Peake, Rusco Township

Rusco Township is in the second tier of townships, third from the west. It is south of Loup Township which has Pleasanton in the southeast corner. Prairie Hills Golf and Ski Club is located in the southeast corner of Rusco Twp. Highway 10 runs up the first section line west of the east boundary.

[See also My Pictures II, "Peake, Rusco Township" file]

Nebraska Place-Names, Lilian Fitzpatrick, 1960

Peak – A settler named Peake homesteaded in Rusco Township in 1874 and established a post office. It has been discontinued but the name applies to the neighborhood.

Buffalo Tales

Early Post Offices in Buffalo County, *Buffalo Tales*, Vol. 1, No. 8, Alice Shaney Howell

The Peake Post Office was named for Jeannie Peake, first postmistress. The post off ice began operation Dec. 5, 1884. It was at various locations in Rusco Township in the next 20+ years.

Episodes in the Lives of Early Buffalo County Women, *Buffalo Tales*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Emma Jane Wilder

Hadassah [Grant Seaman]managed the Odessa Post Office after she and her husband arrived in Buffalo County in 1873, and long before the expansion of population and good roads. It has been a family story that Odessa was named for Hadassah. This is indeed credible since it has been found that the town, Peake, was named for its first postmistress, Jeannie Peake, in 1884. From *Ten Generations of Grants* compiled by Myron Scott.

Pleasanton School District 105, *Buffalo Tales*, Vol. 13, No. 6, Barbara Reidy O'Neill

In May 1953 several districts including Peake, #33, voted to consolidate with the Pleasanton district.

Historical Background of Churches in Buffalo County, Part II, *Buffalo Tales*, Vol. 19, No. 4, Alice Shaneyfelt Howell

Other Lutheran congregations in the early years include St. John's Lutheran of rural Poole and St. Paul's Lutheran of Peake, whose congregations merged in 1955 to form Grace Lutheran Church at Pleasanton. Trinity Lutheran Church at Amherst was established in 1907, and Bethlehem Lutheran at Ravenna in 1917. Many neighboring rural congregations have joined them when their churches disbanded.

The Church of Christ had a rural congregation in Rusco Township as early as 1893,…

Kearney Hub, April 1900
Mail to Peake was delivered by horse and buggy.

[The Peake Post Office must have been closed by 1919 because Rusco Township residents listed in the 1919 Buffalo County Atlas all have P O addresses mostly in Pleasanton and Riverdale; with a few in Poole, Sartoria, and Amherst.]

History of Buffalo County Vol. I, Samuel Bassett, 1916.

Chapter XXXVIII, p 282
The first settler in what is now Rusco Township was E. M. Holly, in 1873, and A. Peake, John Wilson, L. H. Johnson, J. L. Scott, L. Allen, B. L. Graham, A. M. Morse, F. Boyer and J. H. Lockard, in 1875. Twenty-five claims had claims had been filed upon in the township previous to the year 1880.

Pleasanton on the Loup, Pleasanton Book Committee, 1988, pp. 18-20

Rusco Township was named for Warren Rusco, a homesteader who came in 1876. The township was organized April 1, 1884.

The Loup River goes through the northern part of the township and three creeks feed into it from the south. "In 1883 the County Board of Supervisors installed a bridge across the Loup River on the section line between Sections 5 and 6. This bridge is called the Peake Bridge, and it is located on the road known as the Riverdale Road."

No towns in the township – Peake was not a town, but a community with a church, a school, and a post office. Located eight miles straight north of Riverdale. Peake area generally is around the Peake Lutheran church in Section 30.

Three postal locations, South Loup, Riverview, and Peake.
South Loup, started in 1874, in Section 2 on the south side of the Loup. Discontinued in 1877 and later restarted as Riverview.
Riverview, started in 1884, was located on the south side of the Loup and then moved to the north side. It was the predecessor of the Pleasanton post office.
Peake, started in 1884, in Section 6, on mail route from Prairie Center to Loup City. Jennie Peake was first postmaster. Mail arrived two times a week. Originally a sod structure 10 miles north and ½ mile west of Riverdale, serving 40 families. 1891 William Newell became postmaster and moved the post office to his home, currently the home of Walter Lammers [in Section 20 according to 2003 Buffalo County Farm & Home Plat & Directory]. When Ludwig Mueller became postmaster in 1897 he moved it to his home a mile north and a mile west of Peake Church [Section 19]. Closed in 1907 when mail route went from Amherst to Pleasanton.

Three school districts – 32, Peake; 67, Mt. Zion or Vest; and 100, King. All are now part of Pleasanton's R-105.

Two churches – Peake Lutheran & Church of Christ.

Peake Lutheran – officially "St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod", but also called Peake Lutheran and St. Paul's of Riverdale. Organized in 1892. First services and Sunday School were held in Dist. 55 school. Services were in German. The congregation split and part, taken over by the Iowa Synod, stayed at Dist. 55. The other part met in John Zwiener's home until Nov. 1904 when they reorganized at the Dist. 100, King, schoolhouse. They built in Section 30 in 1906. There were two chandeliers with each holding four kerosene lamps, heat by pot-bellied stove, and seating for 100. Starting in 1932 the worship service was held in English followed by one in German while the children had Sunday School in the parsonage. German was not dropped until the late 1940's. With both congregations declining in numbers, elders from St. Paul's and from St. John in Poole decided to join. The church from Poole and the Parsonage from the Peake church were moved to a site on the south side of the Loup at Pleasanton. In 1955 the new congregation became Grace Lutheran.

Church of Christ – located in the SE ¼ of Section 34.

Two cemeteries – Peake Lutheran Cemetery and Fairmont

Stories –
Stringtown area was a neighborhood where several farm houses were close together.

An early settler claimed his 160 in the center if a section. No one would want the 40 acre strips around it so he had a buffer with no close neighbors and space to let his cattle graze. [The 1889 plat map of Buffalo County shows what appears to be property lines outlining a claim in the center of Section 4 of Rusco Township. The South Loup River goes through the property west to east. There are, however, other land owners named on all sides of him in that section.]

From Mona Houser's GenWeb site:

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

St. Paul's congregation organized in 1896 at the rural school District 55, known as the Scheihing school. They met at the school and in the homes of members, often those of Christoph Rieckman or Wilhelm Mueller. The church building was completed in April 1906 with dedication in July. It was located on the north part of the southeast quarter of section 30 of Rusco Township.

In the mid 1950's St. Paul's Church and St. John's Lutheran Church near Poole joined together to form a new congregation in Pleasanton, called Grace. The parsonage from Peake and the church from Poole were moved to a site on the south edge of town.

A small cemetery remains next to the location of the former St. Paul's Church at Peake.

Peake*, post office opened in 1884, 14 miles north and 5 miles west of Kearney, in Rusco township.

1919 Nebraska state atlas map of Buffalo County shows Peake near the western border of the township, slightly north of center north/south. 1895 Nebraska Atlas map of Buffalo County has Peake located on the Loup River, south bank, west of Pleasanton. May be in Section 6 in 1919 Buffalo County atlas

1890 State Gazetteer Business Directory:
Peake, a post office in the northern part of Buffalo county, 18 miles* north of Kearney, and six miles south of Bentora.**(Peake was about 13 miles north and 4 miles west of Kearney, but the reference to Bentora, which became Hazard in Sherman County, is incorrect.)* [No businesses listed]

Newly elected precinct officers, as reported by the Kearney Daily Hub, 12 November 1890.
RUSCO -
Assessor, A. H. Peake, Peake
Clerk, W. C. Downey, Peake
Treasurer, G. M. Brooke, Kearney
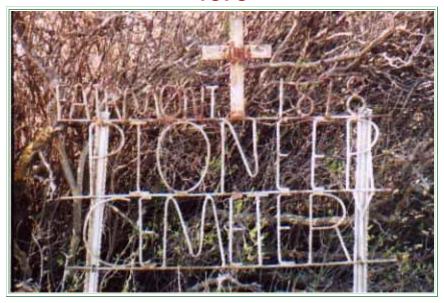Justice of Peace,
    A. Summerman, Pleasanton
Road Overseers:
    district 47, E. Streit, Pleasanton;
    district 26, H. A. Wells, Pleasanton.

Cemeteries in Rusco Township

FAIRMONT PIONEER CEMETERY
1878

Fairmont Pioneer Cemetery is in Section 34 of Rusco Township, on the north side of Pole Line Road, about 1 1/2 miles west of Nebraska Highway 10.

From Ft. Kearny Genealogical Society cemetery book:

Fairmont Cemetery – Rusco Township Sec. 34

Legal description is in Rusco Township 34-11-16 in Buffalo County, Nebraska. On May 26, 1893, A.J. Scott sold 2 acres for $25.00 to the Church of Christ and at this writing (June 7, 1987) it is still owned by the Church of Christ. In 1886 the Fairmont Cemetery was known as the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery Association. The warranty deed is recorded in the Register of Deed's Office at the Court House in Kearney, Nebraska as 51-483 and 51-482.

PEAKE LUTHERAN CEMETERY

Peake cemetery is located in Section 30 of Rusco Township, about 7 1/2 miles north of Riverdale, on Riverdale Road between 220th and 225th Road.

From Ft. Kearny Genealogical Society cemetery book:

Peake Lutheran Cemetery - Rusco Township, Sec 30

The church was built in 1906 and was called St. Pauls. The first grave was before the Church or cemetery was organized. A baby died and was buried in the place which was later organized into a cemetery. This was related by Mrs. Frieda Lammers: Mr. Herbert Lammers said his father helped dig this grave. There are three graves without markers.