, Dora, Paul, Lawrence and Lou. Augusta, the fifth child, married Lew Heaton, who is a missionary of the Seventh Day Adventist Church at Honolulu; they have two children, George and Margie. Albert, the youngest child, is a Pawnee County farmer, and married Maggie Beeman. Their children are Amanda, Irvin, John, Laverne and Lola.

On March 17, 1889, at LaCrosse, Kansas, Mr. Franz married Miss Clarissa Smith, daughter of James E. Smith, mentioned below. Mr. and Mrs. Franz have five children: Ida May, who graduated in 1917 from the Kansas State Normal; John E., who took some courses in the Kansas State Agricultural College at Manhattan, married Irene McElroy and has a daughter, Dorothy May, and is now a practical farmer; Dr. George, who also studied in the Agricultural College of Kansas, is now a veterinary for the Government, and is stationed at Omaha, he married Pearl

Aulthouser; Ella, a student in the Agricultural College of Kansas; and Nora.

James E. Smith, who has lived in Pawnee County for over thirty years and is now retired, was born in Coshocton County, Ohio. September 6, 1843, a son of William and Lucy A. (Kridler) Smith. His mother was of German descent. William Smith was born in Virginia, was a soldier in the War of 1812, and spent his last years in Tuscarawas County, Ohio. He and his wife reared a large family, and several of the sons were soldiers in the Union army. James E. Smith had a limited country school education, and when a few days past eighteen he enlisted in Company E of the Thirty-eighth Illinois Infantry. He joined his regiment in Southern Missouri, saw his first fighting there, and afterwards was on the east side of the Mississippi and at the siege of Corinth and in the Kentucky campaign against Bragg. He was in the battle of Stone River, and at Chickamauga was wounded in the left hip and taken prisoner. He spent several months in Libby prison at Richmond, and suffered extremely from his wound, gangrene having set in. After his parole he recuperated in the North and finally rejoined his command in time to participate in the Atlanta campaign. He was almost constantly under fire from June 10th to September 5th of 1864. At the end of three years he was granted his honorable discharge. He joined the Union League in Illinois, this organization being the origin of the Grand Army of the Republic, and has taken an active part in the Grand Army.

After the war Mr. Smith became an Illinois farmer and about twenty years later he came to Kansas, bringing with him about \$15 in cash, a team of horses and a carload of goods. His household at that time consisted of eleven members. He pre-empted a claim on the north line of Pawnee County and for a number of years lived in sod houses and underwent all the hardships and privations of the period. He herded a few cows belonging to his neighbors in order to secure milk, and from stuff raised in the garden his family never went hungry. He gradually got into cattle raising and wheat growing and by economy and hard work he was never compelled to resort to outside employment during the period of stress and strain. He finally acquired a section of land, developed it, and after prosperity was assured he moved from his farm in the fall of 1916 and is now well situated and enjoying a merited retirement. He helped create district No. 61 in Grant Township, his children having to go four miles to the nearest schoolhouse when he first came to Kansas. He has also served as trustee of Grant Township, justice of the peace and road overseer. He is a loyal and stanch republican who has never been led aside from allegiance to the party by any of the various issues presented in Kansas. He cast his first vote for Abraham Lincoln in 1864 while he was in the army.

In April, 1865, in Ohio, he married Jemima Armstrong, who died three weeks later. October 31, 1867, he married Miss Celesta S. Barber, daughter of Augustus and Clarissa Barber. Mrs. Smith was born January 10, 1848. The children of Mr. and Mrs. James E. Smith are briefly mentioned as follows: A. Daniel, of Rozel, who married Berta Kitch, and their children are Glee S., Glenna, Helen, Fairy and Fayne; Ralph; Earnest; Clarissa, wife of John A. Franz; James J., who married Sadie Rogers, their children being Nettie, Eddie, Blanche, Cecil, Lloyd, Fern, Laverne and Wade; Francis M., who married Eva Pruett, and has children named Charles, Earl, William and May; Dorcie, wife of A. F. Dighton, and the mother of Orva, Alma and Leslie; Wesley, who married Ida Sufficool and has two children, Carl and Nita; William, who married Nora Pruett, their children being Victor, Carroll and Harold; Henrietta, wife of Charles Wilcox, and the

mother of Iona, Thelma, Eugene, Arlyn and Verne; Rosa, wife of Elza I. Sams and the mother of Vernon, Deane, Pearl, Weldon and William D.; Clarence, who married Katie Hinkle and has children Irene and Lorraine; Julia, wife of Edward Maresch, has two children, Virgie and Altareta; and Miss Viola, the youngest child. James E. Smith has forty-six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

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Tom & Carolyn Ward
Columbus, KS



tcward@columbus-ks.com

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