

# John B. Sloan

*Billie DeLancey  
Parish House Museum Director*

John B. Sloan was a prominent farmer and dairy rancher in the Elwell community and later in Johnstown. He came to the Berthoud area in the late 1880s and married Armenda Flora on New Year's Eve day in 1890. The couple moved to Elwell two years later and became part of that budding community.

The Sloans farmed for five years on land owned by Jessie Thornton bounded on the south and east by what is now Hwy 60 and Colorado Blvd, respectively.

On April 1, 1902 the Sloans bought the Thornton farm. The same day, Thornton had reserved 6.75 acres of his farmland behind the Dilley Chapel for its trustees to establish a local cemetery for the sum of \$135, which came to \$20 per acre. The remainder of Thornton's quarter-section became the Sloan farm.

Sloan was one of the Dilley Chapel's founders in 1895. He served on the church's board of trustees and on the Colorado Conference of the United Brethren Church for many years.

The Sloans had 10 children – W. W., Florence, Archie, John H., Letha, Stella, Mable, Lena, Dorothy, and Frances. In 1914, Sloan had an 1,800 sq ft gambrel-style barn built on the Hwy 60 side of his farm, followed by a 2,500 sq ft mansion the family referred to as the “big house.” The house had running water – something uncommon for a country home in those days, an advantage of having the Home Supply Ditch traverse the farm. The Sloan family sold the property in 2004. Both buildings are still standing today.

Sloan's success with high yields in his sugar beet crop, often as high as 20 tons per acre when the average was around 16 tons, was due in part to his insight to also operate a dairy. He was touted as one of Johnstown's best dairymen.

The Sloans were also part of the development of water resources for the Johnstown district, and John B. was a director of the Home Supply Ditch Company for several years. His son John H. and later his grandson Donald worked as ditch riders for the company.

Sloan served on the White Hall and Erkenbeck school boards and the Union High School board in 1910 when it was organized – together a total of 30 years.

John B. died on May 7, 1936 at age 71, and Armenda followed him in death on July 27, 1938. The Sloans were buried in their family plot at the Johnstown Cemetery that was originally part of their farm.



The Sloan's “Big House” on Hwy 60, built in 1917. John B. Sloan's gambrel barn, built in 1914, is one of the rarest types of barns in America left today.



## **The Historic Parish House and Museum**

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9:00 A.M. – Noon, and by appointment