

Charles Magers and Elizabeth McCutcheon
Early Pioneers of Burdett, Washington County, Colorado
by Mona Sarratt Knight

(Information supplied by Mona Sarratt Knight of Denver, Colo. She would like her email address made public and she encourages you to contact her if you have information concerning the Magers.

Charles Magers was born June 1857 in Warren County, Illinois, a son of Elza and Elizabeth (Patterson) Magers. The Magers family originally came to America from Ireland in the 1700's, settling in Pennsylvania like so many other early immigrants.

The spelling of the surname in Ireland was Major or Majors; this was eventually changed to Magers by census takers and on other records in the United States. Today the family spelling of this branch is consistently Magers.

Charles Magers married Elizabeth McCutcheon 24 Jul 1879 in McDonough County Illinois. Very soon after their marriage Charles and Elizabeth moved west into Nebraska. In the 1880 census for Hamilton County, Nebraska, Charles is enumerated with his wife and baby Lucy. By 1885, Charles' parents and several siblings had also moved to Hamilton County, Nebraska. Baby Lucy, born April 1880, died on April 28, 1881, and was buried at Giltner, Nebraska.

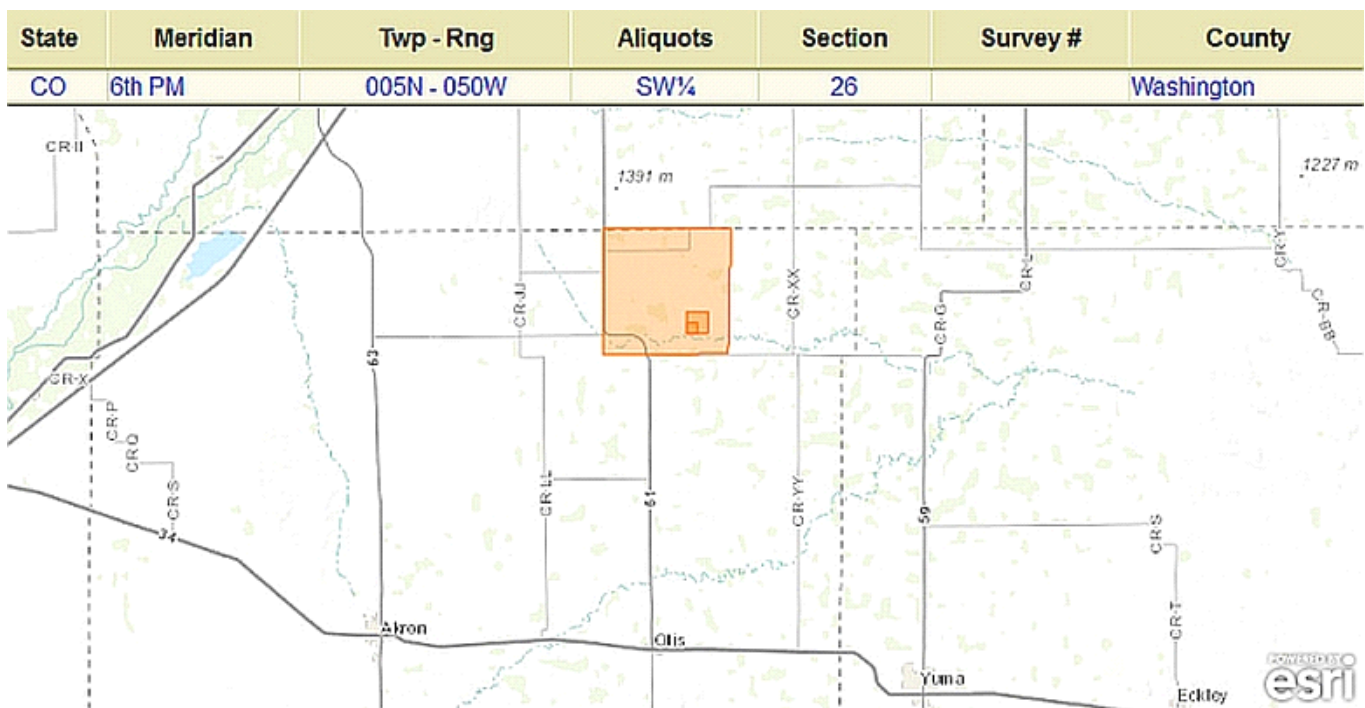
Their second child, George Elmer, was born 3 Aug 1881 in Nebraska. By the end of 1881 they were on the move again to Colorado where they settled in Washington County near the populated place Burdett (just a post office, grocery store, and a few more buildings 15 miles north and 1 mile east of Otis Colo). I believe that Charles may have worked on the local farms when they first arrived in Colorado.



The Magers had to endure the terrible winter of 1888. [The Schoolhouse Blizzard, also known as the School Children's Blizzard, or Children's Blizzard, hit the U.S. plains states on January 12, 1888. The blizzard came unexpectedly on a relatively warm day and many people were caught unawares including teachers and children in one-room schoolhouses - Wikipedia].

Their third child, Morton Sterling Magers, a son, was born at Burdett, Colorado, on December 10, 1888.

About 1890 or 1891 Charles Magers made a claim application* at the Sterling, Colorado Land Office for the SW quarter of Township 5N, Range 50W, west of the 6th Principal Meridian containing 160 acres two miles east of Burdett. Then came the hard part of becoming the owner of land in the Great Plains under the Homestead Act of 1862. He was required to build on the land, move his family in, and farm the land for 5 years from the date of the claim. It was a hardship for many migrants, especially those who arrived totally unprepared with no money and no farm equipment, but the Magers were prepared and did fulfill the requirements (probably due to Charles' ten prior years of work in the Burdett area). On 27 Feb 1895 Charles proved up and received his land patent.



Whether life was too difficult in Washington County or Charles just got the wanderlust again is unclear, but by 1899 he had moved his family to Brighton, Adams County, Colorado, and by June 1900 was farming land near the tiny community of Barr in Arapahoe County as shown by the U.S. Census of 1900.** Charles raised his family in the Brighton and Denver area.

In a strange twist, in the *Akron Weekly Pioneer Press* (an early Washington County newspaper), a list of property taxes due by local citizens ran in the issue dated September 14, 1900. Charles Magers appeared in the list and his SW 1/4, Sect 26, township 5, range 50 had a valuation \$100 with a tax due of \$3.90. A similar tax-due list was published again in October 1900 in the same newspaper.

Although it appears that he still owned the land in Washington County through October of 1900 he was busy farming and raising a family in Arapahoe County. The reason for the overlap is left to speculation since the details of the sale of this particular quarter-section are not known.

His wife Elizabeth (McCutcheon) Magers (she had been adopted as an infant by the Hunter family) died

in Brighton, Colorado, on July 29, 1939. Charles died on April 8, 1941. Both are buried at the Fairmount Cemetery in Denver, Colorado.



*Certain information is still not available online. Claim applications were placed in an individual's "case file". From the BLM site: Today, these case files exist only as paper originals and nearly all are stored in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. The complete collection of case files created under the Homestead Act contains more than 30 million individual pieces of paper.

**All U.S. censuses take place in the month of June of every year ending in zero. The first census was taken in 1790; the 1890 census was lost due to fire and water damage.
