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Recollections of a Colorado Blauvelt Family

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Etho Wilson, ca. 1903

My father, James Hosner, and mother, Etho Wilson Hosner, were very good parents. Our home was out in the country all of the time while I was growing up. Dad worked for the Western Colorado Power Company the entire time that I was at home. In fact, he had a total of over 40 years with them when he retired in the early 1950s. Our home life was built around the family. This was necessary as we had no neighbors within several miles. We never felt that we might be deprived, as we had an active family life. Both my sister Dorothy and I had duties around the house each day. Evenings were spent listening to the radio, playing cards, study and many times just sitting around talking. There was little or no arguing or unpleasantness in our life. Dad always had work, and the family purse was handled by my mother. It was said that she could squeeze a nickel until the Indian rode the buffalo. Even with the thriftiness that prevailed we seemed to have good nourishing food, decent clothes and a roof over head. The things we really needed were had. I know that mom and dad didn't buy for themselves if we children were needing anything. Added to this was an abundant helping of love for everyone. Even during the last years of their lives my parents walked down the street holding hands.

My first four years of school were spent in an old time country school. There was one teacher for the eight grades. Due to the teacher shortage, what with about twenty students, while the teacher taught one

grade, the older students helped the younger ones. The teacher managed to spend some time with each grade every day. As complicated as it seems, they were four of the best years of my schooling. Later we went to school in Telluride until finishing the eighth grade. Then we went to high school in Montrose. During that time living was less desirable as dad had to live at the job and mom and we children lived in a rental in Montrose. It was hard for the folks, but they managed to work it out.

Dad had three sisters that lived. Mother had two brothers and five sisters that lived. I guess these were pretty much normal sized families for the time. The difference in the families was in the life they had. Dad's father was German and Irish, his mother being Irish. Dad's mother was as Irish as Patty's pig. The Irish women both came from Ireland as young girls. The Hosners had been in the United States, in the eastern states prior to the Revolutionary War. The Wilsons and the Blauvelts were all old timers to this country dating back also to pre revolutionary war times.



The Wilson Sisters -Carrie, Rosie, Maude, Amy
Etho (Charlie's Mother) and Ellen

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Recollections from Page 1

The Hosners were not inclined to be tied down to any definite profession. My grandfather was a carpenter by profession. He, however, farmed, worked in the mines and mills, was a mule skinner, and at one time was the Marshall in the city of Ouray for a time. It was not uncommon for grandfather Hosner to walk for miles in the snow to get a few days of work in a mine or on a farm. He built many of the houses still standing in Ouray today. He seldom was out of work for long. Dad's mother was born and raised in abject poverty in County Wexford, Ireland. She came to the United States after serving out an indenture in Quebec, Canada at the age of 19. She worked in restaurants as a biscuit slinger in Dodge City, Kansas. She finally worked her way to Silverton, Colorado where she worked as a chamber maid in the Grand Imperial Hotel. Then she went to the old town of Red Mountain some ten miles south of Ouray. There, during the winter of 1885, she was courted by my grandfather. At the time there was no road between the two towns. It meant climbing through canyon country and across country on snow shoes. That, I might say is true love. It was a love they carried through their entire marriage. Maybe due to the poverty she had known, my grandmother always considered that she had a fine life with my grandfather. It was surely better than the days of the potato famine which were still in her mind. In those days families were raised with the mother at home. This custom was observed by both dad's and mother's families.

Mother's father, John Henry Wilson, was a very kind and good man; however, he was a farmer and that was all he knew. He probably didn't know that too well, but he had been born into it. Most years less than \$100 was had to raise the family on. Of course there was always a garden, a few cows, chickens, and some hogs. Even so, the living was pretty slim pickin's. Mother used to tell about being hungry most of her childhood. I am sure the rest of the family shared this experience. Her parents seldom had more than a change of clothes. Her mother had a new child about every second year from 1881 until 1900. Many of them only lived a day or two. But this was also very common in those times. Even with the hard times they had, it was very common to see grandmother Wilson carrying a pot of soup to a sick neighbor, or caring for the children in the home that had been visited by death.

Sylvester L. Blauvelt, BFG #8-8863, a fireman on "Old 71" circa 1888 in Wallace, Nebraska



Fortunately I had the privilege to have known both of my grandmothers and grandfather Wilson. Dad's father died about eight years before I was born. I did feel though that I knew him in a way. His family and grandmother talked about him so much. I was always fascinated by my grandparents. They all had powerful personalities. Grandmother Wilson was a story spinner. She used to tell about Civil War days in her family. Her father, Sylvester L. Blauvelt, was in Andersonville prison. She had a half brother who ran away from home and became a drummer boy. He was killed in the first action he saw. I remember one time when she really got into trouble with mother. We had gone to visit her on the farm. Us kids were in our Sunday best. Grandma told us that if we could catch a baby pig we could take it home. This was out of hearing range of mom. Well needless to say we were in none too good shape by the time we had chased the piglets about the barnyard in our effort. Mom was not happy. Later though she had to admit that it could have been worse had we caught the pig.

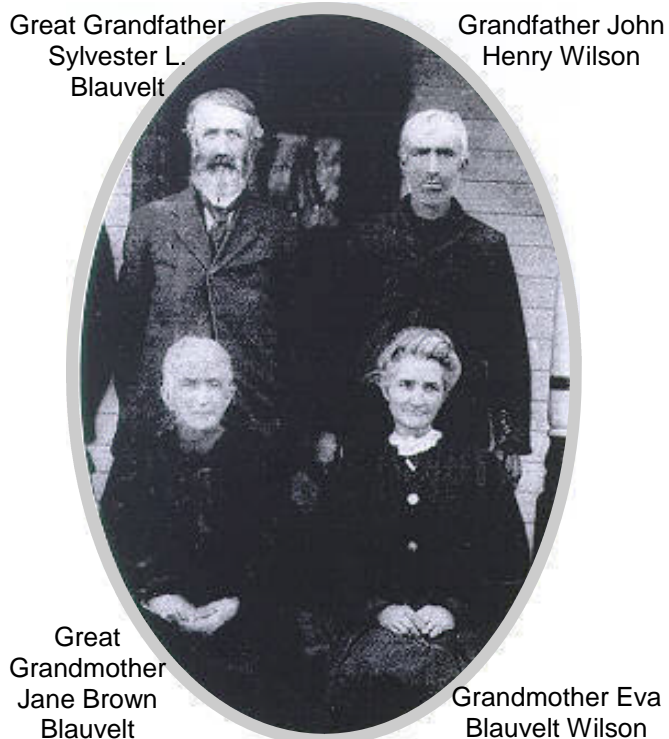


Eva Wilson at 88

The Hosner family came from Rochester, New York. They then followed the migration of the time to Michigan. After great grandfather Hosner married his Irish bride and she had given birth to their two sons, after the Civil War, they went down through Missouri. There they produced a daughter. They then went down through Arkansas and to Denver, Colorado. In 1876 they went as a family to Ouray, Colorado where they all lived and died. Grandmother Wilson's family also started out in New York, migrated to Michigan, and then down into Kansas after the war.

After marriage, the Wilsons migrated to Brush, Colorado, and then to Ridgway, Colorado. They homesteaded on Log Hill Mesa. At many points along the line, they only missed crossing paths with the Hosners by a few miles. They didn't know each other until mom and dad got married. Dad was working on the line gang for the telephone company. Mom was working on the only job she ever had as a telephone operator. They fell in love at first sight and were married only a few weeks after they met. That union lasted from April 28, 1920 until dad's death on March 30, 1978.

My wife Lily and I got married on May 19, 1951 and celebrated our 47th anniversary this year. Her father was Italian, and her mother Swedish. I have worked on her genealogy lines some, but not much. One thing I did find in the 1910 census was that Lily's mother's family and my mother's family were listed as next door neighbors though her mother didn't remember them.



Great Grandfather
Sylvester L.
Blauvelt

Grandfather John
Henry Wilson

Great
Grandmother
Jane Brown
Blauvelt

Grandmother Eva
Blauvelt Wilson



A Colorado Blauvelt Family Reunion

circa 1905

Top row, last 2: Eva Blauvelt and husband Dwight Wilson

Bottom row, last 2: Etho Wilson and her sister Ellen