

KANSAS HISTORY

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WHAT NEXT?



Alexander Beamer Farmhouse, Ness County, 1908

Alexander and Lucinda Beamer moved to Kansas in the late 1800s and established themselves as wheat farmers in Ness County. At seventy years of age, Alexander Beamer was some twenty years older than his wife but appears to have done quite well by his family. He owned 560 acres of land, of which 400 were improved, and planted about 160 acres of that to winter wheat. This seems to have placed him among the larger land owners in his township (a few were much larger but most were smaller) and certainly well above average for western Kansas in the early 1900s.

If their new home is any indication, the Beamer family was prospering during the so-called "golden age" of agriculture. Their ca. 1908 farmhouse exhibits an eclectic mix of popular architectural details. With classical dentils around the roofline, a centered Gothic gable and an exuberance of late Victorian spindle work on the porch, this central hall house appears newly constructed and placed just in front of the family's older home.

This is the fourth and final photograph in this year's inside front cover series featuring familiar structures on Kansas farms.

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COVER: "What's Next?" asks *Life* magazine of August 19, 1920, as it flaunts a "flapper girl" smoking in public! An article on the century-long cigarette controversy begins on page 258. BACK COVER: A campaign poster from World War II promotes the importance of home-front industry in the effort to win the war. An article on the Kansas manufacturing industry begins on page 298.

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