

## FRANCIS WILLIS HASTINGS



*Francis Hastings and Susan Neff*

Francis was born on May 12, 1858 in Marengo, McHenry County, Illinois. We have this date on his death certificate and on his headstone. Nearly every record of him that I have lists his given name as Frank, except for the death certificate that lists his given name as Francis. I am assuming Francis is his official given name but will look at some point for a church birth record in Illinois. Frank was the 7<sup>th</sup> of 8 children born to Carlisle Hastings and Hannah Granger. Both the Hastings and Granger family lines have been extensively traced, so there will be more information coming on them.

We first see Frank in the 1860 Federal Census at 2 years old with his parents in Coral, McHenry, Illinois. His father is listed as a farmer.

The 1870 Federal Census again shows Frank with his parents in Coral, McHenry, Illinois.

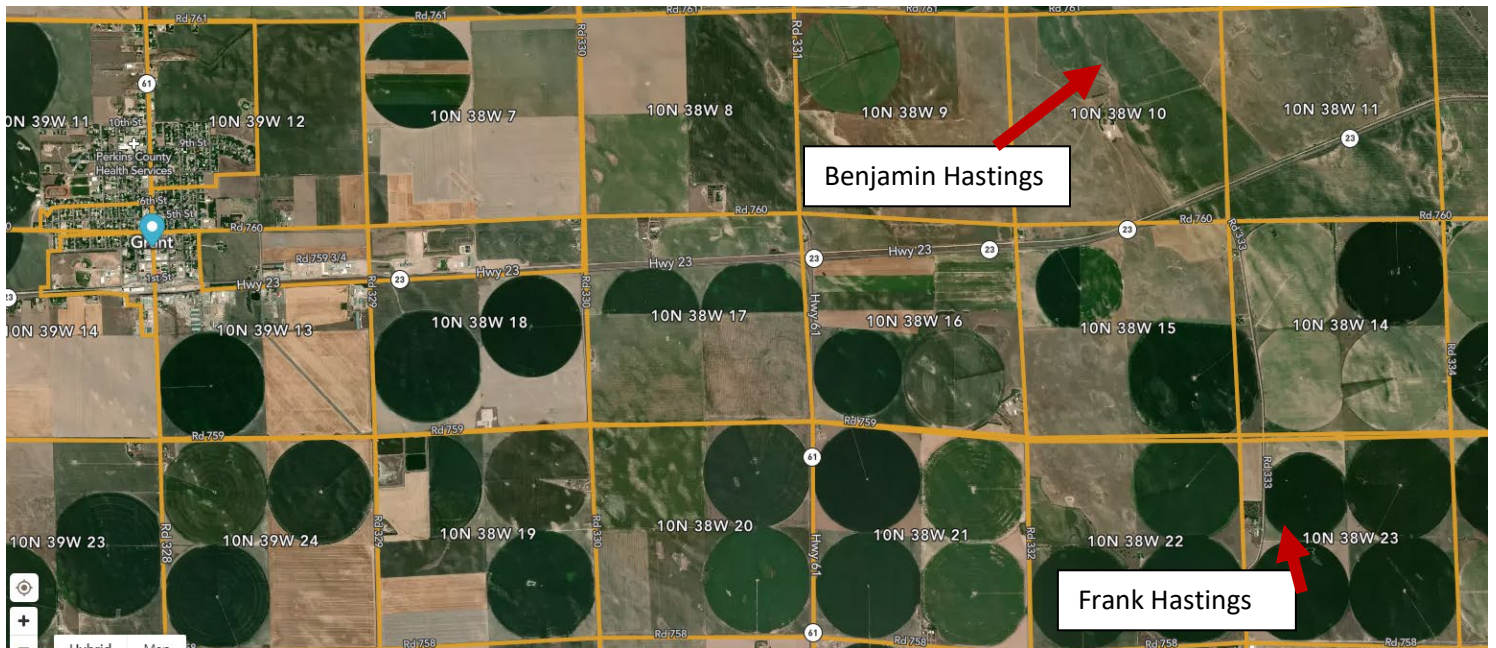
His obituary states that after graduating from Marengo High School that he studied Telegraphy and at 17 accepted a position as night operator at a telegraph office in Mississippi. The obituary states that while in

this job he contracted a severe illness from which he never recovered. That meant that he returned to his parents farm and taught school in the same place he attended school as a boy. The obituary also states that while teaching school he lived in a German community and learned fluent German. He continued teaching until 1887 when he came to Nebraska.

Backing up a little, we see him in the 1880 Federal Census lists with his parents and in 134, Coral, McHenry, Illinois. He lists his occupation as school teacher and his age as 17.

While his obituary states that he came to Nebraska in 1887 and took up a homestead. I find a homestead application for Frank W Hastings for Range 38, Township 10N Section 23 the NW Quarter. This is application number 12784 and final certificate number 4035. His homestead was approved on October 24, 1892. I do also see his brother Benjamin F Hastings taking out a homestead at Range 38 Township 10N Section 10, E ½ of NW ¼ and

W ½ of NE ¼ both just a few miles east of Grant, Nebraska. This is application number 13917 and final certificate number 4224.



The next record I have of Frank is his marriage to Susan Lillian Neff on June 7, 1892 in Holyoke, Phillips County, Colorado. Susan's obituary states that her family came to Western Nebraska in 1886. Her family would have also been in the same area as Frank was living, so I am not sure why they went to Colorado to marry.

The 1900 census shows Frank and Susan in District 0141, Liberty, Perkins, Nebraska. Susan lists that she has had 4 children with two living. Frank lists his occupation as farming and that he owns his farm.

From here, the family doesn't move although their census districts change as they continue to live on the same farm.

In 1910 Frank and his family are reported in District 1070, Liberty, Perkins, Nebraska. In this census Susan again lists that she has had 4 children with 2 living. Frank lists his occupation as farming and Susan lists her occupation as Assistant County Treasurer.

I do not see the Hastings family listed anywhere in the 1920 census. I am not sure why, other than they may have been traveling when the census enumerator was in their area. Overall the area census was taken in Feb and Mar 1920. I have searched manually through the census and allowed the search tool to look both with no results.

The 1930 census shows Frank and his family in District 0006, Liberty, Perkins, Nebraska. Frank reports farming and this census he adds a sub category of stock farm. They report owning their home and in this census Susan is no longer listing an occupation. They do

report owing a radio set in the home. In this census they report Susan's mother living with them and she is listed a "Lizze Neff" which is likely short for her middle name of Elizabeth.

In 1940 we see Frank in his last census. He and Susan are listed in 68-6, Liberty, Perkins, Nebraska. Frank reports that he is unable to work and at 81, it is likely hard to do much farm work. He reports that he has completed 2 years of college. Susan's record either reports 4 years of school, or the C should be repeated and showing 4 years of college. Her obituary leaves no indicator and as the family was in a homestead as she was growing up, it is possible that 4 years of school is correct.

Frank's obituary notes that he served as county commissioner of Perkins County from the 2<sup>nd</sup> District from 1902 – 1906. He also served as the County Treasurer of Perkins County for Four years. (Aside: I haven't looked to see what years those were, I'm guessing it aligns to the dates that Susan was the Assistant Treasurer in the Census)

Frank's obituary also notes that he loved agriculture and the growth of trees. It sounds like he was active, despite his impaired health, and that he was keenly interested in world affairs and politics.

Frank died on August 28, 1944 at his home according to his death certificate, obituary and headstone. He is buried in the Grant, Nebraska cemetery.

Frank and Susan had 5 children with three of them surviving to adulthood. Many online references don't list the two children who died as babies, but they are both included in the cemetery in Grant

- **Francis Ray Hastings (1893-1983)**
- **Hezmer Carlisle Hastings (1895-1895)**
- **Hannah Hastings (1896-1897)**
- **Hannah Rose Hastings (1898-1987)**
- **Max Ervin Hastings (1913-1994)**

## SUSAN LILLIAN NEFF



*Francis Hastings and Susan Neff - Photo says  
50th Anniversary*

Susan was born on February 11, 1877 in Rutland, Illinois as reported on her death certificate and her obituary. Susan was the 7<sup>th</sup> of 11 children born to Daniel Neff and Sarah Rector.

We see Susan in the 1880 census in Rutland, Lasalle, IL with her parents.

Her obituary states that the family came to Western Nebraska when she was 9, or roughly in 1886 and settled on a homestead. I searched through the homestead records in the area and did find a Daniel B Neff who had a homestead, but at the time the homestead application was taken out there were two Daniel Neff's listed in the 1900 census. Daniel B Neff was born in 1876 in Illinois while Susan's father was born in 1832 in Ohio. More searching in Perkins County, Nebraska may be needed, but it appears that homestead was a loosely utilized term and not referring to the official homestead act.

The next record we see with Susan is her marriage to Frank in 1892.

We learn from Susan's obituary that she "made a profession of her faith in Christ and united with the church. She continued active in her church until the last."

After Frank's death Susan moved into town and made her home in Grant.

Susan died on October 24, 1957 in Monmouth, Il while visiting family according to her death certificate and her obituary.

She is buried in the Grant, Nebraska cemetery.