

Library named after educator, eo

Leila Stahl Buffett has a special reason for looking forward to the dedication of West Point's new library—it's named in memory of her father, the late John A. Stahl, who was a newspaperman and educator in West Point years ago.

"We are exceedingly enthusiastic about the ceremony," Mrs. Buffett said in a recent telephone interview. "About twenty relatives plan to attend. When we were all there the last time for the ground breaking, everyone enjoyed it so much that we're excited about coming for the dedication."

Mrs. Buffett's father, John Ammon Stahl, came to Nebraska in the 1890s from Susquehanna, Penn. She said there was only one reason they lived in Nebraska and not Pennsylvania. "Grover Spangler, who was a jeweler in Fremont, was a friend of my father's. He was very persistent, and persuaded my father to come to Schuyler to teach school."

People in Schuyler still remember her father, she said. Recently while doing volunteer work, she met a Schuyler man who remembered him. "He told me my father was still a legend there," she said.

Stahl taught in Schuyler for several years, then left to complete his two remaining years of college at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. When he graduated, he accepted a position in Bancroft as superintendent of schools, a position he held for seven years. It was there that he met his wife, Stella Frances Barber.

In 1900 Stahl was elected county superintendent of schools and the family moved to West Point. He gave up that position in 1906 "to spend more time with his family," Mrs. Buffett said.

Mr. Stahl then purchased the Cuming County Democrat, which was then located across the street from the city auditorium. "My father had no experience running a newspaper," Mrs. Buffett said. "But he was patient and thorough. He taught the rest of the family the business. It became a real family enterprise."

Mrs. Buffett said her father's paper had a big influence on all of their lives. While she was still in high school, she became the first editor of a monthly newspaper for the West Point High School. "It wasn't very fancy!" she laughed. "But I knew how to read and spell well from working at my father's paper."

Mrs. Buffett said another good thing resulted from her father's newspaper business, where she worked for three years after finishing high school. When she went to the University in Lincoln, she met her husband Howard Buffett.

"I thought it would be fun to work at the Daily Nebraskan," she said. "so right away I applied for a job there. Howard was the editor, so that's how I met him. It was a miracle!" she said.

Howard and Leila Buffett were married in 1925 at her family's home at 527 N. Lincoln street in West Point. Shortly after that, Mr. Buffett took a job in the advertising department of the Harry A. Koch Insurance Company in Omaha, where Mrs. Buffett still resides. Later Mr. Buffett worked for a bank and then got involved in the stocks and bonds business.

Their son, Warren Buffett, became involved in his father's investment business. It was he and his wife who began the Buffett foundation approximately fifteen years ago. He is vice president of the private foundation which his wife runs. She is the president and operates the foundation without additional staff.

"It's a convenient way to contribute to worthy causes," Mr. Buffett said. "It was set up to donate to different things as the need arose over the years. For instance, we never could have known we would be donating to the library in West Point."

The Buffett foundation donated \$100,000 to the West Point library with the stipulation that it be named the John A. Stahl Library. The Buffett foundation also contributes to the areas of family planning and unwanted children.

Mr. Buffett currently resides in Omaha where he is board chairman for Berkshire Hathaway, Inc., which among other things owns Nebraska Furniture Mart. He owns the Buffalo Evening News and has interests in the Washington Post, The Boston Globe and Media General. He is also on the board of trustees of Grinnell College and the board of directors of the Omaha World Herald.

Both Warren Buffett and his mother have good memories of West Point. "Years ago I loved coming there when my grandfather was alive," he said. Mr. Stahl died Dec. 22, 1940.

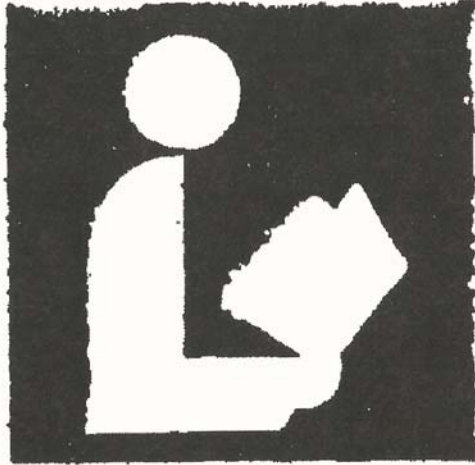
Mrs. Buffett said, "We loved our childhood in West Point. The people there were wonderful. It's an outstanding town of its size with fine, responsible people."

Mrs. Buffett feels that it was amazing that the Buffett foundation was able to contribute to the library. "If it hadn't been for

May Dee Stoltzman contacting us, none of this ever would have happened," she said.

Donating to the library was something her son wanted to do very much, Mrs. Buffett said. "I truly have never seen Warren so happy over anything since his marriage."

About This Edition



There was not room for all the library stories and pictures in this section. Turn to the front section for a history of the library and more photos.

West Point News is pleased to present this souvenir edition for John A. Stahl Library dedicated to Kathy Bechen of West Point responsible for the research, interviews and stories about the old and new libraries and the people connected with them. Photographs by Dick Lindberg. Final responsibility for this edition, however, belongs to the hundreds of library friends from this community whose contributions made possible our new library.
—West Point News Staff.
