

George Edward Ingram Local Photographer

Since you are reading this issue of the *Old Settlers Gazette*, it's a good bet that you are interested in history and like vintage pictures. We are constantly seeking interesting articles or topics for research about Old Pulaski. Equally challenging is finding local images to accompany articles or for their singular interest. Sources are historical societies, archival repositories, private collections, and sometimes purchased. Local nineteenth and early twentieth century photographs are particularly prized because of their scarcity. Good fortune smiled upon us this year when descendants of G. E. Ingram, (Orval Kohenskey, Henry Kohenskey, Clyde Kohenskey, Bobby Kohensky, and Ruby Kohenskey Curtis) consented to share the photographs taken by their grandfather with our readers.

George Edward Ingram, familiarly known as Edd, was born southeast of Edgar Springs in Phelps County. Edd was descended from Louis and Adolphe Renaud, who immigrated from France in 1820, settling first in St. Louis but moving westward to the hill country near Edgar's Prairie. Their daughter, Celia, married Frank M. Jackson and their daughter, Lucy Emma, married Tennessean Abraham E. Ingram. This marriage produced Edd and his sisters Ella, Lizzie, and Delpha.

Edd was born in 1889, in an era when modern 20th century photography was being developed. At the beginning of the decade, George Eastman, a bank bookkeeper and amateur photographer, founded his Eastman Dry Plate Company.

Until the advancement of the dry plate, photographers used wet plates. Just before the picture was taken, the photographer coated a glass plate with collodion (a mixture of explosive gun-cotton, alcohol, and ether), bathed the plate in silver nitrate, and, while the plate was still wet, put it in the camera and exposed the plate for several seconds. The plate then had to be developed while still wet. Printing was done by the contact method.

Light sensitive paper was clamped to the glass negative and exposed to strong sunlight, often for as long as ten minutes. It was a cumbersome process with caustic chemicals. Along with the camera and chemicals, one had to carry a dark tent for the preparation of the plates. There were few casual photographers and it was relatively expensive.

Edd Ingram started taking pictures as a young



Self-portrait of George Edward Ingram as a young man.

man with his glass negative dry plate camera. Exactly when cannot be determined, as there are few dates to give clues. Of the approximately 1,000 prints in the family's collection, less than a third are identifiable as to person or place.

Most of the images are portraits of local people but there is also a wide variety of subjects. In addition to the portraits, there are settings with people in buggies, wagons, and on horseback. Tidy houses are featured in a few images and there is a shot of a family working on an addition to their homeplace. Edd photographed some rural activities, which included hands working in fields, a camp in the woods, a

baptizing at Barnitz Lake, and a portable sawmill in the timber. There is also a shot of a hot air balloon at Barnitz Lake (see News.)

Ingram's photographic territory radiated from Edgar Springs eastward to Lake Springs, south to Licking, west to

Competition, and north to Jerome. Like his contemporary, Charles Elliott Gill in Dent County (see sidebar on page 25), Ingram photographed rural school student bodies. Edd captured the students and teachers of Mt. Pisgah in 1911 and Yancy Mills in 1915, with several schools in the intervening years.

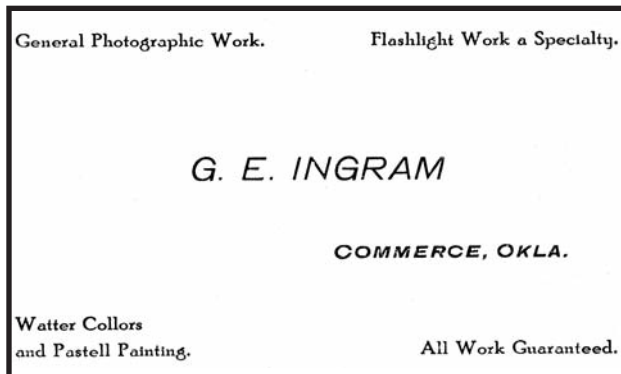
Edd Ingram worked for a time at the American Car Company, builder of wooden trolley cars, in St. Louis. He suffered an injury to his leg and was awarded a lifetime job but decided to return to the farm near Edgar Springs.

A postcard message in 1918 to sister Ella, who was living at Craddock, may have been prophetic. It said, "Ella, if you are not going to use your Kodak Sat & Sun, wish you would send it down by Charlie tomorrow if you haven't any film send it anyhow. I am going to Salem and don't want to take mine so unhandy." Sometime around 1918, according to the family, Edd laid down his glass plate camera and never took another picture.

By 1918, George Eastman and his Kodak company had perfected paper-backed roll film which was developed and printed at its Rochester, N. Y. plant. It was manufacturing affordable cameras that anyone could use and get a decent picture in daylight. The company's slogan "You press the button and we'll do the rest" sparked the snapshot craze. With the challenge and specialty of photography gone, maybe G. E. Ingram gave it up for full time farming. Edd found another specialty in the early 1950s when electricity came to rural Phelps County. He wired many of the hillfolks' houses for lights.



Of the approximately 1,000 Ingram prints in the collection, we saw only one glass plate. We scanned the 3 x 4 inch glass negative and made the positive print above. The exposure times were long for these early photographs and people had to stand very still for several seconds. The young girl could do so but the colt could not, hence the blurred head. The other objects in the image are in sharp focus, particularly the ash hopper on the right, a feature of early homesteads. Ashes were dumped in the hopper, lye leached from the ashes, and mixed with animal fat. The resulting mixture was soap.



Apparently Edd had plans to establish himself as a professional photographer in the new state of Oklahoma, which was formed from the Indian Territory in 1907.



George Edward Ingram and his wife Virgie Finley. They were married in 1921 when Edd was 31 years old and Virgie was eighteen. They had three children. Their daughter, Earlene, married Orval Kohenskey of Spring Creek. It is Earlene and Orval's children who hold the picture collection. They are Orval Kohenskey, Henry Kohenskey, Clyde Kohenskey, Bobby Kohenskey, and Ruby Kohenskey Curtis.



This appears to be a well dressed carpentry crew. This family is building an addition to the log cabin barely visible on the left side. Also barely visible in the lower left corner is a partial embossed imprint, "G. E. Ingram, Edgar Springs."

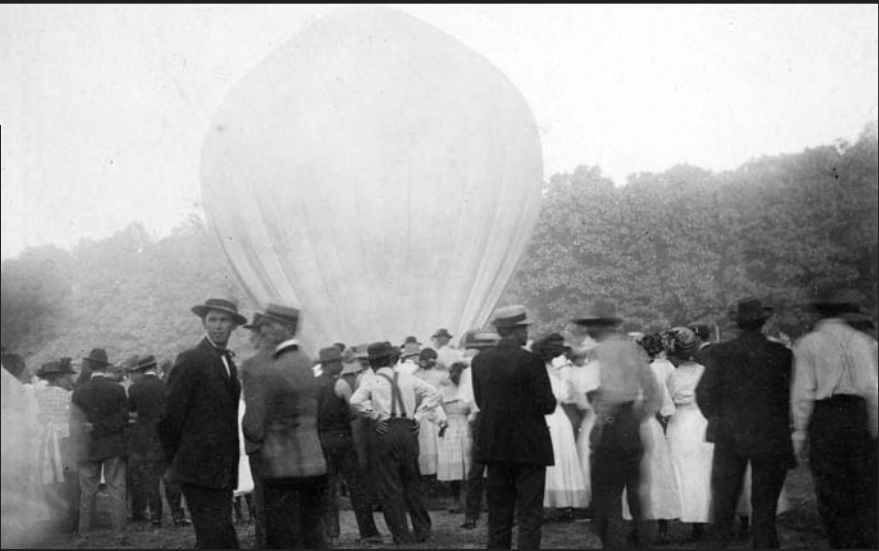


Above There used to be rabbits around Edgar Springs. This is one of the few group pictures where the subjects are fully identified on this mostly family hunting trip. From left are: Corrie Ingram, Tom Ingram, John Ingram, Edd Renaud, neighbor boy, Walter Renaud, Uncle Wess, and Edd Ingram. Edd appears in many of the photographs in the collection. He appears as a dapper, well dressed young man of the early decades of the 20th century. Even here, he is a spiffy hunter.



Left An unidentified group, possibly a school or church young people, are the subjects of this whimsical image. Ingram often arranged people in novel ways, rather than having them stand face front staring into the camera.

Transportation



These glimpses of early 20th century modes of transportation were not very typical in the rural country. The usual uneven gravel roads surely made tricycle (top left) and bicycle momentum difficult but somewhat easier in the villages. Sears, Roebuck 1908 bicycle prices ranged from \$11.95 to \$17.95. This proud owner (center) has added accessories: the light on the front of the bicycle is a carbide miner's lamp with a special mount (\$2.08); tool bag (31 cents); and a telescopic air pump (39 cents) mounted to the center column. Ingram was on hand to capture the ascent (or maybe descent) of a hot air balloon at Barnitz Lake in Dent County. It appears that the lady (right) is getting a driving lesson in the still novel Model T Ford, which was introduced in 1908 and manufactured until 1927.

Work



This photograph might be captioned “dirt farmer.” We are not sure what the farmer is up to but it is an interesting real photo.



This view of a portable sawmill in the timber features a steam tractor-driven circular saw with logs and stacks of sawn lumber. The Gill Collection (see sidebar at right) contains a similar sawmill producing railroad ties.



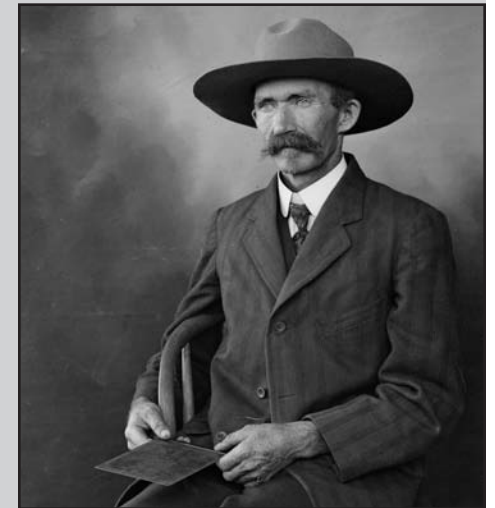
Edd grew up on a farm, tried his hand as a photographer, worked at a street-car manufactory, and wound up back on the farm. Several of his images capture the toil of men who worked the soil.

Charles Elliott Gill

Dent County Photographer

Charles Elliott Gill was also documenting life in the north central Ozarks at about the same time as Edd Ingram. Born in 1869, twenty years earlier than Ingram, Gill began active pursuit of his hobby while in his forties, capturing local scenes and images on his travels with his 1906 Seroco extended view dry plate camera. Apparently, Gill did not entertain aspirations of being a professional photographer as Ingram, but his eye for subject and composition produced some remarkable images of the first four decades of the 20th century. Ingram and Gill's territory and photographic periods overlapped. Their images give us a view of the people, structures, activities, and landscape of our area.

Edward Addison Gill donated his father, Charles Elliott Gill's, photograph collection to the Missouri State Archives in 2002. The collection con-



Charles Elliott Gill 1869-1962
Self-portrait holding a dry glass plate

sists of 722 glass plate negatives and some original prints. There are 725 images available for viewing online at http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/mdh_splash/default.asp?coll=gill



Jennie and Mary Ware and Tom Gill in a john boat on the Big Piney River.



Two women and five children in a tent, while musicians pose in front. Tom Gill holds the bass fiddle. Pictures courtesy of the Missouri State Archives.

Structures



The location of this early 20th century lumber yard is unknown. Maybe a reader will be able to identify its home town.



Jacob Woehr’s store and post office at Elk Prairie. Elk Prairie is south-east of Rolla, on modern Highway 72 toward Salem.



The location of this bank is unknown. A round safe, similar to that at the Bank of Plato, is visible through the window. Another photograph (inset) shows a man at a desk next to a round safe. This is probably an interior shot of the same bank.



A nice mirror house, possibly near Edgar Springs. The imprint “G. E. Ingram Edgar Springs MO” is in the lower left corner.



This student body at Yancy School had quite an age range in October of 1915. Yancy School was about a mile south of Yancy Mill and Spring on the Little Piney, south of Rolla on Highway 63.



Pictured above is the Electric Theater, the sign touting it as “The People’s Theater” and “Colvin’s Vaudeville and Talking Pictures” featuring the “Human Voice.” The promotion includes free candy to the children gathered in front of the theater. This may be one of Ingram’s latest images as the talkies became commercial in the late 1920s. On the reverse of the picture, Edd wrote, “Electric Theater had me make a slide from this picture to show on screen. Sure was fine.”

Portraits

The majority of C. E. Ingram’s photographs are pictures of large groups, small groups, and portraits of individuals. Most of the group pictures are unidentified and the large majority of the individuals are unnamed. People seldom smiled in early photos, partly because of the requirement to stand very still for up to four seconds for the long exposure times.



These are some of the more unusual poses and subjects. Men liked to mug for the camera (bottom center) and women with saws and axes (bottom right) was not typical. Buggies often appeared in Edd’s pictures. Identified in the image at right are: on horses from left, Lillie Sturgeon and Ella Ingram; in buggy from left, Lizzie Ingram and Lena Johnson; on buggy from left, Leslie Lenning and Delbert Johnson. Third man not identified.



Judge Colin Long

Seda’s Gift Shoppe

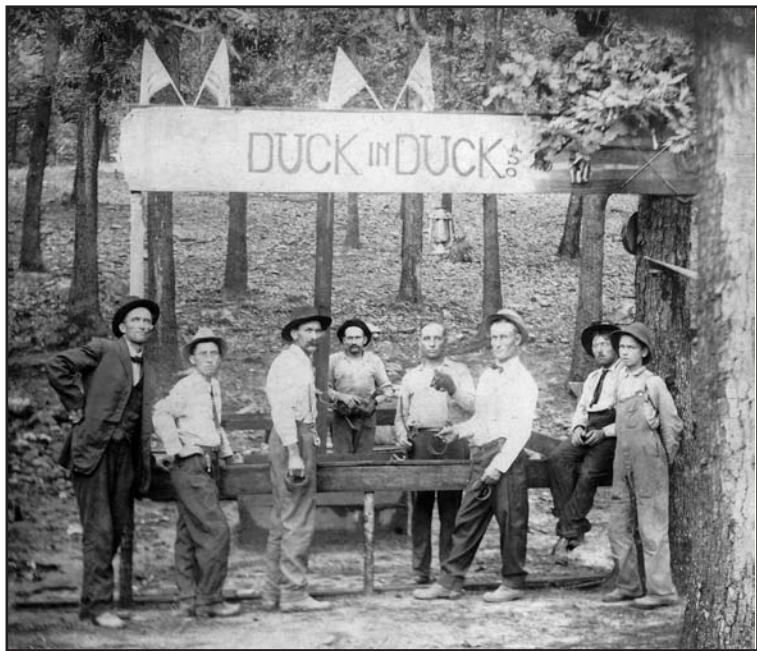
Pepsi

Sanman’s Car Care

Waynesville Career Center

City of St. Robert

Recreation



This photograph is identified as having been taken at Barnitz Lake near Lake Spring in Dent County, possibly at the same event where the hot air balloon landed. “Duck in Duck Out” appears to be a game involving duck decoys and rings.



The identity of this diamond nine is unknown but there was a Camp Creek School House and community northwest of Rolla.

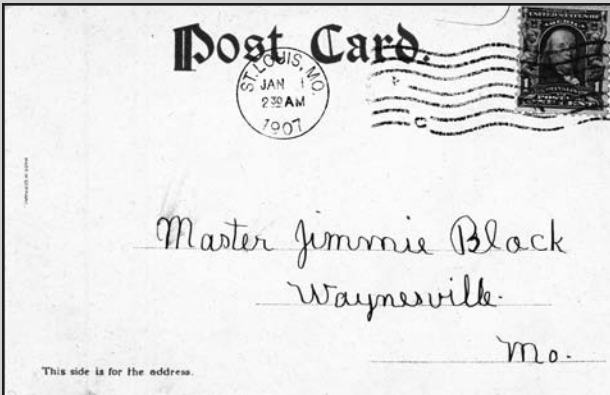


It is arguable whether this horse and sleigh should be categorized as transportation or recreation. We suppose it depends on your intent when riding. Winter scenes seem to be rare in most early photographic collections.

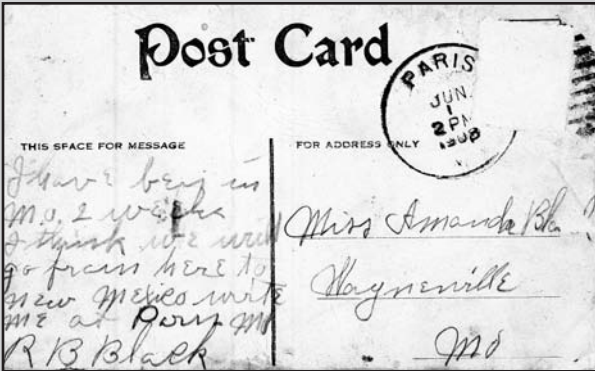
A Brief History of Postcards

Publishing an interesting *Gazette* issue requires a lot of graphics. The last two issues contained 180 images. One of our sources for vintage photos is the postcard. They can be a source of images of persons, events, roads, and structures on the national and local level. Some of G. E Ingram's pictures were printed on postcard stock.

There were a variety of postcard-type mailers introduced in Europe as early as 1869. In the United States in the 1870s, privately printed exposition cards with lithographs, woodcuts, or drawings on them required the going two cent rate for a letter. The government began printing cards, known as postals, and required only a one cent stamp on them and in 1873 started producing a prestamped postal. The U. S. Postal Service was the only entity allowed to print a card labeled “Post Card” until 1898 when Congress enacted the Private Mailing Card Act. This allowed private printers to produce cards, required that “Private Mailing Card” be inscribed, and set the rate at one cent rather than two. Only the USPS could print “Post Card” on the back. Until 1898, postcards had an undivided back. It was used for the address only. Messages could not be written on the address side. Any message was written on the face of the card. At the end of 1901, publishers were allowed to use the term “Post Card” but messages were still confined to the front of the card.



Undivided back Period 1901 - 1907



Divided Back Period 1908-1915

Again, Europe led the way. It devised the divided back. The right side was for the address, the left for a message. This preserved the front for artwork. As it had been doing in the field of photography since the 1880s, Eastman Kodak revolutionized the postcard business. In 1906, it introduced the Kodak Folding Pocket Camera. This reasonably priced camera's film negative was the same size as that of the postcard. Pictures taken by professional and amateurs alike could be printed on postcard stock. These postcards are referred to as “Real Photo” postcards. It ushered in what is called the “Golden Age” of postcards, 1908-1915. Anyone could produce a postcard of any subject they wished: house, pet, or best friend. USPS figures show 677,777,798 postcards mailed in 1908 when the population of the U. S. was not quite 89 million. Postcards had become the world's biggest collectible hobby. Eastman Kodak added another boost with the introduction of the Autographic camera in 1914. It allowed the user to open a small door on the back of the camera and inscribe a caption on the negative with a metal tool. We see the early captioned postcards mostly of towns and scenery. World War I brought to an end the hyperactivity in postcard collecting. Germany printed cards of the finest color and design. The rapid spread of the telephone made the postcard a slow and constrained form of communication but postcards have continued to be a souvenir of travel for some. The traveling public of the Route 66 era spurred sales with racks of cards at roadside attractions. Styles changed, too, in the following decades: cards with white borders, linen paper stock, and the bright photochrome images of the 40s and 50s.



Writing a caption through the door of the Kodak Autographic.

Sources

Collins, Douglas. **The Story of Kodak.** Harry N. Abrams, Inc. New York. 1990.

“The History of Postcards”, www.emotionscards.com/museum/historyofpostcards.htm



Upper left We found this to be the most unique picture. It appears to be a family of gypsies camping along the roadside. Gypsies passed through Waynesville in 1905.

Lower Left Edd Ingram made a strong effort to establish himself as a professional photographer in Phelps and surrounding counties, as well as the new state of Oklahoma. After a stint working in St. Louis, Edd returned to the family farm south of Edgar Springs in Phelps County. He took to the plow thereafter, posing here with the double shovel.

Above right Edd poses with his sisters (l-r) Lizzie Ingram Floyd, Delpha Ingram Case, and Ella Ingram Evans in their later years. All three of the sisters were school teachers. Edd died in 1978 in Rolla, Missouri of emphysema and respiratory arrest.

More of George Edward Ingram's vintage images can be found on the Old Stagecoach Stop's web site at <http://www.OldStagecoachStop.org>.

Sellers Sexton

Rep. David Day