

REMINISCENCES OF PIERRE COLLIE "P. C." EGBERT

Gray County, Kansas

Written by Juanita Trebilcock

Consultants: Mr. and Mrs. Pierre C. Egbert, Cimarron, Kansas

** Additional information added about Pierre Collie Egbert*



Pierre Collie "P. C." EGBERT
About 1905

*Photographs provided by Sara McFarland,
Research Librarian at the Cimarron (Kansas) City Library*

P. C. Egbert has spent most of his lifetime in Gray County, Kansas. He is not as old as some of the earliest settlers here, but he has been here for nearly fifty years and has had a very interesting life. Besides being a pioneer and seeing Gray County's growth from the time it was organized, he is a Spanish-American War Veteran, the only one now living in Gray County. His experiences in the army included a trip around the world.

Mr. Egbert was born in Morgan County, Indiana, in 1878. He lived there until he was eight years old. He accompanied his parents when they left Indiana and came to Kansas. They arrived in Gray County in October 1886. His father took out a homestead six miles south of Ingalls, in what is now the Gray Center Community.

Staying on the homestead with his parents, he lived the life of any normal Western Kansas farm boy until he was twenty-one years old.

On the 29th of March, in 1889, P. C. Egbert enlisted in the army. He enlisted as a Private in Company D. of the 23rd Regiment of Infantry and then followed three years of adventure.

Mr. Egbert was to sail with his regiment to the Philippines to help quell the native Filipinos' uprising against the United States. He also spent some time in Honolulu, Hawaii, where a United States naval base was located. In 1898, at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, the United States annexed the Hawaiian Islands, as it was necessary to have a United States Naval Base in the Pacific Ocean. Americans already largely controlled the industries of the islands.

The United States Army and Navy had already defeated Spain at the time Mr. Egbert left Kansas. The Spanish fleet and land forces in the Philippines and West Indies had been defeated by 13 Aug 1898. A provisional treaty was signed at that time, and by 10 Dec 1898, a final treaty was signed by both the United States and Spain in France. Spain had lost all control over the West Indies and Philippine Islands, over which she had ruled for nearly three and a half centuries.

The United States found itself with territorial possessions, whose inhabitants were not yet ready for self-government. Therefore the United States could not at once recognize their independence.

When the Filipinos realized they were not yet to have full independence, they rebelled. Under the leadership of General Emilio Aguinaldo, they rose in revolt against the United States.

It was necessary to keep the United States troops stationed among the Philippine Islands for about two years when the insurrection was at last stamped out.

The camp at which Mr. Egbert was stationed was broken, and he started for the Philippines from Kansas City, Missouri.

He traveled by train over the Union Pacific railroad to San Francisco, California, and sailed on the Morgan City boat from San Francisco to the Philippines. The boat crossed the International Date Line west of the Midway Islands in the Pacific Ocean.

Mr. Egbert arrived at the Philippine Islands after traveling for thirty-four days. He was stationed on the Jolo Island of the Philippines in the Sea of Sulu. He was stationed there for two years and was on guard and police duty. It was part of his regiment's duty to quiet any uprisings by the Filipinos and help keep peace and quiet on the Island.

Mr. Egbert feels quite lucky that he made the trip to the Philippines when he did, as

the Morgan City Boat sank on its next voyage. After two years in the Philippines, he went to Honolulu in the Hawaiian Islands.

He started his trip back home on the Transport Buford. His journey back to the United States was all by water. His course carried him along the coast of Borneo, across the South China Sea to Singapore. Then through the Straits Settlements to Colombo, just off the coast of India. He sailed from Colombo across the Indian Ocean and through the Red Sea to the Suez Canal. The Suez Canal connects the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea by water. At the head of the Suez Canal, just as it opened into the Mediterranean Sea, was Port Said.

Port Said is in Egypt, which is one of the few independent countries in Africa. The old biblical towns of Jerusalem and Damascus in Asia are not far from Port Said. That part of the journey was very interesting to Mr. Egbert, not only because of the bible stories about Egypt, Asia, and the Red Sea but also because it was a large factor in searching for a new route to the West Indies and the ultimate discovery of America.

One of the old routes to India went through the Mediterranean Sea to Alexandria, then through the Red Sea into the Indian Ocean. It was much the same route that Mr. Egbert followed, coming from the Philippines to the Mediterranean.

After Mr. Egbert left Port Said, he sailed through the Mediterranean Sea to Gibraltar. From there, he sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to New York. He spent sixty-two days on the water and finished with the tour of the world in April 1902.

Mr. Egbert said something about the people and climate in the Philippines and Hawaii. The people in the Philippines are nearly all Malays. They are brown in color, and when Mr. Egbert was there, they all spoke Spanish. They first learned Spanish from their rulers, as the islands belonged to Spain for many years. The Philippine Islands are in the torrid zone, very close to the equator, and the climate is very hot. The Island Jolo was farther south than most of the Philippines and was smaller. The Philippines were exceptional for growing coconuts and bananas. Very little work was done there in the daytime after eight o'clock in the morning as it was so hot.

Thick forests and many bushes and climbing vines covered most of the land on the islands. Many black men lived in little grass huts back in the woods. They had little to do with the brown men or the white men. They hunted with bows and arrows or gathered wild fruits and nuts in the forests.

The Hawaiian Islands are known as volcanic islands. They were built up from the bottom of the sea by cooling volcanos, now seen on these islands. When it decayed, the cooled lava made the richest soils and was excellent for growing sugar cane. Because of the volcanoes, the Hawaiian Islands were very steep and rough, and although the soil was rich, only part of the Islands could be cultivated.

Mr. Egbert returned to his home in April 1902 after being gone for three years. He had been to many places and had experiences he would never forget.

On 14 Oct 1903, he married Bertha Francisco (*daughter of James Detroit Francisco and Mary Ellen Hilton*) of Ingalls, Kansas. The Francisco's are an early pioneer family in Gray County. Francis Francisco, Bertha's brother, married in the 1890s. His wife (*Minnie M. Price*) had come to Gray County in 1885 and was identified with the county's growth and development since her arrival. She and her husband engaged in the mercantile business, opening a store in Gray County in 1897.

In 1903, when Bertha Francisco married P. C. Egbert, Francis Francisco was taken away by death. His wife, Mrs. Francisco, took up management of the business and made a success of it. She had a general merchandise store of dry goods, groceries, millinery, and furnishing. There were dress goods in all the numerous styles and fabrics, dress trimmings, and notions. She also handled farm produce, poultry and cream, staple and fancy groceries, candies, and tobacco. In her store, you could find a complete line of canned, dried, and fresh fruits in season, dried cured and salted meats, drugs, and a good line of hats and shoes. She always watched the business details and made it a personal matter to see that each customer received prompt and courteous treatment.

Some years after Mrs. Francisco closed her store in Ingalls, P. C. Egbert started a store here. After several years, he sold out his supplies to his nephew, who had a store. Both the Egbert and the Francisco families have had a large part in the mercantile business of Gray County.

For many years, Mr. and Mrs. P. C. Egbert lived two miles east of Ingalls, in Mrs. Egbert's old childhood home. It is a lovely place, surrounded by trees, and situated just off of the old trail. In later years, Mr. Egbert has modernized the house.

Mrs. Egbert's mother died about a year ago, and Mr. and Mrs. Egbert moved to her home in Cimarron. It is one of the lovely old homes there. One of Mr. and Mrs. Egbert's sons now lives in their old home near Ingalls.

Mr. and Mrs. Egbert have raised seven children, six boys and one girl. One of the boys died in young manhood. All but two of the other children are now married and gone from home.

They have lived a happy, useful life in Gray County. They have helped to build up their community and are respected and well-liked.

Additional Information
PIERRE COLLIE "P. C." EGBERT



PIERRE COLLIE "P. C." EGBERT & BERTHA (FRANCISCO) EGBERT

PIERRE COLLIE "P. C." EGBERT, son of Israel Egbert (1831-1891) and Mary Elizabeth Coleman (1840-1925) was born on 11 Sep 1878 in Morgantown, Morgan County, Indiana. On 14 October 1903, he married BERTHA ELIZABETH FRANCISCO, daughter of James Detroit Francisco (1852-1913) and Mary Ellen Hilton (1854-1935) in Ingalls, Gray County, Kansas. Bertha was born on 27 Aug 1879 in Kirksville, Adair County, Missouri.

Pierre "P. C." Egbert died on 18 March 1945 in Cimarron, Kansas. Bertha died on 6 July 1957 in Liberal, Seward County, Kansas. Both buried at the Cimarron Cemetery.

Their children were the following... An INFANT who died in 1904, BUFORD D. EGBERT (1905-1956), MERL HILTON EGBERT (1907-1953), RAY MORGAN EGBERT (1909-1928), ORA FRANCISCO EGBERT (1912-1986), GILBERT WILSON EGBERT (1913-1976), EARL ERWIN EGBERT (1917-2012), and ELDA ELIZABETH (EGBERT) MEHL (1920-2000).