

THE HAZELBAKER NEWS

Newsletter - Update

3RD EDITION 61 WATERMAN AVE., COLDWATER, MI. 49036 (517)279-7875

Star columnist features Mary Hazelbaker

Mary Reynolds Hazelbaker, Pleasanton, was featured in the September 5, 1993 edition of The Kansas City Star by Star columnist James J. Fisher.

The article traced Mary's life from 1868 to 1952. Mary arrived in Linn County at the age of two with her father, Floyd Reynolds and other family members.

Fisher's article read in part, "In 1888, age 20, Mary wed a man named Hazelbaker, a teacher. A decade later, with five children, ages 1 to 9, she divorced.

Which in the late 1890s was a very big deal. Women back then were supposed to endure, to accept their lot, to, in some cases, literally turn the other cheek.

But Mary divorced. The word is used explicitly in the Linn County histories.

Mary did more than that. When her ex-husband offered to help out with her expenses, she refused. She would work, she said. That was another fairly radical idea for women back then. "Any honest work is honorable," Mary announced.

She worked at several jobs, including clerking at a drugstore in town. Eventually she got on at the post office at Pleasanton doing inside work.

At the turn of the century, the



Mary Hazelbaker

THE LINN COUNTY NEWS, SEPT. 16, 1993

Mary Hazelbaker . . .

countryside hereabouts was full of people, families who worked 80- and 160-acre farms. And who wanted mail service. It was decided that a third rural mail route would be added to serve patrons south of here.

Mary decided to take the examination. People scoffed. A woman doing what then was exclusively a man's work?

Mary scored the highest score on the exam. She was appointed, the first woman so named in the country. The route was 25 miles long, crooked as a snake and required the fording of several streams.

"No woman has the stamina to make such a long drive," the scoffers predicted.

Mary brought two good horses and a wagon, armed herself with the map of her route, and in 1904 started carrying the mail. She sloshed through high water, bogged down in mud, ate dust. She delivered the mail.

"She made trips when other carriers had given up," said one contemporary. "She considered the U.S. mail sacred and made a supreme effort to deliver it."

Eventually Mary traded her two-horse wagon for a one-horse buggy. She would be at the post office at 7 a.m., sort her mail, leave at 7:30 a.m., return by 3 p.m., then fill out a report of her activities that day.

Which were legion. Back then, farmsteads were isolated. Usually one trip a week was made to town. But Mary came every day. So she shopped for her patrons, visited with them, told them the latest news, even ran errands for them. She became a beloved figure on the back roads of Linn County.

In the 1920s Mary bought an automobile and carried on her route for 12 more years, finally retiring in 1933. Her reward for 29 years faithful service?

Well, people got together and bought her a nice floor lamp, probably all they could afford in those harsh Depression days.

Mary lived until 1952, dying at age

KANSAS HAZELBAKERS

CURRY CEMETERY

Mound City, Kansas (LINN Co.)

Tombstone info

Russel S.

Son of S.L. and Anna Holh

HAZELBAKER

Jan. 15, 1892 - Dec. 26, 1895

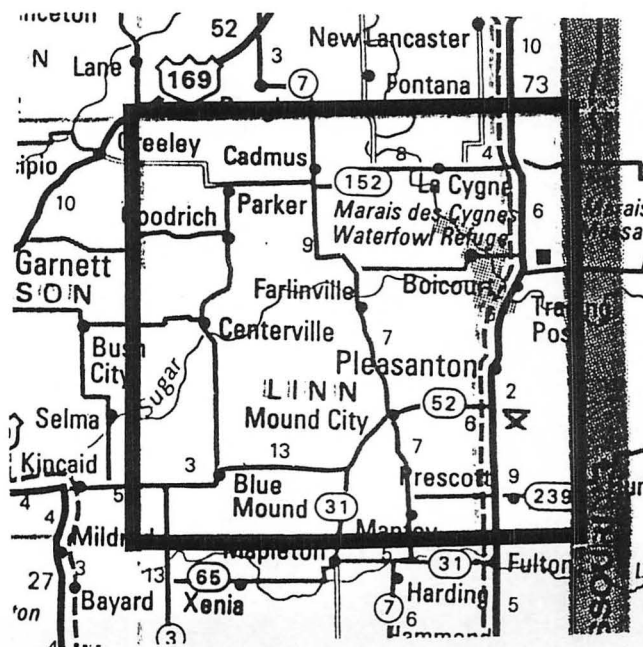
LAURA A. HAZELBAKER

Dec. 6, 1875 - Aug. 12, 1884

GEORGE L. HAZELBAKER

Nov. 16, 1873 - Sept. 11, 1897

Map of LINN Co., Kansas





This photo shows the front of Joseph **HAZELBAKER'S** barber shop, located in Earl Park, Indiana. Left to Right, pictured is 1., unknown barber who worked for Joseph, 2., Wife, Mary Hazelbaker, 3., Joseph Hazelbaker and 4., son William Perry Hazelbaker, (father of Hartzel Hazelbaker).

Family Group Record

Page _____

Husband: SYDNEY J. HAZELBAKER			
Born: April 7, 1838?	Place:	Civil War Vet. Co. K Illinois Infantry Aug. 1, 1861 1864	
Chr.:	Place:		
Marr:	Place:		
Died: Sept. 23, 1922	Place:		
Bur.:	Place: CURRY CEMETERY, MOUND CITY, KANSAS		
Father:		Mother:	
Other Wives:			
Wife: MARIA A. SHELLENBERGER			
Born: Feb. 28, 1838	Place:		
Chr.:	Place:		
Died: Jan. 27, 1912	Place:		
Bur.:	Place:		
Father:			
Other Husbands:			
Sex Children		List each child (living or dead)	
M/F		in order of birth	
1.	Name: SAMUAL A. (Teacher)	Spouse: MARY REYNOLDS (Post Office)	
M	Born:	Place:	
	Chr.:	Place:	
	Marr: 1888	Place:	
	Died:	Place:	
2.	Name: FRANK W.	Spouse:	
M	Born:	Place:	Ran for LT. Gov. of Mont., about 1964
	Chr.:	Place:	
	Marr:	Place:	
	Died:	Place:	
3.	Name: JOHN W.	Spouse: MARY KOHN	
M	Born:	Place:	
	Chr.:	Place:	
	Marr:	Place:	
	Died:	Place:	
4.	Name: SUE	Spouse: CASIDA	
F	Born:	Place:	
	Chr.:	Place:	
	Marr:	Place:	
	Died:	Place:	
5.	Name:	Spouse:	
	Born:	Place:	
	Chr.:	Place:	
	Marr:	Place:	
	Died:	Place:	

Name and Address of Submitter:

Relationship of Submitter to Husband _____ **Wife** _____