

ARMSTRONG / KEATING

Block 20, Lot 4 De Smet Cemetery



☛ There are 5 stones in the Armstrong row in Block 20, south of Block 13 (where Rev. Brown memorial marker is located). From L-R (north-south): Unreadable small rounded stone in alley between blocks (to the left of the group pictured above), perhaps for a child; Lucy Armstrong 1863-1934 (grave 1); R.J. Armstrong 1865-1948 (grave 2); John Armstrong 1843-1902; Lillian B. Armstrong 1865-1948 (wife) / John H. Armstrong 1868-1943 (husband).

John “Johnnie” Henry Armstrong and Lillian “Lillie” Belle (Keating) Armstrong are mentioned in “The Road Back” diary entry dated June 16, 1931 (*see page 314, A Little House Traveler*). It is implied that Almanzo & Laura knew Johnnie & Lillie prior to leaving De Smet in 1894:



Johnnie and Lillie Armstrong, 1941

Manly went to De Smet and spent the morning loafing with Charley [Dawley] and Gay Barrows. In the afternoon I went with him and looked up some more of the records at the courthouse, and we called on Lillie Keating Armstrong and she took us to see Johnnie Armstrong, where he is janitor at the courthouse. She is the same flannel-mouthed Irishwoman as ever. Flattery! My gosh! Manly always falls for her and Johnnie hard. He enjoyed it and I was amused. It is funny how everyone who never would have been so familiar in the old days calls me Laurie and loves me so much, but in some way I like it. It all makes me miss those who are gone, Pa and Ma and Mary and the Boasts and Cap Garland.

JOHN HENRY ARMSTRONG

Block 20, Lot 4 De Smet Cemetery

December 26, 1868 – March 14, 1943; died at age 77

Husband of Lillian “Lillie” Belle (Keating) Armstrong (1862 – 1948); married November 26, 1891.

Brother of Susan (Armstrong) Keating, who was married to Richard W. Keating.

In stock-raising business with J.H. Armstrong (uncle, also buried in this row) in 1880s, De Smet. Later was janitor at the Court House in De Smet.

No children.



ARMSTRONG / Lillian B 1865-1948 wife /
John H. 1868-1943 husband

John Henry “Johnnie” Armstrong and his sister Susan Armstrong arrived in New York from Liverpool on June 6, 1882, aboard the *Gallia*; they were the children of Harriet & Thomas Armstrong of County Louth, Ireland. Johnnie went into business with his uncle, also named John H. Armstrong, in the purebred stock-raising business in De Smet. The uncle was president of Kingsbury County Bank in 1880, with Thomas Ruth as cashier.

Johnnie filed on a tree claim, the SE 32-112-56 on December 4, 1882. He relinquished it and refiled as a homestead on June 4, 1886, making final proof April 17, 1889. He made final proof on a preemption claim, the SW 32-112-56, on February 16, 1884. Almon Johnson’s homestead adjoined the Armstrong land; Almon was a brother of Little House character Minnie Johnson.

Johnnie Armstrong married Lillian “Lillie” Belle Keating on November 26, 1891. She was the daughter of Michael Keating and Mary (Shannon) Keating, also buried in De Smet; see below.

Lillian & Johnnie had no children.

December 4, 1941. The De Smet NEWS.

Couple Congratulated on Golden Wedding; Were Married On Farm Of This Vicinity.

Almost overwhelmed, were the J.H. Armstrongs, with the congratulations received on their fiftieth wedding anniversary Wednesday of last week. They seemed surprised at the interest taken in the event, but as both of them had been residents of the community since the early eighties, and their marriage had taken place here, it was not at all surprising.

Through the afternoon and late into the evening, friends called on them. There were letters, telegrams and telephone calls from distant former De Smetites and others, and over 150 signed the guest book.

A huge box of flowers came from a group of old friends at Portland, Ore., Mrs. T.I. Robinson, Mrs. W.M. Robinson, Mrs. D.A. Crawford, and Mrs. Tom Dunham joining in sending it. A telegram of congratulation came from Mrs. Mary Hunt Altfillisch in New York, Russell Johnson telephoned from Dallas, Texas, that evening.

As Lillian Keating, Mrs. Armstrong had come to De Smet in 1882 from Benton, Wis., spent several years, returned home and came back a few years later. Mr. Armstrong had come from Canada in 1882. They were married at the homestead of her brother, W.R. Keating, now the Elmer Colwell farm, five miles north of De Smet, on Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 1891, with relatives present, and a turkey dinner served. Mrs. Keating is a sister of Mr. Armstrong, and was present on the anniversary.

The couple have lived in this community most of the years since, their only absence being five years on a homestead near Wasta, from 1908 on.

Arrangements for the observance of the anniversary were made by a group of friends, a number of women baking cakes and cookies, and serving through the hours of the afternoon and evening. At the table they used three hot dish holders that had been the gift of Mrs. C.H. Tinkham at their marriage.

Among the gifts last week was a blanket presented by the court house "gang" to which they had belonged, Mr. Armstrong having retired a few years ago after many years as janitor of the court house. A number of former county officials and their wives were among the visitors through the day.

Out of town guests included Mrs. Armstrong's sister, Mrs. Charles Dawson of Hawarden, Iowa, and her son, Tom Dawson, of Hudson; her niece, Mrs. Ethel Gunnison of Hartford; Mr. and Mrs. Ed Finney of Alcester and Mr. and Mrs. Rollo Jack of Arlington, the two women being nieces of Mrs. Armstrong.

Mr. and Mrs. George Ferguson of Yankton, friends of many years, drove here to congratulate the Armstrongs.

Gifts of currency amounted to over \$35.

March 18, 1943. The De Smet NEWS.

J.H. Armstrong.

The community was shocked by the report of the death of J.H. Armstrong in a sudden attack Sunday afternoon.

Mr. Armstrong had returned to the house from his barns adjoining town, and Mrs. Armstrong, in the next room, heard him fall.

One of the early residents of the vicinity, Mr. Armstrong had been a homesteader, and for many years was janitor of the court house.

Services were held Thursday afternoon in the Methodist church with the Rev. Adam S. Forch officiating. Burial was in De Smet cemetery.

March 25, 1943. The De Smet NEWS. [photo of Armstrongs at Golden Wedding shown on page 1 is from this issue, taken by McKibben]

J.H. Armstrong, Early Day Stockman, Native of Ireland.

John H. Armstrong, who died at his home here last week, was one of the early settlers of this area, having come here direct from his native Ireland in 1882.

His earlier years here were spent in stock raising, associated with his late uncle, the late John Armstrong. He and his wife proved up on a claim in the west river country, and for many years he was caretaker at the court house, and since retiring had devoted himself to stock raising.

John Henry Armstrong was born Dec. 26, 1865, to Thos. and Harriet Armstrong, near Dundalk, County Louth, Ireland. He immigrated to this country May 16, 1882, to join his uncle, already located here as a pioneer purebred stock raiser.

He married Lillie Belle Keating, a homesteader of this vicinity, at the home of her brother and his sister, Mr. and Mrs. W.R. Keating, on Nov. 26, 1891. They commenced housekeeping in De Smet and for some years he continued with his uncle. He later owned a meat market.

Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong went to Wasta vicinity in 1907 and returned five years later, after proving up on a claim.

In many years as caretaker of the court house and grounds he took a great pride in the lawns and flowers.

The couple had lived in their own home on East Second street many years, and he raised stock on a few acres east of town.

As a boy he was baptized and confirmed in the Episcopal church in Ireland. He has three brothers there and one sister, Mrs. Susan Keating in De Smet; several cousins, nieces and nephews, who with his wife, are left to mourn his passing.

Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1941, having open house at that time.

He passed away suddenly on Sunday, March 14, about 6 o'clock p.m. Funeral services were held in the Methodist church Thursday with the Rev. Adam S. Forch officiating.

Out-of-town relatives attending the funeral were Thomas and John Dawson and Mrs. Vica Marshall of Hawarden, Iowa; Mrs. Ed Finnie of Alcester; Mr. and Mrs. Rollo Jack of Arlington; Mr. and Mrs. Merle H. Keating of Miller; Flight Officer and Mrs. Henry Stampe, who came from Ramona where he was on a furlough at his father's home.

LILLIAN BELLE (KEATING) ARMSTRONG

Block 20, Lot 4 De Smet Cemetery

April 28, 1865 – November 11, 1948; died at age 86

Wife of John Henry Armstrong (1868-1943).

Daughter of Michael and Mary (Shannon) Keating.

No children.



*November 18, 1948. The De Smet NEWS.
Mrs. J.H. Armstrong Laid to Rest Sunday.*

Death came November 11 to Mrs. John H. Armstrong, pioneer resident of De Smet. Funeral services were held Sunday in the Methodist church and burial was made beside her husband here.

Lillian Belle Keating was born April 28, 1862 on a farm near Benton, Wis., to Michael and Mary Keating. Before 1885 she came to De Smet to make a home for her brother, W.R. Keating, who was living on a claim. Upon his marriage she returned home and later came back to make a home for her younger brother, Mike, until December 1890. In November, 1891, she came back to De Smet and was united in marriage to John H. Armstrong in the home of her brother and wife, Mr. and Mrs. W.R. Keating.

Although they had no children of their own, Mr. and Mrs. Keating were Aunt Lill and Uncle John to the neighborhood children. She was preceded in death by her husband March 14, 1943.

Mrs. Armstrong was a member of the Primitive Methodist church in Wisconsin and a Sunday school worker there. After her marriage she attended the local Methodist church and was a member of its aid society. She was also a member of the Rebekah lodge.

Out of town relatives attending the funeral were Mr. and Mrs. R.E. Jack, Arlington; John Dawson and sister, Mrs. Viva Marshall, Hawarden, Iowa; Mr. and Mrs. Merle Keating, Miller; Mr. and Mrs. Frank Keating, Scotland; and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Stampe of Ramona.

ARMSTRONG / Lillian B 1865-1948 wife /
John H. 1868-1943 husband

KEATING / DWIGHT

Block 43, Lot 8 De Smet Cemetery



☛ The parents of Lillian (Keating) Armstrong are buried here, plus her brother Mike Keating with his wife and a daughter, in the block to the west of the Ingallses' graves. From L-R (south-north): Mr. and Mrs. Mike Keating Sr.; Mike H. Keating 1864-1919 / Ada L. Keating 1872-1964; Eleanor Keating Davidson 1908-2000 (her husband, Delbert Davidson, is buried in Iroquois Cemetery). Mike and Ada's son Charles' grave is also here, unmarked. They had another son who died young; his burial location is unknown, but may be west of this row, in the same lot.

These Keating family members aren't mentioned in the Little House books, but they have a Little House connection in that Ada Lorena (Dwight) Keating was the daughter of Daniel Dwight, father of one of Laura Ingalls' Wilkin School students mentioned *Pioneer Girl*; Wilder's character "Georgie Dwight" was actually Clarence Dwight, one of Ada's brothers.

"Mr. and Mrs. Mike Keating Sr." buried here are Michael Keating Sr. and his wife, Mary A. (Shannon) Keating, parents of Lillian (*see* "The Road Back" diary), Mike, and Dick. The Dick Keating family is buried in Block 36, Lot 5, west of the Boasts and on the east side of the main cemetery avenue.

MICHAEL KEATING (SR.)

Block 43, Lot 8 De Smet Cemetery
circa 1828 – January 20, 1914; died at about age 87

Husband of Mary (Shannon) Keating (1832-1892).
Father of Lillian Belle (Keating) Armstrong (1862-1948).

Father of Walter Richard "Dick" Keating (1853-1921).

Father of Michael Humphrey Keating (1864-1911).

Father-in-law of Ada Lorena (Dwight) Keating (1872-1964).



Mr. and Mrs. Mike Keating Sr.

Michael Keating (called Senior for clarification) was born circa 1828 in Ireland. He married Mary A. Shannon in 1852, and the couple, with son Walter Richard Keating (born in England in 1853), came to America in 1854 and settled in New Diggings (Lafayette Co.) Wisconsin. Mary and Michael Keating came to De Smet in 1892 to be near their children, following a fire which destroyed their home in Wisconsin. After Mary's death in 1892, Mike Keating, Sr., was the janitor of the De Smet school, living

in a room in the basement of the school; he was described by grand-daughter Evelyn as being “a little old man with a gray Van Dyke beard.” He died January 20, 1914, in De Smet.

January 23, 1914. The De Smet NEWS.

Michael Keating passed away Tuesday night. The end was nearer than had been looked for, although the old gentleman had been very ill for several days. The funeral was held from the M.H. Keating home yesterday afternoon, conducted by Rev. John Oakley, pastor of the M.E. Church.

KEATING, MARY A. (SHANNON)

Block 43, Lot 8 De Smet Cemetery
1832 – November 26, 1892; died at about age 60

Wife of Michael Keating (circa 1828-1914).
Mother of Lillian Belle (Keating) Armstrong (1862-1948).
Mother of Walter Richard “Dick” Keating (1853-1921).
Mother of Michael Humphrey Keating (1864-1911).
Mother-in-law of Ada Lorena (Dwight) Keating (1872-1964).



Mr. and Mrs. Mike Keating Sr.

December 1, 1892. Kingsbury County INDEPENDENT. Obituary.

Mary A. Shannon was born in Tralee, county of Kerry, Ireland, in 1832 and died at her residence in De Smet, Nov. 26, 1892, at 12 o'clock. She was left an orphan when only a small child, but was taken to London, Eng., by a kind lady who always treated her as a mother. In 1852 she was united in marriage to Michael Keating in the Church of England. About a year later she came to the United States, bringing her little boy, W.R. Keating, in her arms.

She resided with her husband in LaFayette county, Wis., from that time until April 1892, when they came to South Dakota to live nearer her children. Two sons and two daughters live at De Smet, one daughter near Calliope, Ia., one in Superior, Wis., one in LaFayette county, Wis., while one son and two daughters preceded her to the Great Beyond.

She always enjoyed very good health but when any sickness did overtake her she was a very sick woman. Just before coming to South Dakota, they had their house and everything in it burned. A similar misfortune occurred several years before. Though a hard working woman all her life she had a very strong constitution, but when pneumonia visited her it soon exhausted her strength. All that medical aid and loving sons and daughters, with their families could do, seemed only to ease her pain, by remembering how good and kind her family and neighbors were to her during her short sickness of nine and one half days. She was beloved by all her knew her. Children as well as aged people would always visit her. Only a few hours before her death she called the family to the bedside and told them to “be good children, help one another and keep good company, that is the main thing.” She was buried from the M.E. church Monday afternoon at 2 o'clock, Rev. L.B. Wiles conducting the services after which all

that remained of the wife and mother was followed to the last resting place by a number of sympathizing friends.

MIKE HUMPHREY KEATING

Block 43, Lot 8 De Smet Cemetery
January 9, 1864 – December 28, 1919; died at
age 55.

Son of Michael Keating Sr. (~1828-1914) and
Mary A. (Shannon) Keating (1832-1892).

Brother of Lillian Belle (Keating) Armstrong
(1862-1948).

Brother of Walter Richard “Dick” Keating (1853-
1921).

Husband of Ada Lorena (Dwight) Keating (1872-1964).

Father of Eleanor (Keating) Davidson (1908-2000), et. al.



KEATING / Mike H. 1864-1919 / Ada L. 1872-1964

Mike Humphrey Keating (called Junior for clarification) was born January 1864 in Wisconsin, son of Mary and Michael Keating. He came to Dakota Territory in 1882 with his brother Walter Richard “Dick” Keating (born January 1853 in England; died January 13, 1921 in De Smet) and sister Lillian Belle Keating (born March 1862 in Wisconsin).

Mike H. Keating, Jr. married Ada Lorena Dwight in 1891. They had six children, two girls and six boys: Evelyn Maude (1893-1982; she married Bert Stewart); Merle Humphrey (1896-1985; he lived in Miller SD); Clarence Dewey (1899-1971); Charles (born after 1900, died in 1902); Samuel (1904-1952); Eleanor (1908-2000, she married Delbert Davidson); and twins Edwin and Elmer (they both moved to California).

January 2, 1920. The De Smet NEWS.

Obituary of Mike H. Keating.

Mike Humphrey Keating was born Jan. 9, 1864 at Benton, Wis., and passed away at his home near De Smet, December 28, 1919 at the age of 55 years, 11 months and 19 days.

He came to De Smet in 1884 and on April 25, 1891 he was united in marriage to Ada L. Dwight. Eight children, six boys and two girls, came to bless this union, all of whom survive him, except little Charles who passed away in 1902. All the others were at his bedside when he passed away.

Soon after his marriage he united with the M.E. church of which he remained a constant member, and much of the time an office bearer, until his death. He was a member of the Degree of Honor, Modern Woodman and United Workmen.

In October 1918 he had an attack of influenza from which he never fully recovered. He was however able to be about until the latter part of June, but he has since then been confined to his bed. All that medical skill and loving ministry could do was done for him, but his strength never returned, and he quietly passed away last Sunday evening at 8:30 o'clock.

Besides his immediate family he leaves to mourn his loss, a grandson, one brother and five sisters, besides a number of nieces and nephews and a host of friends.

Funeral services were held at the M.E. church in De Smet on Tuesday afternoon, December 30, at two o'clock, Rev. A.N. Courtney officiating. Burial was made in the De Smet cemetery.

ADA LORENA (DWIGHT) KEATING

Block 43, Lot 8 De Smet Cemetery

August 22, 1872 – December 29, 1964; died at age 92.

Daughter of Dan Dwight (1841-1919) and Frances (Owen) Dwight (1848-1923).

Wife of Mike H. Keating (1864-1919).

Mother of Eleanor Davidson (1908-2000).



KEATING / Mike H. 1864-1919 / Ada L. 1872-1964

Ada Lorena Dwight was the daughter of Dan Dwight and Frances Amelia (Owen) Dwight. Frances was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Burdette Owen, so De Smet shoemaker, Sam Owen, was Ada's grandfather. Frances's brother was De Smet teacher, V.S.L. Owen. Ada's brother, Clarence Arthur Dwight, was one of Laura Ingalls' students in the Wilkin School.

Ada Keating wrote the following directions for twisting hay into sticks for burning:

“First you get some long stemmed medium dry hay. If the hay is too dry, you'll likely get cuts and scratches on your hands and wrists. Hay stems up to 30 inches long is all right or you can use shorter stems by splicing them. Grasp one end of a hand full of hay and if you are right handed, place the other end of the hay under your left arm and proceed to twist the hay over and over. When it is about as tight as you can get it, let the loose end double back so it will twist itself together with the main part of the rope-like product. Do the same with the other end. When tight, tuck it under something to hold it. One who is used to it can make the twisted hay nearly as hard as wood. This takes experience. If you had a coal bin building with door, window and roof, it was often filled with twisted hay. This work would often be done during so called 'leisure time.' It was a job for 'kids' to do who were five or more years old. The loose hay was usually stored in a stall in the barn to keep it away from the rain, snow and the wind. I think you could demonstrate this twisting with a thin bath towel of the right length if you do not have the hay.”

January 7, 1965. The De Smet NEWS.

Early Day Rural School Teacher, Resident Nearly 83 Years, Ada Keating Had Full Life.

The death last week of Mrs. M.H. Keating, at the age of 92, removed one of the few remaining daughters of early settlers, a teacher in several rural Kingsbury County schools in the first decade of settlement here, and a woman beloved for her great spirit and kindly disposition.

Coming to the county in 1882 at the age of 10, she had resided in De Smet and vicinity all her remaining years, familiar with its history and to her last years interested in its progress.

Family, education and religion were her chief devotions, her teaching starting at the age of 16, her membership in the Methodist Church at De Smet beginning in June, 1891. She was a member of the Degree of Honor Society for fifty years and a member of the Daughters of Union Veterans. She taught Sunday School classes for many years.

Ada Lorena, the oldest of seven children of Dan and Frances Dwight, was born August 11, 1872, at Cedar Falls, Iowa. Death came to her December 29, at a Rest Home at Arlington, where she had resided for over a year, in failing health. She was 92 years, 4 months, and 18 days of age.

The Dwight family moved to De Smet, Dakota Territory, in April 1882, to the home of Mrs. Dwight's parents, Sam B. Owen, an early shoemaker here. When a home had been built at their farm two miles northeast of town, they moved there.

The daughter attended the De Smet public school, its principal V.S.L. Owen, her uncle, from [missing line] the tenth grade, but a crop failure caused her to leave school to teach in that sophomore year after a crop failure from a hail storm on her father's farm.

Her first school was in Le Seuer township about two miles south and two miles east of Bancroft, to be paid \$30 a month, with room and board costing her \$8 a month. She next taught the Still school four miles from her home and could remain with the family. Later she taught in Whitewood township, Number One school, then in Spirit Lake township, this time, in a 12x16 claim shanty.

Rooming and boarding with a man and his sister brought romance into her life and a year later she and Mike Humphrey Keating were married.

Eight children were born to the couple, six of them surviving their mother. They are Evelyn, Mrs. Bert L. Stewart, of De Smet, Merle H., of Miller, Clarence Dewey of Kuna, Idaho, Eleanor, Mrs. Delbert Davidson of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Edwin and Hugh, both of San Diego, Calif.

After farming north of town, the Keatings moved to their farm a half mile southwest, the present Milo Wallum farm, operating this from 1903 to 1920.

Surviving also are one sister, Mrs. Vivian Reed of Long Beach, Calif. There are 10 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

Preceding Mrs. Keating in death were her parents, three brothers and two sisters, one of them on November 30, 1964, her husband in 1919, two sons, an infant and Sam in 1952.

With the exception of several winters spent in California with her sons, Mrs. Keating had lived continuously in or near De Smet for almost 83 years.



Ada Keating, age 80, McKibben photo



Ada (Dwight) Keating, seated, and daughter Evelyn (Keating) Stewart, standing, with grandson and great-grandson. Photo from *De Smet: Yesterday & Today*, page 255

She suffered a broken hip May 7, 1963, which healed after surgery, but due to her advanced age never permitted walking. She resided at Bedwell Rest Home in Arlington for over a year.

Funeral services were held Friday afternoon at the Methodist Church, the Rev. Kenneth Farr, minister, conducting them, with interment in De Smet Cemetery.

Mrs. Rodney Brandt, Mrs. Grover Denman and Mr. Farr sang, Mrs. James Penney the organist.

Casket bearers were Orville Carpenter, Dale Snyder, Leon Carpenter, Rodney Brandt, Edward Hinz and Bernelle McCaskell.

Ketelsen Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

ADA ELEANOR (KEATING) DAVIDSON

Block 43, Lot 8 De Smet Cemetery

Daughter of Mike Keating (1864-1919) and Ada (Dwight) Keating (1872-1964).

Wife of Delbert Davidson.

Delbert Davidson had two children (Shirley and William) by his first wife, Anna De Vries; they married in Beadle County in 1926. Anna died March 9, 1930 in Mitchell.

Eleanor Keating married widower Delbert Edwin Davidson on December 27, 1933. They had two daughters, Lillian and Lois.

The Davidsons lived in De Smet in the former Surveyors' House on Joliet Avenue from September 1947 until the 1950s, when they moved to Cedar Rapids. Delbert Davidson died in Cedar Rapids on June 13, 1966. He was buried in the Iroquois (Kingsbury County) Cemetery.



Eleanor Keating Davidson / 1908 - 2000

June 14, 1966. The (Huron) Daily PLAINSMAN.

Funeral set Thursday for D.E. Davidson, De Smet. The funeral service for Delbert E. Davidson who died Monday in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, will be held Thursday at 2 p.m. in the Methodist Church. The Rev. Kenneth Fair will officiate. Burial will be in the Iroquois Cemetery. Davidson was born March 31, 1899, in Iowa. He married Eleanor Keating, December 27, 1933, at De Smet and they resided in De Smet until eight years ago when they moved to Cedar Rapids. Survivors include his widow, Eleanor, one son, William D., Cedar

Rapids; three daughters: Mrs. Lillian Lund, Ames, Iowa; Mrs. Shirley Hanson, Omaha; Mrs. Lois Peterson, Alexandria, Minn.; one sister and five brothers.

The following year, the Laura Ingalls Wilder Memorial Society purchased the Davidson property and soon began renovating it as a tourist attraction:

December 15, 1966. The De Smet NEWS.

Plan to Preserve 1879 RR Shanty.

Small structure, once by shores of silver lake, widely known. May be only remaining building of camps of railroad construction across Dakota. Fund drive for preservation of structure – the railroad shanty of 1879-1880. The one time construction camp shanty, since early years of the town a small residence.... It had been the residence of the Delbert Davidson family for many years but not occupied in recent years. Mr. Davidson died a few months ago and the property was made available for purchase as a historic relic. Originally stood on the shore of the small lake a mile to the southeast of where it is now located, a fact long known to its last owner and to others. Until some years ago it had the upright plank siding with batten strips of most railway structures.

June 8, 1967. The De Smet NEWS.

Purchase of the Davidson residence property on East First Street—the onetime shanty of the railroad camp of 1879-1880 at Silver Lake—was approved by the directors of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Memorial Society, Inc, at a meeting Tuesday evening. The Memorial Society had received a price of \$2,350 on the property. The price first asked was \$3,000. The Society has a fund of about \$1400 toward the purchase.

September 7, 1967. The De Smet NEWS.

R.R. Construction Camp Shanty of Wilder Books Lore Acquired.

Purchase of the one-time railway construction camp shanty of 1879-1880 by the Laura Ingalls Wilder Memorial Society was made last week, to be made a historical museum. The property, at the east end of First Street, was bought from Mrs. Delbert Davidson, the former Eleanor Keating, native of De Smet, now of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Negotiations for the purchase were made by telephone and mail some weeks ago and the purchase completed this week, during Mrs. Davidson's visit here. Possession will be given before she returns to Iowa later this month.



The Surveyors' House in use as a residence in the 1960s

The sale by Mrs. Davidson closes a history of many years' ownership, during which the Davidsons made their home in the small residence for years. The house had not been occupied in recent years and disposition of the property came following the death this year of Mr. Davidson. Purchase of the 50-foot Lot 10 of Block 9, Western Town Lot Addition is at a price of \$2,350. The Memorial Society, an incorporation, had \$1,360 to pay toward the purchase and with the approval and promised support of the De Smet Chamber of Commerce a loan was made for the balance.

Likely the only relic of railroad construction days of Dakota Territory.

KEATING / ARMSTRONG

Block 36, Lot 5 De Smet Cemetery



☛ These Keatings are northeast of the Ingallses in Block 36, just south of George and Martha Wilmarth, Delbert and Arthur Wilmarth. Boast marker is to the back left. From L-R (north to south): father Walter R. 1853 – 1921; mother Susan H. 1864 – 1949; main Keating lot marker; Bessie G., wife of F.A. 1889 – 1929; Frank A. 1890 – 1952. Frank was the son of Dick and Susan Keating.

WALTER RICHARD “DICK” KEATING

Block 36, Lot 5 De Smet Cemetery

January 20, 1853 – August 13, 1921; died at age 68.

Son of Michael Keating Sr. (~1828-1914) and Mary A. (Shannon) Keating (1832-1892).

Brother of Mike Humphrey Keating (1864-1919)

Brother of Lillian Belle (Keating) Armstrong (1862-1948).

Husband of Susan H. (Armstrong) Keating (1869-1949).



Father / Walter R. / 1853 - 1921

Walter Richard “Dick” Keating was born January 1853 in England, son of Mary & Michael Keating. Dick Keating married Susan Armstrong in 1885. Susan was the sister of John Henry Armstrong (1865-1941), who married Lillian Keating (mentioned in “The Road Back”). Dick Keating had a homestead, the SW 27-112-56. Timothy Johnson filed a tree claim in 1881 on the SE 27, which Arthur Johnson took over and held from from 1886-1889.

August 19, 1921. The De Smet News.

W.R. Keating dies suddenly following short illness.

W.R. Keating passed away at his home in this city Saturday, following an illness of about two weeks. His death was unexpected as it was thot until near the last that he would recover. He was buried Monday.

Mr. Keating was one of the early settlers and farmers of this vicinity, coming here in 1880. Until a few years ago he continued running his farm north of the city.

Walter Richard Keating was born in England in 1853, came to this country in infancy, and lived near Benton, Wisconsin, until he moved to South Dakota. He was married in 1885 to Susan Armstrong and to them five children were born.

Mrs. P.P. Gunnison, of Crooks, Miss Pearl Keating and Walter Keating, from Watertown, and Mr. and Mrs. Russell Keating of Highmore were called here by the death of the father. Frank Keating has operated the farm since his father moved to town.

SUSAN H. (ARMSTRONG) KEATING

Block 36, Lot 5 De Smet Cemetery

March 18, 1864 – May 18, 1949; died at age 85.

Daughter of Harriet and Thomas Armstrong.
Wife of Walter Richard “Dick” Keating (1853-1921).

Susan H. Armstrong and her brother, John Henry Armstrong, arrived in New York from Liverpool on June 6, 1882, aboard the *Gallia*; they were the children of Harriet & Thomas Armstrong of County Louth, Ireland. John and Susan Armstrong arrived in New York from Liverpool on June 6, 1882, aboard the *Gallia*; they came to Dakota directly upon arrival.

Susan married Dick Keating in 1885.



Mother / Susan H. / 1864 - 1949



Susan Armstrong Keating

June 2, 1949. The De Smet NEWS.

Pioneer Mother Dies; Native of Ireland.

The death of Mrs. Susan Keating recently brought to an end a long residence in this vicinity, as she was a member of a pioneer family, the Armstrongs, and came here in 1884 to live continuously near or in De Smet until her death.

Susan Armstrong was born March 18, 1864, near Dundalk, County Louth, Ireland, to Thomas and Harriett Armstrong, one of 12 children. She and her brother John came to Canada at about the ages of 16 and 18, with their uncle, John Armstrong, Sr., and later came to this vicinity with him when he came to locate north of town.

Marriage to W. Richard Keating, another pioneer, on December 25, 1885, took her to his farm north of De Smet, where they lived until 1912. Five children were born to them, four of them surviving her. Mr. Keating died August 15, 1921, and their son Walter in 1947.

Moving to town, the Keatings bought a property in the south part of town and in 1929 she bought what has since been her home, on First avenue at First street. There she lived,

alone for the most part, making winter visits to her children in later years as her health became poorer but always returning for the summers.

Death came to her May 18, after a short illness, at the age of 85 years, 2 months.

She leaves four children, Frank A., De Smet; Mrs. Ethel Gunnison, Minneapolis, Minn.; Mrs. Pearl Keinholtz, E. Hartford, Conn.; and Russell, Walker, Minn. There are also two sisters-in-law, 14 grandchildren, 11 great grandchildren.

In her years in this vicinity, she had been a member of the Methodist church and its aid society, a member of the Royal Neighbor lodge.

In 1905, Mr. and Mrs. Keating went to her native home in Ireland to visit her aged mother and other relatives.

Funeral services were held at the Methodist church with the Rev. E.H. Jarman, officiating. Mrs. Jarman sang, accompanied by Mrs. Glen Van Tassell.

Burial was in the local cemetery beside her husband.

Attending the funeral from a distance were Russell Keating, Walker, Minn., Mrs. Pearl Gunnison, Minneapolis, Mrs. Myron Youngblood, Hastings, Nebr., Mr. and Mrs. H.M. Stampe, Ramona.

ASA FARNUM ARMSTRONG

A resident of Seattle at the time of his death. Cremated.

May 28, 1851 – October 10, 1909

Unrelated to the John Armstrong family, Asa Armstrong was born in Massachusetts, on May 28, 1851, the son of Seth Walcott Armstrong of Rhode Island and Maria Catherine Farnum. Asa married Alice Clarissa Tyler in Alden (Steele County) Minnesota, on October 22, 1877.

In 1880, Asa and his brother, David Newell Armstrong, came to Dakota. They both had claims in Kingsbury County in Township 111, Range 58, between Manchester and Iroquois. Asa ran a store in Fairview (later Manchester). David married Mary W. Nelson; both Asa and David had children born in Kingsbury County.

In September 1896, Asa took over the Commercial Hotel in De Smet (“Mead’s Hotel” from the Little House books), which he ran until around 1900, when he moved to Seattle. At one time, Armstrong was chairman of the County Commission in Kingsbury County.

October 14, 1909. The Seattle Times.

Real Estate Dealer Buried.

The funeral of Asa F. Armstrong, a well-known real estate dealer who died Sunday at his residence, 2417 Fifth Avenue, from pneumonia, was held this afternoon from the family home... Mr. Armstrong was born in Uxbridge, Mass., in 1851, and lived in Minnesota from 1859 to 1880. From that year until 1900 he lived in South Dakota, where he conducted the Commercial Hotel and engaged in the real estate business in De Smet, S.D. In the eight years he had lived in Seattle he has been engaged in the real estate business. He leaves a widow and four children, A. Newell, Seth J., and R.C., and Mrs. J.C. Jackson, of Morgan, Minn. He was a member of Iroquois, S.D., lodge, A.O.U.W.