

**Irving Horace Wheatcroft**  
**1870-1952**



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Irving Horace was born Samuel Isaac Wheatcroft in 1870 at 110 Derby Road Burton on Trent, son of William Samuel and Emma Moore. He had five brothers, four sisters, one step brother and three stepsisters. It must have been a very crowded and rowdy house!.



*Burton Upon Trent*

His father was a master wood turner, born in Crich, Derbyshire in 1838, son of George German, the Crich Postmaster.

As a young man, Samuel became District manager of The National Benefit Trust Ltd, a bond investment and endowment certificate company, which was to stand him in good stead for his later career in banking.

Samuel emigrated to the USA in late 1891 and settled for a while in Alabama, where he promised to build a railroad in Gurley.

From the January 21, 1892 edition of the Gurley Record Newspaper:

“The full preliminary survey of the intended route of our new railroad was commenced last Monday. The northern section of the line is first being located from Gurley, up the Paint Rock Valley, right over the Cumberland Plateau and on to Winchester Tenn., a distance of about forty miles. After which the southern portion will be surveyed to the town of Deposit on the Tennessee River. The commencement was made from the Memphis and Charleston Railway near the west boundary of the town, where the line will cross and connect with the M&C Railroad and running in a general north eastern direction pass to the north of our town some three hundred yards from the college.

Continuing through the land, owned by Capt. Gurley for about a mile the course then bears off to the southeast to avoid the mountain ridge some two and half miles from town; after rounding which, the line enters the Paint Rock Valley.

The full survey corps consists of the following: Samuel I. Wheatcroft, chief engineer; W. H. Calhoun, assistant engineer; Capt. E. F. Walker, transitman; J. F. Childress, flagman; Robert Givins, rodman; A. J. Hannah, front chainman; W. Hankins, rear chainman; Walter Givins, stake marker; M. H. Roberts, axeman; William A. Walker and F. B. James, other assistants. Capt.

Frank B. Gurley is acting as general director of the party and T. P. Gurley as assistant. Several other gentlemen are accompanying the party.

Seldom has a more jolly party of men set out on an exploring expedition than the "merry" crew that left our town, in high spirits on Monday morning. The novelty and importance of the occasion attracted quite a number of spectators to witness the start; and the hopes of our citizens are beating high, in anticipation of the long desired railroad. Few companies can boast of their survey corps having more national representatives than the Gurley and Paint Rock Railway Company. It is not often we get an Englishman, a Scotchman, a Frenchman, and an American to constitute the principles of an undertaking similar to this and we congratulate Capt. Gurley on securing a competent corps. We learn from the chief engineer that the work has progressed satisfactorily to date, and we will give full particulars in due time”

Although the Gurley and Paint Rock Railroad was a dream for many Gurley residents at the time, it was never was built. Founder's stock certificates were issued but there was never enough money to build it.



*Gurley and Paint Rock Valley Railway Co. Share Certificate*

In 1894, Samuel now living in Louisville Kentucky, purchased three orange groves in Florida. The following year, he and Mr R.W. Goode of Melbourne, Australia, made an examination of the countryside around Mims, Turnbull and as far as Lake Harney, Florida. He represented a group of English capitalists who had already invested a considerable amount of money in various ventures of his in the USA. He promised to return to Titusville later that year.

Samuel changed his name to Irving Horace Wheatcroft after being arrested by the postal service for mail fraud in 1895.

Samuel Isaac, now Irving Horace continued to promote railway construction

The Colorado Valley Railway Company was chartered on April 26, 1897, to connect Colorado City, in Mitchell County, with San Angelo, seventy-five miles to the south in Tom Green County. The capital stock was \$500,000. The members of the first board of directors were C. B. Holmes, Irving Wheatcroft, J. H. Burroughs, J. W. Reed, L. H. Brightman, W. C. Barron, F. Buchanan, J. B. Latham, and L. B. Murray, all of Robert Lee in Coke County, where the principal office was located. At a stockholders meeting held on July 21, 1897, the route was changed to run between Sweetwater and San Angelo via Robert Lee. In 1889 the railroad built seven miles of track from Sweetwater and was acquired by the Panhandle and Gulf Railway Company in that year.

Ada, Texa, Nolan County, was on Farm Road 1809 east of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway and north of Lake Trammell; the site is eight miles southwest of Sweetwater in central Nolan County. In 1897 Irving Wheatcroft, a railroad promoter, persuaded the citizens of Sweetwater to finance the construction of the Kansas City, Mexico and Orient Railway to link up Sweetwater with other lines to the south. The railroad was soon built to a point eight miles southwest of Sweetwater, and the new community laid out at that site was called Ada, after Wheatcroft's stenographer, Ada Cooper. The building of the railroad was delayed by financial difficulties, and the community developed slowly. In 1900 the owners of the railroad removed the rails and used them for another project, and when the railroad was

eventually built later in the decade it was laid out to the west of Ada. Ada Common School was built in 1899, and by 1904 it had one teacher and twenty-two pupils. In 1914 Lake Trammell was built to south of the community. By 1940, when the site was identified on maps as both Ada School and, a little to the west, Lake Trammell, it had the school and scattered dwellings. The school was consolidated with the Sweetwater schools in 1941, and the site was deserted by the 1980s.

As if the efforts of Sweetwater citizens to procure the Santa Fe railroad were not a large enough undertaking for so small a community (according to the 1900 census Sweetwater had a population of 670, Sweetwater had earlier launched a fight against the Kansas City, Mexico, and Orient Railroad Company. The Orient road had a long and complicated history. The original plan of the builder and promoter, Arthur Stillwell, was to construct a railroad from Kansas City to Topolobampo, Mexico, a distance of 1600 miles. At the time Stillwell was considering various routes through Texas, Sweetwater found itself with a small railroad, the Colorado Valley Railroad Company, in which local citizens had invested heavily. The promoter of the Colorado Valley, Irving Wheatcroft, was unable to complete construction of the road, and the assets—seven miles of track and some equipment—reverted to the stockholders. Anxious to realize some monetary return on their investment, the Colorado Valley stockholders reorganized the railroad as the Panhandle and Gulf Railway Company and authorized Thomas Trammell and R. L. McCaulley of Sweetwater to find someone willing either to operate or to buy their white elephant. Trammel and McCaulley contacted Stillwell, and he agreed to consider taking over the Panhandle and

Gulf road and make it a part of his proposed transcontinental line. Sweetwater citizens were enthusiastic over such a possibility. In fact, they were too eager. Townspeople bought stock in Stillwell construction companies, "just to get construction started in Sweetwater instead of somewhere else in Texas." The railroad promoters also agreed to place terminals, machine shops, and general offices in Sweetwater in return for a bonus of land and money furnished by the town:

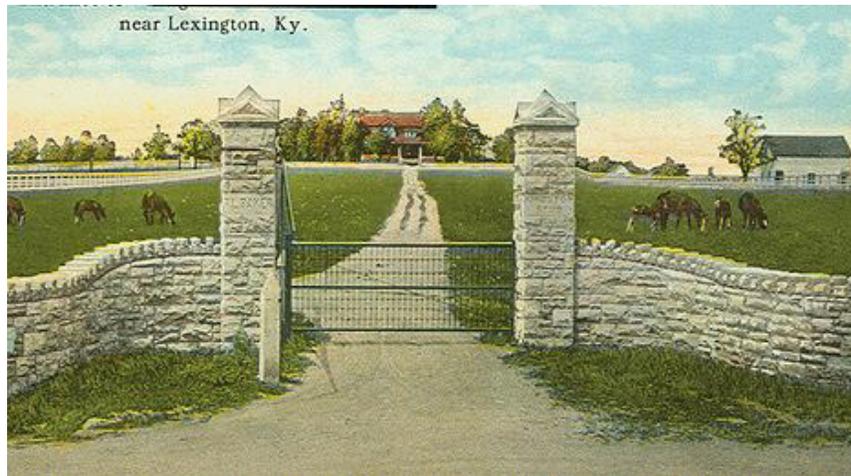
Irving Horace, married Annie Jennings Clarke, the first of his three wives, of Clarksville Tennessee, a descendant of the CLARK half of explorers Lewis & Clark, and rather well-off, after meeting her whilst visiting the Buckner family at 470 South Alamo Street in 1897 and they went to live in Webster Co. Kentucky.

Irving built the first railroad through Webster county 1901-1905, from Blackford to Dixon and from Wheatcroft to Providence. He founded the town of Wheatcroft which was named after him and owned and operated mines there which later were sold to West Kentucky Coal Company.

A station on the railroad, Jolly, between Providence and Dixon where Highway 41 crosses the old railroad bed was named after a dog owned by Irving Wheatcroft which bore that name. The big dog, older residents of

Wheatcroft recall, was a favourite of the children of the town and was often seen hitched to a small wagon carrying groceries or on other errands

In 1906 he bought all five lots on James Island, a small island east of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Here, he became proprietor of The St James Stable of thoroughbred horses. He was a very successful breeder and owner and quoted as being a millionaire and the biggest racehorse owner in the Dominion. He also had a stud farm in Lexington, Kentucky, where he moved his stock after selling the Island to a British consortium in 1910. Wheatcroft won many prestigious races with his classy thoroughbreds at this time.



*Stud farm, near Lexington, Kentucky*

is super stallions included -:

1. Cesarion, who had 49 winners in 1909, more than any other sire in America and they ran off with a total of 139 races. Within 21/2 years, he sired 51 two year old winners

2. St Savin was recognised as the greatest St Simon product ever seen in America
3. Kismet, by Melton out of Kisberina
4. Don Royal, by Donovan out of Royal Visit
5. Mexican by Mirthful out of Llandrino. He was one of the most successful young sires in the States.
6. Leonadus, by Hamburg out of Boise
7. Green Seal, St Simon out of Gold Seal. He held the world record for a mile and one eighth.
8. Marlborough, by Woolsthorpe out of Carsona
9. King Broomstick, by Broomstick out of Esteem
10. Embracer.

In 1911, because of adverse legislation in the USA (the stringent betting laws) Irving decided to take his horses to Australia. In September 1911 The St James Studs in Lexington and D.C. were put up for auction. In November, valued at \$150,000, Wheatcroft imported nearly a hundred of the finest bred brood mares in America, some twenty odd foals, a dozen yearlings, a few horses in training and the super stallions. . The horses were to be quarantined at a farm about twenty three miles from Sydney and then to eventually establish a breeding farm in Melbourne.

He is credited for introducing fallow deer (*Dama dama L*) to British

Columbia. They were released on James Island and became so well established there that periodic control measures had to be adopted. Animals were trapped by the Game Commission on several occasions and released on Saltspring and Pender Islands and in the Alberni district of Vancouver Island. The first transfer was made in 1931, 34 and 35 respectively.

After he left Wheatcroft he moved to Oklahoma City where he operated banks and was extensively engaged in oil refining in the state of Oklahoma.

The Oklahoman dated Feb 6<sup>th</sup> 1915 carries an article stating that a charter was issued by the Secretary of State J. L. Lyon to the First State Bank of Villa, capital stock \$15,000. Incorporators Irving Wheatcroft, Leedy, and J.E Wheatcroft, villa. This was his brother Joseph Ernest, who came to USA in 1901

Later in 1915 Irving was elected President.



Joseph Ernest Wheatcroft Naturalization Papers

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# FIRST STATE BANK

Of Oklahoma City, Okla.

Condensed Statement of Report to Commissioner of Banking at  
Close of Business June 30th, 1916.

RESOURCES	
Loans and discounts .....	\$445,554.66
Overdrafts .....	246.06
Furniture and fixtures .....	7,861.62
WARRANTS .....	\$ 17,973.34
CASH AND SIGHT EXCHANGE.....	236,452.88      254,426.22
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$708,088.56</b>
LIABILITIES	
Capital .....	\$ 61,000.00
Surplus (earned) .....	3,000.00
Undivided profits .....	10,369.82
DEPOSITS .....	633,718.74
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$708,088.56</b>

Conservative Methods the Reason for Our Steady Growth.

## WE WANT YOUR BUSINESS

Irving H. Wheatcroft, President.      S. P. Berry, Vice-Pres.

DIRECTORS

C. F. Colcord,      Kellie M. Roach,      F. H. Riley,  
A. J. Henthorn,      C. C. Dabney,      J. B. Boen,  
S. P. Berry,      Irving H. Wheatcroft.

Irving Horace Wheatcroft President of First State Bank

In October 1917 Irving Horace headed the Oklahoma City fund for Syrian and Armenian relief. There were 50,000 orphans in Lebanon alone and 1000

dying every day of starvation, a million people were deported with many taken into the desert east of Akeppo, others into the malaria swamps of the Euphrates. Thousands of dollars were raised and monies left in his charge.

After four years, In April 1919 Irving retired as President. He had disposed of his interest in the bank at a price reported to be the highest ever paid in the city for bank stock. Newspaper reports at the time stated he would be devoting all his time to the running of a oil refining plant he had recently purchased in Nashville, Tennessee. He was succeeded as President by F.P. Finerty.



*The Colcord building, housing the First State Bank, Oklahoma, now a hotel.*

During the next thirty years, Irving, his wife Ann and son Irving Horace jnr (Laddie) crossed the Atlantic on numerous occasions, their comings and goings reported in the society columns of the Newspapers of the day. They eventually moved to Canada.

Annie died in 1927 in England.

Irving married his second wife Doris Alexandria Porter who bore him a daughter Sylvia Fay, who married Lloyd Amos Fulk on 4 Jul 1958 Woodstock, Ulster Co., NY and who was still living in New York at the turn of the century.

'Laddie' was a proficient tennis player, who played at Wimbledon on many occasions during the 1930s and partnered his wife in the mixed doubles. He won championships in Montana in the 1940s. He became a professional bridge player.

**The Wheatcroft obit Providence Journal-Enterprise**, dated *Thursday, October 23, 1952*. Reporting Irving's death, stating that information had been received regarding the death of Irving H. WHEATCROFT, founder of the town of Wheatcroft, on September 27 at his home in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Death was caused by a heart attack.