

The FILLMORE COUNTY STORY

Edited by

Wilbur G. Gaffney

Geneva Community Grange No. 403 Geneva, Nebraska 1968 The Geneva Community Grange expresses their appreciation to the Fillmore County History Committee, comprised of Mr. and Mrs. Guy Brown, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Warren Lefever and Mr. and Mrs. Darrel Hughes, for the many hours of work and thousands of miles driven in collecting and compiling the material contained in this book.

The Grange and the History Committee acknowledge with gratitude the time spent by the many contributors without whose efforts this book

would not have become a reality.

Geneva Community Grange No. 403 Geneva, Nebraska

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PREFACE

This history of Fillmore County was begun a full fifteen years ago, in 1953, stemming from a suggestion of County Agent Ivar Lindstrom. His idea, taken up by the various people who have subsequently worked on this project, was that the history of a pioneering community could best be told in the words of those pioneers still surviving, or of their immediate descendants, while memories were fresh.

The Geneva Community Grange appointed a committee, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. William Lauenstein and Mr. and Mrs. Albert Johnson, to organize people to collect and write up historical information about each of the sixteen townships. Soon a sizeable group of diligent volunteers had begun collecting, township by township, village by village, the often short, often simple—but always interesting—annals of the people who had settled the land and built the county.

Athough Fillmore County was not formally organized until 1871, it was already being settled, however sparsely, by 1867. Those pioneers who first faced the treeless prairies—the vast, unbroken seas of grass—and the hazards of an unfamiliar, and often dangerous, climate, are worthy of being honored in this post-Centennial year of Nebraska statehood.

Fillmore County is only one of the 93 counties that make up the state. But it has the special distinction of being ours. The people who settled here—who endured the blizzards, the drouths, the grasshoppers, the tornadoes, and the mortgages—made this local countryside what it is, what we have inherited, what we hope to make even better in the next hundred years. Many of these people were our own ancestors; many of those who were not are either more distantly related to us, or have left their marks on the lands that we now prize as ours.

In our school days, many of us perhaps felt that "history" was something distant and remote, suitable only to make dreary those days when blue skies, spring winds, the sight of waving fields, the smell and touch of animals, all invited us to ignore the printed words in books.

But history is not really that distant; it is not, it is never, something that happened far away and long ago to people who are merely names on printed pages. History is people—including the people we know, and those who have just preceded us. With this idea in mind, the writers and compilers of this book felt that history should be captured as close to its own moment as was possible, without waiting for future researchers to extract it at distant second hand from the dusty and crumbling pages of newspapers, or yellowing documents, or palely-readable microfilm.

We are only two or three generations removed, at most, from the earliest sources of Fillmore County history. We have therefore tried to assemble what we can know of our local past from "old inhabitants" directly, so far as possible, or at least from their still living offspring, while the memories of pioneer parents and grandparents are still fresh among us.

After more than ten years of assembling the information, we chose the Centennial year of 1967 as a fitting time to bring out this book, the first full-scale history of Fillmore County. That it did not in fact appear in that year reflects certain unexpected magnitudes of the task. The present volume is approximately 33 per cent larger than the manuscript turned over to the editor in the spring of 1966, and contains twice as many pictures reflecting various aspects of the life of the county.

The information in this history has been supplied by many people, over a period of 15 years. There is, therefore, considerable variety in the manner of expression and in the arrangement of the material. There are some repetitions: for example, the Great Blizzard of 1888 was one event, taking place in a short period of time; but it was experienced in a variety of ways by different people. There may here and there be inconsistencies or inaccuracies; but the compilers (and the editor) have felt that if people are to report their own local history, they should certainly report it in their own individual ways, to tell it as it happened to them.

Where old, original accounts were available, these have been reproduced exactly, except for perhaps minor changes in punctuation, for clarity; there has been no "editing" to "pretty-up" the accounts. For example, one highly valued contributor—since deceased—apparently felt that the ancestor would be revealed by his language as somehow undignified, and rewrote substantial passages into more or less modern diction. Luckily, the original manuscript was still available; the editor took upon himself the editorial liberty of going back to that, and restoring the original wording, with all the color, flavoring, and "feel" of the 1870's.

Later accounts taken from newspapers, or supplied by the host of kind and willing contributors to this volume, have been left, as nearly as seemed practical, in the wording of the writers themselves; verbal editing has been deliberately kept to an absolute minimum.

The information about the various townships has been supplied sometimes by a few, sometimes by a great many, persons in each precinct. It is not possible to give full and exact credit, line by line or page by page, for each item or section; and many more persons have contributed, in one way or another, than those we can name or could hope to name. So many individual persons have been involved that the most we can do is to extend our sincere thanks to all who have in any way been touched by this enterprise.

Some of the accounts remain very nearly in the words of the original writers, the only changes being in verification of facts or in the addition of facts discovered since the original writing; these accounts carry the signature lines of the contributors. Others, for one reason or another, have been through so many hands in the intervening years that it is not possible to assign a name or identification to the original writer; these, inevitably, in the form in which they appear, must be accepted as re-written and edited, and sometimes then re-written, by the compilers or the editor. If a credit line for some writer still living has been thus lost, the compilers can do no more than extend their gratitude to the accidentally anonymous original writer.

When this book was first conceived, in 1953, the intention was to make the year 1957 the basic cut-off date. Broadly speaking, that date still stands, although we have tried to bring up to date some of the more obvious developments (such as, for example, the progress of irrigation and the surfacing of roads), and to acknowledge the passing away of several of the older generation, who were still with us when we began. Within the limits set by this co-operative process of gathering our material, we have attempted to get the history of Fillmore County into shape for ourselves, for our children, and for the next generation of historians.

This book owes a good deal of its content, in some ways, to Pioneer Stories of the Pioneers of Fillmore and Adjoining Counties, collected and published in 1915 by the Rev. George R. McKeith, of Exeter. Mr. McKeith's "Preface" contained a paragraph which is worth quoting, by way of remarking on the pitfalls of all who attempt to write histories: "To the piecemeal fashion of the project, in building up the book, must be attributed many of the mistakes and inefficiencies to be found in the text. In many cases, especially in the beginning, the proof sheets were not corrected, neither did we anticipate the need of an index, otherwise the pages would have been numbered and an index provided."

We have attempted to profit by Mr. McKeith's rueful notes: both the manuscript and the proof sheets have been read with diligence; our pages are numbered; and we do have

an index.

University of Nebraska August, 1968 But to go on to Mr. McKeith's more optimistic closing paragraph, we feel that we can do no better than to close with the words of this more or less pioneering historian of our communities: "It is therefore with a distinct consciousness of many faults too easy to be found that we send forth the *Pioneer Stories*, believing, however, their intrinsic worth will be appreciated, and prove a source of pleasure to the present generation, and supply a foundation of facts for future history."

And once one has admitted the many errors that compilers, editors, printers, and proofreaders are automatically heirs to, what more can be said—except once more to offer heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed written accounts, or pictures, or even less visible but none the less important efforts, to the development and—at long last—the

completion of this history.

Wilbur G. Gaffney

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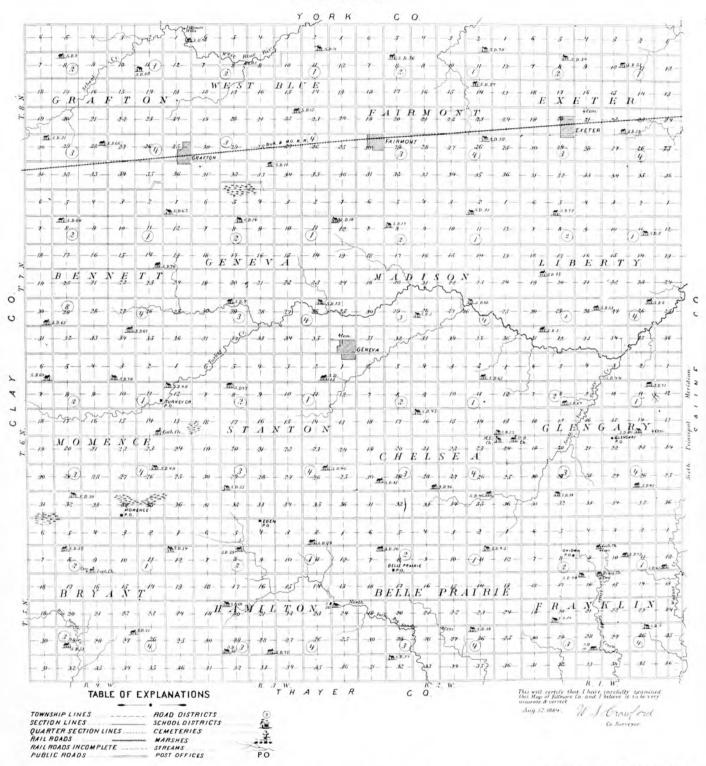
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MILLIANDRE GO.

Scale: 1/2 Inch to I Mile.



Map of Fillmore County as of August 1, 1884

Official State Atlas of Nebraska (1885)

Early History

(Most of this section, including the records of earlyvoters, was compiled by Mary Badger Halsey.)

NO MORTGAGE ON THE FARM

Mary, let's kill the fatted calf and celebrate the day, For the last dreadful mortgage on the farm is wiped away. I have got the papers with me, they are right as right can be—Let us laugh and sing together, for the dear old farm is free.

Don't all the Yankees celebrate the Fourth Day of July? Because 'twas then that freedom's sun lit up our nation's sky. Why shouldn't we, then, celebrate, and the day ne'er forget? Where is there any freedom like being out of debt?

I've riz up many mornin's an hour before the sun, And night has overtaken me before the task was done. When weary with my labor 'twas this thought that nerved my arm—

Each day of toil would help to pay the mortgage on the farm. And, Mary, you have done your part in rowin' to the shore, By taking eggs and butter to the little village store; You did not spend the money in dressing up for show, But sang from morn to evening in your faded calico.

And Bessie, our sweet daughter—God bless her little heart, The lad that gets her for a wife, must be by nature smart—She's gone without a piano, her lonely hours to charm, To have a hand in payin' off the mortgage on the farm.

I'll build a little cottage soon, to make your heart rejoice; I'll buy a good piano, to go with Bessie's voice.

You shall not make your butter with that up and down

concern,
For I'll go this very day and buy the finest patent churn.

Lay by your faded calico and go with me to town, And get yourself and Bessie a new and shining gown; Low prices for our produce need not give us now alarm; Spruce up a little, Mary, there's no mortgage on the farm.

While our hearts are now so joyful, let us, Mary, not forget, To thank the God of Heaven for being out of debt, For He gave the rain and sunshine, and put strength into my

And lengthened out the days to see no mortgage on the farm.

This poem, which appeared in Volume I, Number 1 (May 9, 1872), of the Nebraska Bulletin, the first paper published in Fillmore County, epitomized the philosophy of the sturdy men who had chosen to wrest their livelihood from the rich virgin soil of Fillmore County. There was the hardness of granite in their determination to earn an honest living from the soil, and the softness of velvet in their envisioning of comforts and luxuries for their families. The combination of these characteristics carried these pioneers through scourges of grasshoppers that darkened the sky and left no green thing behind; through drouth that seared their crops and their land; and through the plague of vampires who came from the East to prey upon the defenseless settler through usury and exorbitant charges for services and materials—and so enabled them to build the prosperous country that we know today.

The Territory of Nebraska was created by Congress in 1854. Surveying of the land began, and the legislature appointed a committee to determine locations, sizes, and names of the counties. The committee, under the able chairmanship of Mr. A. G. Jones, were determined to be fair and to choose names from the leaders of both the major political parties.

The adoption of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in 1854 had sounded the death-knell of the Whig party, which, with President Millard Fillmore as its candidate, lost the national

elections in 1852. Fillmore ran again in 1856 as the candidate of the American (or "Knew-Northing") party, and, on losing once more, retired from politics. But as Vice-President under Taylor he had presided over the Senate with such impartiality during the turmoil caused by the slavery question that his own thoughts on the subject could not be detected; and as President, although many criticized his actions, no one questioned his honesty of purpose. And so, as his name was chosen for our county, we can look with pride to our name as standing for integrity.



Courtesy of Helen L. Smith Mr. and Mrs. William O. Bussard, first to file a claim in Fillmore County.

Many people had moved into the new Territory, and the Free Homestead Act of 1862, passed to reward Civil War soldiers, became a further impulse toward settlement. On March 21, 1864, Congress passed an act enabling the residents to form a State government (which finally became a fact on March 1, 1867).

William O. Bussard, a native of Ohio, was the first man to file on a claim in Fillmore County. He filed on the NE ½ of Sec. 8, T8, R3W of the Sixth Principal Meridian in June, 1866. Mr. Bussard was a man of strong character and high principle. In the years of his retirement he lived in the village of Lushton in York County, only a few miles from the site of his homestead. Being greatly opposed to the use of liquor and the traffic therein, during his last illness he requested his family not to have his body carried in the local undertaker's hearse, where, it was reported, the bootleggers kept their wares. Out of respect to his wishes, Mr. Bussard's remains were carried to his grave in a spring wagon.

Mr. Bussard was accompained to Nebraska by his cousin, William C. Whitaker, also a native of Ohio, who made the second filing on a claim in Fillmore County, the NW ¼ of the same section (T8, R3W). Thus Bussard and Whitaker were names familiar to the early settlers of the county. The men came onto their claims and made dugouts and shelter for their livestock, thus preparing for a permanent settlement.

In October, 1866, Nimrod J. Dixon, a native of Pennsylvania, filed on the SE ¼ of Sec. 8, T8, R3W, and his fiancee, Miss Lydia Gilmore, filed on the SW ¼ of the same section. Mr. Dixon selected his land without seeing it. When he arrived in Nebraska City, the filing point, the law was soon to change so that one person could homestead only 80 acres instead of the 160 then permitted. There was not time to make the trip to select his land and return to Nebraska City to file on his claim before the law changed. In telling of this afterward, he said he thought it would be a poor quarter that did not have eighty acres of farm land.

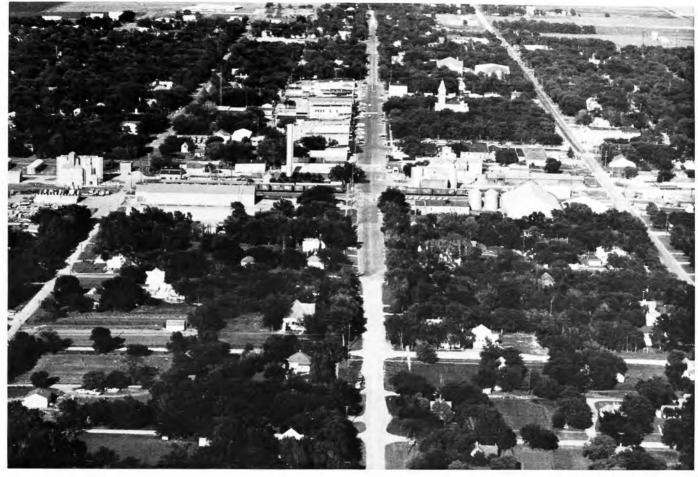


Photo from Nebraska Signal

Aerial view of modern Geneva, looking east toward the main business district, the courthouse, and U. S. Highway 81.

When Mr. Dixon filed on his claim, he was with the family of Elias Gilmore, the father of his fiancee, who was bringing his family to the claim he had previously entered in York County. Mr. Dixon spent the winter in the Gilmore home. Their wedding in the same home, on February 28, 1867, was the first in York County. Mr. Dixon had to go to Nebraska City to get the license. That spring they took up residence on their homestead, where they resided for 40 years, thus being the first to make permanent continuous settlement in Fillmore County. Their first child, Arthur, born January 5, 1869, was the first white child born in the county. A reighbor, Mrs. Eliza Whitaker, was the midwife who assisted at the birth.

Mr. Dixon was an enterprising farmer, always interested in community and civic affairs. After 40 years on the farm Mr. and Mrs. Dixon established a home in Fairmont, where they spent the remainder of their lives. Their youngest son, Lloyd, still resides in Fairmont.

Mrs. Dixon used to relate many interesting experiences of the early days. One time when she was alone an Indian came to the dugout and handed her a paper upon which was written the statement that he had lost a pony. She assured him that they had seen nothing of the pony. He saw a new butcher knife lying on the table, picked it up and examined it, and finally drew out his old knife and held it toward her, saying, "Swap, swap." She said, "Yes," and so he went away with her good knife.

Mr. Dixon told of being on a buffalo hunt in 1867 when he saw the first construction train that came into Grand Island to build the Union Pacific Railroad westward. Mrs. Dixon recalled that though they had many hardships, they had enough to eat, were comfortable most of the time, and had good social times and lots of fun.

The same season, J. H. Malick and Jacob Wirts, young natives of Ohio, and James Whitaker, twin brother of

William, filed on claims in Fillmore County, making a total for the county of seven in the year 1866. All of those claim-holders, fearing the severity of the winter, returned East to their families or friends. In the spring of 1867 the Whitakers and William Bussard returned and broke some of the land and then went to Missouri for the winter of 1867-1868. There were no additions to the list of claims or settlers in Fillmore County in the year 1867.

The Whitakers returned in the spring of 1868, bringing with them their mother, Mrs. Eliza Whitaker, then over 70 years old. She filed on a claim adjoining that of her son William

On October 20, 1868, Henry L. Badger, a native of Connecticut, came from Illinois with his family and built a



Photo from McKeith's "Pioneer Stories"

Mrs. E. A. Whitaker, the first white woman to take up land in Fillmore County, Mr. Whitaker had died in Illinois, and she came out with her sons

dugout on the bank of the West Fork of the Blue River on the NW ¼ of Sec. 2, T8, R3W. His son Lewis Henry, then 12 years old, lived the remainder of his life on the homestead, passing from this life in 1940.

Later in 1868, E. L. Martin, a native of New York, filed on the NE ¼ of Sec. 1, T8, R4W, and L. R. Warner, a native of Massachusetts, filed on the W ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 10, T8, R3W, but did not settle on their claims until the spring of 1869

E. L. Martin laid out a town site on his claim and called it Fillmore City, the first town in the county. He was commissioned postmaster on March 18, 1871, and kept at Fillmore City the first post office in the county. Later in the same year Henry L. Badger was commissioned postmaster and kept what was called the West Blue Post Office in his dugout on the NW ¼ of Sec. 2, T8, R3W. It was later kept in the log house Mr. Badger erected on the south 80 of his homestead after the establishment of the Fairmont Post Office.

For the first settlers, Nebraska City was the nearest railroad station. The mail was brought by carrier from one post office to the next, the offices being in the homes of the settlers. The mail was carried in one sack and emptied at each office, where local mail was sorted out and the rest sent on to the next office, where the performance was repeated.

The Nebraska Bulletin (Fairmont) for August 17, 1872, reported, "The Tri-weekly mail route between Fairmont and York by way of West Blue and McFadden was put into operation last week." McFadden was a post office kept at the McFadden home in York County, one mile east of the present Highway 81 and four miles north of the Fillmore County line. There the first county settlers received their mail before the establishment of the post offices at Fillmore City and West Blue.

Very few claims were taken in the northern half of the county in 1869. D. H. Dillon and John Ziska both filed on Sec. 2, T7, R1W on Turkey Creek in that year. Mr. Ziska, a native of Bohemia, naturalized in Wisconsin, came in May, 1869, and rented an old dugout in Saline County to live in until he could make his own. After breaking 20 acres of sod and getting it ready for sowing, he went to Lincoln for provisions and to file on his claim. The first night after they moved on, in September, 1869, a great flood spread Turkey Creek a half-mile wide, causing considerable loss of property and cattle.

The following are listed as claim-holders along Walnut Creek, in the southeastern part of the county, in 1869:

Charles Eberstein, native of Michigan; Joseph Rozicka, John Kral, Frank Kabrila, Gottlieb Girmus, and Frank Becwar, all natives of Bohemia; Ellis E. Barnett, native of Iowa; and Thomas E. Barnett, native of Illinois.

Charles Eberstein, the first man to file on a claim in the southern half of the county, passed through Nebraska in 1865 as a soldier. After his release from the army in 1867, he went to Omaha, there to wait until he became of age so that he could file on a homestead. In April, 1869, he filed on Sec. 13, T5, R1W.

Because of an Indian scare, Governor David Butler ordered the raising of a militia, which Mr. Eberstein joined. Several scouting trips turned out to be merely hunting trips, with never a sight of an Indian. After his discharge from the militia, Mr. Eberstein returned to his claim and built a log cabin. He spent the following winter in Plattsmouth, where he worked on the first few miles of the Burlington & Missouri R.R. in Nebraska .

The earliest settlements were in the northern part of the county, not only to have easy access to water and fuel, but also because the B. & M. had been surveyed and staked to follow the Blue River valley and passed through York County just north of the Fillmore County line. The settlers desired to be near the railroad and the towns that would spring up.

Congress had granted the railroad companies one-half of the land for 20 miles on each side of the survey as an inducement to build the road. After the survey was made and the road staked, Congress passed another law giving them the privilege of building anywhere within the land grant. Therefore the B. & M. line was built five miles south of the original survey. This saved the railroad company much expense, as the road in Fillmore County was through level country, whereas the York County line would have called for many cuts and bridges. The company was very proud of building 30 miles of line without a curve. The completion of the railroad through the county in 1871 then brought the large trek of immigrants.

The railroad company had selected the sites of their stations. The site for the town of Fairmont was not on railroad land, and so the company hired four men to take preemption claims on the land wanted for the town site, live on the claims for six months and "prove up" on them or obtain title to them. The men hired to do this were George Enderly, James Seeley, J. A. Crawford, and Obediah Scott. Each filed on an 80 in Sec. 30, T8, R2W, and they built a house in the center of the section in April, 1871. When title was secured,





courthouse and Citizens Bank from an early-day "parking lot."

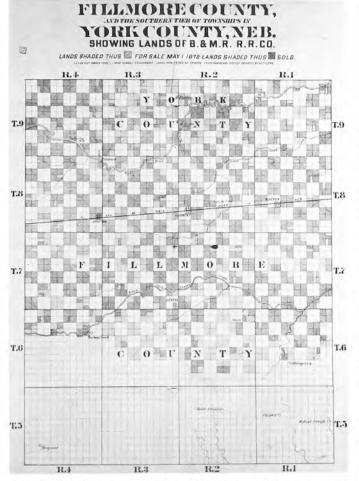
Looking northwest toward the

Photo from Delia Fisher

Photo from Geneva State Bank Turkey Creek on March 20, 1912

An early-day playbill for the Geneva Opera House; the date is not known, although the name of the printing house offers some hint of the period.





they deeded the land to the South Platte Land Company, who had it surveyed into town lots in October, 1871, and sold these to the people. In May, 1872, Obediah Scott returned to Fairmont to learn telegraphy.

The railroad companies sent out many brochures and advertised extensively in Eastern papers to attract settlers. The country was portrayed as a veritable Eden, with glowing testimonies from those who were here and preferred it to all of the East. Those who returned to the East disheartened and discouraged were not mentioned. The number of abandoned claims advertised were evidence of the heartbreak of the struggle to many who came with high hopes but for whom the struggle was too great. Nevertheless, thousands were attracted, not only to wrest their living from the soil but to wrest their living from those who tilled the soil. Most of the settlers came with very little money and were harassed by the loan sharks, who charged exorbitant interest rates, 36

per cent being not unusual.

John R. McCashland, a native of Indiana and a Civil War veteran, who filed on the SW ¼ of Sec. 12, T8, R3W in the fall of 1870, said that he had \$42 in his pocket. When telling about this in 1921, he said it didn't seem possible that they could have lived as long as they did on that amount. The descendants of Mr. McCashland still own and farm the homestead.

According to news items and advertisement in the pioneer papers, promotion schemes and ideas were as numerous as they are today. Most were legitimate and worth while, but some were designed to flourish at the expense of the weak and those defenseless through adversity. In the Nebraska Bulletin¹ for May 22, 1873, appeared a letter demanding that the "organization of a grange be looked into to combat the vampyres who [are] bleeding the farmers."

Fillmore County was at first combined with Saline County for revenue and political purposes. The organization

of Fillmore County began in the spring of 1871. On March 15, 1871, Acting Governor W. H. James decreed that April 21, 1871, should be the time for the election of officers to organize the new county. At the same time, he appointed Henry L. Badger as registrar of voters for the county. Mr. Badger took the oath of office on March 20, 1871, before William Ong, justice of the peace, in York County, and proceeded with his duties.

The old register shows that there were 145 eligible voters out of 161 names registered. The following states and foreign countries were represented: New York 22, Ohio 19, Pennsylvania 14, Indiana 14, Illinois 7, Wisconsin 6, Michigan 6, Connecticut 3, Massachusetts 2, Kentucky 4, Iowa 2, Vermont 2, North Carolina 2, New Hampshire 1, West Virginia 1, and Virginia 1; Germany 20, Bohemia 11, Canada 2, Sweden 2, Scotland 4, Ireland 2, England 1, Isle of Man 1, and Switzerland 1.

Most of these voters had been resident in the county 12 months or less, the majority less. The oldest man registering was William Purdy, a native of New York State, then 73 years of age

The first election was held on April 21, 1871, in the dugout of Colonel Nathaniel McCalla, on the NE ¼ of Sec. 20, T7, R2W. A transcript of the poll book for this election is included at the end of this chapter. At this time 82 votes were cast. William Merrill, who made the ballot box (which is still in the possession of his descendants), was the first man to vote, and Asa Glass the second. E. L. Martin, James Horne, and G. R. Wolfe served as judges of the election, and A. W. Chase and W. Woodard as clerks.

The county officers elected were: Henry L. Badger, county clerk; Wilbur Deuel, treasurer; J. F. Snow, sheriff; T. E. Barnett, coroner; William H. Blain, probate judge; Henry L. Badger, county surveyor. The Board of Commissioners were E. L. Martin, Charles H. Bassett, and Jesse Lee.

On October 10, 1871, the first regular election in the county was held and the following men were elected: William



William H. Blain, First County Judge (left), J. F. Snow, First County Sheriff (right).

H. Blain, judge; J. C. McFadden, sheriff; A. T. Hager, treasurer; James Shepherd, coroner; J. E. Spear, clerk; H. L. Badger, surveyor; G. W. Gue, superintendent of schools; and H. G. Smith, W. T. Burnett, and T. E. Barnett, commissioners.

The election of these men produced some complications that had to be settled by the courts. It was understood by the old board that two of their body having the largest number of votes at the organic election in April should hold over, one for two and the other for the full term of three years. T. E. Barnett was elected in the place of Jesse Lee, whose term of office, it was admitted, expired on January 1, 1872. Bassett and Martin, claiming the office on the grounds of the election the preceding spring, were candidates for re-election. In Martin's district, H. G. Smith was the only man voted for, but, as Smith declined to qualify, E. L. Martin was allowed to retain the office. In the second district, W. T. Burnett was elected, and he began a suit before the court to depose

¹Also known, at various times, as the Fillmore County Bulletin, Fillmore Bulletin, and Fairmont Bulletin.

Bassett. The Court Journal (Volume I, Case number 3) recorded: "By virtue of decision of His Honor O. P. Mason, Judge of the First Judicial District at a special term of district court held in County of Fillmore on the 28th of February, 1872, Mr. Wm. T. Burnett was recognized as Commis-

sioner for the second district of said county."

Before the courthouse was constructed, the meetings of the county commissioners were held at McCalla's until March 16, 1872, when a meeting was held at the residence of David Lee, near the town site on the school section. After this, until May, 1873, commissioners' meetings were held at the office of the county clerk, J. E. Spear, which was located in his residence a short distance northwest of the site of the county seat.

Before the formal organization of the county, Fillmore County was attached to and legally assessed by Saline County. Difficulties arose. The following account of how they were settled is taken from A. T. Andreas's *History of Nebraska* (1882):

"The officers of Saline County had refused to give up the tax lists for Fillmore, and on October 16, 1871, the Commissioners ordered the County Attorney, J. W. Eller, to begin a suit before the District Court for their possession.

"Eller urged the suit, agreeing to pay the costs if defeated, which certainly required considerable assurance, for the young man had just begun the practice of law, and at the time his only possessions were two or three law books, his

homestead claim, and 50 cents in cash.

"To attend the meetings of the Commissioners as their attorney, he had to walk about 15 miles, and get trusted for his dinner, but on going to attend the District Court, in Saline County, he borrowed a pony, and managed to scrape enough money to pay his hotel bill, but he secured the tax lists." ¹

At this time the vicinity that is now Franklin township had the largest number of voters because it was the only township that contained no railroad land. It was decided at the time of the election that the county seat should be in the center of the county. There was as yet no settlement there, and the deer, antelope, and elk roamed over the spot long after it had been designated to be the county seat.

The first meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held May 29, 1871, in Nathaniel McCalla's dugout. As suggestions for names were made, Col. McCalla's young daughter, Emma, suggested the name "Geneva," the name of their old home town in Illinois, and this name was chosen.

In June, 1871, Henry L. Badger, the county clerk and surveyor, surveyed, platted, and recorded the town site, and



Photo from Mrs. Mary Halsey Henry L. Badger, County Surveyor.

for that service, according to the clerk's record, was paid \$70. The question of roads came first before the board at the meeting held on July 3, 1871. The first road laid out by the commissioners crossed the county from east to west through the northern tier of townships, near the Burlington main line and today's U.S. Highway 6.

Because of the railroad, Fairmont was the first town to flourish rapidly. Here the first newspaper, Nebraska Bulletin,

published its first issue on May 9, 1872. The issue of June 22, 1872, contained this news story about the county seat:

The Sale
Sale of Lots at the County Seat
The County Commissioners
Bid off the Court
House Square
Name Changed From
Henry to Geneva.

"The sale of the school lands of Fillmore County began at this place on the 11th at 10 o'clock. Nearly one section was sold, then it adjourned to Henry, the site of the County Seat. There was no difficulty in finding the place as there was a surveyor in the crowd. Our reporter arrived just in

time to witness the sale of TOWN LOTS. "There were 148 town lots and about seven-eighths were sold that day; some at the appraised value, but most of them far above it. The first offered was the COURT HOUSE SQUARE, the appraised value of which was \$135, and it was bid off to the County Commissioners at the appraised value. Then followed the lots in rotation beginning with No. 1. The corner lots were valued at \$10 and the others at eight. The terms were one tenth of the principal and the interest on the ramainder up to Jan. 1, 1873, cash in hand; and a note @ 10 years bearing 10 per cent interest—the cheapest lot sold for \$8 and the most paid that day was \$41.50, R. H. Werts purchaser. There is some talk of a railroad through the place and gas works and the Court House would be built before long. At nearly 6 o'clock the sale was adjourned till 10 o'clock at Fairmont. Second day the remainder of the lots were sold. highest at \$60. Next 5 and 2 acre lots sold. The best 5 for \$110 and the best 2 for \$156 to E. A. Spear closing County Seat lot business. The NE 1/4 of Sec. 36 joining Fairmont was then offered for sale. Sold to Mr. Grant for appraisal price of \$18 per acre."

This sale took place in June, 1872, one year after Geneva had been surveyed; but June, 1873, found Geneva still little more than raw prairie. The first signs of a "town" were a temporary jail and courthouse, built by Jesse Thompson and accepted by the county commissioners on May 5, 1873. Various attempts were made to move the county seat to other places, but all failed. E. L. Martin tried to have it moved to Fairmont. The *Bulletin* reported on October 26,

1872

"We learn from Maj. Williams that an attempt is being made to establish a town 2 miles west of the County Seat. There is already one building 3 stories, about 48' x 60' store rooms below, offices on second floor and hall on third. It is a fine location on Turkey Creek. The coming term of District Court will be held there."

This place, called Manleyville and located on the S½ of Sec. 27, T7, R3W, was another of the places that hoped to

become the county seat.

On July 6, 1872, the *Bulletin* reported on the tax levy: July 1 (1872) returns of State Auditor presented showing rate of taxation to be:

General Fund	2½ mills \$	3,164.85
Sinking Fund	1 mill	1,265.878
State Schools	2 mills	2,531.72
University	1/4 mill	316.46

Ordered by Board that in addition the following levy be made for County purposes.

General Fund	5½ mills on the dollar value.
Sinking Fund	1 mill on the dollar value.
Road & bridge	3 mills on the dollar value.
Court House	2½ mills on the dollar value.
Poor House	½ mill on the dollar value.
Road Fund	\$4 per each 1/4 section of land.

On February 6, 1872, J. S. Le Hew, Nathaniel McCalla, and John A. Williams were appointed by the commissioners to appraise the school lands of Fillmore County. They soon found that to survey each section would require much labor and expense, so after consulting the State Auditor it was decided to survey only timber lands and town sites. They reported to the commissioners on April 29, 1872:

¹As no county attorney had been elected, it must be presumed (in the absence of exact records) that Mr. Eller was appointed to the post by the Commissioners.

"We visited each section and appraised it carefully in 40 A. tracts (after encountering some difficulty in finding some of it owing to the fact the prairie fire had burned up the stakes in the sparsely settled part of the county) save Section 16, Town 8, R4W, which is traversed by School Creek and has a small amount of timber along the banks we subdivided it into 10 A. tracts. The southeast one-fourth of Section 36, T7, R3W, we found had been laid out in part in lots and a town located thereon. We thought it advisable to have balance of said quarter surveyed into Outlots which was done and appraised in subdivisions as shown and numbered on the original plot and plots of the additions which we ordered laid out. We thought it advisable to appraise it that way as the County has failed to purchase said ground, it can now avail itself of benefits of county seat location. People could purchase single lots without being compelled to buy 40 A."

On April 15, 1872, G. W. Gue resigned as county superintendent of schools and J. A. Dempster was appointed in his place.

Letters in the *Bulletin* for July 27, 1872, contained much ado about the county commissioners borrowing money at an allegedly exorbitant rate of interest to purchase the courthouse square and 160 acres of land for a poor farm. On July 30, 1872, the commissioners ordered that at the general election to be held that fall, not more than five mills be levied annually until \$50,000 should be realized for the construction of county buildings. The result of this vote was 264 in favor and 243 against.

Notice was given on October 2, 1872, of the first Presidential election (for the county) to be held November 5, 1872. The county was first divided into four districts or precincts, each taking in one-fourth of the county. District No. 1 consisted of the northeast quarter, No. 2 the northwest, No. 3

the southwest, and No. 4 the southeast.

A list of the voters in District No. 2, prepared by Registrar Arthur Murdock, was published in the *Bulletin* on September 21, 1872. (See end of this chapter.) In September, 1872, more voters were registered in District No: 1 than had been registered in the entire county for the organizational election in May, 1871. (For this list, see Appendix D.)

The first mention of bridges came with a legal notice dated July 30, 1872, advertising for bids for the construction of Bridge No. 1, over the West Blue River on Road No. 6 on range line between R3 and R4 and Secs. 1 and 2; Bridge No. 2, over Turkey Creek on the range line road between R2 and R3; and Bridge No. 3, over Walnut Creek in T5, R1 between Secs. 13 and 14. The contracts for the bridges were let to Mr. Webster for the two bridges over Turkey and Walnut Creeks, and to Mr. Baker for the one over the West Blue. The two were to cost about \$3,800.



Photo from Leo Schaaf

Ben LaShalle and his crew building a bridge across Turkey Creek (about 1890).

There were numerous complaints; many citizens felt that the bridges were built to accommodate the commissioners themselves, because they were all near their homesteads. The people in the northern part of the county were discommoded by the lack of bridges. They had to ford the river; and, although the bed was sandy and solid, the mud along the edges made it difficult to haul a load. The first settler, N. J. Dixon, told how, to overcome that difficulty, he had made bundles of willow poles and placed them along the two banks

and covered them with sand.

Later the settlers made a log bridge along the homestead of H. L. Badger (Sec. 2, T8, R3). This was the first bridge in that area and became a landmark called the "Badger Bridge." In November and December of 1875 the county built a bridge in the same place. In 1909 it was replaced by an iron bridge which is still in use and still known as the Badger Bridge.

After much ado in the newspaper over why it had not been done before, the county commissioners published the proceedings of their meetings for the first time in 1873, a practice which has prevailed down through the years. There being no courthouse, the commissioners had to hold their meetings wherever they could. William H. Blain, the probate judge, obtained permission to hold his court at his residence,

the E ½ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 20, T7, R2W.

The traffic in liquor has always been a problem, as indicated in this early record of the board proceedings: "It having been represented to the County Commissioners, that certain parties are selling liquor within the jurisdiction of the county without license, it was decided to delegate the authority to J. W. Eller to confer with offenders and receive the amount of license fee which was fixed at the sum of \$25 each for term of six months or \$40 per year, and also empower him to accept legal application for license for or by said parties." In 1873, the license fee for selling liquor was fixed at \$500 per year.

August 10, 1872, brought news of a murder at the homestead of Orlando Porter on Turkey Creek. The victim was G. A. Day. Constable Bain took Orlando Porter into his custody. The coroner's verdict was that Day came to his death by a ball from an Enfield rifle supposed to be in the hands of Orlando Porter, who was committed for trial and

taken to Nebraska City.

At the trial held in Manley ville, Porter pleaded "guilty" and on November 23, 1872, the District Court sentenced him to one year in the penitentiary for the murder of Day. The entire jury petitioned the governor for his reprieve immediately, and the governor pardoned him on December 24, 1872. Thus the jury did their duty according to law and according to justice as they saw it. Almost 50 years later, Captain C. S. Allen, who was one of the jurors at the Porter trial, recalled that the jurors had to carry their beds and provisions with them.

There was other violence in the same vicinity with not so tragic an ending. One time six burly claim-jumpers tried to scare a claim-holder whose name was Reed, while he was driving home. They surrounded him and fired six shots, all of which missed. He drove as fast as he could, and as he

neared some houses the men ran away.

At the general election of November, 1872, a favorable vote was given for a tax for the purpose of erecting county buildings. The commissioners published notice that they would receive sealed bids at the office of the county clerk, until the first Monday in December, 1872, at the hour of 10 A.M., for the building of a wooden courthouse and jail.

The path of the board was not "rose strewn," because there were published many letters of criticism. Some writers felt that they were not spending enough on the county buildings to make them substantial and adequate, others that they had voted more than they were spending, and still others that they should wait till the money was in hand be-

fore spending it.

The jail was built in February, 1873, and was the only building in the town for some time. The first man to occupy this jail in a lonely spot was from Turkey Creek. Work began on the courthouse early in 1873 and was finished by May of that year. That building was replaced 20 years later by the present edifice. The old courthouse was moved onto a farm south of Geneva, made into or used as a barn and later burned.

The first town in the county was laid out by E. L. Martin on his homestead on Sec. 1, T8, R4W. This he called Fillmore City. He was commissioned postmaster in March, 1871, making Fillmore City the first post office in Fillmore County. J. E. Porter, the pioneer merchant, opened a store



Photo from Mrs. C. Camp View of Geneva from west end of G Street about 1880. Notice old courthouse on right.

in Fillmore City on February 10, 1871, so stores were coming nearer to the settlers.

During the summer of that year the railroad reached Fairmont and Mr. Porter moved his store to the new town, beginning business October 15, 1871. The store in Fillmore City was continued by the Melvin Brothers, Charles and Cal, who afterward moved to Sutton. At the same time, Mr. Porter kept store on his homestead two miles southwest of Fairmont. A blacksmith shop was a flourishing enterprise in Fillmore City.

A flouring mill was built at Fillmore by C. M. Northrup, known as the Fillmore Mill. It was known for miles around and had many customers. It was all that remained of Fillmore City for many years. At the beginning of World War I, it was abandoned and torn down. That was before the days of heavy transportation by truck, and the mill was handicapped by not being nearer to a railroad.

By 1874, the call of the thriving city of Fairmont caused Mr. Martin to abandon the city of his dreams and move to Fairmont, there to remain the rest of his life, taking a great

interest and part in all civic activities.



hoto from Delia Fisher Fillmore Mills, downstream

The Burlington Railroad laid out the towns of Exeter, Fairmont, and Grafton, named in alphabetical order by the railroad officials, presumably after various towns back East.

Fairmont was surveyed in October, 1871, and the sale of town lots began. Buildings began to spring up like mushrooms. J. E. Porter moved his store from Fillmore City and opened it October 15, 1871, thus becoming the first storekeeper in Fairmont as well as the first in Fillmore City and Fillmore County. A post office called Hesperia, kept by M. H. Brown, postmaster, on his farm adjoining the town site on the northeast, was moved to the town and became known as Fairmont. The town grew rapidly and was for many years the most prosperous and leading town of the county.

Fairmont was incorporated May 26, 1873, the petition for incorporation being signed by E. G. Bliss and 22 others. A. S. Shepherd, H. L. Edwards, W. C. Ziegler, J. E. Porter,

and B. F. Parliman were the first trustees

The fact that the materials for the construction and maintenance of both Geneva and York, the county seat of York County, had to come through Fairmont, the nearest shipping point to both towns, was responsible for the prosperity and rapid growth of Fairmont.

Although Congress had given the railroad companies one-half of the land in York County, that county did not have a railroad until it was well established and the people

voted bonds to help build the road.

A transportation company was organized and several heavy transportation wagons purchased with which to haul to Geneva and York. When the Burlington branch came through Geneva, the transportation company was liquidated. One of the wagons was purchased by L. H. Badger and used on the farm for several years. It can now be seen in the "House of Yesterday" in Hastings, Nebraska, where it has been mildly remodeled to represent the type of covered wagon in which the early settlers came to this country.

Lumber yards and other businesses dealing in materials needed for these growing towns waxed fast in the new city of Fairmont. The following item appeared in the Bulletin for

January, 1873:

The first business house was completed in October, 1871. Now, 15 months later, it has a fine church building, ministers from Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational denominations, a good school, has two hotels, two lumber yards, three dry goods and grocery stores, two grocery stores selling only groceries, two hardware stores, one drugstore, a printing office, one livery stable, one blacksmith shop, one boot and shoe store, and one butcher shop. A large dry goods building and carpenter shop are under construction.

These stores advertised to accept wheat or grain of any

kind either for cash or in exchange for goods.

The following advertisement, on May 9, 1872, just seven months after J. E. Porter's establishment of the first store, well describes the type of business of the time:

Pioneer Store

Having opened the first store established in Fillmore County, and knowing the wants of the people, I keep constantly on hand a large stock of goods, which I will sell at the very lowest living prices, consisting of-

Dry goods, hats and caps, boots and shoes, garden seeds, all kinds of groceries and provisions, a large assortment of ready-made

clothing.

Corn, corn, I keep constantly on hand a large quantity of corn

which I will sell at the lowest prices.

I am agent for the celebrated Valley Chief combined mower and self-raking reaper. The well-known Marsh Harvester; Kerry combined mower and reaper; the Moline Corn Planter; Dexter Walking Cultivator; Marsh Sulky Plow and Cultivator; and the Fisk Bro. Wagon.

Jackson Scales

Also for the convenience of the public I have put in a pair of Jackson Scales for weighing hay, corn, etc.

The highest price paid for hides, furs and country produce. My motto has been and always shall be "Live and Let Live."

J. E. Porter, Fairmont.

In 1875, a bank was established in Fairmont by E. B. Branch & Co. E. B. Branch was a young man from the firm of J. H. Branch & Bro. of Marengo, Iowa. In 1882, Charles S. Miller became the owner of this bank. Mr. Miller was a highly respected banker and remained in Fairmont for several years before becoming affiliated with a bank in Seattle, Washington.

The Fillmore Bank was organized January 1, 1878, by J. O. Chase. It was incorporated on April 1, 1880, with a paidup capital of \$20,000. This bank flourished for a time and then failed. As always when money is lost, there was much

bitterness.

Another essential business that mushroomed with the advent of the railroad was the grain business. Stewart Brothers built an elevator in Fairmont and J. W. Price built an elevator of 12,000-bushel capacity. Later there was another elevator, making three in Fairmont. J. W. Price and P. S. Real both had elevators in Grafton. Mr. Real was the pioneer grain man of Grafton. Price also had an elevator in Geneva. There were three elevators in Exeter. Thomas M. Wright, who started to work for J. W. Price in 1882, was for 35 years manager of the elevator. During that time the elevator was owned by George Warren & Co., by Peabody &

Co., and by the Nels Updike Co. It was sold in 1917 to the Farmers' Co-op Association who now own it and have erected a large concrete structure.

The first hotel was built by S. G. Gaylord in 1872.

The Fairmont Steam Flouring Mill was erected in 1878 by Welch & Wiley. It was later owned and operated for many years by Welch.

On June 19, 1872, Mrs. Hagerty gave birth to a girl, said to be the first child born in Fairmont, and named "Bessie Fairmont." The first death was that of a young child of William Chapin in the summer of 1872. The first marriage was that of Clarence C. Chapin and Miss Morgan in the fall of 1872.

The town of Exeter was laid out in November, 1871, on Sec. 20, T8, R1W, on land procured from Dr. H. G. Smith, who had settled there a year earlier and who was prominently connected with the building of the town. His house, on the NE ¼ of Sec. 20, T8, R1W, was the first house built in Exeter. Because of his desire to accommodate the settlers he brought in a stock of goods and opened the first store in December, 1871.

The claim north of Dr. Smith's was taken by J. W. Dolan, who later became a partner in the Smith store. William Dolan settled on the NW ¼ of Sec. 20, T8, R1W, and John Dayton and William N. Babcock took 80 acres each on the SW ¼ of the same section. All these settlements were made about the same time in 1871.

The first actual settler was Warren W. Woodard, who had homesteaded the NE ¼ of Sec. 28, T8, R2W, cornering with Sec. 20, in 1870.

The depot and switch were built in 1872.

J. F. Kettlewell, pioneer meat merchant, in telling of the progress and prosperity of the town in the July 3, 1872, issue of the Fairmont *Bulletin*, gave this glowing description of the depot:

"Our new and commodious B. & M. Railroad station house, standing between the main and side tracks, is 22 feet wide and 42 feet in length and 12 feet in the clear, having a platform 8 feet wide on the east, south, and west and 7 feet wide on the north; together with a low platform along the main track nearly 200 feet in length; all this with a mansard roof projecting 5 feet, we boast of our station building as without a rival for many miles along the line East or West.

"Mr. Kettlewell also mentions Mr. Root, our shoemaker; Mr. Taylor, merchant, of the Smith & Co. firm; a blacksmith of whom the boys say 'his head is level and he makes plow lathes run the same'; our lumber and machine merchant, J. Dolan, Esq., whose sunny smile beats medicine, who sells everything needed in the line of lumber and farm machinery; a schoolhouse completed at a cost of \$2,000, B. F. Stilly builder, and is a monument of credit to the architect. It will be convenient as a place of worship and wherein to hold our Union Sabbath School."

With the advent of the railroad, Exeter became an independent community that could build and sustain itself.

The Congregationalists were organized in March of 1872, the Baptists in May, 1872, and the Methodists about the same time. They all met together until 1878, when pressure from outside caused the denominations to separate. The Union Sabbath School was dissolved in 1879. A Catholic church was erected in 1878 and the Protestant denominations built the next year.

The pioneer newspaper of Exeter (the Exeter Enterprise) was first published September 29, 1877. Its early years were marked by ups and downs. The first publisher was William A. McConnell. On January 12, 1878, the Enterprise was taken over by William J. Waite, who published it for 31 years; it is still being published.

The year 1883 recorded \$27,400 worth of improvements added to the town of Exeter and \$9,400 in the rural precinct.

The third town laid out by the B. & M. Railroad was Grafton, in the southeast corner of Sec. 25, T8, R4W. The first building was a warehouse erected by C. M. Northrup, pioneer owner of the Fillmore Flouring Mills of Fillmore City. Grafton was the main shipping point for the Fillmore Mill, which distributed its products over a large territory, and for the Seeley Mill located on the Blue River over the county line in York County. Captain P. S. Real is recognized as the

pioneer merchant of Grafton.

In less than two years' time the town had a population of 100 and almost every kind of business and profession was represented.

The Grafton Gazette came into being early in 1881. An early issue carried advertisements for two drugstores and a medical doctor (G. F. Ballard); E. A. Cushing, dry goods; J. G. McFadden, restaurant, W. H. Johnson, physician and surgeon; E. Murasha, boot and shoe making, T. F. Combs, auctioneer and expressman; S. K. Hawkins, livery and feed; P. B. Tolles, attorney at law; bank, J. O. Chase, president, R. C. Price, cashier; H. J. Day, general store; Daniel Easton, blacksmith; R. J. Blackburn, livery and feed; A. Ambler, windmills; W. J. Hickox, feed mill. The feed mill was powered by a large Hazen windmill which Mr. Hickox said had a grinding capacity of 20 bushels an hour.

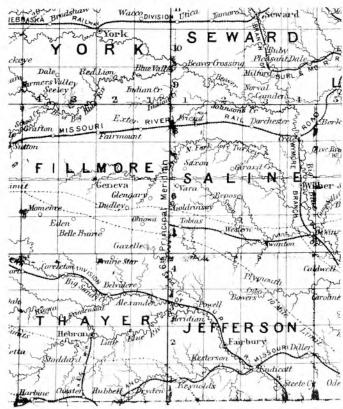
This same *Gazette* quoted the price of wheat at 95 cents per bushel and corn 30 to 35 cents, and seven pounds of good coffee for one dollar. It listed services in the Methodist Church by both Congregational and Methodist ministers (J. B. Doolittle and J. P. Stewart), and also Catholic services by Father Jennett.

Societies were the Knights of Honor, Good Templars, and Grand Army of the Republic. The Good Templars maintained a circulating library.

The editor of the *Gazette* recorded that in his search for news items he climbed to the top of the tall, newly erected Hickox windmill and searched the countryside with a borrowed spyglass and found several newly erected houses.

The Fillmore County map published by the B. & M. Railroad on May 1, 1878, shows the towns in the southern half of the county as follows: Alpine SW 1-6-2; Glengary NE 28-6-1; Turkey Creek SW 11-6-4; Bryant W 29-5-4; Belle Prairie SW 8-5-2; Ohiowa NE 17-5-1; Walnut Creek, SE 13-5-1.

On a petition filed by A. D. Babcock and 60 others, Ohiowa was incorporated in March, 1887. As most of the residents were natives of Ohio and Iowa, they combined the two names and called the town Ohiowa. It became a railroad town and a permanent settlement.



Official State Atlas of Nebraska (1885)

Fillmore County in 1885. Notice P. O. names that never became town names: Glengary, Dudley, Gazelle, Momence, Eden, and Belle Prairie.

Strang was incorporated the same year and named for the Strang windmill, which was much advertised in the pioneer papers.

Milligan, another railroad town, named by and for a railroad official, was the center of a Bohemian settlement in

the southeastern part of the county.

Shickley, in the southwestern part of the county, was the center of a German settlement. The four towns above mentioned came into existence after the pioneer days and are still in existence. Since the adoption of irrigation from wells, Shickley has become a growing and prosperous town.

The following railroad towns shown on a map published in 1900 are nonexistent today: Martland, Lyman, Sawyer, Burress, and Empire. Dudley, an inland town about five or

six miles northeast of Ohiowa, is also gone.

Sawyer and Burress were located southeast of Fairmont in Madison township. Sawyer was founded by one of the early settlers, Simeon Sawyer, on the Northwestern R.R. One-half mile away was the town of Burress, laid out by



Courtesy of Nebraska Signa
The Sawyer Store (early 1900's)—Robert Wirz standing in front.

J. D. Burress on the K. C. & O. R.R. Sawyer faded away, but there is still an elevator and grain business at Burress.

Lyman, on the Burlington branch line that runs from Lushton through Sutton and Clay Center, is now called Bixby and has only a grain business and elevator. A grain elevator is still in operation in Martland.



Store in Burress about 1900—Mitch Clark by post, John Shade, Henry Burress, Mr. Dutcher, and Charles Hull (standing by horse). The two boys sitting on the porch are unknown.

The Fillmore County Bulletin dated February 22, 1873, tells of the life in and around Empire on Turkey Creek. There were evangelistic meetings and Saturday-night "social sings" attended by everyone. Debating society, on Tuesday of each week, was also attended by everyone. One question argued was "Resolved, That intemperance causes more misery than

war." Also spelling schools took up a spare evening occasionally. These were all typical of the recreations enjoyed by the pioneers. In Empire there were 30 pupils on the roll of the school, which was one of the "Dugouts of the Great American Desert."

In the "rosy morn" of the life of Fillmore County the people flocked in with high hopes for great happiness and prosperity. Every town had doctors, lawyers, merchants, and artisans in every field applicable to the country.

Along with the main business, which was agriculture, the industry most needed was mills for the making of flour.

In September, 1872, P. S. Real, R. C. McComb, and Mr. Wolverton were planning to erect a mill on Sec. 7, T8, R3W on the West Blue River. They asked for public subscription to the amount of \$2,000, with interest at 10 per cent and the labor to be donated by the subscribers. By October, work on the dam was started. McComb and Wolverton were succeeded by Skerrett, but for some reason the Real-Skerrett Mill failed to materialize.

During the same summer, C. M. Northrup purchased a site for a mill on Sec. 1, T8, R4W on the West Blue River and went to New York to buy the necessary machinery and have it shipped here. This mill, completed in 1873, was known as the Fillmore Flouring Mills and did a thriving business for many years. Mr. Northrup built a warehouse by the railroad four miles south of the mill to handle the flour, which was shipped to many points; that site became the town of Grafton. The nearest mill to the first settlers was located at Camden on the Blue River in Seward County.

Building material was in great demand and by 1872 two enterprising young Fairmont men, Le Hew and Likes, had a kiln for making bricks on School Creek near the residence of Mr. J. A. Wirts on Sec. 1, T8, R3. The clay there seemed

superior to other clay for brickmaking.

Henry L. Heckman, residing four miles west of Fairmont on Sec. 28, T8, R3W, in the spring of 1872 started a nursery business which he called the "Lookout Nursery." He planted 10 bushels of black walnuts, several bushels of peach pits,

and a large variety of fruit trees, grapes, etc.

As the Lookout Nursery did not become a permanent business, credit goes to Youngers & Brown, who established the well-known Youngers Nursery, now known as the Geneva Nurseries. On his arrival in the county, Peter Youngers planted fruit trees on his homestead, and this expanded into the nursery that served a large territory. Mr. Youngers was ably assisted by Mr. Brown, who became the proprietor after the death of Mr. Youngers. He was assisted by his son Guy Brown, Sr.; when his health failed, the management was taken over by Guy Brown, Jr. In the latter part of 1959 the nursery was sold to one of the faithful employees.

During the year 1872, coal was found in Fillmore County by some men attempting to drill a well. Excitement ran high. Professor Samuel Aughly of the University of Nebraska was brought to Fairmont to give a lecture on geology. He watched



Photo from Guy Brown Jr. Nursery crew at packing house (taken in 1890's).

the drilling of a well and thought there might be a paying vein of coal.

On February 8, 1873, a company was organized to drill for coal. On February 22, they started drilling on the A. J. Beals farm on Turkey Creek. At the end of a month they had to give up drilling because at 176 feet the water came in. They planned to drill 400 feet. By then the legal notice for the incorporation of the coal-mining company had been published. The name was to be the Fillmore County Coal and Mining Company, under the laws of the State of Nebraska as to mineral rights, etc., for 99 years from that date. The place of business was to be confined to Fillmore County, and the authorized capital stock was \$1,000. The officers of the company were to be a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and a board of five directors. The document was signed by William H. Blain, president; C. H. Bane, secretary; and H. F. King, G. L. Pike, M. D. Williams, G. L. Hart, and A. J. Beals, board of directors. The county records contain the articles of incorporation, but they were not completed, and nothing further seems to have come from this exciting venture.

Many builders and contractors came to help develop the new county, and buildings sprang up like mushrooms. In August, 1873, J. H. Haughawout, a contractor from Pennsylvania, arrived in Fairmont on a Monday evening, bought a lot from H. G. Bliss, built a house on Tuesday, and moved into it that same evening.

There were many other capable builders. W. C. Massey built the Fairmont schoolhouse, an edifice of which the citizens were very proud, in the summer of 1873. S. F. Stilley was the contractor for the \$2,000 school building in Exeter.

On the farm of Joseph Frazier there was claimed to be a soil that made a plaster superior to anything then known. It was thought this would become a thriving business, as plaster was in great demand, but it did not seem to be developed to any great extent.

Notice was given for the citizens of the northwest townships of Fillmore County and southwest townships of York County to meet at Fillmore City on Saturday June 7, 1873, to take action on the proposition to establish an academy or graded school and confer with the Rev. W. Cochran on the subject. As we fail to find any further record, this must have been a dream that failed to materialize.

The Smith "Adjustable Index Factory" in Exeter, owned and operated for many years by C. C. Smith (son of Dr. H. G. Smith, the pioneer founder of Exeter), held a unique position in the world. The tags or indices, for use in offices, were Mr. Smith's own invention. While working in an office, he made them for his own use to save time and make his work easier. They were soon in demand by businessmen who saw them and desired them for their own offices. Mr. Smith started to make them commercially and soon had a world-

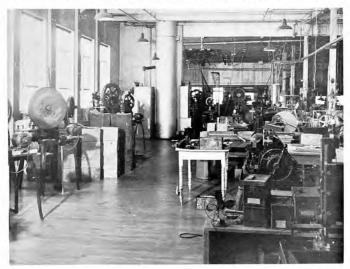
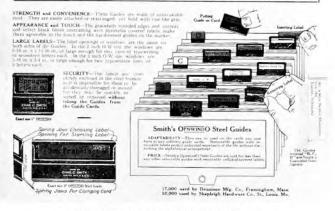


Photo from John Bacon Interior of Smith's Tag Factory.

wide business, as they were the only items of their kind.

Another business founded here which became worldwide was the Fairmont Creamery Company. (See under "Fairmont.") Thus Fillmore County has fathered two businesses that have reached out to cover the world. (It is in-





Advertisement for Smith's Index Tags.

teresting to note that another world-wide business had its origin in a sister city, not very far away, and one with which our pioneers had many contacts: the Beatrice Creamery Company, which also grew into a giant food-supplying corporation.)

Another claim to fame, of a sort, is that Rural Free Delivery Route No. 1, out of Fairmont, the first in Fillmore County, just missed being the first R.F.D. route in the state of Nebraska (it was the second). I. N. Beery, a resident of West Blue township, visited relatives in Iowa who had rural free delivery. This inspired Mr. Beery to come home and set the wheels in motion to get this service here. The result of his efforts was R.F.D. Route 1, started in June, 1901, with Frank Robinson, son of Postmaster Clark Robinson, carrying the mail. (For further details, see "Fairmont.")

Soon after the railroad came through the county mail routes reached out from Fairmont to the other towns. There was one route north to York and another southwest through Turkey Creek and Carleton, and into Kansas. July 6, 1872, saw a regular stage line from Fairmont to York.

The determined purpose of the early settlers caused them to build the new county on those firm foundations that had made the United States of America an example to all the world: churches, schools, and a sound civil government. Those were paramount in the hearts of the pioneers.

There are many sincere claims to the first Sunday School and the first religious services being held in this or that settler's cabin or dugout. We will give the credit to the Rev. Caldwell, a United Brethren circuit rider who came on horseback up the Blue River Valley from his home in Swanton in Saline County and held religious services in the dugouts of the Bussards, Whitakers, and Dixons in 1869.

There are many records of religious services as soon as there were enough people in a neighborhood to gather together for religious meetings.

On May 7, 1871, the Rev. Erastis Spear, a Baptist minister from Orlando, Indiana, held preaching services in the dugout of Col. Nathaniel McCalla. The following Sunday a Sunday School was organized with James Shepherd as superintendent. The Rev. Mr. Spear continued his preaching at various places. This was the beginning of the organization which was perfected January 21, 1872, at the home of James Loghry and was later known as the First Presbyterian Church of Fairmont (so recorded on July 6, 1872, in the office of the county clerk).

The Methodist Episcopal Church of Fairmont was organized in the fall of 1871 and the first sermon was preached in the new railroad depot by the Rev. G. W. Gue.

The church building was built in the summer and fall of 1872. It was to have been dedicated December 1, 1872, by the Rev. J. G. Evans, of Hedding College, Illinois, but for some reason that date was canceled and the ceremony postponed. The Methodists shared their building with the Presbyterians and Congregationalists until those denominations were able to build their own.

The Congregationalists organized in autumn of 1872 with Charles Hibbard as pastor and services were held in the upper room of a new store building, which was being used at the time for school purposes. The Presbyterian Church was built in 1873 and the Congregational Church in 1881. The Catholic Church was built in 1882, but it was not first in the county, as the Exeter Catholic Church had been erected in 1878.

The Congregationalists were organized in Exeter in 1872, the Baptists in May of that year, and the Methodists about the same time, but they met together as one organization until 1878, when pressure from outside caused them to separate. The Congregationalists built in 1878 and the other two in 1879.

On May 19, 1872, Elder J. N. Webb, General Agent of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, assisted the Rev. J. E. Ingham in organizing the regular Baptist Church of Exeter, with 10 members. Then, on May 23, the Rev. Mr. Ingham organized the Regular Central Baptist Church of Fillmore County, with 15 members present, at the home of Mr. Morgan, three miles south of Fairmont. Rev. Spear, who was preaching around the center of the county, was asked to labor with the Rev. Mr. Ingham.

An item in the August 31, 1872, issue of the Fairmont Bulletin says; "The Picnic of Pleasant Ridge Sabbath School at Walnut Creek proved a great success. Pleasant Ridge Sabbath School and Bethlehem Sabbath School joined in the

procession and activities."

A county Sunday School convention for all of the Sunday Schools of the county was held in Fairmont, September 24 and 25, 1872. Many Sunday School picnics were held in Snow's Grove on Walnut Creek in the southeastern part of the county and along the Blue River in the northern part of the county.

Jonathan Horton, a descendant of Joseph Horton, who had been born in England in 1578, settled in 1870 on Sec. 2, T8, R2W. He gave one acre of land for a school lot on which was built a sod schoolhouse that served for many years as both school and church. As a result of services held there by the Rev. D. B. Warner of Ohio, a "Church of God" was organized, with 25 members, and with Mr. Horton and Jacob Witter as elders and Samuel Bair and George Helms as deacons. This church existed for many years, thanks to the untiring devotion and efforts of Mr. Horton. When a frame school building replaced the soddy, it too was used for many years as a place of worship by United Brethren, Methodists, Baptists, and Congregationalists. The appearance of the automobile marked the end of the great era of country churches.

It was the custom in the early days to bury the dead on their own land or in a plot of burial ground donated by some

homesteader for his family and neighbors.

The northern part of the county contains two such cemeteries. The plot for the first was given by Napoleon B. ("Poly") Roe on his farm on the S ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 6, T8, R2W. Libby Roe, daughter of Thomas Roe, aged 12 years and 3 months, died September 19, 1872, and was buried here. Some of the earliest burials were in this cemetery, but later some of the bodies were moved to Fairmont, which was considered a more permanent burial ground. Some of the graves were marked, but as the original owners are long since gone and the land has been used for pasture, by now almost all traces of it have been lost.

The Horton Cemetery, donated by Jonathan Horton, was on his farm on the NE corner of the SE 1/4 of Sec. 2, T8, R2W, about 71/2 miles NE of Fairmont. The earliest grave recorded here was of Sarah Horton, who died on August 20, 1872. The names of many of the pioneers of that vicinity are

recorded in that cemetery, which is still used for burial of the families and relatives of the people buried there in early days. The citizens of Fairmont selected the site for the Fairmont Cemetery in February, 1873.

With the rush of settlers into the county came the organization of school districts. Many of the first school-houses were built of sod and poorly furnished and equipped. The 1872 report of the County Superintendent described the schoolhouses as poorly equipped but said that the teachers were making good progress regardless of these handicaps.

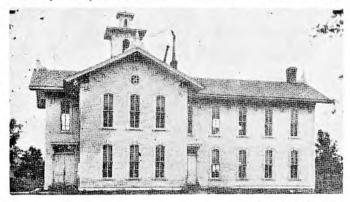
As it took some time after the organization of the school districts to raise necessary funds and erect buildings, school was sometimes taught in the homes of ladies capable of teaching. This happened in District 4, in West Blue township, located in the southeast corner of the SW ¼ of Sec. 2, T8, R3W. County Superintendent George W. Gue organized the district on January 6, 1872, but no action was taken regarding building until March 24, 1873. Meanwhile, Mrs. Laura Phillips taught in her home on the NW ½ of Sec. 12, T8, R3W. She was said to have taught the first school and was paid by the parents of the pupils before the organization of the district.

The first schoolhouse in District 1 was a log house on the south side of the river on land now owned by Louis Budler. N. J. Dixon was the treasurer, a position he held for 25 years. As there were no banks, he had to go to Geneva every

month to get the money to pay the teacher.

The citizens of Fairmont voted bonds for the erection of a schoolhouse for District 19 on September 21, 1872. School opened in November, in a room over a store building, with Miss Elva Lewis as teacher. A large and substantial two-story building was completed in 1873 at a cost of \$2,000. This main building, with later additions, was the first of the town high schools.

The first marriage license granted in Fillmore County was issued June 27, 1871, to William Whitaker and Sabra Brumsey. They were married June 28, 1871, by County



Courtesy of Nebraska Signal

Fairmont's first Public School-1873.

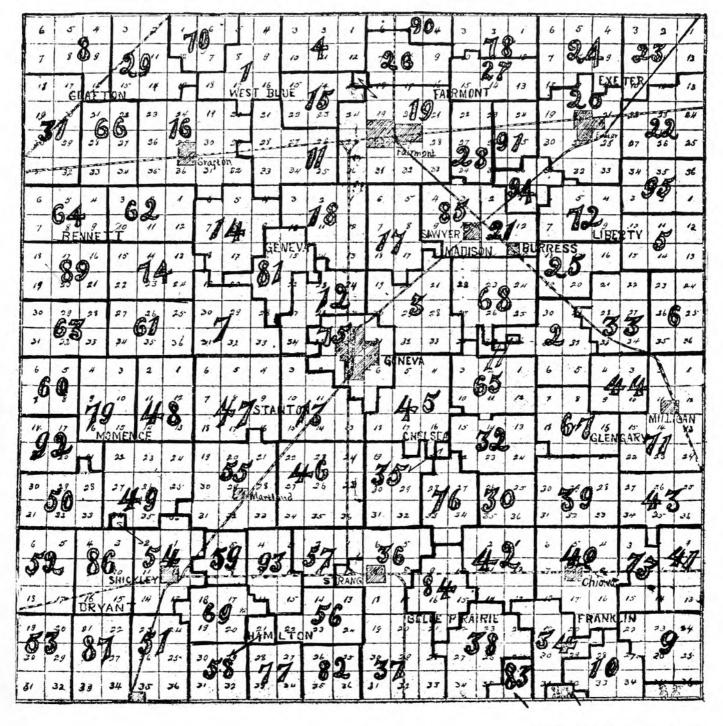
Judge William H. Blain. The ceremony took place on the NW ¼ of Sec. 4, T8, R3W. The names of Mrs. H. L. Badger and John H. Whitaker appeared as witnesses. Judge Blain came from his home on Turkey Creek and spent the night in the home of the county clerk, H. L. Badger, who lived one and one-half miles from the scene of the wedding.

The first white child born in the county was Arthur Dixon, son of Mr. and Mrs. N. J. Dixon, the pioneers. He was born on their homestead January 9, 1869. Grandmother Whitaker, the pioneer lady in Fillmore County, was the midwife.

Emma Whitaker, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James C. Whitaker, was the first white girl born in the county. She was a great attraction to the Indian women when they camped near, who loved to be permitted to hold the white "papoose." Emma was married to John K. Hall. They were the parents of two children, Grace (now deceased) and Earl, who for many years farmed west of Exeter.

When people settle a community, organizations quickly follow. Churches and Sunday Schools came first.

11



Courtesy office of County Supt. of Schools

Location of school districts about 1900.



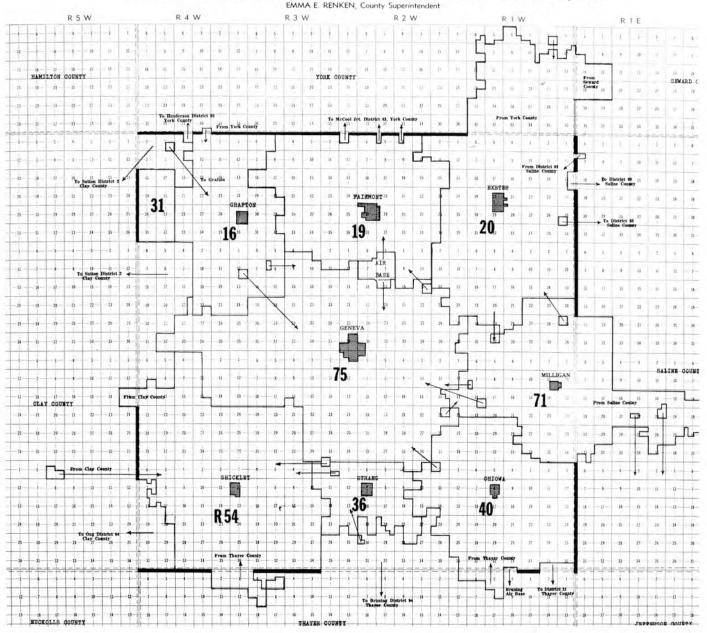
Photo from McKeith's "Pioneer Stories" Mrs. J. K. Hall, husband, and family. Mrs. Hall (Emma Whitaker) was the first white girl born in Fillmore County.

Seven months after the first building was erected in Fairmont, the directory of the first newspaper contains notices first of church and Sunday School, and then the Independent Order of Good Templars and a Fairmont Debating Society. Fairmont also boasted the first Masonic and Odd Fellows lodges in the county. Lodge No. 48, A. F. & A. M., was chartered June 26, 1874, with John Vodra as Master. Lodge No. 42, I. O. O. F., was chartered August 17, 1875. Mt. Moriah chapter No. 38, O. E. S., was chartered in Lune 1891

Posts of the Grand Army of the Republic and its auxiliary, the Women's Relief Corps, were in every town, as most of the homesteaders were veterans of the Civil War. The soldiers and sailors were called together to form an organization for fellowship and religious purposes in Bennett township.

The Knights of Honor was one of the organizations men-

MAP OF FILLMORE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS AS OF OCTOBER 1, 1966



School districts following consolidation.

Courtesy office of County Supt. of Schools

tioned in the early newspaper. The Ancient Order of United Workmen and the Modern Woodmen of America, with their auxiliaries, the Degree of Honor and the Royal Neighbors, were lodges that were popular because they paid death benefits. These benefits provided inexpensive protection for the family man who had indebtedness on his farm or business.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union was active in all the towns.

These organizations and many others, together with singing schools, literary societies, debating societies, and spelling bees made up the social activities enjoyed by everyone.

Also many and popular were the dances held in people's homes, and it seemed there were many "fiddlers" ready for these occasions.

Most of the people had a keen interest in politics. Near election time feeling ran high. There were debates and torchlight parades, and men would walk miles to exercise their right of franchise. Political news in the papers left little space for local news. Letters concerning every candidate—local, state, and national—were numerous and often bitter. Fillmore County was overwhelmingly Republican because it was settled largely by soldiers who had served on

the side of the North. One of the first political organizations was a "Tanners and Cobblers" Club, organized in July, 1872, to support General Grant for the Presidency. The officers were: J. E. Cramer, president; N. McCalla, first vice-president; H. L. Badger, second vice-president, George Fifield, secretary; Andrew Church, treasurer; Fifield was absent so was replaced by L. E. Le Hew; executive committee, J. W. Eller, F. H. Gerard, and J. L. Le Hew.

The tilling of the soil was paramount in the minds of the homesteaders. Methods best suited to this climate were discussed and written about in every gathering and every paper and magazine. Everyone planted trees to make the country resemble their homes in the East. There was rivalry between individuals and different parts of the county as to who could plant the most. In June, 1872, H. McLaughlin challenged anyone to beat his record of over 2,000 trees, not counting cuttings and seedlings. That season Thomas Roe, north of Fairmont, set out 1,500 trees and 20,000 hedge plants. All over the county ornamental trees and shrubs and fruit trees and hedges of osage and mulberries were set out on the lines. H. L. Badger set a row of cottonwood cuttings around his half section, which grew in 50 years large enough to make lumber,

The fruit trees and many others had a fine start, only to be killed out by the grasshopper plague in 1874.

The year 1868 was a poor "growing year" and the crops planted were scarce. In 1869, however, everything grew and yielded well. The first crop of wheat that N. J. Dixon, the first settler, raised was in 1869. It yielded well and was cradled by H. L. Badger. Mr. Dixon hauled his first crop of barley to Nebraska City and brought back lumber for a floor in the log-house.

Fillmore was called the banner county in the state by several of the newspapers. One of the merchant grain dealers (the merchant who sold groceries, dry goods, and other needed supplies would buy grain) in the 1872 season offered a \$10 prize for the best 10 ears of corn raised in the county. In November, the prize was paid to L. A. Lewis, who lived on Sec. 26, T7, R3W. The weight of his ten ears was 9 pounds and 10 ounces.

Many of the farmers raised stock and found that line very profitable. Texas cattle were driven through the county to feed on Sand Hills grass and to be shipped on the railroad to the eastern markets. The settlers told of seeing the strays around for many years. It was claimed that a herd of 5,000 passed just west of Fairmont.

During the winter of 1871-1872, a meeting was held for the purpose of organizing an agricultural society. A committee on constitution and by-laws was appointed to meet and report to a meeting to be held in March. On the appointed day a severe storm kept those living at a distance from coming to the meeting. One of the absentees had the prospective by-laws and constitution in his possession. Three of the committee being present, it was moved to adopt a constitution as much as possible like the one decided upon. The motion was opposed but carried. The constitution and by-laws were drawn up and adopted, officers were elected, and the next



Courtesy of Nebraska Signal Fillmore County Fair Grounds at Geneva, about 1909.

meeting was set for the second Saturday in May. There being some disapproval, President Judge Blain was urged to call a special meeting to reconsider the action taken. This he refused to do, as he thought matters could be straightened out at the appointed meeting time. As all of the people were not satisfied, a meeting was called and a committee of seven was appointed to meet with the officers-elect to try to adjust matters to the satisfaction of all parties. This they were able to do, and the constitution and by-laws of the newly formed Agricultural Society were published in the May 16, 1872, issue of the Nebraska Bulletin. The officers were to be president, vice-president, secretary, corresponding secretary, treasurer, and a board of 16 managers, one from each township.

One of the most interesting provisions of the constitution was Article 9: "Every member of the Society shall enter at every Annual Fair of the Society some article or animal for exhibition; if vegetable it shall be accompanied with a concise statement of the character and condition of the soil at planting, when planted, length of time required to mature, mode of culture, quality of seed and yield of same for the benefit of the Society." Thus the object of the organization was to help the farmers learn how and what was best in the new country.

The constitution also forbade intoxicating liquors, lotteries, and games of chance on the fair grounds. Permission was given for shows and exhibitions free from immoral tendencies upon payment of a reasonable fee.

On June 6, 1872, a meeting of importance was called for the first Saturday in August. James Shepherd advertised that he could be contacted at his home, the SE ¼ of Sec. 14, T7, R3W, and would be in Fairmont on the second and fourth Saturdays in June. The meeting held on August 1, 1872, was so poorly attended that it was thought best to adjourn and meet at the J. F. Loghry place on the fourth Saturday in August.

Notice was given to the Township Managers to report to a meeting in October on township activities. The township managers were: J. A. Williams (T5, R1W), R. D. Sturdevant (T5, R2W), Mr. Ward (T5, R3W), C. H. Bemendiffer (T5, R1W), C. H. Basset (T6, R1W), H. F. King (T6, R2W), W. T. Burnett (T6, R3W), Mr. Beam (T7, R1W), Seth Woodard (T7, R2W), J. Loghry (T7, R3W), Prof. J. B. Lewis (T7, R4W), Job Hathaway (T8, R1W), J. E. Cramer (T8, R2W), A. W. Chase (T8, R3W), and J. S. Le Hew (T8, R4W).

Regardless of various obstacles, the society persisted and in 1875 the Fillmore County Agricultural Society held its first fair at Fairmont.

About 1877 there was agitation to have the fair at the county seat; at the same time a series of meetings were held in Alexandria, in regard to a district fair. The result of these meetings was the organization of the District Agricultural and Mechanical Fair Association, comprising Jefferson, Thayer, Fillmore, and Saline counties, the fair to be held in Fairmont. This fair continued for several years. Horse racing was one of the chief attractions.

The District Fair continued for several years after the Fillmore County Agricultural Society had established the Fillmore County Fair in Geneva. The county fair became a successful enterprise that is still an annual attraction for the people of Fillmore and surrounding counties. The association owns its own well-improved grounds, located just north of the city of Geneva.

The first homes of the Fillmore County settlers were dugouts and sod houses. These were substantial structures, cool in summer and warm in winter, but were dark and lacked ventilation. The roofs were made of poles covered with grass and then sod. There was no way to keep them from leaking during a hard rain, and sometimes the entire roof would fall in. Some were built stoutly enough to hold a team and wagon. They would last for seven or eight years, and by that time material could be procured for a frame house.

Many hardships beset the pioneers. In April, 1873, came a blizzard that lasted for three days. It was known as the Great Easter Storm because it started on Easter Sunday. A fine snow was whipped across country by winds so high as to make it blinding and pack it solidly in draws and ravines, leaving the level ground bare. It was so solidly packed that men and stock could walk on top of it across rivers and draws.

The summer of 1874 brought the great plague of grasshoppers in August. They came in such clouds as to obscure the sun and devoured every green thing, as well as clothing if it was in their path. Fruit trees that had a nice start were



Courtesy of Nebraska Historical Society A typical dug-out (about 1875).

History Of The Harmony Church And Cemetery

(by Nancy Ebbeka)

The Harmony Cemetery Associa-The Harmony Cemetery Association was organized January 25, 1879. The appointed board members were: F. F. Hill, chairman; Irvin Metcalf, clerk; E. G. Beers, R. W. Stowell, and W. A. Simms, members of the board of directors. at the first meeting of the board of directors the following officers were elected: E. G. Beers, president; J. W. Nier, treasurer; Irvin Metcalf, clerk; M. C. Matson, who served as trustee for three years; J. W. Dewold, who served as trustee for two years, and Jake Miller, who served as trustee for the cemetery until Frank Rathbun took over. After him, Jim Mikkleson served as sexton for 24 years. In 1945, N. N. Brown of Strang took over the sexton's duties and is still serving.

The cemetery's organizers first named the group the Belle Prairie Cemetery Association. The name was changed to Harmony cemetery October 7, 1947.

The first grave was that of Rhoda Mott. Her son-in-law planted two pine trees that are still there. There are 44 soldiers buried in the cemetery. These include soldiers from every war except the Vietnam conflict. In the northwest quarter in Lot 20, there are graves of three unknown soldiers. They were originally buried on a farm near Strang. The Strang post, G.A.R., moved them to the cemetery many years ago.

The Harmony church was bought from the Methodist conference February 5, 1900. The inside of the church is exactly the same now as it was when it was purchased. The church has the same kerosene lamps and pews. A piano is the only item that has been added.

A flagpole was put up in 1948. The first big flag was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Ben Grant, now deceased.

The arch over the cemetery gate was suggested April 2, 1951. The arch has the cemetery name on it. Edgar Miller was in charge of putting up the arch.

In October, 1953, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Schweer donated the drivein gate. At the same meeting N. N. Brown was nominated to put in a peony bed. Mrs. Henry Wernimont, now of Geneva, donated the 285 peony plants. The plants still make a beauty spot in the cemetery.

make a beauty spot in the cemetery.

The water works was suggested October 5, 1955. The entire water system was put in by donation.

The registration box was donated by Edgar Miller in 1955. At the time, there was only one other like it in the entire state. Now there are several like it in Nebraska. It is at the gate.

Ethel Moore donated 10 pin oak trees in memory of her parents. The trees were planted October 3, 1961. All the trees 10 c a te d around the church were donated.

The Memorial day services at Harmony have been held in the church since 1947. The program each year is presented by the American Legion from either Bruning, Ohiowa or Geneva. The services always begin at 2. The program this year was presented by the Ohiowa Legion. The Geneva Legion will present the program next year.

In 1965 the church foundation was worked on for the first time since it was built. The entire church was recently painted.

I received the information in this report from Mr. and Mrs.



Photo courtesy of Nebraska Signal Fairmont during the Easter Storm, April, 1873.

trimmed of their leaves. They leafed out again, but these leaves did not have time to mature before freezing weather and so the trees died.

Christmas of 1874 was one long to be remembered as a bleak time because of the dreary prospects, hard times, no crops, and much destitution. The county passed through hard times in both the middle seventies and the middle nineties brought by drouth and depression.

Prairie fires were an ever-present hazard. It was necessary for the settlers to plow around their buildings to stop the fire. As late as 1880, a huge prairie fire fanned by a high north wind swept through the fair grounds and threatened the city of Geneva. The threat was so great that people began moving their belongings and worked desperately to save the town and only the abating of the wind saved the city.

January 12, 1888, was the date of another terrible blizzard that caused loss of lives and livestock. Many children were trapped in schoolhouses and some who tried to reach home perished. The teachers who managed to avoid disaster were considered heroes and heroines.

Before Fillmore County was organized the Indians who had claimed Nebraska as their home had been confined to the reservations and were allowed to go out on hunting trips only on good behavior. If they departed from this rule by Uncle Sam they would be reported and sent back to the reservation. They appreciated the privilege of being allowed to hunt, so the settlers had no fear of serious trouble with them. The old Pawnee Trail crossed Fillmore County from north to south near the east line of the third row of townships from the east. This was the path taken by the Indians on their treks to and from the reservation. The scars made by this trail were plainly visible well into the twentieth century.

In the pioneer days the county abounded in wild game. There were buffalo, deer, elk, antelope, and numbers of the smaller fur-bearing animals such as mink, otter, beaver, and a little fox called a swift, which the settlers trapped for their fur.

Buffalo did not come into the county after the summer of 1868. The presence of people in their old haunts along the river caused them to seek other pastures, even though no farther away than Nuckolls County. In the summer of 1868, Grandmother Eliza Whitaker scared the buffalo away from her dugout with her apron. This was their last appearance in this county.

Until after 1871 the settlers were able to supply themselves with meat from buffalo, deer, wild turkeys, and prairie chickens. Along the river there was an abundance of wild plums, grapes, chokecherries, elderberries, etc. Also along the river the settlers found the stark skulls of humans, presumably of persons captured by the Indians along the Oregon Trail.

No history of Fillmore County would be complete with-

out mention of the old Big Cottonwood Tree that so many, many years stood as a "Monarch of Nebraska's plain and wood." Landmark it was for man both red and white and sheltered them many a stormy night. This tree, reputed to be the largest tree in the state, grew on the land homesteaded in 1868 by Henry L. Badger, the first county clerk and surveyor, then owned by Lewis H. Badger, son of Henry L. and now owned by Mary Badger Halsey and farmed by her son Lewis Badger Halsey. The tree stood on the south side of the West Blue River just east of the bridge known as the Badger Bridge, on the NW 1/4 of Sec. 2, T8, R3W. The tree measured 26 feet in circumference at the base and 19 feet in circumference six feet above the ground, and grew to a height of almost 50 feet before it branched. It would undoubtedly be standing today had not some hunters, on a cold day, built a fire against it that burned through to the heart of the tree and killed it.

Early Elections

Following is a copy of the Poll Book for the first election.

[Editor's note: The variant spellings of several names in these lists are those of the original lists.]

"Poll Book of an election held in Fillmore County in the State of Nebraska on the 21st day of April, 1871, for the organization of said County and election of Officers therefor, at which time E. L. Martin, James Horne, and G. R. Wolfe were judges and Warren Woodard and A. W. Chase were clerks of said election."

42. Bussard, William

The following named persons voting:

Merrill, William

2.	Glass, Asa S.	43.	Whitaker, William
	Kauffman, John B.		Dixon, Nimrod J.
4.	Ziska, John		Beals, A. J.
	Steinacher, John		Spayde, William
	Clarke, Thomas W.		Brower, C. D.
	Kavrila, Frank		Matthews, Wilson
	Wolfe, Benjamin F.		Roe, Thomas
	Bernacak, John		Boyer, Andy
	Kassil, Joseph		Boyer, J. F.
	Kotus, John		Matthews, Benjamin
	Kotus, Frank		Winborg, N. P.
3	Deuel, Wilbur		Clarke, Arthur C.
	Lewis, L. A.		Walder, Martin
	Spear, Myron L.		Lyndon, John (Sworn)
		57	Shirley, Francis (Sworn)
	Wheeler, John B.	58	Shirley, John F. (Sworn)
	Kral, John McCashland, John R.		Adams, Austin
			Clapp, Silas
	Jez, Joseph		Babcock, E. L.
	Whiting, John C.		Trauger, L. T. (Sworn)
	Whitaker, James B.		Dietrick, S. (Sworn)
22.	Stewart, L. G.		Clemons, R. L.
	McKinney, William		Stone, Ed. J.
	Wilson, N.		Martin, Elisha L.
	Thompson, Joseph S.		Badger, Henry L.
	Porter, Orlando		Horne, James
	Keller, Alfred		Wolfe, G. R.
	Barber, William L.		Elt, Fred
	Bacon, Silas		Kreg, Henry
	Case, William	72.	McCauley, N.
	Bassett, C. H.		Fullgrab, Adolph
	Lowry, George W.		Woodward, Warren
	Bugiska, Joseph		Bechtel, John
	McLaughlin, Hugh		Lippincott, John F. (Sworn)
	Sluker, Ferdinand (Sworn)		Bechtel, Cyrus
	Barber, John K.		Lippincott, Jerimiah F.
	Snow, J. F.		Cooper, John A.
	Patsek, Charles		Talmadge, Henry (Sworn)
	Blain, William H.		Thompson, Jesse L.
	Zelingle, John (Sworn)		De La Mater, William A.
Ŧ1.	West, S.	Ju.	and and areas of the second

Certified to by us this 21st day of April A.D. 1871.

Judges	Clerks
E. L. Martin James Horne G. R. Wolfe	W. Woodard A. W. Chase

The following is a list of the voters registered in District No. 2 by Arthur Murdock. The list was published in the Bulletin (September 21, 1872) together with the notice which followed it:

Adams, John B. Ash, John Granger, G. R. Grimes, Robert Gue, William F. Gue, Geo. W. Gutchess, J. J. Garrignes, S. Allen, Chas. S. Angell, De Los Adams, Calvin J. Archibald, Alex Alddrige, Richard Ackland, J. Howell, W. N. Hamilton, G. W. Honey, J. Henderson, T. J. Angell, Orwin Angell, Daniel Ackland, Thomas Honderson, T. J.
Honey, G.
Hogbery, Alex
Hagenbaugh, Thornton Shaw, Owen
Sailer, Joseph
Scruby, George
Uselman Henry L.
Scruby, George Badger, Henry L. Bussard, William O. Boyer, Solomon Boyer, J. F. Heckman, Henry L. Henderson, Thomas Henny, C. L. Barrows, Geo. Bell, William Henny, C. L. Howell, John Heiner, H. B. Hart, H. R. Besack, Daniel W. Brown, Julius Burdick, William Bosserman, William Boyer, Andrew Hall, Jonathan Heller, J. M. Boyer, Andrew
Butterbaugh, Samuel
Barr, James H.
Bussard, G.
Burnett, J.
Belknap, O.
Benedict, W. C.
Beal, L. S.
Beal, J.
Besworth, D. H. Jones, Phineas B. Jackson, Andrew Jordon, Wesley Jenkins, John L. Koepers, D. Kingsley, Henry E Kauffman, John B. Knee, B. F. Bosworth. D. H. Case, S. J. Chase, S. Case, Hobart Clark, Erskine Long, A. J. Lucore, A. B. Littlefield, E. A. Clark, Erskine Clute, A. J. Craw, A. J. Carson, Robert Carson, W. J. Clark, Arthur C. Lytle, Owen Lyde, John Lyde, Joseph Lewis, L. A. Long, Lemuel L. Le Hew, Joseph S. Likos, Pobort P. Chase, Stephen Coburn, Samuel Likes, Robert B. Chase, Aaron W.
Culver, Jasper
Chambers, John
Church, Andrew G.
Cooley, R. S.
Cromwell. D. L. Loghry, J. D. Lewis, J. B. Lewis, Edgar G. Mattern, W. S. Mathews, Benjamin Moffitt, B. D. Milner, Ebenezer Dingman, John L. DeQuasie, James O. Dorrance, James H. Dobson, Richard Donnelly, J. Dixon, N. J. Monohon, John L. Miles, Charles C. McCashland, B. C. Marthies, J. W. Messcroa, — Mathews, Wilson Martin, Elisha L. Dunegan, James H. Dunning, Chas. Donahey, Geo. W. Maleck, J. H. Maleck, J. H. McCashland, John R. McFadden, John G. McFadden, Joheph Dunegan, Benjamin Eastwood, J. Eastwood, T. Melvin, James Martin, H. L. Murdock, Arthur Newhouse, Chas. Ellison, Daniel Evans, Lemuel Fisher, A. D. Ferrier, J. Fralie, D. Orcott, A. H. Fairbanks, Wallace Palmer, Anson Pace, E. A. Parish, J. Pangle, Mordican Frazier, Joseph Fisher, J. M.

Palmer, G. M. Porter, James E. Price, Joseph Phillips, M. B. V. Real, W. H.

Rudisil, G. Robbins, F. M. Root, Isaac E. Roe, Thomas

Roe, Thomas Riddle, James S. Scruby, George
Shepperd J. H.
Sheldecker, Frederick
Stevens, X. C.
Smith, William
Stanard, Norton M.
Spear, C. B.
Spear, Miron
Spade, W. W.
Spear, Robert B.
Spear, William P.
Spear, William P.
Spear, E. R.
Shoff, John
Shepherd, A. S.

Shepherd, A. S. Syas, J. D. Scrilby, Chas. Spade, Isaac Taylor, Benj. Tucker, Albert Torver, D. C. Turner, A. B. Thompson, Jesse B. Taylor, Peter Tatro, Joseph

Tiffany, D. Vanslyke, M. T. Vanslyke, L. P.

Watkins, G. P. Warner, E. L. Wycoff, T. B. Wright, C. C. Williams, Major D. Williams, Theodore Williams, Theo Wilde, Charles Wilde, William Wilde, John Webb, Edward Webb, Frank Wright, Owen Wright Cyrus

Woolfe, G. R. Woolfe, Benj. Whitaker, William C. Whitaker, James B. Whitaker, John Wirts, Jacob A. Wirts, William Winburg, N. P.

Winburg, N. P Warner, L. R, Ward, Chester Winterstein, George P. Witter, George E. Witter, James B.

Young, John M.

tered by J. E. Cramer with the following: "Notice is hereby given that I will sit for the purpose of correcting the list of voters in Precinct No. 1, Fillmore County, Nebraska as follows: at my office in Fairmont on Monday, September 30, 1872; and at Exeter on Friday, Oct. 4, 1872.-J. E. Cramer, Registrar."

Armstrong, W. M. Allen, T. W. Appleby, Frank H. Angel, B. H. Andrews, F. E.

Beals, A. J. Blaine, W. H. Barber, John K. Brower, Chas. O. Babcock, W. N. Barnes, W. D. Babcock, N. S. Borland, John T. Borland, John T. Black, D. M. Black, A. M. Bruner, B. H. Bailey, Milton Burge, R. A. Brittenham, Noah Bailey, Benj. Bailey, L. S. Butterbaugh, Levi Bean, Elias Butler, Jonathan Bair, Samuel

Clark, T. W. Cramer, J. E. Cooper, J. A. Carlis, James Chapin, C. C. Crum, John Crookham, M. E. Coffin, J. R. Crist, J. W. Chapman, O. P., Sr. Chamberlain, T. C. Chamberlain, C. J. Chamberlain, C. Corp, Alfred Clark, F. C. Clark, Chas. Carskaden, Wm.

Deuel, W. M. Dykes, Henry Dye, William Davis, T. H. Donovan, Timothy Dolan, J. W. Dolan, J. W.
Dayton, John N.
Dailey, Samuel
Deems, Harrison
Dolan, William
Dye, R. S.
Drummond, J. P.

Elt, Frederick Eller, J. W. Emigh, Chris Ervin, Bennett

Fulgrabe, Adolph Farmer, Thos. D. Freeman, D. H.

Glass, Asa Green, Lyman Gleason, A. R. Gaylord, W. R. Groves, John C. Gooden, T. G.

The names published in September, 1872, were regis-

Horne, James Hager, A. T. Hager, Orson Hathaway, Job Hill, James M. Harris, J. S. Hiskey, J. M. Halsey, J. Hedy, William Henry, W. C. Helms, George Hevron, H. Hetherrington, B. F. Hammond, Henry Horton, Jonathan Horton, Ezekiel Hoover, David

Jez, Joseph Joiner, Robert E. Johnson, Albert

Kabrila, Frank Kral, John Kral, John Keller, A. S. Krieg, Henry Kelley, David Kessler, John Kingery, Samuel Krist, Jacob Kelley, Rice

Logan, Willard Lindon, John Lawrence, R. L.

McCalla, N. Merritt, Wm. McKenna, Wm. Murphy, Patrick Marshall, Holmes Morse, Amos O. Morse, Eugene F. Morse, Eugene I Morse, Silas J. Miner, W. H. McCarey, Alex Mercer, Edward McCalla, W. H. Mullis, H. H. Miner, A. A. Marquette, Phillip Mead, L. D. Morgan, Thos.

Noble, G. D.

Porter, Orlando Purdy, William Paggett, Reuben Pruett, N, M. Parks, Alex Phillips, Charles Powell, N. J. Pinney, R. H. Parliman, B. E. Powell, Thomas

Paine, W. D. Ptrek, Karl

Stewart, L. G.

Ruzityka, Joseph Rice, Palmer Rice, Alonzo Roe, Thomas Riggs, J. W Robertson, James Richardson, Thomas Ryan, Patrick Ryan, Lawrence

Stuart, V. A. Stuart, W. L. Smith, H. G. Shirley, J. F. Shirley, F. M. Songster, A. A Sterrett, John Shively, John Simpson, W. H. Sibbett, B. F. Stonerook, A. B. Sturtevant, H. A Sturtevant, Fred Stilley, B. F. Sweeley, Mike Sheldon, Henry Stultz, — Stultz, John J. Stultz, Harmon Singleton, Stephen Sluka, Ferdinand

Tallmadge, H. F. Thompson, J. S. Thompson, C. B. Tanner, John Treaster, James Thompson, N. M.

Ulrich, Anton

Voightlander, -

Wirts, R. H. Watson, Joseph Williams, R. G. Williams, D. S. Witter, Jacob Wakeman, G. I Williams, J. W Williams, J. W. Winters, Theodore

Woodward, Seth Woodward, Warren Wright, Harvey Winand, G. W. Wilcox, E. G. West, S. Wilson, N.

Young, E. D Young, H. C. Youstler, J. K Youngers, Mathew Youngers, Peter

J. F. Snow, Registrar for District No. 4, had published the following:

"Registration Notice

"Notice is hereby given that the registrar of voters of Precinct #4, Fillmore County will sit at the Ohiowa Post Office on the 30th day of September; at Mr. Bothwell's T6 R1 W on the first day of October; at H. F. King's T6 R2 W on the second day of October; at Vosburg's T5 R2 W on the third day of October 1872.—J. F. Snow, Registrar."

"I hereby certify that the above list of qualified voters has been registered in the book of said precinct No. 2, Fillmore County, Nebraska.—Arthur Murdock, Registrar."

"Notice is hereby given that I will sit at the residence of C. C. Miles, Sec. 6, Town 7, Range 3, West, Monday, September 30, 1872, for the purpose of making additions, to correct omissions, to strike off any name that is not entitled to the elective franchise, or errors in said list.—Arthur Murdock, Registrar."

Gell, William

Belle Prairie Township

Belle Prairie township is on the southern edge of Fillmore County, bounded by Thayer County on the south. It is bounded on the north by Chelsea, on the east by Franklin, and on the west by Hamilton townships. The general surface of the land is rolling. A stream edged by hills—the north fork of Big Sandy Creek-runs through the south central part of the township (Secs. 19 to 33) from west to southeast. In 1966, the township counted 45 irrigation wells. It is crossed from east to west (through Secs. 12 to 7) by the Beatrice-Hildreth branch of the Burlington and from north to south (Secs. 6 to 31) by the Fairmont-Hebron branch; the two lines cross at Strang, its only village. Nebraska Highway 74 follows the south section line of Secs. 6 to 1; U. S. 81 comes in from the north on the Hamilton township line for a mile, cuts over to the next section line-bypassing Strang by about a half mile on both north and east-and then follows that section line down to Thayer County.

The township was a first called Beautiful Prairie because of the pleasing lay of the land. Later it was renamed Belle Prairie in honor of a very pretty little girl who lived there at that time with her parents; but the identity of the girl who thus left her name imprinted on Fillmore County

seems to be lost in the mists of history.

The early settlers of this township, organized in 1872, were largely Germans, coming from Iowa, Illinois, and Pennsylvania. Among the first were the George Matson, Peter Eggenberger, Chris Dunker, Ralph Stowell and E. G. Beers families. The first farms were homesteaded. The homesteaders had to get their claim papers at Beatrice, driving there and back by team and wagon. The main industry was farming and the feeding of cattle and hogs.

Homesteading Belle Prairie

(The following account was written by early settler Whitefield Crawford in 1908. Although we do not have for other townships any such detailed summary-and if we had them, space would not permit including them all-we print this, in all its detail, because it shows a good deal of the "pattern" of homesteading. Except for a few minor changes of punctuation, for clarity, it is printed exactly as Mr. Crawford wrote it. We have noted in square brackets [thus] some slight variations between his account and the lands shown on the homestead

In Belle Prairie township there was no settlement; nothing but wild beasts and reptiles inhabited the now fertile country known as Township five (5) north of base line of range two (2) west of the 6th Principal Meridian in Fillmore County and State of Nebraska.

The whole country was like unto a mighty sea of land; no forest of timber except the shoe-string and wild rose. The grass was of the wild varieties of Prairie grass, and was swept by fire every year; which would make the country look drear in the extreme. No people except those of an iron nerve would think of settling in a sea of Prairie where not a tree could be seen to break the view as far as the eye could reach, or arrest the sweeping winds that often approached the dignity of a blizzard. The nearest mill to [at] which corn meal could be bought was at Beatrice, 60 miles east. I said corn meal, that was all we could afford to buy at that time; and we ate sparingly of even that. As Dr. Franklin said to his landlady when she wanted to raise "Make the gruel thinner; that is all I can afford to pay. his board. We made the Johnny-cake thinner. I don't know whether to call it a luxury or a necessity; it was very luxurious when we were in luck to have plenty of it. When corn meal could not be obtained we would make a soup of wild onions and last year's rose buds. This was a thin diet; especially when the mosquitoes kept us busy at night and flies at day sucking our very life's blood from our veins.

The first settlement made in the township was on Sec. 2 by George and Thomas Matson, Samuel Remley, and Samuel Holderness in June of 1870. The Matson boys were natives of Ohio; but moved to Iowa and from Iowa to Nebraska. The other two native unknown, but moved from Iowa to Nebraska. This took all of Sec. 2.

The next settlement was on Sec. 4 by J. H. Ward in the fall of 1870. Mr. Ward took the NW 1/4, native of Ohio, and moved from there here. William De La Mater took the NE 1/4 of Sec. 4 in the fall of 1870; but did not move on until spring, native unknown. Freeman Warren filed his claim on the NE1/4 of Sec. 14 in the fall of 1870; but stayed at Cub Creek near Beatrice until the spring of 1871; native of New York, but moved from Illinois here in April of 1871. A. Burns settled on the SE 1/4 of Sec. 14, native unknown; but came

from Illinois. Irvin Metcalf came at the same time with Mr. Burns and took the SW 1/4 of Sec. 14, a native of Illinois, and moved from that state to Nebraska. Jake Linwander had filed his claim on the N $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 34 in April and had gone back after his Biddy and came on in the fall of 1871. Mr. Linwander (Dutch Jake) was a

native of Germany; but came from Wisconsin here.

George Wright took the E 1/2 of the NW 1/4 of Sec. 34, a native of New York; but came from Illinois here. Joe Clink took the W 1/2 of the same quarter as Mr. Wright. Joe as he was known was a native of Illinois and came from his native home here. W. S. Crawford took the NE ¼ of Sec. 28, his native was Illinois and moved from there here. George Wright, Joe Clink, and Whitefield Crawford came together, from Illinois in a covered wagon. George Goodrich took the NE 1/4 of Sec. 24, native of Vermont, I think, but moved from Illinois here. P. D. Sturdevant took the NW ¼ of Sec. 24, native Vermont; but came from Illinois here. D. W. Simms took the SW ¼ of Sec. 24. W. A. Simms took the SE 1/4 of Sec. 24. The Simms boys were brothers, natives of New Jersey; but moved from Illinois here. Cass Kingsbury took the NW 1/4 of Sec. 14. Native of Illinois and moved from there to Nebraska.

In June James Vosburgh took the E 1/2 of the NW 1/4 of Sec. 28, A native of Pennsylvania, but came from Illinois here. C. E. Hyde took the SE 1/4 of Sec. 28, native of New York, but came from Illinois here. J. E. Miller took the SW 1/4, and his brother Wm. Miller took the SE 1/4 of Sec. 22. Native of Illinois and moved from there to Nebraska. Judd Grummon took the NW 1/4 of Sec. 22, native of Pennsylvania, but came form Illinois here. George Elliott took the NE 1/4

of Sec. 22, native of New York, but came from Missouri.

Some time in early spring or fall before, a man by the name of Tuttle came here from Wisconsin and pre-empted the SW 1/4 of Sec. 12. He was an old man with a young wife yet in her teens. Mr. Tuttle brought some cattle, and had a young man hired to herd for him. He soon found his young darling had fallen in love with the young man. Being a free love thinker, a trade was soon made with the young man, whereby the young man gave him a pony for the young wife; and each took possession of their new property at once.

Pete Green took the NE 1/4 of Sec. 10, native unknown, he came from Iowa. Isaac Rakestraw took the SE 1/4 of Sec. 4. Nation of Illinois, but came here from Indiana. Mr. Raven homesteaded the SW ½ of Sec. 10, but never moved onto it. Miss Mary Rakestraw held it in some way, but how I never learned. Wm. Bell took the NW ¼ of Sec. 10, native of England, but came from Iowa to Nebraska.

E. G. Beers took the SW 1/4 of Sec. 8, native unknown, he came from Wisconsin here. James Burwell took the NW ¼ of Sec. 8, native unknown, he came from Iowa here. T. J. Hall took the NE ¼ of Sec. 8, a native of Illinois, but came from Iowa. John Mead took the W ½ of the SE ¼ of Sec. 8, he was the step-son of T. J. Hall. Henry Sinn took the E ½ of the SE ¼ of Sec. 8, a native of Germany, former residence unknown. Pryor Trenary took the SE [NE] ¼ of Sec. 6, native unknown, came from Iowa here. J. W. Williams (Banty) took the NW 1/4 of Sec. 6, a native of Ohio and came from there here. Francis Alvy took the SW ½ of Section 6, native unknown. George Coon took the SE ¼ of Sec. 6, native of Illinois; but came from Iowa here. Charles Minney took the NW ¼ of Sec. 26, a native of Illinois, and came from there here. Alex McKeeney took the N 1/2 of the NW 1/4 of Sec. 18, was Irish all over, came from Chicago here. George Criswell took the SW 1/4 of Sec. 18, a native of Ohio, and came from there here. J. Seese took the NW 1/4 of Sec. 12, a native of Iowa, and came from there here. [Benjamin] Spelde took the NE 1/4 of Sec. 12, a native of Germany, came from Illinois. John Cole took the SE 1/4 of Sec. 12, native unknown. John Taylor took the SE 1/4 of Sec. 20, a native of Pennsylvania, but came from Illinois. A man by the name of [George] Rockford took the SW 1/4 of Sec. 4.

In early autumn Wm. Donahoo took the NE 1/4 of Sec. 30, native unknown; but came from Illinois here. At the same time Josiah Sheppard took the SE ¼ of Sec. 30, a native of Ohio, but came from Illinois. Ely Shultz took the NW ¼ of Sec. 30, native unknown, but came from Illinois. B. F. Turner took the SW 1/4 of Sec. 30, a native of Ohio and I think came from there here. John Chase took the E [N] $^{1}\!\!/_{2}$ of the SE $^{1}\!\!/_{4}$ of Sec. 32, native unknown; but came from Illinois. A. M. Rex took the W $^{1}\!\!/_{2}$ of the SE $^{1}\!\!/_{4}$ of Sec. 32, native unknown, he came from Illinois. Theo Ward took the N $^{1}\!\!/_{2}$ of the SW $^{1}\!\!/_{4}$ of Sec. 32, he came from Illinois. Ammon Goodwin took S 1/2 of the NE 1/4 of Sec. 34, a native of Indiana, and came from that state. Ernest Rippe took the N [W] ½ of the SE ¼ of Sec. 34, a native of Germany, but came from Illinois. Frank Hill took the S [E] 1/2 of the SE 1/4 of Sec.

34, native unknown, but came from Illinois.

o4, native unknown, but came from filmols.

John Shaffer took the SW ½ of Sec. 28, a native of Ohio, but came from Iowa. R. W. Stowell took the SW ¼ of Sec. 26, a native of Illinois, and came from there. He went back for the winter and came on in the spring of 1872. When his mother, Mrs. Mary Hague, came and took the W ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 26. George Durham came with them and took the E ½ of the SE ¼ of Sec. 26. Sec. 26, a native of Canada. In the spring of 1872 Charles Dunker took

the SE 1/4 of Sec. 18, a native of Germany, but came from Illinois. Christ Dunker took the E 1/2 of the NE 1/4, a native of Germany, but came from Illinois. His mother-in-law took the W 1/2 of the NW 1/4 of Sec. 18. A Mr. Hicky took the W ½ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 18. John Goodwin took the S ½ of the SW ¼ of Sec. 34, a native of Indiana and came from there here. C. Shaffer took the N ½ of the SW ¼ of Sec. 34, a native of Ohio, but came from Iowa. Wm. Goodwin took the NW ¼ of Sec. 32, a native of Indiana, and came from there here.

Peter Eggenberger and mother-in-law took the NW 1/4 of Sec. 20, and two old ladies, relatives of Mr. Eggenberger, their names I have forgotten took the NE ½ of Sec. 20, natives of Switzerland, and came from there direct. Peter Peterson and son, Hans, took the SW

1/4 of Sec. 20, natives of Sweden, and came from there.

In the fall of 1872, G. S. Crawford took the W 1/2 of the SE 1/4 of Sec. 26. a native of Pennsylvania, but moved from Iowa to Nebraska. In the fall of 1874 George and James Bridgewood took the SE 1/4 of

Section 10, natives of New York, but came from Iowa.

The E ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 26 was taken by a German; but I never learned his name [John Conrad Graf]. The W ½ of the NW 1/4 of Sec. 28 was taken by a German but he never moved onto it.

It will be noticed that only the even number of sections has been taken as homesteads. The Congress of the United States passed a law granting every alternate section to the railroad; to the Santa Fe & Denver, as it was then called, and also to the B. & M. R.R. Sections 16 and 36 were granted to the state as school land; leaving only 16 sections to be homesteaded.

I would like to call to mind our Belle Prairie Post Office; which was located on the SW ¼ of Sec. 8. It was kept by Mr. Beers as Post Master. It was a case of bring the mail yourselves, anyone was intrusted to bring the mail from the Ohiowa Post Office to Mr. Beers once a week. Well do I recollect waiting with others for the arrival of the mail; then as now sometimes late, and how with eager eyes we would watch its arrival, and how our very hearts thrilled with admiration as it came whirling in drawn by a yoak of oxen. For all this Mr. Beers received the enormous salary of \$12 per annum.

The homestead law was that all lands for homesteading within 10 miles of the railroad (then only on paper) was what was called double minimum lands. This was if you wished to pay out on your land, the land office would charge you \$2.50 instead of the regular price of \$1.25 per acre, that the Government had sold all her lands at,

from the day of our Independence.

When the law of 1862 was passed it granted a quarter section to anyone who would live on it five years; had been amended so a citizen could only take one-half or eighty (80) acres within the 10-mile limit. Yet it gave the right to any honorable discharged soldier of the U. S. Army to take a full quarter section on any public lands. The

						В	elle F	rair	e Towns	hip Hom	estead	Mar)			
John W. Villiams	Prior Trenary						Jalian H. Ward		Wen Mr. De La Muter				Thomas Matson	Samuel H Holderness		
Harriet Alvey	George		******				Genrge B Rocklo i		lsaac V. Bakestraw				George Mateur	Samuel H. Remiev		
			James H. Burwell		Thomas Hall	y.				William Beil	Peter Green				Jared P. Seese	Beny H. Spelde
			Elon G. Beers		Frederick Dunker	Henry Sinn				Morgan C Matson	Genrys H Bridgwoo	I.			Phelps D. Sturdevant	John Cule
ilexandor McKinney Abel toltenburg	Henry Kiser	Christian Dunker											Castella Kingsbury	Freeman Warren		
George W. Criswell	Charles Dunker				7			Schoo	6 Land	4	15		irvin Metcali	Amesa 5 Burns		. h
			Lizette Sturzen- egges	Peter Eggen- berger	Barbara Eggen- berger	Mana Engler				Judsun Grummen	George I Ellioti	В		, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	P. D. Stordeyant	Geo W Goudtich
*********	19		Hans Peter Peteraon	Lorenz Peter Peterson	John Taylor					Jacob E. Miller	Wen. N. Miller			1	David W Simms	Wm. A. Summe
Eli Shulta	William	J.					John J. Koehler	James Voeburgh	Whitefield S. Crawford				Marr E John Heague Comrad Oraf	Chas Minney		Griffin S. Crawford
Franklin B. Turner	Josia Sheppa	h rd	Latte		29		John Shaffer		Chas. E Hyde		27		Ratph W Stowell	Griffin S George Crawford Durham		-25
			William Goodwi	i H	Francis M. Demnas	Mrs. Jurgen Tucksen				Levi 5 Drink Wigh	A Jacob Linwand	er				16
	- 31		Francis A Baker	Anthony Baker	John G. Chase		41164		1 +	William F. Rugg	Ernat Rippie	Frank Hill		15		hood Land == 6=

10-mile limit cut off the North East corner of the township, leaving Secs. 2, 4, 12 and the north half of 10 outside the double minimum lands. These sections were taken by people who had never served in the army. Those taking a full quarter section except in the above numbered sections were Veterans of the Civil War. In the whole 16 sections of homestead land 32 soldiers had settled, making an average of two, to the section. The states they migrated from to Belle Prairie township, speaking of the heads of families, were: Illinois 33, Iowa 17, Ohio 4, Indiana 4, Missouri 1, Wisconsin 2, from out of the United States 6, and two unknown, making 60 [69] that had taken homesteads and settled in the township.

It is the case in any new country that but few ever stay to enjoy their hard-earned homes that they have underwent all kinds of privations to obtain for two reasons; as a rule and in our case those that settle a new country are poor; having nothing but a team and covered wagon, a few dollars in money, enough perhaps to pay the receiver's fee at the land office. In a few years they could sell their land for a few hundred dollars. Not stopping to think of the future they feel rich with so much money; they can retire and have plenty the rest of their lives. Such bliss, such a haven on earth. Who could resist such prosperity and so sudden a rise from poverty to great riches. Then again they would argue they could put such a vast amount of money at

Interest and live on the interest and at ease.

Just as they were getting in shape to live and be happy from their past privations they sell their homes and are now living on the interest of what they owe; and will live in poverty as long as they have a mortal existance. The other reason is there are a great many that are of a roving nature and cannot and will not remain but a few years in a place. Some of this class did not stay long enough to get a title from the Government, they just left and got nothing for their claims. There is another class that made a failure in those early days; those that had never been away from home and had always lived on soft bread and knew nothing of roughing it; became faint-hearted and went back to live with their wife's folks, of course they never got a dollar ahead. Many of the latter class took the grasshopper raid for an excuse; but did the grasshoppers drive them off? I said they were faint-hearted.

Of all that took homesteads in the township of Belle Prairie, but twelve hold their homesteads today. Most of those that have held their homesteads have bought more land and are well-to-do. Some have rented their land and moved to town to live a retired life. Many have died on their homes and many have died that have left their homes. Were they a good class of people? We will look at those living in our midst at present. At that time we were all alike and today you will not find any of the old settlers that are not good citizens. They have not learned the new fashions and are as plain and common as of old; yet they are often called old foggies especially by some young fop that parts his hair in the middle and wears his hat on one side that has more style than brains.



Standard Atlas of Fillmore County, 1905 Map of Strang in 1905.



The Oldest Monument in Harmony Cemetery (1881).

A notable historical landmark of Belle Prairie township is Harmony Cemetery, located on Sec. 27 in the NE corner of T5, R2W. One of the oldest and best kept cemeteries, it is 3 miles S of Strang and 2 miles E of U. S. Highway 81. Harmony Cemetery, organized January 25, 1879, is a corner of the land that Whitefield Crawford owned at that time. Some of the farmers who bought lots in the cemetery were Ralph Stowell, Jode Shephard, Eli Shultz, George Durham, and Whitefield Crawford. The first chairman was T. G. Hill.

The oldest grave in the cemetery is that of Rhoda Mott, who died January 18, 1879. It is thought a "Conley baby" was the first child-burial. The small grave, marked by a little stone with a shoe-and-stocking design on it, it may be found along the walk on the east side as you first enter the gate. In 1889, three soldiers who had been buried southwest of Strang were given a lot and their remains were moved to Harmony.

When the cemetery was laid out, a family by the name of Kingsbury planted pine trees around the grounds. In 1893, an outside fence with cement posts was put in. In the same year, $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres were added (January 3, 1893) at a cost of \$88.50. During the time James Mikkelson was caretaker, a permanent upkeep program was started (October 5, 1920). Since then numerous improvements have been added, many of them by donation. The following write-up appeared in the Nebraska Signal of May 24, 1956:

"This year the Memorial Day service at the Harmony Cemetery near Strang will be a special occasion, as the new water pressure system that has been installed the past year will be in full operation.

"From year to year the cemetery has always been neat and attractive under the special care of Mr. and Mrs. N. N. Brown of Strang, assisted by Edgar Miller of Geneva and other cemetery trustees. The lack of water has been more vital than usual the past few years on account of the unusually dry weather. The new water system has been in operation for some time and vegetation is improving accordingly.

"The well is 105 feet deep and there is an endless supply of water for use. The submerged pump is electrically operated. Under-



Photo from Emma Christiancy Harmony Cemetery, Decoration Day, 1956.

ground pipes, buried to a depth of five feet, are radiated four ways from the pump. With the addition of 100 feet of hose from each tap, the entire cemetery can be watered. There are five frostproof taps and the pressure is enough that all can be operated at one time.

"This project was installed by donations from interested friends. Work was donated in preparation for the installation of this project by Strang residents and business firms from near-by communities.

"The pit was dug gratuitously by Junior Lentfer of Strang. Ernest Anderson, also of Strang, donated the mason work and Fred Ough of Strang donated the hose sprinkler. The brick was donated and delivered by the A. Koehler Co. of Geneva. The trench work was donated by the Kiester & Walker Construction Company of Geneva.

"Numerous other people have donated their time and labor. More than \$1,000 has been collected and donations are still coming in.

"The peony bed in the northeast corner of the cemetery includes about 280 plants donated by Mrs. Henry Wernimont of Geneva as a memorial to her late husband. The bed was planted last fall and came through the winter without a single loss. Many of the plants are budded.

"The Memorial Day service will be held at the church at 2 P.M. May 30. Dr. Frank E. Pfoutz of the Geneva Methodist Church will give the address. There will be special numbers of music.

"The service at the cemetery will be in charge of the Geneva American Legion. The Ohiowa School Band, under the direction of Ben Fussell of Geneva, will give a concert.

"Mr. and Mrs. N. N. Brown, Edgar Miller, and many others interested in the cemetery have given many hours to the progress of this fine community project."



Photo from Emma Christiancy Memorial Day at Harmony Church, May 30, 1956.

There are 25 G.A.R. veterans, two Spanish-American War veterans, and at last check, six World War I and two World War II veterans buried in Harmony Cemetery.

The Harmony Upkeep also owns the little church just across the road north of the cemetery. This church seems to have been built around 1889, having been formed by the people in that community at the time. Mrs. Edith Walker of Alexandria, who remembers that as a child of 10 she went to this church, supplied this information. The church and its contents were purchased for \$340 on February 5, 1900, by an M. E. Church committee consisting of L. S. Wells, J. Shephard, and W. C. Hervet.

SCHOOLS

District No. 36 is included under the history of Strang.



Photo from Mrs. N. N. Brown District No. 37 (Prairie Grove school)—taken about 1890.

District No. 37, known as Prairie Grove school, was located one mile E of the Hamilton township line and one mile N of the Thayer County line, on what is now U. S. 81, on the NW corner of Sec. 32. This school was organized in 1876. It served its purpose well for 75 years. After the school closed in 1951, the buildings were sold and moved away in 1953.

On Sunday, June 29, 1953, a reunion was held on the grounds. Many of the old pupils were present, among them Chris Reichert of Bruning, who started to the school in 1881. His teacher was Jennie Deselms. The oldest lady present was Mrs. G. C. Bruning, who became a pupil in 1888 and whose teacher was Carl Wilson.



Photo from Emma Christiancy District No. 38 (Harmony school).

District No. 38, better known as Harmony school, was located 3 miles S of Strang and 3 miles E of U. S. 81, on the NW corner of Sec. 26. The first record of the school was found in a treasurer's book dated 1888. In 1912, the original building burned down and school was held at the Albert Stowell farm until a new school was built. When this new schoolhouse was partly burned in 1929, classes were held in a building on the Henry Hopken farm.

Mrs. Edith Walker of Alexandria tells us that her grandmother, Mrs. Mary Heague, homesteaded the 80 acres on which the Harmony schoolhouse stands. Mrs. Heague's home was a sod house on the SW corner. Later a sod house was made east of the schoolhouse, where Mrs. Walker's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Adam Rex, lived and where she and her brother were born.

District No. 42, known as Goldenrod school, was 4½ miles E of Strang on the SW corner of Sec. 1. County Superintendent John A. Dempster organized the school September 14, 1872. He appointed A. S. Burns to call the first

meeting for election of school board members on September 28, 1872. The first teacher was Susan Mott.



Photo from Emma Christiancy District No. 42 (Goldenrod school).

Some of the people who served this school during its 87-

year III	e are noted below.			
Year	Teacher	Term	Salary	Director
1872-73	Susan Mott	3 mo.	\$22.50 mo.	No record
1873-74	Mary Mott	3 mo.	\$22.50 mo.	No record
1874-75	Mary Mott	2 mo.	\$22.50 mo.	Thomas Matson
1875-76	E. E. Corbin	3 mo.	\$20.00 mo.	Thomas Matson
1876-77	Sadie Mosier	3 mo.	\$30.00 mo.	Thomas Matson
1877-78	Sadie Mosier	4 mo.	\$25.00 mo.	George Matson
1878-79	Eleanor Matson	3 mo.	\$30.00 mo.	George Matson
1879-80	Chester Metcalf	3 mo.	\$30.00 mo.	George Matson
1880-81	William Evans	3 mo.	\$28.00 mo.	John Near
	Elmer D. Town	3 mo.	\$30.00 mo.	
1881-82	Elmer D. Town	21/2 mo.	\$28.00 mo.	John Near
	Walter White	3 mo.	\$30.00 mo.	
1955-56	Carol Jones			

After Mabel Cradduck ended the 1957-58 term, school in District 42 was discontinued and the district contracted for one year with the Ohiowa school. On June 1, 1959, District 42 formally joined with the Ohiowa public school (District 40).

1956-57

1957-58

Carol Jones

Kapperman

Mabel Cradduck



Photo from Emma Christiancy District No. 84 Schoolhouse.

The District No. 84 schoolhouse was located 2½ miles E of Strang on the NW corner of Sec. 15. The first organizational meeting was held at the home of Joseph Thomas on September 7, 1886, and the school was organized on September 11, 1886. The ground for the school was given by Mr. Kubes.

FAMILIES

Elon G. Beers homesteaded on the SW ¼ of Sec. 8, T5, R2W, ½ mile S and ½ mile E of Strang. He operated the first post office in his home on this piece of land, later owned by Ellis Bumgarner of Strang. A blizzard in the early 70's caught some of the homesteaders out of shelter for their stock. The Beers family, in this predicament, penned a place under the beds for their few chickens and pigs.



Photo from Mrs. Roy Dunker

The Chris Dunker family (taken in 1897 or 1898). Chris Dunker (father), Mrs. Chris Dunker (mother), James Dunker (son), Herman Dunker (son), Julia Dunker (daughter), Minnie Dunker (daughter).

Chris Dunker filed homestead entry rights in the spring of 1872. He and his brother Charlie came to Alexandria from Moline, Illinois, to stay with friends and to look for land. Chris made his homestead on the E ½ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 18. The brothers had the first two-room house in that locality, built by W. J. Mosier and Frank Sauer with lumber brought from Lincoln. After the house was finished, Mrs. Dunker and daughter Julia, who was only one year old, came to settle in their new home. This farm was the birthplace of James, Minnie, Herman, and Theresa. Theresa passed away when a small child. Chris later purchased 280 acres of land next to his homestead. Mr. and Mrs. Dunker made this homestead their home until Mrs. Dunker's death on March 12, 1918. Chris died on December 11, 1919. Upon the passing of their parents, James came into possession of the 80. Julia, Minnie, and Herman received the home place and the remainder of the land. They lived there until the fall of 1952 when they purchased a home in Geneva. Mr. and Mrs. Willard Rippe and family moved to the Dunker farm to keep the line intact. Mrs. Rippe is a great-granddaughter of the Chris Dunkers.



Photo from John Gewacke

Mr. and Mrs. William G. Gewacke (taken in June, 1902).

William George Gewacke was born January 28, 1871, on a farm near Beecher, Illinois, the first child of Christoph and Sophie Gewecke. His mother died in September, 1872. His father remarried, to Marie Sophia Richerdt, in 1877 and

shortly thereafter moved to a farm 5 miles SW of Ohiowa, where for several years they lived in a sod house. During their first year in Nebraska it was not uncommon to have bands of roving Indians come and steal anything outside that was loose, particularly any colored clothes which might be hanging out to dry.

In 1892, he and his parents moved to a farm near Sharon Springs, Wallace County, Kansas, but in 1894 returned to Fillmore County to live southeast of Ohiowa. As a young man he worked as a hired hand on farms. After leaving home he changed the spelling of his name from

"Gewecke" to "Gewacke."

On March 25, 1902, he was married to Elizabeth Wernimont, born April 16, 1872, at Varna, Illinois. In February, 1881, she came with her parents, Theodore and Catharine Wernimont, and her brothers and sisters, on a long train journey in an "immigrant car" which contained all of their possessions, including a cow and a team of horses. They arrived in Belvidere, the nearest railroad point at that time.



Photo from Clyde Gewacke
Parents of Mrs. William Gewacke—taken in December, 1890. Theodore
Wernimont—born in Luxemburg, Nov. 25, 1837; died Sept. 14, 1895.
Catherine Wernimont—born in old country, Oct. 1, 1839; died May
6, 1911.

The summer before, her father had come to Nebraska and built a small frame house upon a quarter section of land 4 miles W of Ohiowa. They traveled from Belvidere to their new home by bob-sled through the deep snows which then covered the plains.

The Burlington R.R. line which now passes through Ohiowa was built across their farm in the spring and summer of 1886. In October, 1886, Elizabeth watched the first train that crossed southern Fillmore

County.

After her marriage she and William lived the remainder of their lives on a farm 3 miles W of Ohiowa. To this marriage were born two sons, Clyde William Gewacke, born August 11, 1905, and John Clifford Gewacke, born October 30, 1907. Clyde was married January 23, 1936, to Thelma Burt. John was married August 16, 1942, to Dorothy Knight.

There are five grandchildren: Margaret Ann Nichols and Mary Ellen Gewacke, twin daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Gewacke (born September 27, 1940), and Joan Elizabeth Sargent (born July 28, 1944), Virginia Suzanne Gewacke (born March 6, 1948), and Marilyn Ann Gewacke (born April 13, 1951), the three daughters of Mr. and Mrs. John Gewacke.

William Gewacke died June 28, 1942, and Elizabeth Gewacke died July 13, 1957.

—John Gewacke



Photo from Florence Loghry Montcure and Harriet McReynolds (about 1900).

Montcure Robinson McReynolds was born on May 5, 1834, at Washingtonville, Pennsylvania, and moved with his parents to Mason County, Illinois in 1838. He married Harriet Lytell at Mason City, Illinois, on February 25, 1859. They had nine children, of whom two died in infancy. Those who survived were Mary, Robert, Minnie, Luretta, Carrie, Florence, and George, all born in Illinois.



Golden Wedding Party (1909) of Montcure and Harriet McReynolds. Front row, left to right: Mary (McReynolds) Gaffney, Montcure McReynolds (Donald, son of George, at his knee), Harriet McReynolds, Mildred (daughter of George) McReynolds, Minnie (McReynolds) Deselms. Second row: Luretta (Lou) Loghry (wife of James), Lorena McReynolds (wife of Robert), Lois McReynolds (wife of George), Caroline (Carrie) McReynolds, Leon McReynolds (son of Robert). Top row: James Loghry, Ross Gaffney (son of Mary), Robert McReynolds, Maude Calkins, George McReynolds, Rena Robertson.

In the spring of 1880, Mr. McReynolds, with his son Robert, 15, and his nephew, Willie Cross, of Forest City, Illinois, came to Fillmore County in a covered wagon. He had mortgaged his land to help a member of his family, and the mortgage had been foreclosed. He had heard that land was cheap in the West, and also his wife and his daughter Minnie were sick quite a bit in Illinois. Before the migra-

¹ Information about the McReynolds family was supplied by Miss Florence Loghry of Maywood, Nebraska, daughter of Luretta Mc-Reynolds and James Loghry.

tion, the family discussed going to Missouri, California, or Nebraska. Mrs. "Mac" turned thumbs down on Missouri because the "James Boys" were robbing and looting there, and they agreed that California was too far away. So they settled on Nebraska.

On arriving in Fillmore County, Mr. McReynolds made arrangements for land on Sec. 20, Belle Prairie township, SE of Strang. Then he wrote home, telling his wife to sell the cattle and bring the family. She sold the cattle at a good price, and she and the children came West by train. The children who came with Mrs. McReynolds were Minnie, 17; Luretta, 13; Carrie, 10; Florence, 8; and George, about 4 years old. The oldest daughter, Mary, was already married.

In the meantime, Mr. McReynolds had made a dugout for shelter, as the land was unimproved. Later, they built a house, partly in the bank, with a frame upstairs. This was the family home until 1899, when they moved to the vicinity of Geneva.

The move west was especially hard on the womenfolk, as they had left a comfortable home, with orchards of apple, plum, and cherry, and berry patches, to come to this prairie dugout. Luretta remembered one dirt and wind storm. Her mother had washed the plates three times while preparing supper and then cried because she had to feed her family on dirty plates.

The McReynoldses were good neighbors, never happier than when "doing" for others. They were good gardeners and lovers of flowers. One of their hobbies was trying new varieties of vegetables. Neighbors visiting the "Macs" in growing season always went home with flowers, or a head of cabbage or a melon, in season.

Mr. McReynolds had an education better than average and was always a great reader. He was honest, upright, and a good citizen. His wife Harriet, who was quite religious, instilled honesty, generosity, and good moral character in the seven children.

Some of their neighbors near Strang were the Arnold, Jones, Shepherd, Gertz, Deselms, and McKeon families.

The McReynoldses moved in 1902 to Frontier County and bought 400 acres 5 miles S of Maywood, where they lived the rest of their lives, and where they were privileged to celebrated their Golden Wedding in February, 1909. On this occasion, all their living children were present except Florence (Mrs. Phil Theobald). They had 29 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren. Mr. McReynolds died in 1914 at the age of 80 years, 4 months and 12 days. His wife Harriet died in 1916.

The oldest boy, Robert, went to the city when they moved and became a streetcar man. He died on February 16, 1914. The younger, George, went to Frontier County with the family, and after the old folks' deaths continued to farm his land and his sister Carrie's share with a few years before his death in 1051.

until a few years before his death in 1951.

The oldest girl, Mary, had married John B. Gaffney in Illinois some time before 1880. They both came out to this area, where her husband, a carpenter, worked for some years around Belvidere and Strang. She died at the age of 52, on December 22, 1911. Minnie married David Deselms (brother of school teacher Jennie Deselms), and moved to Bertrand, later to Edison, passing away at the age of 92. Luretta (Lou) married James Loghry, who moved to Frontier County, 5 miles S of the McReynolds place; she died at 67 years of age. Florence married Phil Theobald in Fillmore County; after some moving about, he settled near Pine Bluffs, Wyoming, where she later died at the age of 90.

The only unmarried daughter—"Aunt Carrie" to generations of friends and neighbors—learned the dressmaking trade at Friend, and worked for families around Strang as long as they lived in Fillmore County. She too went to Frontier County, and after her parents' death farmed (with the aid of her brother George, a mile away) her share of the land for 25 years or more, until she moved into Maywood.

where she died in 1961 at the age of 92.

Aunt Carrie used to tell about butchering days. Four or five hogs were killed, and scalded in water heated in a large iron kettle in the yard. When dressed out and cooled, the meat was cut up for curing. A team was hitched to a light wagon and a tub of ribs, backbones, and livers was taken to neighbors. They spoke of it as "a fresh of meat." The lard was tried in the same kettle. Then cracklings and lye were put in the kettle and soap was also cooked outside.

In the year 1870, George Matson came from Marengo, Iowa, and homesteaded the SW 1/4 of Sec. 2. His first home was a dugout built in a draw on the north side of the land. In 1873, he built a three-room frame house on the south side of the land (now marked by Highway 74). The following year (January, 1874), he married Rachel Pumphrey. This house was their home until 1891, when a larger two-story house was built near the same location. This homestead still stands in the name of the heirs of George Matson. He had four children, John W., Charles L., and Edith Mae Matson, and Mrs. Rena L. Ewart. John had three children, Dorotha Matson, Mrs. Vera Darby, and Mrs. Della Thoroughgood. Edith Mae is the last survivor among George Matson's children. The homestead now is in the name of Edith Mae and three grandchildren. It is still registered in the original U.S. patent deed, since it has never been sold.



Photo from Mae Matson The Matson Family, about 1905. Back row: John W. Matson, Rena L. Matson, Charles L. Matson. Front row: George Matson (father), Mae Matson, Rachel A. Matson (mother).



Photo from Dorothy Runge

The Ralph Stowell Family. Standing: Albert, Mae, and Clyde. Seated: Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Stowell.

Ralph Winchester Stowell was born in Waddington, New York, in 1847, and moved with his parents to Illinois in 1853. At the age of 16, he joined the Union Army, serving under General U. S. Grant and taking part in the siege of Vicksburg and other battles. Mr. Stowell cast his first presidential vote for Abraham Lincoln in 1864. He was not of legal age for voting, being only 18, but because of being in the service and carrying a musket for his country he was allowed to cast his ballot for "Honest Abe."

He and his wife came to Nebraska in 1871 and homesteaded on the SW ¼ of Sec. 26, Belle Prairie. They lived in a frame house but their stock was sheltered in a straw shed. Their first trading place was Crete, about 40 miles northeast of their farm. He made a specialty of stock raising, having brought 29 head of stock from Illinois. He also served as a county supervisor for 12 years.

They lived on this homestead until 1905, when they moved into Ohiowa. He lived to be 97 years old, departing this life in 1944. Their daughter, Mrs. Mae Stowell Grant, lived in Ohiowa until her death

in January, 1962. The homestead is still in the family.

Other early farmers in Belle Prairie township as listed in the *Fillmore County Handbook* of 1886 were William Bell, J. H. Bell, Julian H. Ward, W. S. Crawford, Hon. T. J. Whitzel, D. Cook, and Cyrus Macy.

Strang

Strang was the largest village in Belle Prairie township at the time of its incorporation on November 3, 1886. The nearest towns to it then were Ohiowa, Shickley, and Geneva.

The first building in Strang was the west elevator. It burned down in 1902 and was replaced by the present one (1956). The first elevator man and stock shipper was Anthony Koehler. The Koehlers still operate the two elevators in Strang (much expanded) as well as a lumber, coal, and hardware business there.

Among the first houses built in Strang were the home of M. L. Matson, two and one-half blocks west of Main Street, and a two-story structure across the street from it, later owned by Mr. and Mrs. Adam Sallomon. Another old house, which has been remodeled, on the SE corner of Strang, is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Jess Messman. Still another, two blocks east of Main Street on the south side of the street, was originally owned by Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Schilling, now of Lincoln. The present owners are Mr. and Mrs. E. E. Ander-



Photo from Deb Witt Birdseye View of Strang—taken about 1910, looking north. The first elevator is at the upper left. The town windmill stands in the main intersection; the larger windmill to the right supplied the Burlington's water tower.



Photo from Emma Christiancy The original hotel building in Strang. Its general appearance has not changed.

There are two landmarks in Strang which are much the same as in the early years. One-half block east of Main Street is a house which was the town's first hotel, run by J. R. Piersol. The two-story building on the east side of Main Street, now owned and used by Rebekah and I.O.O.F. lodges, is equally old.

Churches

As early as 1884, preaching services were held 3 miles E of Strang by the Rev. R. G. Carter.



United Brethren Church, Strang (about 1890).

When the village of Strang was established, the present church (later remodeled) of the Evangelical United Brethren was erected. Originally called the United Brethren Church, its first minister was the Rev. R. G. Carter, Over the years, 50 ministers served this church, which until the last decade or so remained a prosperous body with an active Ladies' Aid. This congregation is now disbanded. The parsonage, which was moved to Strang in 1891, has been remodeled and rented out. At the present time, the Salem Mennonite Church, southwest of Strang, holds Sunday School and worship services here.

Up until 1955 the Evangelical Church had held an auction, bazaar, and supper at the schoolhouse for three successive years. These were well attended, and the money raised helped to support the church.

At one time there was a Methodist Church in Strang, but this was disbanded and the building was sold around 1917 to the late Harvey Parks of Bruning. No records of this church seem to have survived.



Photo from Mrs. N. N. Brown Congregational Church, Strang-built in 1886.

A Congregational Church was organized April 5, 1887, and dedicated July 10, 1887. The Reverend J. J. Robertson was pastor. This church disbanded in 1934.

School-District No. 36

A sod schoolhouse was built March 12, 1872, on the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 8, T5, R2W, now owned by Ellis Bumgarner. At that time District 36 included Secs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18. In 1886, the E $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ and the S $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 12 were added. Later this same year, the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 4, the E $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 8, all of Secs. 9 and 16, and also the E $\frac{1}{2}$ of Sec. 17 were detached from it.

Around 1879, a frame schoolhouse on Sec. 7 replaced the sod building. This was also used for church services until the village of Strang was established. The Reverend R. G. Carter was the minister. The NE corner of the ground is now owned by the Roy Christiancy





Photo from Emma Christiancy

Strang schoolhouse on original site, built after Strang was incorporated in 1886 (taken in 1902).



Photo from Emma Christiancy

Strang school pupils in 1902. Standing, from left: E. C. Kimble, principal; Guy Allsman, Ed Mitchell, Josie Munday, Belle Brown, Vern Gaffney, Nettie Folger, Thirza Wellman, Walter Messman, Harry Allsman, August Eggenberger. Two in middle row: Robert Munday, Fred Messman. Seated: Grace Schilling, Harry Miller, Florence Taylor, Clyde Simmons, Jennie Rocole, James McAlpin, Maude Ray, Lonnie Bennett, Mabel Ray.



The old Strang school building after being moved to the present school location in 1908. This picture was taken in 1923. The school faculty were (left to right) Lale Scofield, Stella Gilmore, Hannah Gilmore, and Vera Shepherd.



Photo from Emma Christianey The new Strang school (built in 1929).

After the village of Strang was incorporated on November 3, 1886, a new two-story schoolhouse was built on Sec. 7 at the SE edge of town. This school, which included 10 grades, was moved in 1908 to Sec. 7 on the NE corner. The building was bricked over and made to include 12 grades. In 1928, this school burned down and a modern school for 12 grades was built in 1929. Owing to consolidation, the high school has now been discontinued but there still is an accredited eight-grade school which includes rural near-by districts.



Photo from Deb Witt

Main Street, Strang, looking south from the railroad (taken before 1909).

Before its incorporation the village was called Media. But when it was found that another Nebraska town had the same name, it was renamed. An Omaha dealer in windmills, A. L. Strang, on hearing of this name change, gave the town its first windmill, which until very recent years ran the town pump, squarely in the middle of the principal intersection. Nothing in the records indicates whether Mr.

Strang's gift was "accidental," after the fact, or whether the town fathers named the town for him on purpose. No matter: it was a long-useful gift, and gave Mr. Strang at least the same kind of municipal immortality as that befalling a man who builds a skyscraper

to which he gives his name.

While the village was still "Media," the railroad was having a well dug not far from the school. This railroad well, in use until 1954, was dug by hand. One day while the diggers were gone for their noonday meal, a group of boys and girls from the school, including James Dunker and his sisters Julia and Minnie, dared someone to go down in the bucket used in digging the well. The largest boy of the group, William ("Bill") Coon, took the challenge and went down. The boys at the top were too small to pull him up and so they had to round up some older boys to get Bill out of the well. By the time Bill was rescued, the school bell rang and all started on a quarter-mile run for the schoolhouse. The boys got there on time but the girls, who could not run fast enough to make it, all had to stay in after school. After the well diggers reached water, they had to suspend operations until the railroad was completed so that rock could be shipped in.



Photo from Mrs. N. N. Brown

Burlington Water Tank at Strang. This later burned down with a tank full of water.

The first graduating class of the Strang school was in 1896, the last in 1951. At this final graduation, the descendants of Chris Dunker were especially honored. Chris Dunker, homesteader, served on the school board 45 years. His son, James, who lived near Strang, was on the board 35 years. Five generations of the Chris Dunker family have been connected with the school.

The first Strang School Alumni Reunion, sponsored by the Belle Prairie Homemakers' Extension Club and Ladies' Aid, was held November 5, 1954, at the Strang schoolhouse. This first reunion brought together 61 out of a total 186 graduates. A second Alumni meeting was held in 1955, sponsored by the same group of ladies. At that time it was voted to have another graduate homecoming in 1958. Other reunions have been held since; the most recent was in 1966, with another planned for 1968.



Sixth Annual Commencement, Strang High School, Monday, May 19, 1902. The principal was E. C. Kemble; the graduating class consisted of (left to right) Thirza Wellman, Nettie Folger, Walter Messman, Vernon Gaffney, and Harry Allsman.



Photo from Emma Christiancy

Belle Prairie Homemakers Extension Club-taken at their Christmas party in December, 1954. This club started as early as 1923 as the "Strang Community Woman's Club." Standing, left to right: Alma Ohnesorge, Ruth Bumgarner, Elaine Bumgarner, Ethel Ough, Ollie Duis, Martha DuBois, Beverly Vaught, Lila Wilkinson, Ida Sallomon, Helen Lichti, Katie Reichert, Hannah Gilmore, Bernice Ely. Sitting left to right: Emma Christiancy, Betty Bumgarner, Elsie Reinsch, Wilma Fitzgerald, Patricia Houck, Flora Houck, and Rose Wells. Norma Lee Christiancy was unable to be present.

During the school year of 1896-97, the teachers were J. C. Adams. principal; Whitman, intermediate; Mae Palmer, primary. A. Strickland, William Messman, and Chris Dunker made up the school board. The largest class graduated from the 10th grade was the class of 1910, with 10 graduates. The principal of this class was Frank Adams, a son of the late J. C. Adams, one of the first principals of the

Strang school.

An interesting school paper, called the Strang Strangulator, has been preserved by Mrs. Herman Ohnesorge, the former Alma Hopken. This paper, published in April, 1927, was written by the pupils of the Strang school. Marian J. Hedden was editor-in-chief, Lois R. Witt, business manager, and Vern Miller, assistant business manager. It mentions that Strang High School is a minor accredited school as it meets all requirements. Teachers at that time were Lale Scofield, professor; Miss Alice M. Gilbert, principal; Maurice McAvoy, grammar room and basketball coach; Mrs. Curtis Witt, intermediate room; and Miss Eva Meyers, primary. The Board of Education was composed of Thelo Houck, president; Mrs. Fred Messman, secretary; and H. Dunker, treasurer. The valuation of District 36 for the year 1926-1927 was \$700,635.70 and the total levy was 6.5 mills. There were 44 pupils in the grades and 22 in high school. High-school enrollment included 13 non-resident pupils.

Some interesting news items anl advertisements appearing in the Strangulator are: "An Outdoor Program. The Strang school will observe American Forest Week in a 30-minute program." An account of the Basket Ball Banquet lists athletic letters and chevrons awarded to the girls' and boys' basketball teams. According to the paper the girls had the honor of playing 15 games with only 2 losses, both were to Glenville school. The boys were not so fortunate. "The seniors gave their annual class play, Aaron Slick from Punkin Creek, before a good-sized house, Wednesday evening, April 6. All of the actors did



Photo from Emma Christiancy First Alumni Banquet at Strang School, held November 5, 1954. 1 Keith Eich. 2 Julius Lentfer, Jr. 3 Marion Hedden. 4 Alvin Hopken. 5 Kenneth DuBois. 6 Layerle Hopken. 7 Virgil Steffens. 8 Will Oldham. 9 Russell Bumgarner. 10 Walter Christiancy. 11 Norman Dunker. 12 Earl Houck. 13 Wendell Christiancy. 14 Mervell Bumgarner. 15 Gerald Ough. 16 Herald Ough. 17 Kenneth Robare. 18 Warren Rocole. 19 John Evans. 20 Art Evans. 21 Byron Bumgarner. 22 Donald Bumgarner. 23 Vern Gaffney. 24 Leland DuBois. 25 John Zimmerman. 26 Pat Ohnesorge Houck. 27 Wynona Christiancy Lechtenberger. 28 Grace Strine Trapp. 29 Alma Hopken Ohnesorge. 30 Merle Anderson Webster. 31 Beverly Ohnesorge Vaught. 32 Lorraine Vostrez Hinrichs. 33 Elsie Hopken Reinsch. 34 Leta Dunker Messman. 35 Ora Brown Skipton. 36 Bessie Bumgarner DuBois. 37 Ella Plank. 38 Grace Messman Eich. 39 Mable Hunter Witt. 40 Gladys Monroe Brown. 41 Thirza Wellman Garrett. 42 Dolretta Powell Vobril. 43 Fred Messman. 44 Grace Schilling Fricke. 45 Dorothy Gerard Erickson. 46 Delores Gerard Folkerts. 47 Alberta Lentfer Hulse, 48 Helen Thompson Styskal, 49 Louise Messman Dubois, 50 Emma Schott Christiancy, 51 Shirley Noel Kennel, 52 Wauneta Christiancy Lothes, 53 Mabel Miller Monroe, 54 Luetta Messman Archer, 55 Rahama Rakestraw Stewart, 56 Lucile Bumgarner Evans, 57 Hazel South Erickson. 58 Doris Houchin Brinegar. 59 Belle Brown.



Photo from Alma Ohnesorge Girls' Strang School Basketball Team, 1926-27. Top row, left to right: Alice Gilbert, Coach; Margaret Kiester; Alma Hopken, Captain; and Lois Witt. Center row, left to right: Una Witt, Hazel Houck, Leona Dunker. Front row, left to right: Josephine Dunker, Ruby Houchin, and Bonita Butler. These girls won 13 out of 15 games played.

very well and the play was a pleasing success." "Commencement exercises will be held at the Opera House on Thursday evening, May 19." "The senior class spent the day of the 22nd in Hebron at the Day Studio." "Helen Thompson, who had the misfortune of breaking her leg while playing at school, is able to be back with us again."
"Bonita Butler, Harold Steffens, Winona Butler, Virgil Steffens,

Kenneth Mitchell, and Walter Christiancy have been neither absent nor tardy this month." "If you want to know about verbs, ask "Russell seems to attend to the class work of his Harold Steffens neighbors lately."

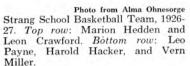






Photo from Deb Witt (taken about 1910) The man on the left is C. W. Witt; the other man is unidentified.

STRANG IN RHYME

In our airship we set sail
And westward took a fly.
And as we passed o'er the city of Strang

Sailing fast and high, We saw a hand outstretched to us,

Beckoning us to hail.

We took a dive and landed near

The telephone office door.

Soon before us was unrolled Ten yards of rhyme or more, Telling all about the people,

And every shop or store;
So we made haste on our return
And the type was made to fly;
Click, click, click, in the typo's stick,
And Arthur heaved a sigh.

With pleasant things we wish to deal, And tell you how today

We're all alive to toil and strive
And nobly win our way.

So now we'll take you thru our town
And toot our horn a bit,

And hope that in our pleasant mood We'll make a happy hit.

The first great thing that we recount Are Cole's and Posson's stores Packed full of goods, all up to date

And full from door to door; Dry goods, groceries, hats and caps And ladies' finest wear,

Elegant shoes from which to choose A nobby fitting pair.

Shickley and Ray our bankers are Safe and sound we know.

The Gold standard is their motto And pay up as you go; Alden Cross is assistant

And handles the cash with care, Obliging in his manners He'll serve you on the square.

Sam Renner is the hardware man With stoves and tinware too;

And I'll tell you right here now
He's here to see you through.
Wheeler and Messman are quite alert,
To sell you implements right,

And they'll make the hardware rattle, When a customer is in sight.

Tom Tonkinson has also come,
He's also in the block,
And if you call you'll find he carries
A rattling grocery stock.

D. W. Simms is the place
 To get your furniture fine

 Says he'll give you goods that please,
 And save you money every time.

J. H. Schilling, paper hanger
 Or painter, if you please,
 And he'll adorn the most forlorn
 With all dispatch and greatest ease.

Art Brown is the man
That furnishes the beef,
And tender roasts he sells you
To the housewife's great relief.

And Geo. Workman is right in place Our station agent here,

He's served us true, he's served us well Without a doubt or fear.

J. Rakestraw is the restaurant man Who dishes up the hash;It's understood their grub is good

And always cheap for cash; But I declare I most forgot

His bread so good and sweet— His buns are rare, and I declare They simply can't be beat.

And here's our friend Mrs. Ella Sauer And sister Julia too,

They're milliners up-to-date Ready to dare and do.

Johnnie Houck is here

And runs a shoe shop fine, And if you want to get togged up Perhaps you had better stop.

We're not without a good hotel— Mrs. Winslow runs the ranch; And for cash sets up the hash Good and strong and stanch.

F. L. Nicolay has lately come To lather and shave your face; And he does his best to keep in trim The human hairy face.

Roy King is our druggist
To sell you pills and quills.
And patent lotions guaranteed
To cure all your ills.
And in this office Roy

Runs a silver store, Watches, clocks and jewelry, And all such goods galore.

D. E. Smith is our postmaster,
 His right none dare dispute,
 And in his office you will find
 Postals and stationery to boot.

Dr. Hickman is the young man His honors we'd extol;

He doctors you clear thru and thru And makes the sick man whole.

C. Bumgarner is our smith
To shoe your horses right,

To sharp your plows, and fix your gigs, And bring you great delight.

Isaac Theobald with flour and grain, Is very much alive,

Pays well for grain, sells flour cheap, And so makes business thrive.

Wm. Pumphrey is on foot, When there's any stock to buy, He eats his hash and pays the cash,

And never tells a lie.

S. A. Allsman the rural mail
He brings it round precise.
He licks and licks, your stamp he sticks
All at the same old price.

Powell and Grone the elevators run, And also hold the fort; They buy your grain at market price, And not a penny short.

W. J. Wells with his livery barn
Will furnish a rig that spins
And if you want a driver
He'll drive you out and in.

Koehler & Co. with coal and lumber Are very much alive; And B. B. Brown sells them cheap, And so makes business thrive. Mrs. Smith and Simmerman Are telephone girls you know; And always ready to answer you By ringing out "Hello!"

We have three churches spick and span Where you can worship free, Praise God from whom blessings flow Both here and over the sea.

Here's our schools, they're our pride;
They're always called, "fust-rate,"
Prof. Husman did preside
And kept them up-to-date;
Miss Nellie Wilson, she is in
The intermediate room,
And her sister Maude, in the primary
Is making business boom.

In lodges we are well supplied:
Odd Fellows, good and true,
Royal Neighbors lodge is here,
And Degree of Honor, too;
The Court of Honor shines from afar,
And lights you on your way;
M.W.A. and A.O.U.W.,
All good and true are they.

Village board are Brown and Simms, Pumphrey, Houck and Adkins, Messman as treasurer, Cole as clerk, They keep us all from starvin'.

S. N. Kuntz runs the dray
For Brown's and Theobald's coal,
And he'll do your draying too,
And get you out of the hole.

We've lovely homes and pretty girls, And ho is ewives tried and true, And everybody takes the "Reporter," And profits by it too.

But really now I guess I'm thru
With all my boomerang;
I'll take in the town and simply say
"Hurrah, Hurrah for STRANG."



Photo from Deb Witt Early store in Strang, (1910), run by Mr. and Mrs. Tom Tonkinson. The clerk is Fern Woodworth.



Photo from Emma Christiancy The Original Burlington Depot at Strang. "Burlington Depot Red" has given way to white paint.

Businesses

At one time Strang boasted the following place of business: a depot, two elevators, a bank, a hotel, a lumber vard, a coal dealer, three grocery and dry-goods stores, two millinery shops, a butcher shop, a newspaper, a printer, a shoe shop and shoe repair, a drugstore, a hardware store, furniture and undertaking shop, a wagon and harness repair shop, a blacksmith shop, a livery stable, a feed mill, a railroad coal chute, and a saloon. There were also two doctors, a dentist, and a photographer.



Photo from Mrs. N. N. Brown

Lloyd Monroe and one of his teams at his livery barn, located where Elmer Messman's shop now stands.

Since 1902 there have been at least eight fires which have destroyed business places. Although some of these were replaced, most were not. With the present ease of transportation by car to larger communities, rebuilding seemed unnecessary. There are now in Strang a Burlington depot (freight trains go through two or three time a week), two elevators, a lumber yard, a hardware and grocery store, a produce station, and a cafe. There is a post office which provides good mail service; it has been in charge of Postmistress Lavera (Mrs. Harry) Gewacke since September 1, 1961. N. N. Brown has been mayor of Strang for 44 years (since May 1, 1923). The town board is made up (1967) of N. N. Brown, Charley Hobbs, Louis Trenary, Paul Harms, and Glenn Hintz.

Strang's newspaper was the Strang Reporter, of which the late Frank Sauer was editor. A news item of 1887 reports, "Citizens of Strang burned off the prairies surrounding Strang to avoid danger to the town from prairie fires." The issue of the Reporter for November 2, 1893 (in the possession of Mrs. Grace Eich, the former Grace Messman), reports Mrs. Eich's birth: "The home of William Messman was gladdened Sunday by the arrival of their first baby girl." Other news in this paper, a weekly two-page affair 15" x 21" in size, was largely political, as it was near election time. Besides the Republican and Democratic parties there was also a People's party (Populists). President Grover Cleveland received a write-up, and there was an article pertaining to the election of a county treasurer: "If you want the interest on the county funds to go into the pocket of the county treasurer, then vote for Sandrock, but if you want the county to receive such interest then vote for Trauger."

Some of the advertisements in the Reporter are as follows:

"L. Vanzele, Dealer in Flour, Feed and Exchange.

"Bargains at all times for cash, O. O. Thomas."
"An Artesian well in Strang has not been discovered but the place to buy your boots and shoes for summer and fall can be found at the corner of Main and Center Street, Strang, Nebraska. Bender,

The Shoeman."

"The Metropolitan Hotel—This is a first-class House. Special attention given to traveling salesmen. Convenient to depot. J. E.

Miller, Prop."

Also advertised were these items: Hood's Sarsaparilla. Chamberlain's Cough Syrup, Royal Baking Powder, St. Jacob's Oil, Syrup of Figs, Mother's Friend, and Kennedy's Medical Discovery.

Answers to the following questions, dating back to 1886, were supplied by L. H. Sauer, Peter Eggenberger, and W. A. Simms.

- Who was the first resident in Strang? M. L. Matson Who erected the first residence in Strang? W. J. Mosier
- Who first engaged in business in Strang? A. Koehler Who was the first born in Strang? Victor V. Vodra 1887
- First death in Strang? Annie Minnie
- Who taught first term of school in Strang? Jennie Deselms Who preached the first sermon? Rev. R. G. Carter Who was the first station agent? Kenyon
- Who was the first newspaper man? A. L. Scott The Record

- Who was the first postmaster in Strang? J. H. Bridgwood 1886
- 11. First Town Board? C. H. Woodruff, J. A. Ashbrook, E. G. Beers, A. T. Scott, J. C. Bender, A. J. Hettinger (treasurer), and H. Leowin
- Who conducted the first hotel? J. R. Piersol
- Who operated the first bank? A. J. Hettinger Who was the first blacksmith? George Vodra
- Who was the first apothecary in Strang? L. S. (Sanford) Darling Who was the first physician in Strang? T. Leleanie
- Who operated the first meat market in Strang? Bridgwood & Matson
- Who operated the first general store in Strang? J. M. Bender
- Date of first lodge organization in Strang? A.O.U.W., June 25,
- First carpenters living in Strang? W. J. Mosier and Massey
- Who operated first Snake Store¹ in Strang? John Stabenow
- Who operated first elevator in Strang? A. Koehler
- Who was first stock shipper in Strang? A. Koehler
- Who was first liveryman in Strang? Uoher2
- Who was first justice of peace in Strang? W. A. Simms Who was first constable in Strang? F. M. Rathburn
- Who were first graduates in Strang? Will Odell and Nellie Matson - 1896
- Who were the first lumbermen in Strang? Kerlin and Miller
- Who operated the first barbership in Strang? J. R. Piersol

Businesses advertising in the Strangulator in 1927 were these:

"Strang State Bank - Banking, Farm Loans, Insurance - Prac-Thrift.

"Cuttenden Grian Co. — Grain, coal and grinding — Elmer Mess-

man, Manager."
"Frank Baand & Koehler Co. — Wholesale and Retail — Grain and feed - Chix feed.'

Trade with Us - We carry a full line of Groceries, Dry Goods, and Shoes - Highest prices paid for Cream, Poultry, and Eggs-Snodgrass & Norris.'

"Congoleum by Yard - Very attractive, very durable, and very reasonably priced - Earl Christiancy, Dealer in Hardware and Harness,

"C. S. Bridgwood - Contractor and Builder - Manufacturer of Cement Blocks - All work appreciated."

Mail and Phone Service

Peter Eggenberger started the idea of the first mail route, which was established out of Strang in 1903. Arthur Allsman, a Strang citizen, was the first rural mail carrier. The original mail route was 24 miles long and had about 70 patrons. Later, it increased to 27 miles and served about 77 patrons.



Photo from Émma Christiano The New Strang Post Of fice (built 1936).

As nearly as can be ascertained, the Bell Telephone service was installed in 1905 or earlier, for offices. Around 1906 or 1907, the Independent Telephone system started serving country homes. Later, Bell bought out the Independent company, and, in time, telephones were placed in all city, town, and country homes where desired.

The Strang telephone directory, printed in a two-column square in the Strang Reporter on July 23, 1908, listed the following names: Bumgarner, Clarence, res..... 36

Bell, John, residence..... 20 Cole, D. D., store Cole, D. D., residence. 20 Gardner, Rev. F. W., res...... Grone, F. J., elevator..... 28 26 Hickman, Dr. J. C., office. 35 King, L. R., residence...... King, E. R., residence..... 41 43 Koehler & Co., lumber yard....25

Kuhns, Nathaniel, residence....42 Lenhard, J. H., residence... .40 Posson, A. C., store...... Powell, G. W., elevator. .39 39 Rakestraw, J. E., restaurant. 27 21 Renner, Sam., hardware... Theobald, Isaac, feed store... Tonkinson, T. H., grocery. Wheeler, E. E., residence... Wells, W. J., livery..... 23 37 .31

Electricity

The residents of Strang had the convenience of electric lights on the streets when Consumers Public Power wired them in January, 1923. On May 25, 1923, the homes of Strang were rendered more efficient with the installation of domestic electricity. Consumers also electrified farm homes within 1/4 mile S and E of the town. Frank Eich was the first to have lights on this route, in 1928, when they were

¹ For the benefit of several younger generations since 1886, it may be useful to explain that this was a Temperance term for "saloon."

² This unusual name remains, despite many inquiries, unidenti-

living 1/4 mile S and 1/2 mile E of Strang. In the fall of 1950, the R.E.A. came down on the road 1/4 mile W of Strang, making power

available to more people.

The first irrigation well in Belle Prairie township was put down on the farm of Jack Hinrichs, 3 miles S and 3 miles E of Strang. By February 21, 1957, the number of wells had risen to 30, and by January 1, 1967, there were 45 irrigation wells in the township.



Photo from Paul Lefever Honor Roll of World War I Servicemen from the Strang Community.



Photo from Emma Christiancy The Strang Baseball Team in 1919. Front row, left to right: Lloyd Monroe, Leon ("Peewee") Crawford, Oscar ("Buzz") Miller, Ora Wells, "Winnie" Messman. Back row, left to right: Ed Mitchell, Elmer Messman, Jim Hurley, Norman Dunker, Alfred Archer, Lou Domeier, N. N. Brown.



Photo from N. N. Brown A baseball crowd brought from Grafton to Strang by a special excur-



Photo from Emma Christiancy

The Strang Baseball Team in 1937. Front row, left to right: Walter Christiancy, Vernon Messman, Keith Eich, Elmer Messman. Back row, left to right: Warren Rocole, Leon Messman, Roy Dunker, Dean Messman, Laverle Hopken, Lowell Messman, Bob Dondlinger.

Recreation

For some years free motion picture shows during the summer were sponsored by the following Strang businesses: Koehler Lumber & Grain Co., managed by Charley Hobbs, assisted by John Jansen, the depot agent; Albert Butler, Hardware and Groceries, run by Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Messman; Lowell Messman, operator of the Produce Station; Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Ebbeka, owners of the Strang Cafe; Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Messman of the Post Office, and others

In 1910 N. N. Brown organized a baseball club in Strang, and continued to manage it until the close of the 1930 season. At first the club traveled to neighboring towns by a hack hired from the Strang Livery Barn. When automobiles came into use, they traveled by car

and were able to play clubs at greater distances.

In 1913, several special excursion trains ran from Grafton and Fairmont to Strang. In order to get the service, the ball club gave the railroad company a certified check for \$50. Sometimes more than 300 people would take advantage of these excursions. The ball park was then located 1/8 mile from the Strang depot on the west side of the road on Sec. 7. Earl Boering from Dunning, Nebraska, and Lloyd Monroe of Strang were the battery.

The Meridian League was organized in the early twenties, and continued for several years. An old schedule in the possession of N. N. Brown shows 10 towns in the league. They were Tobias, Exeter, Sutton, Geneva, Strang, Milligan, Fairmont, Belvidere, Ohiowa, and

Grafton.

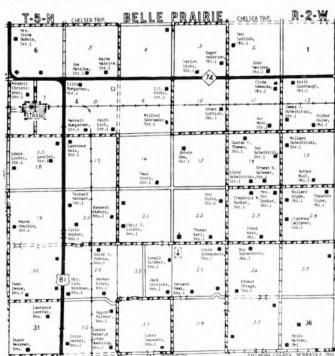
When Strang won the M. L. pennant in 1929-1930, Mr. Brown chose for his boys silk watch fobs each with a gold baseball on it. These were given by the Spalding Sporting Goods Co. Bob Logan, whose father had been a depot agent at Strang, was playing with Strang at Sutton when the State League spotter signed him up. He started playing professional baseball in 1930.

In 1937, Elmer Messman organized a baseball team made up of some boys in high school and some out of high school. This team played 22 straight winning games. The battery were Lowell Messman,

Herman Everts, and Walter Christiancy.



Photo from Lowell Messman The Strang Baseball Team in 1940. Front row, left to right: Paul Conners, Herman Everts, Roy Dunker, Keith Eich. Back row, left to right: Elmer Messman, Tiny Luttman, Fred Kuch, Keith Endorf, Gerald Ough, Lowell Messman.



sion train (1913).

Bennett Township

Bennett township, on the west edge of Fillmore County, is bounded on the north by Grafton, on the east by Geneva, and on the south by Momence townships, and on the west by Clay County. It differs from the other precincts of the county in that it has no towns, churches, rivers, railroads, or highways, although its southern boundary is marked by Nebraska 41. In one considerable respect it is like all the other townships: farming constitutes its financial basis and background. Its southern sections are crossed from east to west by a branch of Turkey Creek. Thanks to experience of drouth years and to technical progress, the township had, by mid-1966, a total of 73 irrigation wells.

It was named for Allen Bennett, son of Josiah and Mary Bennett, who were among the first settlers in the precinct. Their first home was a sod house in the SE 1/4 of Sec. 8, T7N, R4W, and in this house Allen was born. It was also in this sod house that the first school was held in District 64, with Allen's mother as teacher at a wage of \$12 a month. Here she rocked the cradle of the young Allen as she imparted the

rudiments of learning to other young Americans.

SCHOOLS

In September, 1872, John A. Dempster, county superintendent, organized Bennett township into four school districts, by the simple process of drawing two bisecting lines which divided the precinct into four quarters of nine sections each. These he numbered as follows: Southeast, District No. 61, Northeast, No. 62, Southwest, No. 63, and Northwest, No.

On September 26, in accordance with the school laws, he sent to a qualified voter in each district a notice of his school's organization and setting a time and place for the first meeting to be held to elect a school board. It then became the duty of this voter to relay the message to each of the other qualified voters in the district and to hand to the chairman of the meeting a list of those notified.

District No. 61 was set up to consist of Secs. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, and 36. Thomas Ackland was notified that the first meeting to elect officers would be held at his home on October 12, 1872. This was the third school organized in the precinct. School was held for a number of years in the

home of David Frolic, with Mrs. Frolic as teacher.



Photo from Nebraska Signal

School District No. 61-1900. Front row, left to right: Rotter, Ed Myers, Ed Shafer, Mamie Shafer, Laura Yeager ter, Buttell, John Clawson, Lora Harrold (teacher). Middle row: Clarence Huston, Buttell, Laura Myers, Lillian Harrold, Gertie O'Brien, Sadie Cypher, George Buttell, Lee R. Harrold, Back row: Jim O'Brien, Frank Huston, Albert Clawson, George O'Brien, Leslie Myers, Will Myers. Some of the first names of students are not known.

District No. 62 constituted Secs. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. The first meeting to elect officers was held in the home of J. B. Lewis on October 5, 1872. The first school in Bennett township was held in the Lewis sod house, with Mr. Lewis as teacher at a salary of \$25 a month. It began on November 1, 1872.

District No. 63 used to be situated on the SE 1/4 of Sec. 30 but in 1889 was moved to the SE corner of Sec. 29, where

The organization meeting was held in the home of P. M. Robbins at 2 P.M. on Saturday October 5, 1872, David Kreachbaum having notified the following voters: Barnett Isley, A. Sherwood, Gilbert Sherwood, Andrew Sherwood, Elihu Hambleton, George W. Hambleton, C. S. Hooper, P. M. Robbins, and David Kreachbaum.

P. M. Robbins was chosen temporary chairman; the officers elected were: Aden G. Sherwood, director; P. M. Robbins, moderator; and David Kreachbaum, treasurer.

Quoting from the minutes; "After discussing the propriety of voting bonds for school purposes and holding a winter term of school, it was decided to let the matter lay over until the annual meeting to be held the following April."

Evidently this did not prove satisfactory to a majority, for at a special meeting on March 11, 1873, in the home of G. W. Highley, it was voted to hold a spring term of school of three months, from April 1 to July 1, 1873, with the teacher's wages fixed at \$12 per month.

This first school was held in the home of C. S. Hooper with Miss Mary Isley, daughter of Barnett Isley, as first teacher. She received the munificent sum of \$36 for the three

months of teaching.

No record is available of those who attended, but the list is known to have included John Isley and Martha Isley.

The first annual meeting was held in the home of G. W. Highley on Monday, April 1, 1873. At this meeting Barnett Isley was elected treasurer and thereafter served on the school board. Those who attended were B. Isley, David Kreachbaum, A. G. Sherwood, G. W. Highley, C. S. Hooper, and P. M. Robbins.

Because it was typical of many first meetings of that early time, and the schoolhouse described therein was the typical sod schoolhouse of that day, the details of building and furnishing a schoolhouse, as contrasted with similar expenses

today, are most interesting.

A part of the minutes of that meeting are quoted here; "Motion was made by A. G. Sherwood, seconded by David Kreachbaum, that a tax of 10 mills on the dollar on the taxable property of the district be made for a schoolhouse fund to continue for one year and that a tax of 5 mills be voted to be used in any way required to sustain a school and furnish the house in a proper manner and to pay the teacher and any other indebtedness that the district might incur according to law. Motion carried since homesteads were not taxed, etc."

"Motion made by G. W. Highley, seconded by A. G. Sherwood, that there be a sod schoolhouse built in the district to be 14 x 18 ft. inside with walls 2 ft. thick and 61/2 ft. high with a board roof and sod covering. To have a door and 4 glass windows to be built in a good workmanlike manner and furnished with seats sufficient to seat 20 persons, to be finished on or before the first day of October, 1873." No mention is made of a floor, since the ground usually served as

"Motion made by David Kreachbaum, seconded by G. W. Highley, that the schoolhouse be built on the SE corner of the SW 1/4 of Sec. 20, that being the homestead of G. W. Highley, and that an agreement be made between the board and G. W. Highley that the house may be removed at any time a majority of the legal voters of the district shall so decide. Motion carried.

"Motion made by A. G. Sherwood that the district award the contract of building said schoolhouse to C. S. Hooper for the sum of \$150 to be paid in a district order. Carried.

"Motion made by B. Isley, seconded by C. S. Hooper, that a three months school be held in the district to commence the 1st of December, 1873. Motion carried."

After so much detailed planning, the work eventually came to naught. Several new homesteaders had come into the district that spring, and the board realized that the number of pupils had outgrown the schoolhouse before it was built.

The second term of school was held in the home of P. M. Robbins, with Mr. Robbins as teacher at a salary of \$20 per month. According to the superintendent's report, there were then 19 children of school age in the district, too many to be accommodated in any home, so the settlers were determined to have a schoolhouse even if they had to bond themselves in



Photo from Mrs. Sam Huntley School District No. 63-1930-31. Back row, left to right: Susie Solberg, Bertha Isley, Martha Kalberg, Albert Johnson, Bert Solberg, Harry Peter, Ruth Shultz, Esther Johnson, May Isley, Teacher Clara Turney. Front row: Walter Isley, Carl Johnson, Marvin Shultz, Edith Johnson, George Isley, Jessie Isley, Willie Stertz, Rose Stertz, Nels Kalberg, Mary Isley, Arthur Shultz, Albert Fessler.

order to build it. Accordingly they petitioned the board on January 2, 1874, before the school had begun, asking that a special meeting be called for that purpose. Most of those signing the petition had lately come into the district. Their names are therefore of interest, since they were among the early settlers. They were H. P. Wondling, Uriah W. Oblinger, M. P. Hoover, H. Cook Griffith, also Elihu and George W. Hambleton heretofore listed.

The meeting was held in the home of Aden G. Sherwood (present John Sheridan home) on February 4, 1874, with most of the men of the district in attendance. We quote from the minutes: "On motion of H. Cook Griffith, seconded by U. W. Oblinger, that part of the former minutes relating to the building of a sod schoolhouse were rescinded and it was voted to build a frame school 18 x 22 by 10 ft. high on the inside to be wainscoted 4 ft. high on 2 sides and 1 end and ceiled overhead with the balance of the surface plastered. That there were to be 6 full windows, 3 on each side with plain shutters, and 1 large door."

This description is given here because it is that of the typical cracker-box schoolhouse, thousands of which dotted the plains of Nebraska and in which most of our eminent present-day citizens received their early education but which have now all but faded from the landscape.

The board purchased two acres in the SE corner of the homestead of H. C. Griffith (SE 1/4 of Sec. 30, T7, R4W) for 50 cents per acre. The proposed frame schoolhouse was contracted to A. F. and R. L. Clemons for \$600. In later years this schoolhouse was moved to the SE corner of Sec. 29.

The last full term taught in District 63 was that of 1944-45, with Doris Fenske (Miles) as teacher.

Teachers who served District 63 included the following. (The records are not clear, and so these names are not necessarily in chronological order, although we are sure about the first and the last teachers.)

- 1. Mary Isley (first)
- P. M. Robbins 3. Ida G. Sherwood
- 4. G. H. Bumgarner
- F. A. Brownell
- Christena Flink
- Laverne Finnegan Clyde Basey
- Lucy Eckley 10 Bertha Thompson
- 11. Lillie Green 12.
- Millie Brown 13 Hallie Salzer
- Ella Brown 14
- 15 Sylvia Pratt
- 16. Lillie Harrold
- 17. Guy Carson
- Lula Boop 18 19
- Rosy Davis Pearl Wagers 20.
- 21. May Smith
- 22 Alma Toren
 - Clara Turney

- 24. May Smith
- 25 Helen Trace 26
- Agnes Kennan Pearl Armstrong
- Faye Hawkins
- Lillie Kleinschmidt
- Carrie Lytle Mildred Clausen
- Esther Salmen
- Fauna Young Roine Richey
- Marita Weatherford
- Pearl Tysell
- Evelyn Rudd
- Ruth Sutter
- Doris Bruit 40.
- Evelyn Moravac June Statz
- Bernice Carlson
- Alvina Johnson
- Joseph Moore
- Doris Fenske (Miles) (last)



Picnic at District 64 taken in 1922. Children attending District 64 in 1922 were Janice Cundall, Raymond Cundall, Inez Cundall, Jeane. Cundall, Grover Cundall, Edna Huffman, Luella Huffman, Helen Huffman, Clara May Huffman, Hazel Pearson, Blanche Pearson, Oscar Kelly, Lawrence Rath, Albert Nuss, Solomon Nuss, Dina Nuss, Johanna Zimbleman, Antoniea Zimbleman, Jessie Milroy, Walter Maser, Ruth Maser, Otis Burrow and Maude Case Hansen, teacher.

District No. 64 was the second school in the precinct, where the first schoolhouse was built. On September 26, 1872, Alonzo Lucor was notified that the first meeting was to be held at the home of Josiah Bennett on Thursday, October 10. Mr. Lucor notified the following voters: R. Gell, William Gell, A. Tooker, S. J. Case, James Donnelly, E. Angel, O. Angel, J. Brown, B. Knee, Alonzo Lucor, and Josiah Bennett. At the meeting, Samuel J. Case was elected temporary chairman; James Donnelly, moderator; Josiah Bennett, director; and Alonzo Lucor, treasurer.

School began a few weeks after that of District 62, in the home of Josiah Bennett, with Mrs. Bennett as teacher at a salary of \$12 a month.

At a special meeting called at the request of five legal voters and held in the home of Josiah Bennett on January 31, 1873, it was voted to establish the schoolhouse site on the NW 1/4 of Sec. 8, T7N, R4W, on the north line of that quarter. It was also voted that the men of the district do the work on the schoolhouse (to be completed on or before May 1, 1873), and that if any money were left in the treasury, it should be applied on the teacher's wages for the present term. The building committee consisted of John G. Parish, Albert Tooker, and James Donnelly.

At the first annual meeting, on April 7, 1873, the board voted that teachers should not be paid more than \$20 a month plus board and room, or \$25 if they boarded themselves; to have three months of school commencing May 1, 1873; and to levy a tax of 10 mills for building purposes. The treasurer was also authorized to lend \$100 of the district's money if he saw fit.

The second annual meeting in 1874, held in the schoolhouse, voted to have three months of school that year, to begin in May. In 1875, they voted to have six months of school, the spring term to begin May 1 and the fall term October 1. In 1878, four months of school were held; in 1879, seven months; in 1880, nine months (three in summer, three in fall, and three in winter; and 1881, eight months.

In 1882, it was voted to move the schoolhouse site not to exceed 90 rods south of the NE corner of the SE 1/4 of Sec. 7, T7, R4W, by a lease of five years with the privilege of 10 years. J. Spencer, J. Bennett, and Albert Tooker served as a committee to let the contract for moving the building, the move to be completed before May 1, 1882.

This location, however, did not prove acceptable to all residents of the district, especially those of the eastern part, and a special meeting was held on April 19, 1882. Since no site could be agreed upon, the meeting voted unanimously to leave the location of the site to J. B. Lewis, the county superintendent. After due deliberation, Mr. Lewis decided upon the site then occupied by the schoolhouse, which remained there until it was sold in 1955.

District No. 74, in accordance with a majority of the legal voters in Districts 61 and 62, was formed from Secs. 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, and 24 in T7N, R4W, on June 4, 1875. Charles H. Harrington was notified that the first meeting was to be held on June 12, 1875, at his house. Mr. Harrington notified the following legal voters of the new district: George Watkins, W. Corey, A. H. Orcutt, F. Schulz, E. S. McCashland, Geo. Harrington, F. B. Harrington, C. H. Harrington, D. Dobson, William Miles, John Starr, A. Archibalde, R. J. Young, and Isaac Gosser. The records show that the meeting was held at the home of F. B. Harrington with G. S. Harrington presiding. A. H. Orcutt was elected moderator, J. B. Harrington, director, and George P. Watkins, treasurer.

At the first annual meeting on April 3, 1876, it was voted that a school site be located on the corner of Secs. 13, 14, 23, and 24, "provided said site can be secured." They also voted to levy a 10-mill tax on the dollar for the purpose of building a schoolhouse.

According to the minutes, no schoolhouse had yet been built by April 2, 1877. However, they "voted to have a three-



Photo from Mrs. Wm. Lauenstein School District No. 74-1907-1908. Teacher, Miss Maude Jones.

months school in case a suitable building can be secured for the purpose, also said school to commence on or before May 1st, 1877." Adella Lewis was hired to teach the three-month term (May through July) for a salary of \$20 a month.

At the annual meeting on April 1, 1878, it was decided that the size of the schoolhouse as established in 1876 should be reconsidered. The patrons voted to build a schoolhouse 18' x 30' x 12' studding on "condition E. S. McCashland donate to the District free of charge two acres of ground on the southeast corner of said, McCashland's land now owned by him on SE 1/4 of Sec. 14, T7N, R3W."

On May 25, a special meeting was called and it was decided to build a temporary building, 14' x 16' x 8' high.

This building cost a sum of \$62.47.

Two years later, in 1880, the permanent schoolhouse was built on the McCashland corner with certain specifications. The said building to be 18' x 28' x 12' posts and was to be completed in 40 days so "fare" as money on hand would go and said building to have an east front and said building to have a stone foundation.

At the annual meeting it was decided to have "six month school this present year" and "to employ a female teacher if one can be secured. Two months to be taught when schoolhouse is completed, the balance in the fall and winter." In 1881, the school term was lengthened to seven months and in 1882 to an eight-month term, three months to be taught in the winter, the balance to be taught in the summer and fall.

District 74 was dissolved by petition and annexed to and included in District 16 on July 9, 1956. The last year school was held was the 1947-1948 term taught by Della Everts for a salary of \$1,440.

On March 16, 1888, upon written petition signed by a majority of the qualified voters in Districts 63 and 64, the following territory was set apart to form District No. 89: from District 63, all of Secs. 19, 20, and 21; and from District 64, all of Secs. 16, 17, and 18. County Superintendent J. J. Burke fixed the time and place for the first meeting in the newly formed district at the home of James Mount on March 24, 1888, at 2 P.M.

S. J. Case was elected the first director. His report of July, 1888, to the county superintendent stated there were 20 males and 12 females between the ages of 5 and 21 in the



Photo from Way Barnell School District No. 89 "Willow Dale" 1910. Back row, left to right: Way Barnell, Claude Long, George Barnell, Sergia Barnell, Alma Leininger, Mary Goesch, Myrte Long, Gertrude Leininger. Middle row: Edward Leininger, Homer Thimgan, Clarence Spurling, Harvey Thimgan, Pearl Oswald, Mable Goesch, Grayce Long. Front row: Leo Barnell, Flora Spurling, Dora Brehm, teacher.

district, for a total of 32 children. Nineteen, 10 males and 9 females, attended that year. Earnest Case taught the twomonth school term for a salary of \$28 a month.

On May 26, 1954, the school was dissolved and annexed to District No. 2 in Clay County. The last year the school was in operation was taught by Phyllis Schinzel in 1948-1949.

FAMILIES

I. Thomas D. Ackland, third son of Thomas and Eliza Ackland, was born May 29, 1866, in Berry Arbor, England. In 1869 at the age of three I came to America with my parents, brothers, and sister. There being three sons and one daughter: John Francis, William, and Thomas D., and later Mary was born.

The family located at Kalamazoo, Michigan, where father worked at the carpenter trade for one year. (In England

he had been a wheelwright).

Early in April, 1871, the family moved to Nebraska over the newly built Burlington Railroad. The road at that time ended at Crete and there our father hired a team and wagon to take us to Fillmore County, where he had previously filed a homestead in what was later named Bennett precinct, being the first to take up a claim in that precinct. When we arrived in the vicinity of our claim late in the afternoon we had a hard time locating it, since ours was the first claim taken in that precinct and the tall prairie grass which grew everywhere hid the surveyors' stakes. Finally we found a stake by which we were able to locate the approximate boundaries of our claim and our driver unloaded the few supplies we had brought with us—three trunks and a box filled with bedding. Imagine our feeling of desolation as the driver headed his team eastward, leaving us alone on (the sole occupants of) the prairie.

That night we spread the bedding on the prairie and then enclosed it with the three trunks and the box, and in this one enclosure we all slept the first night on our homestead. In the night it rained, a cold wet April rain, and we got

soaking wet.

Next morning the sun came out nice and bright and we spread our clothing out to dry on the tall prairie grass. After breakfast, a slim one, because there was only set fuel with which to cook, yet it seemed like a royal banquet since it was the first meal eaten on our own land.



Photo from Earle Ackland Mr. and Mrs. T. D. Ackland wedding picture, April 20, 1893.

Our father and brother took our only spade and went on an inspection tour of our homestead. They found a large badger hole dug in the side of a hill and beginning with this they enlarged it into a dugout. The dugout was about 8 feet wide and extended back under the hill about 12 feet—using the ground overhead for a roof and leveling the bottom for a floor. By that night they had dug far enough back into the hill so that we were able to sleep with a roof over us. With a blanket to hang over the opening, we felt very snug indeed compared with the night before.

Gradually they extended it back about 12 feet, then on the back end they dug a hole from the top down for a stove-

pipe.

This dugout was our home for a couple of months or until Father could get some poles hauled from the river to make a roof on a sod house which we later built. In the meantime we had found that the dugout was not on our own land but a few feet south of it on what was later the O'Brien land, so the new sod house was dug several yards to the north of the dugout but still at the south end of our claim, and thereafter used as a stable. The depression which was the dugout, the first in Bennett precinct and in this part of Fillmore County, can still be plainly seen and is often visited by those

who are interested in the early history of the county.

When the sod house was finished, Father and my older brother went to work on the Burlington Railroad which was building through from Crete to Sutton and beyond and thus he supported his family for a time.

We had no well, so my mother carried water from the dug well of a neighboring homesteader over a mile way. This was the A. O. Orcut homestead where Will Bohlen now lives. One day while she was coming home with her jugs of water she noticed what she thought was a black cloud in the northwest, gradually it came closer, it was in the direction of Sutton. At length she saw flames leap into the sky, She realized then that it was no cloud she saw but a much-dreaded prairie fire and a very unusually large one at that.

She ran for home, seized a blanket and sack and soaked them in the water, then hung them at the door and window. All this time the fire was coming on with a roar like thunder and she had barely time to get us inside and shut the door when it had the house completely surrounded. The heat was intense and when it had passed everything was black as far as the eye could see. The burned prairie was dotted with dead rabbits, birds, and snakes. We found snakes in big round balls, several wrapped together.

We children were young and gay, and nothing daunted our spirits; but for our parents the outlook must have been a gloomy one. We had very little money when we came here and it did not last long. That winter our fare was mostly mush and water; since we had no cow we had no milk.

Like many of the other settlers, Father worked on the railroad until he had enough money to buy a team of oxen, a cow, and a pig. Then, with a plow and some few other pieces of machinery, finally we started farming and had some crops. In the meantime my older brother had taken up the homestead adjoining us on the west, where the Kennedy family now lives, and we were farming a quarter section.

Then in the spring of 1873 on April 13, came the Easter Sunday storm. Although I was only seven, I remember it well. It had been raining all day Easter Sunday, but just before dark the wind changed from the southwest to the northwest, the rain changed to sleet, then to fine snow, so fine and driven with such force that few houses were sturdy enough to keep it out. We had to bring our oxen and cow and chickens into the house to keep them from freezing to death. We put the chickens under the bed and put boxes around it to keep them there. Finally we ran out of fuel and had to cut up some of our homemade furniture to keep from freezing to death. Had to melt snow for water for our stock and ourselves.

However, the snow, when it melted, gave us plenty of moisture and that year we had a good crop. The next year was a good year also. The corn looked good and most had cut their wheat. It was midsummer. The gardens were good. Then came the grasshoppers! They covered the sky like clouds, darkening the sun, They lit on the green cornstalks and the garden truck and devoured it all. Nothing green was left except sorghum. They came on July 20 and left as suddenly on the 23rd.

Many people were discouraged and returned to the East. My brother decided that he wanted no more of farming and sold his homestead right to a man named Gelespie for a watch, not a good watch either. My parents, however, stuck it out, although it was tough sledding that winter.

After that we got on our feet again and got along fairly well. We had some good crops and some failures but managed to live through it all. We finally got a team of horses and a wagon. My brother cut the wheat with a cradle and bound it with straw by hand. A neighbor bought a threshing machine and we had him thresh it.

When we landed on the homestead there were no neighbors for miles around. A few came in that summer, but the next spring settlers came in fast and some of them had money. Then we had neighbors about a mile away. Finally about all the claims were taken and sod houses were plentiful over the prairie.

For almost 35 years through good times and bad my parents lived on their homestead until the spring of 1905, when they moved to town.

Written by Thomas D. Ackland in his own hand in the

summer of 1956 at the age of 90 years.1

One of the early settlers of Bennett township was Eilert Baumann, born in Leer, Osterstrasse, Germany, December 31, 1843. He came to America in 1872 and first settled near Edwardsville, Illinois. Here Eilert met Folste Bohlen, who later became his wife. She was born July 11, 1851, in Lammertsfehn, East Friesland, Germany. She had journeyed to America with her parents in 1872, and settled near Edwards-

They were married in 1873, and lived on a farm near Edwardsville, Illinois, until the fall of 1882, when they moved to Nebraska. They were blessed with nine children, five of whom were born in Illinois: Edward, born in 1875, twins, Almina and Anna in 1877, Marie in 1880, and Jacob in 1882. Anna, one of the twins, and Marie passed away in Edwardsville in June, 1881.

When word reached Edwardsville that land could be homesteaded in Nebraska, Eilert Baumann, along with several other men, decided to go west. They boarded the train and rode west as far as Grafton. The location seemed satisfactory, so he looked at the homestead lands. These didn't please him, and so he made a down payment, on March 1, 1878, to the Burlington R. R. on the NE \(\frac{1}{4}\) of Sec. 15 and the S \(\frac{1}{2}\) of Sec. 15, T7, R4W, Bennett township.

Mr. and Mrs. Eilert Baumann, sons Edward and Jacob, and daughter Almina came to Nebraska by train in September, 1882. The furniture, household goods, farm machinery, a team of horses, and wagon were shipped in a box car. A young man named Harmon Everts was in care of the horses

during the long trip.

The prairie land which they had purchased had no buildings. However, they were fortunate enough to be able to live with Mrs. Baumann's father, Jacob Bohlen. He had preceded them to Nebraska in 1877, and lived on the SE 1/4 of Sec. 9, T7, R4W, Bennett township.



Photo from Mildred Baumann Home of Mr. and Mrs. Eilert Baumann about 1900. Left to right: Edward, Jacob, William, Eilert, George (cousin), Etta, Edward Englemann (cousin), Folste, Sophia, Minnie, Rev. Wessel Bohlen (uncle), Deana Englemann and daughter Della (cousin).

Over and above the hardships they had to endure came sorrow and bereavement. Their five-year-old twin daughter, having been in Nebraska less than three months, was called to her heavenly home on November 6, 1882, and was laid to rest in the Grafton Cemetery.

In the spring of 1883, the Baumanns undertook the tedious work of building a house on the NE 1/4 of Sec. 15. A four-room, two-story house was built with a lean-to kitchen. A water well was dug, and water was brought to the surface by bucket. They bought a milk cow near Shickley. The team of horses was used to break up the sod and to put in a crop.

These early settlers had many hardships to endure. There were no roads, only trails across the prairies. Long distances were traveled with a team and wagon to religious worship,

¹ Thomas D. Ackland died June 13, 1960.

and to obtain supplies for living and building purposes. Medical care in the pioneer days was not easy to secure. When illness came, the pioneers relied mainly on home remedies.

As the children grew older the parents were concerned about their spiritual education. They drove 10 miles to Zion

Lutheran Church, north of Shickley.

There were still Indians in this part of Nebraska. The tribes camped along the Blue River and many of the early settlers were often visited by them. The Indians were eager to get the dead animals that were lost by the early settlers. The Baumanns, however, were not mistreated by them.

After they moved on their place, they set aside an acreage for an orchard and planted apple, cherry, and mulberry trees. Cottonwood trees were planted for shade, and could be started in the spring by cutting a twig and sticking it into the ground. These were planted along the governmentsurveyed section and quarter-section lines. Some of these trees are alive today along the SE 1/4 of Sec. 15.

Many years later they planted several rows of grape vines east of the house. These were mulched with straw, and the older children decided it would also be a good place to plant watermelons. Their decision proved profitable, because many a spring-wagon load was hauled to town. Some were stored in an oats bin and were good eating till Christmas.

As the years passed, most of the prairie was broken up and put into crops. One of the years that was outstanding in the memory of the early settlers, and the older children of the Baumann family, was 1896. Corn made around 50 bushels per acre. In the towns, long cribs were built along the railroad tracks. The farmers hauled each load as they picked it, receiving 8 cents a bushel. It was hauled for miles and hand-scooped into these tall cribs. You could hire a man to unload a big load for 10 cents. The two years that followed were failures. Corn sold for 30 to 35 cents a bushel the first year, and 50 cents the second year of drouth. Since corn was hauled in the ear, cobs for fuel were scarce, and many had to resort to cow chips for fuel. This, however, was a common practice among the early

In 1900, the house was remodeled. They moved the leanto kitchen. Another two-story room was added on the north,

and porches were added on the south and east.

Eilert Baumann was called to his eternal home February 13, 1903, and was laid to rest in the Grafton Cemetery. He left his wife Folste, three sons, and three daughters. Three daughters had preceded him in death.

Folste Baumann and the children continued operating the farm from 1903 till 1915. During these years all the

children married with the exception of Ed.

In 1913, Mrs. Baumann gave a portion of her real estate to her six children so each would have a farm on which to establish a home. The land given them still remains in their possession.

From 1915 till 1920, Ed and his mother continued to farm. In the spring of 1920, they had a public sale, after which they moved to Sutton and resided there for three years. In 1923, Mrs. Folste Baumann and her son Ed moved to Grafton. She was called to her eternal home January 26, 1930. She left to mourn Edward, Jacob, William, Mrs. Sam Oberlander, Mrs. William Otte, Mrs. Reinhard Everts, and 20 grandchildren. Mrs. Baumann, having been bounteously blessed by the grace of God, contributed much to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Grafton.

The original land in Sec. 15, purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Eilert Baumann in 1878, remains in the possession of two of the Baumann children. Ed, the oldest son, possesses the E ½ of Sec. 15, Bennett township, and Etta, the youngest, now Mrs. Reinhard Everts, has the SW 1/4 of the same section.

Of the Baumann children who survived Eilert, three are now deceased: Jacob and Edward, and Sophia (Mrs. William) Otte. Jacob Baumann entered his eternal home on January 30, 1942. The living descendants are William Baumann of Geneva, Etta (Mrs. Reinhard Everts), and Minnie (Mrs. Sam Oberlander), both of Grafton. All of these three live today within a radius of 12 miles of the home place.

-Mrs. Sam Oberlander (Deceased Aug. 23, 1967)

Newton C. Burt came to Nebraska in 1873 from Rockdale, Crawford County, Pennsylvania, and homesteaded south of Grafton — 80 acres in Bennett township and 80 acres across the road in Geneva township. Here the Burts lived and worked diligently, wresting from the prairie not only a living but a finely improved farm, with the addition of many acres to the original homestead. Two children were born to them; John and Mattie (Mrs. Edwin Chambers of Whittier, California).

In 1920, Mr. and Mrs. Burt retired to Geneva where Mr. Burt passed away in 1927 at the age of 82. Mrs. Burt resided

in Geneva until her death in 1950.

In 1918, John Burt took over the management of the farm and lived there and farmed the land until 1959, except for two years. In 1954, John and his wife decided to retire. They held a sale of all their belongings — machinery, cattle, hogs, everything. Those who attended agreed that it was the largest sale they had ever seen in Fillmore County. Although the Burts retained ownership of the farm, they shortly thereafter moved to Hastings, where they expected to spend their future. But the call of the land was too strong, and after two years of "retirement" they returned and took up life again on the homestead. Their son Keith, who farmed the Harvard Air Base from 1949 to 1960, helped out with the operations and the development of a nice herd of Black Angus cattle.

In December, 1959, Mr. and Mrs. John Burt moved from the farm into Geneva. In 1960, Keith Burt moved onto the farm and also bought the Geneva Implement Company. This is one of the relatively few homesteaded farms in Fillmore County that has remained continuously in one family.¹



Newton C. Burt family about 1920. Left to right: Mrs. Newton (Mary) Burt, Miss Ella Turney, Pennsylvania relatives, Newton Burt, John Burt.

The families of Anthony Buttell and his brothers and sisters made notable contributions, both economically and numerically, to our area.

At the time when this part of Nebraska was being settled, Illinois and other states to the east were already thickly populated and the land was too high priced for young people starting out for themselves. "Cheaper land" was the cry, and Nebraska held alluring possibilities to those who were willing to leave the fertile farm lands to pursue the harder task of breaking sod and risking crop failures in the dryer lands to the west.

In the Buttell family of Lincoln, Illinois, there were three young men and five young women who were eager to make this venture. They did not all come to Nebraska at the same time, but in the course of a few years all were settled within a short distance of each other, Adam and Anthony (Tony) in Fillmore County and the others in the near-by county of Clay.

They prospered and soon owned their own homes. They were good farmers, but their most valuable crop was their children. The first families of the 8 Buttells numbered more than 70 children. They were all members of St. Mary's Catholic Church of Sutton. To the rest of the St. Mary's parishioners they were "The Relations."

In 1894 Anthony (Tony) Buttell and his family took up their residence in Bennett township. His parents came from Alsace-Lorraine, that disputed territory lying between northeastern France and southwestern Germany, hence the French name Buttell. The nine children of Tony and Anna Buttell grew up on the same farm and all attended District 74 school.

In 1905, Frances joined the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and began her novitiate at St. Elizabeth's Convent, Cornwells Heights, Pennsylvania, dedicating her life to the

teaching of Negroes and Indians.

In 1914, Korella (Sister Rita) joined the Ursuline Order, beginning her novitiate at Fishkill, New York. After taking her final vows she taught at Steinauer and later volunteered for mission work in faraway China. She taught a year in Bangkok, Siam; because of the trouble in China the Sisters had to give up their schools and teach in the homes and finally were forced to leave China altogether. She now resides in Arcadia, Missouri.

In 1916, Anna (Sister Juanita) entered the Order of the Blessed Sacrament. While in Chicago she had a bad siege of flu from which she never entirely recovered. She died

at Cornwells Heights, Pennsylvania, in 1935.

Edward married Anna Burns and lived in Sutton until his death in 1963. Mayme married George Schmal and lived at Lexington, Nebraska, until her death in 1930. Amelia married John Mulvihill; at his death she and her small daughter went back to her home and lived with her parents, caring for them in their later years until their deaths. She now lives in Sutton.

George married Mabel Lyhene, granddaughter of John

O'Brien, Sr. They reside in Sutton.

Albert, who married Pearl Sheehy, worked for the Union Pacific R.R. in Hastings until his death in 1956. His widow and their six children still live there.

Cyril married Opal Roulier of Hastings. He acquired considerable wealth from his wheat lands near Goodland, Kansas. He retired to Denver, Colorado, where he passed away in 1950 from a heart ailment, survived by his wife and an only child.

During the depression years, Anthony Buttell, like most of his neighbors, relinquished the ownership of his farm and in March, 1933, he and his wife and daughter Amelia moved into Sutton. Two months later he was called to his eternal home. Twelve years later Mrs. Buttell followed him.

None of the Buttell families are now living in Fillmore

County.

In the spring of 1879, Charles Elofson, at the age of five years, came with his parents, Ole and Johanna Elofson, from Mt. Carroll, Illinois, and settled in Fillmore County on a farm southeast of Sutton. In 1909, he was married to Anna Baas, who lived in Grafton township. From 1913 to 1925 they



Photo from Bessie Erickson Hammer taken about 1907 Olof Elofson, wife and granddaughter.

lived on the John Paulson place on Sec. 20, northeast of Sutton. Then they moved to the O. R. Lytle farm southeast of Sutton, on Sec. 8, where they resided until 1944, when they retired from farming and moved into Sutton. Thus the greater part of their lives was spent in Bennett township.

Two children were born to the Elofsons: Hazel (Mrs. Orval Oates) and Paul, who was never strong as a child, but

¹ This account, and the other unsigned sections of Bennett township, are presumed to be by Miss Anne and Miss Nellie Sheridan.

of a cheerful disposition which endeared him to his companions. He passed away in his youth, leaving no one to carry on the family name. Through the Orval Oates family, the Elofsons possess five loving grandchildren and two greatgrandchildren.

—Mrs. Albert Johnson

Henry Fessler was born in Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania Dutch parents. At the age of 18, he joined the Union army and fought in the Battle of Shiloh or Bull Run or both. He was fortunate enough to receive only a mouth wound during the entire war. About the year 1891 Mr. Fessler came to Fillmore County, settling on a farm in Bennett township, which he purchased from David Kreachbaum. It was here he raised his family of five children; Henry, Dewey, Albert, Sophia, and Susie. Sophia, the last survivor except Dewey, passed away in 1962.

His early acquaintance with the life of hard knocks gave him a roughness of personality which to one unacquainted with him would seem harsh, but that was only on the exterior. He was an honest man and a good neighbor.

During the years 1903-1904 Mr. Fessler served as county

commissioner and later held other township offices.

After Mr. Fessler's death, Henry, who married Nellie Ericson, continued to live on the home place for a number of years.

In 1930, Dewey and his wife Lola bought the farm and moved on it in 1931, where they still reside. They put down the first irrigation well in Bennett township in 1941 and another one in the spring of 1955. It is now one of the best-improved farms in Bennett township. The Dewey Fesslers have four children: Mildred, of Grand Island; Marion (Mrs. Richard Helton), of California; Darrell, who married Frances O'Brien, lives a short distance from them on the John Reed place; and Duane at home.

This farm has been in the possession of and resided upon by Fesslers since 1891.



Photo from Dewey Fessler taken about 1900 Mr. and Mrs. Henry Fessler and family. Left to right: Susie, Mr. Fessler, Henry, Mrs. Fessler, Sophia, Dewey (center front).

Elijah Huntley and his wife Adelaine (Mann) settled in Bennett township not far from Shickley. (For details of his life and career, see *Stanton*.) Two of his sons carried the name of Fillmore County to relatively far places.

Arthur V. Huntley was born September 12, 1895. He went through eight grades in District 61 and was a member of Grace United Brethren Church in Bennett township. He later took pre-medical and missionary training and then held various pastorates on the West Coast. He founded Trinity Church in San Diego, California, in 1939 and was its pastor from then until 1955. He married Marjorie Traviss of Los Angeles in 1929, and they had two children, Arthur V., Jr., and Phyllis Elaine (Mrs. Earl Brown Lloyd). He died in San Diego on February 10, 1957.

—Mrs. Sam Huntley

Leslie Loran Huntley, fifth son of Elijah Huntley, was born near Shickley on January 10, 1903. He went through the grades in District 61 and then graduated from Grafton



Photo from Mrs. Sam Huntley Dr. Leslie L. Huntley

High School in 1921. The following two years he taught in a rural school near Shickley and then enrolled in Huntington College (United Brethren) in Indiana. After two years there, he came back and farmed for two years, and then returned to college graduating in 1929. In the fall of the same year, he entered the University of Nebraska School of Medicine, graduating as an M.D. in 1933. After interning for one year at the Methodist Hospital in Omaha, he married Mary Lucretia Bergdall of Cissna Park, Illinois, on July 7, 1934.

On August 9, 1934, the couple began a long "honeymoon" by sailing from New York directly to Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa, where they spent two three-year terms under the auspices of the Board of Foreign Missions of the United Brethren Church. Forced by the war to return to America in November, 1941, just before Pearl Harbor, Dr. Huntley and his family located at Larned, Kansas, from March, 1942, to September, 1943, when he was called into service as a captain in the Army Medical Corps. One of his first assignments, because of his experience in the tropics and his training at the London School of Tropical Medicine, was to a special School of Malarialogy in Panama; from there he was sent to Assam, India, a highly malarial area. Later he was liaison officer for the First Chinese Field Hospital in Assam, then sent across into China to an American field hospital, where he was stationed at the war's end. Discharged from the army on February 3, 1946, he located as a general practitioner at Washington, Kansas, where he still maintains his own office.

Three of Dr. Huntley's children — Carolyn Joanne, Dwight Eugene, and Alyce Elaine — were born in Africa; the fourth, Mary Louise, was born in this country. Dwight became a bacteriologist; Carolyn became a bacteriologist before turning to pediatrics; Alyce was a graduate nurse until her marriage in 1965 to a physician. The youngest girl, still (1967) in high school, plans to become a teacher.

—Data from Dr. Leslie L. Huntley
From the leaves of an old scrapbook kept by T. O.
Huston, now the property of his daughter, Mrs. Floy McCashland, the stories of the Huston families have been gleaned.

T. O. Huston, imbued with the pioneering spirit and a desire to own a home he could call his own, heard the call of the West where land was cheap and easy to acquire. He came to Fillmore County, Nebraska, in August of 1880 and purchased a farm 7 miles S of Grafton on Sec. 36, Bennett township. Returning to his home in New Boston, Illinois, he was married on September 1, 1880, to Viella Bear, daughter of Peter Bear, pioneer of Eliza township, Mercer County, Illinois; he left September 16 with his bride for their home in Nebraska.

While he was back in Illinois getting married and making preparations for coming west, J. H. Sager and E. O. Lemon built a shanty 14^{\prime} x 22^{\prime} for him and his bride. This humble

dwelling, with additions, was to be their home for more than 20 years, until a fine new home replaced it.

Six children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Huston, five of whom grew up on the farm. They are Mrs. Floy McCashland of Geneva, Frank of Sedro-Woolley, Washington, Clarence of Aledo, Illinois, Eva (Mrs. John Curtiss of Lincoln, now deceased), and Mrs. Ada Price of Cozad, Nebraska.

Mr. Huston and his wife endured all the hardships and privations of pioneer life but refused to be beaten by them. He recalled that at one time a renter had planted a part of his farm to corn. In the fall he picked his share and left the country, leaving Mr. Huston to harvest the rest as best he could. This he did, picking it in sacks while wading in snow above his knees. That winter he burned it for fuel, as coal was expensive and corn was worth scarcely anything.

Mr. Huston took great pride in his fields, his orchards, and his livestock. He had one of the largest peach orchards in the county and one of the largest flocks of sheep.

Mrs. Huston was an active member of the W.C.T.U. and Mr. Huston had received awards for 50 years of membership in the Masonic Order.

In 1912, the family moved to Geneva, where Mr. Huston purchased and operated the Mark Alexander Meat Market until a few years prior to his death, which took place in December, 1942. Mrs. Huston had preceded him in death in 1927.

The Huston family have scattered elsewhere to found homes of their own. The only one remaining in Fillmore County is Mrs. Floy McCashland of Geneva.

Walt Huston was one of the earliest pioneers of Fillmore County. After his graduation from Monmouth College, Illinois, he came west, spending a few years in the Utah mines and teaching school in Utah, Iowa, and Nebraska. He was married in 1886 to Ida Sprout. To this union were born five daughters and one son.

After his marriage, Mr. Huston engaged in different lines of enterprise, the implement business constituting the major part of his career. He held several offices of political trust, serving for a number of years as city treasurer and treasurer of the County Fair Board.

He was a humorist in every sense of the word, even carrying it into his business advertising and office campaigning. For example, he advertised "Wife Getter" buggies guaranteed to do the work. He liked to tell of his baby-kissing, potato-digging campaign to win votes. He being an ardent Republican and John Christiancy a jolly Democrat, they made a campaign bet which John Christiancy lost. For a penalty, he had to paint his campaign hat red, buy a sack of flour, get a red wheelbarrow, and deliver the flour to whoever would buy it at auction, the money to go to charity. The flour sold for \$26. The band led the procession and 20 Republicans on horseback followed to the courthouse where the Glee Club sang "Good-bye, old Grover, good-bye." This was in 1888.

None of the Walt Huston family reside in Fillmore County now.

Barnett Isley was born near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on February 22, 1822; his wife, Mary Wolfe, was born near by in the same year. They were married in 1848. Their oldest son, David, was born in January, 1850; their four other children — Mary, Susan, John, and Martha — were also born in Pennsylvania.

The family lived in Davenport, Iowa, while Barnett served with the Union Army from 1863 to 1865, and then moved to a farm near Stuart, Iowa. In the fall of 1871, he filed a homestead claim on the SW ¼ of Sec. 28, Bennett township, and the next spring, the family came out together. Susan, who had married, remained in Iowa.

Mr. Isley used to walk some 10 miles to Lakeside School in Clay County to teach a Sunday School class. Mary Wolfe Isley passed away in April, 1891; Barnett lived on the homestead until his death in November, 1911, just under 90 years old. Both are buried in Geneva.

David Isley homesteaded the W 1/2 of the SW 1/4 of Sec. 34 in 1878, but later traded the land for a team of horses, harness, and a wagon. He married Addie Kreachbaum in Geneva on August 5, 1891, and farmed the home place. They had seven children: Edward, May, George, Martha, Jessie, Mary, and Walter. Edward was born May 26, 1892; the youngest was born in 1904. After David's death on November 1, 1903, his widow sold off the livestock and machinery; but in 1909 the family resumed farming. She kept the family going until all the children had homes of their own, except for George, who remained with her until her death, October 3, 1951, at the age of 81 years.

Walter passed away in 1955. May (Mrs. Ancel Sedersten) lived in Lincoln (died 1957); Bertha (Mrs. Henry Meyers) lives in Des Moines, Iowa; Jessie (Mrs. John Oldenburg) and Mary (Mrs. Hilbert Dahlbeck) live in Sutton.

George lives in Fairmont.

Edward Isley stayed on the home place until 1920, when he started for himself 1/4 mile E of there, on a rented place the E ½ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 33. He was married in Council Bluffs on September 24, 1924, to Florence Hatcliff, daughter of Mark Hatcliff, from near-by Momence township. They came from there directly to the farm, where they have now resided continuously for 48 years. Here were born their two daughters: Shirley (Mrs. Roger Larkin), of Peoria, Illinois, and Norma Jean (Mrs. Byron Gillett), of Aurora, Colorado. Both girls attended school in District 63 and graduated from the Geneva High School.

Thus four generations of Isleys have lived in Bennett township, and three generations attended school in District 63 — Mrs. David Isley (Addie Kreachbaum), her seven children, and two granddaughters. —Data from Edward Isley

Some of the hazards of pioneer — and later — farm life are suggested by these stories of two mishaps which occurred to Ed Isley within less than one year (August and October, 1952):



Barnett Isley (at right), his son David Isley and wife Addie and grandson Ed Isley taken in the spring, 1893.

ED ISLEY BITTEN BY RATTLESNAKE

Ed Isley, living 10 miles west of Geneva, is in St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Lincoln, for treatment of rattlesnake bite received about 8 o'clock Tuesday evening as he was doing chores at his place. He was working late and while walking through the hallway of the barn lay his hand on the manger and the snake struck two fingers. Thinking it was a wasp he went on with his work until his fingers began to swell and stiffen when he went to the house for a flashlight and found the rattler. He was brought to Dr. Ashby in Geneva but there was no serum to be found there so Dr. Ashby rushed him to Lincoln to St. Elizabeth's Hospital where he was confined from Tuesday until Friday. His hand was sore for several months afterwards until the corn picker accident which he said was so much worse, made him forget about it.

CORN PICKER ACCIDENT FARMER INJURED WHEN CLOTHING CAUGHT IN PICKER

Ed Isley, living nine miles northwest of Geneva, sustained a broken shoulder blade, a broken thumb, six broken ribs and numerous bruises and lacerations when his clothing was caught in a power take-off on a cornpicker about 2 o'clock Friday afternoon

Mr. Isley and Ed Girmus were picking corn on the

Haessler farm when the accident occurred. Ed was wearing a jacket which was blown into the power take-off as he stood behind the tractor. Most of the clothing was torn from his body. The motor was killed when his clothing clogged the take-off but he was still held to the machine by shreds of clothing. As he started down the corn row for help he lost consciousness twice. He was on his way to where Mr. Girmus was working.

Mrs. Girmus who had gone to the house for oil saw Ed coming and put him into her car and brought him to his home from where her husband brought him to the Geneva Hospital.

LARGE GROUP GATHERS ED ISLEY'S CORN

More than one hundred neighbors and friends of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Isley gathered at their farm home Wednesday morning of last week to pick and store 100 acres of corn for the Isleys. Ed is recovering from injuries received recently when he was caught in the power take-off on his tractor being used with his cornpicker. Ed had picked 80 acres before the accident. The Geneva Odd Fellows and two sets of neighbors joined forces and gathered for work at 8 o'clock the morning of October 24th. 17 pickers and other equipment were used. The picking was completed by 11:15 and the crews were through by noon. Altogether they cribbed 2,800 bushels of corn and also shelled and delivered 800 bushels.

At noon members of Rebekah Lodge of Geneva, neighbors, relatives and friends served a bountiful dinner.

Ed Isley



Photo from Warren Lefever Corn picking bee for Ed and Walt Isley.

Andrew Johnson (widowed young) and his three children — Emma Caroline, Hilda Marie, and John Andrew left Stocksund, Sweden, and came to America on May 5, 1868. They first settled in Illinois for a short time, and then moved on to Essex, Iowa, early in 1873. Mr. Johnson took out his naturalization papers at Clarinda, Iowa, on October 1, 1873. By occupation, he was a tailor.

In the early spring of 1878, Mr. Johnson and a neighbor came to Fillmore County in a covered wagon. He bought 160 acres of railroad land, the NE 1/4 of Sec. 29, T7, R4W in Bennett township. He then built a house which was later used

as a granary.

After Andrew's son John's confirmation in the Swedish Lutheran church in Essex, Iowa, he joined his father in Fillmore County in May, 1878. Together they built a house and barn and planted trees and orchards, as all pioneer families did.

On March 13, 1886, John A. Johnson was married to Julia Ellen Johnson. To this union were born five girls and two boys: Johanna, Emeline, Ellen, Esther, Edith, Albert, and Carl. The children attended the same school (District 63) as their father.

Sunday School and church were held at the schoolhouse until in later years a church was moved in one-half mile south of the school. This family worshiped and worked to the betterment of the community.

During the scarlet fever epidemic of March, 1894, Ellen May, a 21/2-year-old daughter, died.

Johnnie Johnson (as he was familiarly called) and his



Photo from Albert Johnson

Andrew Johnson and Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Johnson and children taken in 1900.

wife could best be described as gentle folk, honest and Godfearing. They brought up their family in the same way. Mr. Johnson took an active part in all civic affairs and held offices of trust in the county and his school district.

This pioneer family went through family losses, the blizzard of 1888, hail, drought, grasshoppers, and all the other hardships of pioneer life. The surviving children of John A. Johnson are Carl J. Johnson and Mrs. Johanna Solberg of Alliance, Nebraska, Mrs. Emeline Burough of Scottsbluff, and Albert R. Johnson of Sutton.

Albert, eldest son of John A. Johnson, was born on the farm to which his father had came as a youth with his father (Albert's grandfather). Albert was married to Cecil Lytle and took over the management of the farm. Here they brought up their four children besides rearing as one of their own the motherless daughter of Albert's sister, Esther Burough.

Sheldon A. Johnson resides near Geneva. Dorothy (Mrs. Paul Schneider) lives across the line in Clay County. Geraldine (Mrs. Harry Hank) resides in Grand Island, as does Velma (Mrs. Perry Schneider). The niece Zeola (Mrs. Vern Domeier) lives on a farm in Bennett township.

-Mrs. Albert Johnson On February 18, 1879, Miles Kavanaugh, with his wife Jane and their family, came from Sparlin, Illinois, to Bennett township, where they purchased 120 acres of land - in the SE 1/4 of Sec. 7, T7, R4W — from the Burlington R.R. A cottonwood twig used as a cane en route from Sparlin was stuck in the ground and grew to be a large tree on the farm. The lumber for their house was hauled from Grafton. The sod was broken with walking plows. Some dropped corn by hand in the field.

Miles's son, Charles, was united in marriage to a Lostant, Illinois, girl, Catherine Lawless. Father Murphy performed the marriage in Grafton, as there was no priest in Sutton. They resided on an adjoining farm belonging to his father. Meanwhile Miles K. moved to Hastings, Nebraska.

Around 1886, Charles purchased the farm his father had settled on when first coming to Nebraska. It was a few years before he moved onto his newly purchased farm. In these few years, Charles and Catherine experienced many hardships. One was the famous blizzard of 1888, which struck suddenly and without warning about 4 P.M. It became so severe that Mr. Kavanaugh had some difficulty in getting the stock sheltered and getting back to the house. From what had been a beautiful day a few hours before, it became so cold that the frost lay on the hinges inside the house. The teachers led some of the children to safety by following fences; others kept the children in the schools and burned desks and books to keep warm; but many lives were lost other than school children. Farmers also lost stock. Earl Tucker and Hi Brown, close neighbors of the Kavanaughs, lost large numbers of sheep which were driven off with the wind and frozen. Many farm animals lost in the blizzard wandered around houses and

frightened people inside who did not know they were stock.

Hordes of grasshoppers and chintz bugs came in the summer, so numerous that they hid the sun. They, along with the drouths, destroyed the crops in those years.

Mrs. Kavanaugh once prevented a hardship for the Miles Kavanaugh family. While she was out in the yard, she noticed smoke at their farm. Knowing they were gone to town, she hurried across the field and put out the fire before it reached the house. Miles K. gave her an eight-day clock and a mirror in appreciation.

During these years quite a few children died of diphtheria and the Kavanaughs were also very sick with it. The schools were two miles apart and many teachers walked several miles to them. When cars came out, Mrs. Kavanaugh remembered her horse shying when they met a car. They had to hold the horse at the side of the road until the car passed.

People had many peddlers at their doors in those years. Some of these stayed overnight in the schoolhouse, and this frightened the teachers. Dog races and horseshoe games amused the settlers on Sundays. Families supplied their tables with prairie chickens and quail which were abundant. Indian arrows and buffalo bones were found on the Kavanaugh place.

In 1914, Mr. and Mrs. Kavanaugh and their daughter Cora retired to Sutton. Later, their early-day home was burned to the ground by bootleggers. Since, they have moved another house there, and now the fourth generation is living on the same land.

—Mrs. Cora (Kavanaugh) Hoarty

Down the road to the south of Joe Schaaf's place, Joe Keller had built a two-room house where he lived with his wife and family. When Joe married Trace Auer, sister of Mrs. Joe Schaaf, they moved in with his folks. Mr. Keller then built on two rooms to the west and the young couple lived there while the parents lived in the original rooms. This house is about the same age as the Schaaf house and is owned by one of the Walters heirs and occupied by Lou Walters and his wife.

David Kreachbaum and his wife (Elizabeth Hooper) were born and grew up near Logan, Ohio. After their marriage they lived on farms near Des Moines and Marshalltown, Iowa. Two of their children, George and Addie, were born in the Hawkeye State.

In the spring of 1872, the Kreachbaum and Barnett Isley families came to Nebraska and took up homesteads adjoining each other on Sec. 28 in Bennett township. The covered wagon which they came in served as a home until they built a house. The team of horses which they drove and the one cow which trailed behind the wagon were their most valued possessions. Two children, Walter and Christian, were born on the homestead. Christian lived only a short time. Seven years after their arrival the mother closed her eyes in death.

The sorrowing husband, unable to carry on with three small children to care for, returned to the home of his parents in Ohio. Later he remarried and in 1885 returned to Nebraska, locating on a farm just east of their first home. This place, though untenanted because of the destruction of the house by fire, is still in the ownership of the Kreachbaum family.

In 1884, Richard Lawless and his sister Catherine came to Bennett township from Lostant, Illinois. They began their home on the farm of Hugh Jennett, who lived near Streator, Illinois. A few acres of this farm was used for a school. Two years later Catherine was married to a neighbor, Charles Kavanaugh.

In 1888, Richard purchased 160 acres of land in Sec. 29 from John A. Peterson and wife, who had in 1881 secured it from the Burlington R.R. This land later became his sister's and now, since her passing, belongs to her daughter.

One annoying experience for the pioneers was ridding their hen houses of bedbugs and fleas.

Richard Lawless was invited to the home of Sumner Barnell in 1907, for an evening with friends, where he became seriously ill. He passed away the same evening.

Samuel B. Mann was born in Germany and came to the United States when a small boy. He was educated in New York City and after finishing school traveled northward and



Photo from Mrs. Hobart Springer Mr. and Mrs. Samuel B. Mann about 1913.

became a charcoal burner (charcoal was used for smelting iron).

In May, 1863, he married Theresa Devins and soon enlisted in the Civil War and stayed until the close of the war. He and his wife then began working for the Great Northern Iron Company, Mrs. Mann as a cook and Mr. Mann as a charcoal burner. They lived in the woods following the forest workers. Mrs. Mann became ill and the doctor advised a change to a drier climate, either Arizona or Nebraska.

In April, 1871, Mr. Mann and his brother-in-law Thomas Devins and Francis Blake entrained for Nebraska. The railroad was built to Council Bluffs, so at this point they bought an equipped oxen train to move westward. Omaha was only a small fort, and Lincoln was a tiny place.

They located on Sec. 32 in Bennett township.

No health precautions were taken. They drank from creeks and lived on this barren prairie, erected small houses, dug a 75-foot well by hand, and brought material from Council Bluffs. There was no means of communicating with their loved ones, and great anxiety was felt for their safety. No harm came to them, but Indians were still roaming these prairies.

In the fall of 1872, they brought their families to these barren prairies. There were no towns or mail, but plenty of work. Grasshoppers plagued them, and then a prairie fire which took their feed. So they packed their wagons and went back to Michigan.

After a stay of six years in Michigan they migrated back to Nebraska again, better equipped to stand the rigors of the prairies. But by then all available land had been taken and neighbors were plentiful.

The greatest drawback was that the buildings had been taken off their land and again buildings had to be erected for shelter. It was a hard task, as they had children by this time. But by their indomitable will and great strength this was accomplished.

Mr. and Mrs. Mann were the parents of 13 children, raising 10 to maturity. Mr. Mann gave his whole life to build a better community, always helping wherever needed. He served many years on the school board and acted as justice of the peace for years. He passed away on May 25, 1914, and Mrs. Mann passed away on February 3, 1935.

George B. Miles, Sr., and his wife came from Kewanee, Illinois, in 1875 by train as far as Fairmont, where they were met by his uncle, Charles C. Miles, who had homesteaded in Geneva township in 1871. George had been married the year before; he was 21 and his wife was 18.

Charley Miles, George's brother, lived on the farm next east of Finnegan's — the NW ¼ of Sec. 1, T7, R4W. George bought this farm and later bought the NE ¼ from his uncle,

C. C. Miles. Their first house had just two rooms, one downstairs and one upstairs. Later they built on two more rooms. They had lots of company. They used to have dances, and often the guests stayed overnight, the men sleeping upstairs and the women downstairs.

On this farm the Miles family reared their family of seven children: Lydia, Edythe, Leslie, George, Nile, Jimmie, and Gordon. Mr. and Mrs. George B. Miles were very active in helping to establish the Congregational Church at Grafton and were charter members. They continued living on this half-section until they retired to Grafton in 1908, where Mrs. Miles passed away in 1928. Mr. Miles died in 1944 at the age of 89.

Edythe Miles George lives at Good Samaritan Village in Hastings. George and Gordon Miles settled in Portland, Oregon, where George died in 1966. Lydia Miles married Miles Longman in 1908. After his death in 1930, she moved to Grafton, where she resided until her death on June 6, 1967. Leslie Miles farmed the home place until his death from cancer in 1954.

—Data from Lydia (Miles) Longman



Photo from Mrs. Emma Miles taken about 1900 Left to right: Leslie Miles, George Miles Jr., George Miles Sr. ("Smiley" the dog), Gordon Miles, Mrs. George Miles Sr., Lydia Miles, Nile Miles, Edythe Miles.

In the year 1874, **Joseph Oberlander**, with his wife and son, left their native Russia, then ruled by Czar Nicholas I, and came to America to found a home. They bought land in Bennett township which is still owned by members of the Oberlander family.

Of the six children born to them, three survive; Mrs. Elizabeth Unterseher, of Harvard, Margaret of Sutton, and Mike, on his farm south of Grafton. Sam, deceased, married Minnie Baumann and raised a family of five children, one of whom (Clarence) resides on the farm with his widowed mother. Joe married Katharine Hahn and was living at Gering at the time of his death. Mike married Anna Bohlen.



Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Oberlander taken about 1905.

They were not blessed with a family, consequently he was left alone at his wife's death, and for some years he lived alone close to the road a short distance from the country Lutheran church which he and his wife attended.

Henry married Minnie Bohlen, and was left a widower. He retired to Sutton, where he married Marie Kranz. Like his brother Mike, he had no children, and at his death his wife Marie became owner of the farm in Bennett township.

All of the Oberlanders chose farming as a vocation. Theirs was ever the simple country life but they had time for music and dancing also. The neighboring youth of that generation recall with pleasure the polkas, two-steps, waltzes, and quadrilles which they danced, to the tunes played by the Oberlanders.

John O'Brien, Sr., was born June 24, 1847, in County West Meath, Ireland, in the town of Mullingar, home town of the famous tenor, John McCormack. At the age of 18 he came, with his widowed mother, to America, landing in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1865, just after the close of the Civil War. There he worked in the coal mines and on the railroad for a number of years. On May 6, 1869, he was married to Bridget Battle at Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

In the spring of 1874 they came to Fillmore County, landing in the new town of Grafton. Hoping to take up a homestead, he walked to Alexandria and Belvidere and at length filed on a claim, only to learn that others had filed before him. On the way back he was caught in a storm but was rescued by a Bohemian farmer who took him into his dugout where he remained for two days.

Returning to Grafton, he again worked on the railroad and helped to lay the Burlington siding through Grafton. He lived in a sod house on what is now the William Schumacher place in Grafton township until 1877, when he and his family moved to the farm in Bennett township. Here he resided until 1912, when he retired to Grafton, leaving his sons, George and Jim, to farm the place. He passed away on January 2, 1926; his wife Bridget died August 25, 1936.

The O'Briens went through all the hardships of the early settlers and raised a family of ten children: John, Thomas, William, George, James, Mary (Mrs. James Murray), Ann (Mrs. William Lyhene), Bridget, Ellie, and Gertrude (Mrs. Andrew Schaaf).



Photo from Jim O'Brien taken in 1911 Left to right: George, Bridgie and Ella O'Brien.

Mr. O'Brien was a feeder and shipper of livestock ever since there was a market in South Omaha. An ardent Democrat, he took much interest in politics and served several terms as a member of the Board of Supervisors.

All of the O'Brien children attended District 61, known as the O'Brien School. It was not built, however, until 1879. Before that time they attended school where August Rotter lived. Henry Gillespie plowed a furrow from his place to the Frolics' so the children could go to school in the fall and have a path to follow. When the weather warmed up in the springtime, rattlesnakes used to come out from the tall grass and lie in the sun in the furrow, so they had to change the children's path because of the danger lurking there.

As the children grew to young manhood and womanhood they settled near home.

Tom O'Brien lived on a farm south of the home place. He married Winnifred Dwyer and had four children: Mildred (Mrs. Carl Schneider), Cecilia (Mrs. Bartol Walters), Paul, and Roger. Tom was on the school board 40 years. John, Jr., lived just across the road in Momence. His wife was Minnie Willey. He had one daughter who died in young womanhood. Will and his wife bought and lived on the Anthony Buttell

home after the Buttells moved to Sutton. They had one adopted son, Barney. Jim lives in Grafton in the parental town home. Gertrude married Andrew Schaaf and now lives in Albion. Bridget and Ella lived with their parents in Grafton. Bridget passed away and Ella now lives with Jim. George O'Brien married Sara Britt and they had seven children who grew to maturity. Mike remained on the home place and still lives there. Mary (Mrs. James Murray) lived near there for many years until her husband's death, when she went to live with her daughter, Mrs. Albert Rotter, at Beaver Crossing. She died on October 5, 1962. Anna (Mrs. Will Lyhene) lived on a farm in Clay County. When her husband died, she moved to Sutton, which remained her home until her death.

Most of the O'Brien lands are still owned by members of

the family or their descendants.

John O'Brien, Sr., gave an account of the great blizzard

through the Lincoln Star and the World-Herald.

"That morning snow began to fall coming from the southeast. It was soft and warm and melted on the ground as fast as it fell. I had two cars of cattle and hogs to feed. I spent the forenoon caring for them as they were all wet with the soft snow. When I had done the chores I started for the house. Looking northwest I saw a white ribbon-like cloud

not thinking much of it.

"When I came into the house Mrs. O'Brien said there was a churning to be done and I could commence churning at once. It being an old-fashioned churn with a long dash, I pounded away. It made lots of noise but I thought I could hear something louder than the churn, so I looked out of the window. Everything in the yard was on the move—wagons, hay racks, corn stalks, etc. I went outdoors and looked northwest. The storm was coming not more than half a mile away. It was not a floating cloud but was built from the ground up and it came like a stone wall about a mile high.

"The cattle started running around like they were wild. Then it became dark. When the crest of the storm came with the snow you could not see anything the length of your arm away. It was so cold I had to put on extra clothes and go to the yards. Mrs. O'Brien did not want me to go for fear of

getting lost or struck with flying things.

"Making my way out to the stock yards I found it impossible to drive the stock to the sheds as their eyes were frozen shut with the snow and ice, so I gave up. Finding my way back to the house, nearly frozen, I thought of some-

thing else.

"We had five children at school and would they ever be able to come 100 rods against the storm? At all hazards I must go to the schoolhouse. But how could I get there as one could not see any distance? Thinking of a wire fence we had for 80 rods on one side of the road. If I could make my way to it I would have no trouble reaching the schoolhouse. Finding the fence I arrived at the schoolhouse in time to find Miss Nannie Huston and her 11 pupils standing in a circle around the stove and 'scared' was no name for it. The schoolhouse was rocking like a cradle and the draft of the chimney was

drawing the fire up the stovepipe.

"There were five O'Brien's, four of Mr. Dobson,s, and one boy staying at Mr. Ackland's. I have forgotten his name. There would have been more pupils from the east and south but for the snow in the morning. I told them to put on their wraps and try to make it to our house. They all thought they couldn't make it against the storm but I told them it was easier to die frozen than to burn to death, so they all got ready. I told them to all hang together and I would lead them. Then came the 'tug-of-war.' We made the fence and I kept my stick busy following it. The snow was like broken glass. Every few steps we had to turn around to get our breath. We reached the end of the 80-rod fence and still had 15 rods to the house. At this stand, the boy from Ackland's made a break for home. He went but a short way when he got down in the snow. Before he could get up I took hold of him and brought him back to the rest of the children.

"We reached the house all covered with ice and snow. When bed time came we had to make beds for some of them around the heating stove. All were well and able to be up and around in the morning. O boy, didn't that churning come in good! Mrs. O'Brien made pancakes for the whole bunch. After breakfast, with buckets packed, all were ready to be off to school for the day.

"My loss was 30 head of hogs. It took the cattle one month to look as good as they did the morning before the

storm."

The first settlers of Turkey Creek were Luxembourg Catholics or Luxemburgers, as they were called, from the duchy of that name in Europe. They located first in Wisconsin and about the year 1871 came to Fillmore County. Among the names were John, Peter, Jacob, and Hans Weiss, Peter and Nicholas Gergen, John Marson, two Rock families, Bernard Schommer, John Nittler, Peter Carl, Bartols, Webers, and Diederichs. Germans came later: Reinschs, Kamlers, Rotters, and others.

August Rotter came to Bennett township in 1885. Bernard Rotter came nine years later. They lived on farms across the road from each other where their children grew up together attending the same school (District 61) and the Turkey Creek Catholic Church known now as the Shickley

parish.

August Rotter had seven children: Joseph, Anna (Mrs. Edward Wachter), Mary (Mrs. George Wachter), Minnie

(Mrs. Fred Standard), Hattie, Emma, and Albert.

Bernard Rotter had nine children; Agnes (Mrs. John Fleming), Fred, Charley, Elizabeth (Mrs. Leonard Finnegan), William, John, Gertrude (Mrs. John Dillon), Leo, and George.

Being small of stature, they were usually spoken of as the "Little Rotters," but size did not affect their capabilities, for among the 16 children there were farmers, mechanics, storekeepers, salesmen, business managers, nurses, one teacher, and one member of a Benedictine Order of Brothers.

George, the youngest son of Bernard Rotter, had the misfortune to lose an arm in a runaway while raking hay as a young boy. He has since distinguished himself in the field of education, having written several textbooks. He is now State Director of Conservation in the Nebraska Department of Education. His wife is the former Gertrude Burke of Grafton, daughter of the late Thomas Burke.

The name of Rotter has gradually disappeared from the columns of the Fillmore County papers as they have taken up residence elsewhere. The little town of Trenton, Nebraska, is the home of many of their posterity, since six of the Bernard Rotter family chose that particular spot when launching out for themselves. Denver attracted some of them and California called others away from Nebraska and Fillmore County and Bennett township.

Mrs. Joseph Schaaf, living in her neat little house in

Grafton, gave us her story as follows:

When she was a young girl of 14 her father, a New York harness maker, or carpenter, decided to come west. A half-brother, John Auer, was working for Weisenborns of Grafton and his letters to the folks "back home," urging them to come out to this fast settling up new country, were the deciding factor.

Accordingly, in midsummer of the year 1867 [?] the Auers purchased four horses and two mules, loaded all their possessions in two covered wagons, and started for Nebraska.

It took six weeks of slow, steady plodding to make the trip. For the two young Auer girls, Anna and her sister, it was high adventure all the way. Pitching the tent each evening, eating meals cooked by the campfire, falling asleep to the drowsy murmur of prairie insects, wakened often in the night by the howl of coyotes, and breaking camp at dawn each day were never-to-be-forgotten thrills.

Arriving in Grafton in September, they lived in Weisenborn's yard until their house was built, which required

several weeks.

About this time the Zierens, Francks, Schaafs, Kellers, Stahls, and Shanks arrived to occupy the land which Mr. Stahl had purchased, thus making a "Little New York" settlement. All of the families were related by marriage

except the Stahls.

As the children of these families grew to young manhood and womanhood, Francis and Joe Schaaf married two Auer girls. Joe married Anna Auer, the subject of this story. Joe's parents built and lived in a little two-room house on the NE ¼ of Sec. 11, the same house in which the Lou Schinzels later lived. When Joe married Anna Auer, they went, as was the custom then, to live with the "old folks." An addition was built to the west and later the kitchen to the south was added. This is one of the oldest houses in Bennett township.

Two sons and a daughter were born to the Joseph Schaafs. Andrew married Gertrude O'Brien, daughter of John O'Brien, Sr., a pioneer of Bennett township. They now live in Albion. Andrew worked for the Farm and Home Administration and in similar governmental positions for a number of years until his retirement. Leo, now retired, worked at the Naval Ammunition Depot in Hastings and made his home with his mother in Grafton until her death on May 8, 1965. The daughter, Mrs. Merl J. Stead, lives in David City. The Schaaf farm was sold to Alton and Bertha Workentine on May 12, 1966, and the buildings have now all been removed.

Mrs. Schaaf's life was not an easy one. Mr. Schaaf was never robust physically and in later life his health was a constant worry to Mrs. Schaaf, fearing that he might be overcome while at work in the fields. His death was very sudden but within his home after a strenuous afternoon's work. Cholera had struck his herd of hogs, wiping out most of them in a few days. To keep the disease from spreading to neighborhood herds, it was necessary to burn the dead swine so that dogs or wild animals might not carry parts of the animals away and thus cause the loss of a neighbor's herd. With his neighbors' help, he had been working hard to avoid the danger of fire if left burning into the night. The exertion brought on a heart attack and consequently his death.

When Julius Schinzel decided to go west and purchase a home for himself and family, they left Illinois in 1888 and traveled to Orleans, Nebraska, where Mrs. Schinzel's sister lived. They stayed there five years and then came to Fillmore County, settling on the place which Ralph Schinzel still farms.



Julius Schinzel family taken May, 1908. Back row, left to right: Josephine, George, Emma, Laura, Louis and Myrtle. Front row: Carolyn, Julius, Ralph, Theresa and Amanda.

The Julius Schinzels had nine children. Amanda (Kendall), George, Laurence (died in infancy), Louis, Caroline (Van Patten), and Josephine (Thompson) are deceased. One daughter, Laura May (Rains) lives in California; another, Emma Belle (Miles) lives in Fairmont. The Lou Schinzels lived for a long time on the Schaaf place, where they raised a large garden and kept a yard very attractive with plants and flowers.

The Ralph Schinzels have three boys and one girl: Charles, Waldo, Dean, and Phyllis. Dean, after graduating from the University of Nebraska's Agricultural College, returned to help his father farm the home place.

The Schinzels and Van Pattens were threshermen in the early days, and ran almost every kind of threshing machine manufactured until the combine made its appearance.

—Ralph Schinzel

Among the prominent early pioneers of Fillmore County was the **John Sheridan** family.

At the age of 21 young John Sheridan left his farm home in Castle Pollard, West Meath, Ireland, to go to England. On the voyage he met a young crew member who convinced him to come to America.

On May 15, 1871, he landed in New York. Because he had used all his money for passage, he had to work at various jobs there until he had earned enough money to take him to Decatur, Illinois, where he had distant relatives.

In the spring of 1878, seven years after his arrival in America, the young Irishman, with his new-found friend Bill Coan, seeking adventure and the opportunity to make their fortunes, invested all their savings in a wagon, a team of horses, farm equipment, and provisions and left the older state of Illinois in a covered wagon to settle in the newly founded state of Nebraska. Although the railroad that was built through Fillmore County had been completed as far west as Kearney in 1872, many people found it too expensive to travel great distances with farm equipment and livestock; and so these two young unmarried men came across the plains by covered wagon. They were among the last settlers to make the trip in this way.

Upon arriving in Fillmore County, they spent their first night at the Morgan home, and stayed on there until John found a suitable farm to rent. Bill Coan and the Morgans were cousins.

The following fall John returned to Clinton, Illinois, where he and Ellen Sheehy were married September 24, 1879. Ellen Sheehy, a daughter of John and Mary Sheehy, was born in Wilson, Niagara County, New York, and when six years of age (in 1864) came with her parents to Illinois.

Mr. and Mrs. John Sheridan returned together to Nebraska and lived near Exeter, a pioneer town established in 1871. Four of their children were born there: William, Mary, John, and Ellen (Nellie). The family lived in a sod house which had been built by Jim Dolan, who homesteaded in this area. The rugged pioneer life, carrying water for family use and caring for four young children, was strenuous. Six years later the family moved to Grafton, where Anne and Edna were born.

Shortly thereafter the family realized their dream and purchased a home of their own 5 miles SE of Sutton, just across the county line in Sec. 30, Bennett township, Fillmore County. This had been the homestead of Aden Sherwood.

Like others among the pioneers, they experienced many hardships, the blizzard of 1888, crop failures, and other heartaches; but they also experienced the joy of carving out a destiny for their children and grandchildren, in an earlier day when the great tide of emigration sped forward and backward before their door. Hard work and the passing years brought a generous bounty. John was not only a farmer, but also an avid reader and an advocate of legislation that would benefit the people of this area. The family were devout Catholics, active in church work. John, Ellen, and Anne received their first Holy Communion on October 1, 1899, at Sutton, from Father Michael A. Shine, the famous Nebraska and Catholic historian.

Though the home farm was in Fillmore County, the young Sheridan children went to school at District 13 in Clay County, because this school was nearer their farm. The three younger girls attended high school in Sutton, and Ellen went to Kearney to normal school.

William was married to Margaret Hogan and they made their home in Sutton, where they did extensive farming and sold farm equipment. They raised a family of seven children, five of whom still live in the Sutton area. Mrs. Margaret Sheridan also makes her home in Sutton.

Mary was united in matrimony to Timothy J. Joyce of



Photo from Nellie Sheridan John Sheridan and his sulky (about 1904).

Clay Center, Nebraska, and Pine Bluffs, Wyoming, on November 25, 1908. Afterward they left for Wyoming, where Mr. Joyce had homesteaded 8 miles SW of Pine Bluffs the preceding year. They raised a family of seven children, having lost one son in infancy. In 1958, they celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary. Mrs. Mary Joyce still lives in Laramie, Wyoming.

John remained at home and farmed. After his father's death, he expanded the Sheridan holdings to several sections of land. He still owns the home farm, but in 1964, due to the ill health of his sister Ellen, he moved into Sutton and

continues to make his home there.

Ellen, Anne, and Edna chose teaching as their professions. Ellen taught District 13, Clay County, and District 74, Fillmore County. In June, 1908, she went to Wyoming with her friend May (Joyce) Swanson, now of Alexandria, Virginia, where both these young ladies took up adjoining homesteads near those of Timothy Joyce, Bill Joyce, the Hughes brothers, the Sam Thompson family, and others from this part of Nebraska, who had gone west the year before. Ellen taught in Wyoming for four years while she was "proving-up" on her claim. She then returned to the family home and taught again at District 13 and later at Ohiowa. Much of her time, along with her sister Anne, was spent in research and the collecting of antiques and artifacts of the locality in the hope of preserving them for future generations.

Anne as a young woman taught schools at Districts 63 and 20, the West School, Yetman's, and Fairview. Her overwhelming desire to be near her sister Mary later took her West to the Colorado mountains, where, in an isolated mountain area, she taught children and boarded in a log house. Her love for Wyoming brought her back there during World War II, where she taught at the Thomas Sun ranch and lived with the Sun family on their ranch home between Rawlins and Casper. Anne became noted in the local area as a poet of merit, was a member of Ars Poetica (the Nebraska poetry society) and left a large collection of unpublished

poems at the time of her death.

Edna, also impelled by her pioneer heritage, obtained a teaching position in the Sand Hills of Garden County, where she boarded and roomed in a dugout. Later she taught a ranch-house school in Wyoming in a region newly opened to homesteaders. Because of her mother's poor health she returned home and taught one year in the home school. On May 3, 1917, she was married to Charles Lacy of Laramie, Wyoming. The Lacy family lived at Trenton, Omaha, and Sutton, Nebraska. They also raised a family of seven children.

There are two members of this pioneer family living today, John in Sutton and Mary in Laramie, Wyoming. Grandchildren of the pioneers John and Ellen Sheridan are Rita Ellen Haviland (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) and Jean-

ette Motichka (Rock Springs, Wyoming).

—Mrs. Andy Motichka

Ole Solberg, Swedish by birth, his wife and one child came from Norway to LaCrosse, Wisconsin, where an uncle of Mrs. Solberg's resided. Lack of employment was the reason for leaving the Land of the Midnight Sun to come to America, the Land of Opportunity. A large part of Norway cannot be inhabited and only about one-fifteenth of the country can be cultivated. Lumbering is the most important industry. When the Ole Solbergs settled in Wisconsin, he worked in the sawmills there for a few years, but malaria was so bad there that for health reasons there they were anxious to find a dryer climate. Nels Nelson, a brother of Mrs. Solberg, who was living in Bennett township in a sod house, sent for the Solbergs. It was rather cramped quarters in a one-room soddy, so a bedroom was added which accommodated them until a frame house was built close by. -Mrs. Albert Johnson

Joseph Zieren, Sr., with an older sister, came to America from Essentoh, Germany, at the age of 14 years. They made their home with an uncle in New York who was a cobbler by trade. Joseph worked at cement making and in a brewery until his marriage to Catherine Sillas of Albany, New York, when he purchased a canal boat on the St. Lawrence River. This was their home. On it they lived and worked and traveled, coming to shore for cargo to exchange for a return load.

In the fall, before the rivers froze, they would go up into Canada and bring back a boat load of potatoes and other vegetables which they kept on the boat until their market season was past in the states, thereby getting a better price for them. However, the size of their family had been increasing and, realizing that a boat was not the best place for raising a family since they were never stationed for any length of time in one place, they were interested in a home where they could settle down.

Christian Stahl had returned from Nebraska after taking an option on a section of land. Having purchased an 80, the Zierens were anxious to see it and make it their home.



Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Zieren Sr. and family taken about 1905. Back row, left to right: Anne, Joseph Jr., Theresa, Nettie. Center row: Thecla, Mrs. Joseph Zieren Sr., Joseph Zieren Sr., John. Front row: Mary holding a grandson Joe Martin, Elizabeth, Johanna, Caroline, Kathryn, and Frank.

In 1878, they took leave of their relatives and friends and their canal boat, the *Mary E. Gaylord*, and boarded the train for the far-flung prairies of Nebraska. Arrived in Grafton, Mrs. Zieren and the two children remained there until a two-room house was erected on the 80 in Bennett township; the lumber was hauled from Fairmont. It was unplastered and remained so for several years.

As more room became necessary, the Zierens built on and around the original. It was in this unpretentious home that 10 of their 12 children were born. They were: John (deceased); Mary (Mrs. Ben Martin), Lincoln; Anne (Mrs. Mike Griffin), Grafton; Nettie (Mrs. Louis Klein), North Bend, Oregon; Thecla (Mrs. Will Schmitz), Clearwater, Nebraska; Joe, Grafton, Nebraska; Theresa, Rock Springs, Wyoming; Frank, Sioux City, Iowa; Catherine (Mrs. Paul

Rickettson), Santee, California; Elizabeth (Mrs. John Weiland), Madison, Nebraska; Hannah (Mrs. James Whelan), Missoula, Montana; and Caroline (Mrs. Gene Workman), Grand Island, Nebraska.

Only two of the first generation of Zierens still reside

in Fillmore County.

Across the fields from his father, Joseph Zieren, Jr., batched and farmed. Close by lived the Albert Dietricks. Mrs. Dietrick was expecting a baby and found it hard to locate help for the home at that time. She had lived at Indianola and a friend of hers told her daughter she thought she should go out and work for Mrs. Dietrick at that time. She seemed reluctant to go. Her mother urged her, saying it would only be for a couple of weeks. Two weeks seemed a long time, but, acceding to her mother's wishes, she went. Shortly after arriving there, she met Joseph Zieren, Jr. Romance began, and culminated in marriage later.

In 1913, the elder Zierens retired to Grafton and Joseph and his bride moved onto the home place vacated by them. They have lived on this same place for the past 54 years. The two weeks that seemed so long to Mrs. Zieren lengthened into more than twenty times that many years, and she and Joseph are still living contentedly there with their son Raymond. Their 10 children were born there, bringing the number of births in the two generations to 20 in the same house, and

never yet has a death occurred there.

The second generation of children are: Lenora Hansen, Denver; Wilma Baird, Cheyenne; Irene King, Denver; Ethel Krull, Hastings; Mary Garbers, Lincoln; Bernard, Carmi, Illinois; Raymond, at home; Florence Faughn, Lincoln; Ellen Voss, Lincoln; Theresa Zieren, Crete; and Frances Kamler, Shickley.

Only two are living in Fillmore County. Joseph Zieren served on the school board of District No. 62 from 1914 until the school was discontinued, the school where 22 Zieren children received their early education. He was for many years supervisor of roads for Bennett township.

-Joseph Zieren, Jr.

MISCELLANY

"Buried Treasure"

The Signal for May 4, 1922, contained the following account of this unusual incident:

While Alvin Oberkotter was plowing his garden on the afternoon of April 13, he plowed up a baking-powder can containing \$1,000 in \$20 gold pieces. This 120-acre farm lies in Bennett township 9 miles west and one mile north of Geneva. It belongs to the Oberkotter estate, having been purchased three years ago. Tenants have occupied the land since the Oberkotter ownership until this spring. Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Oberkotter completed their moving to the farm on the day the gold was plowed up.

There were many old cans and bricks in the garden which Mr. Oberkotter was tossing out of the way. This particular can was so heavy he decided to look inside. There he found 50 golden eagles spotted with dirt. Since there was no one to prove positive ownership the Oberkotters assume

that the money belongs to them.

Some years ago an elderly man named Nels Nelson owned and resided on the farm. He lived alone and was known to keep considerable sums of money around with him and that he occasionally became intoxicated. Stories are told of his losing money which the neighbors found and returned to him. He was found dead at his home five or six years ago. The Swedish Consul came from Omaha when the estate was settled as it was believed probably that Nelson buried the gold [perhaps in the wall of his sod house, which was pulled down in 1917].

Page after page of filings are included in the abstracts to this land which is known as "Treasure Farm." Distinguished names appear in the history of this farm including William Jennings Bryan, Secretary of State for Wilson, who attested to some of the record. Birth records from Sweden figure in its history attested by Swedish dignitaries. Jack

Nolde and his mother recently purchased the farm from Oberkotter heirs. —From Scrapbook of Mrs. Ed Isley

Grace United Brethren Church

This church, sometimes called Grace Chapel but more familiarly known as the Mann Church, was established in 1895. Sunday School and church services were first held in that year in the District 63 schoolhouse, located on the SE corner of the SE ¼ of Sec. 29, T7, R4W. Land for the church site was donated by Samuel B. Mann from the Mann homestead on the NE ¼ of Sec. 32.

The first church was a building put up by the Methodist, known as Asbury Chapel, located 4 miles E of the present church site. The Grace congregation purchased that building in the spring of 1908 and moved it to the Mann

homestead. The parsonage was built in 1909.

Established as a United Brethren Mission church, the new organization numbered among its first members Mr. and Mrs. S. B. Mann and their daughters Adeline, Caroline, and Jane; F. V. Mann and his wife Alma; the Fenske family; Willie Levander; Louis Lauenstein; Mamie and Ida Peterson; Mrs. Ezra Harrington; and Mrs. John Whitaker. Others influential in establishing the work of the new church were Bernard Isley, Mr. and Mrs. George Myers, and Henry Fessler. The first minister was a Rev. Mr. Wheeler.

On October 14, 1920, the first church burned down. In the spring of 1921, a Baptist church building, over in Clay County, was purchased and moved to the Mann site.

There were many activities in this country church which endeared itself to many people for miles around. Everybody was always willing to go the second mile.

There were Sunday School and church services every Sunday morning, and Christian Endeavor and another church service in the evening. There was always a young people's choir. Ladies' missionary meetings met once a month. Every summer, a Sunday School picnic was held in the Manns' yard, where there were plenty of large shade trees.

In early church days, camp meetings were great events, and people came from miles around. They brought along camping tents, cots, stoves, bedding, food and other supplies enough to last for the duration of the tent meeting. All had an opportunity to meet in fellowship with other Christians. There was always a missionary present.

Two ministers and two foreign missionaries went out from this church during its lifetime, the Revs. F. V. Mann and Arthur Huntley (both deceased); Dr. Leslie Huntley, now of Washington, Kansas, the first medical missionary to serve in the mission field in Sierra Leone, West Africa; and Miss Mabel Shultz, who also served in Africa. So it would seem that this church not only was a great influence in its community but touched many other lives as well.

The last conference held in Grace Church took place in August, 1944. The visiting delegates and ministers stayed in homes in the community, and the church ladies served

meals in the basement of the church.

The last services were held here on September 11, 1945, while the Rev. John Frederick Lippe was pastor. In November, 1949, the building was sold to Vern Domeier.



Photo from Mrs. Sam Huntley taken in 1923 Miss Mabel Shultz (Missionary)

Miss Mabel Shultz, a member of Grace U. B. Church, consecrated her life to Christian work at the age of 14. After completing her studies at the Moody Bible School in Chicago, she served one year as pastor of her home church. On July 28, 1923, Miss Shultz, with other missionaries,

sailed from New York for Freetown, Sierra Leone, where she was stationed at the Bonthe Serbeo Mission. Despite the fact that she liked her missionary work very much, illness forced her to return home before her term was finished. She passed away on March 15, 1938.

Baptismal Pool

A baptismal pool on Sec. 29 in Bennett township is still very visible and when the water comes up it is all of four

This pool was inaugurated under the tenure of the Rev. William Trace from Dorchester, Nebraska. A minister of the United Brethren Church of Huntington, Indiana, Rev. Trace was the first minister in the second United Brethren Church on the NE corner of Sec. 32, T7, R4W, Bennett township.

In this pool possibly six adults were immersed in 1909.

All are now deceased.

Sam Huntley and his wife Ruth Shultz Huntley recall vividly the service, and to Sam this baptismal pool is hallowed ground; those persons immersed in the pool were his relatives. -Mrs. Sam Huntley

Vanished Scenes

Along the county line where the "Fillmorians" may reach out and shake hands with the "Claytonians" many changes have taken place in the last half-century and more. But the early settlers with far sightedness planted twigs of cottonwood which soon grew into large trees. A row on each side marked the way for miles, not as an avenue, thickly set but at intervals, some distance apart. Travelers jogging along the dusty roads or farmers plodding along to market with heavy loads of grain often stopped their horses for a rest in the shade of these trees from the hot summer sun. They must have blessed the early settlers for their thoughtfulness.

One such tree stood on the corner 2 miles N of Highway 41. It towered above all the other trees, which it outlived a decade or more. It served as a landmark for many years but also as a target for lightning aimed at the highest object around. Each strike stripped it of bark, limbs, and branches until it was no longer a thing of beauty and was cut down and used as firewood. All that remains of those trees are a few stumps by the roadside which refuse to be moved by

wind or high water.

If a boy or girl of 60 years ago were to appear along the county line today he would find few of the people he used to know. There are no Adams left, where seven families in a row each had boys named Adam. The same families each had a John, but that is not uncommon even today. In fact, so few people are living along the county line that he would scarcely recognize the farms without their houses and other buildings.

Many things of the first half-century in Fillmore County that the children of today have missed, they will not see again.

There was the Irish linen peddler with his pack of linens and laces walking a hundred miles and more on his trip each

way from house to house.

The Arab peddler traveled an easier way but scarcely any faster. His one-horse open vehicle, the back of which was equipped with a covered box, held his wares. Happy the boy or girl at whose home the peddler was allowed to spend the night, as they were assured some gift from his pack: toys, fancy combs, brooches, ear rings, beads, etc. Baubles they were, but wonderful in the eyes of the young. Other articles they had, too: bolts of silks and satins, fine laces, gay colored scarfs, and handkerchiefs.

The Abdallahs and Aliases had their favorite stopping places where they knew they were welcome to spend their weekends, while in the vicinity. Often as many as four or five would be gathered together to spend their Sunday talking over their week's sales and experiences. To their credit, none was ever known to break the trust placed in them or take advantage of their hosts' hospitality. A slow way of making a living, you might say, but nevertheless many of these peddlers were able to establish themselves in large towns and set up stores of their own.

On a Sunday afternoon you might see a young man approaching the home of his lady love on foot or on horseback, and if you were too young for romance yourself you would hurry to announce to your elder sister that her beau was coming, at which announcement she would pin a pretty bow or ribbon in her pompadour, add a dash of talcum powder on her cheeks - no rouge or lipstick - and would welcome him into the parlor or the porch hammock. If you were the inquisitive kind you might peek from some vantage point to see him present her with a box of bonbons or to draw from his vest pocket one of the dainty little name cards so popular in those days, or he might present her with his silk neckerchief which many of the swains wore and gave to their favorite lady friend.

If the beau were lucky enough to have a horse and buggy you could see rings on his harness at some distance as he cracked his whip to show off a bit before his admiring girl

On a Sunday afternoon, too, you might see all sorts of vehicles gathered in a pasture with horses tied to fence posts and discover a game of ball was in progress. After the game there would be a horse race. The boys who rode the horses then have grandsons who are the hot-rod racers of today.

All was not hard work in those early days. There were parties, house dances, barn dances, school programs, etc. There were sleighrides in bob sleds or cutters, with the passengers bundled up and tucked in under horsehide lap robes. There were spelling bees and lyceums. If these programs did nothing else, they taught folks to stand on their feet and talk in public. At each program there would be a debate on some subject close to the lives of the people. Debating teams from one school would challenge those from some other district.

"A Reporter at Large"

The following paragraphs are from a newspaper article written by P. J. Kennedy at the turn of the century, listing the people who lived in Bennett township.

Bennett joins Grafton township on the south and is one of the finest townships in the county. We never met finer people. Their homes are cheerful and happy.

The first man we met on the trip was C. C. Kavanaugh. Mr. Kavanaugh owns 160 acres of land and has 30 acres of

wheat, 20 acres of oats, and 40 acres of corn.

We took dinner with W. C. Lange. Mr. Lange owns 160 acres of fine land. He has the following crops this year: 50 acres of wheat, 20 acres of oats, and 40 acres of corn. The rest of his farm is pasture and hay land.

We called to see Mike Oberlander but he wasn't at home.

He has a fine quarter of land.

John Oswald has a beautiful farm and his buildings are

Joseph Oberlander was taking his noonday nap when we called and we were a little afraid to disturb him but he came out in good humor. Mr. Oberlander has a fine 160 and we are pleased to say he is doing well.

John Zieren has just completed a new house and has otherwise improved his farm. He is a strong Republican but his politics do not prevent him from being the good

fellow he is.

George Martin is living on the W. G. Hainey farm. Mr. Martin bade us welcome and treated us like gentlemen in every way. We wish him a long and prosperous life.

William F. Van Patton is farming a fine quarter section. He has the following crops: 80 acres of wheat and 60 acres of

Harm Evarts is farming 160 and has the following crops: 50 acres of wheat, 30 acres of oats, and 50 acres of corn.

G. W. McCormick was very busily engaged cultivating corn. Mr. McCormick is farming a very fine 160 and his

crops look fine.

J. J. Gibbons is farming 240 acres and has the following acreage planted to crops: 90 acres of wheat, 25 acres of oats, and 75 acres of corn. Mr. Gibbons is a pleasant man to visit with.

Charles Burns owns a fine 240 acres and we are glad that we happened around his place about dinner time. We stand ready at any time to speak a kind word for Charles Burns.

The next man we met on this route was Ed Lawless. Ed was asleep when we came to his place, taking his noonday nap. Mr. Lawless and family are nice people to visit with.

P. W. Murray lives along this line. In addition to being a big farmer Mr. Murray is chief justice of the supreme court of Bennett township, a position he very creditably fills to the entire satisfaction of his constituents. The people say his decisions are final.

Here we met our political friend, the Hon. Richard Dobson. Mr. Dobson was not studying politics when we ran ferninst him. Oh, no; on the contrary, he was very busily engaged mowing alfalfa hay. He owns 240 acres of choice farm land.

Anthony Buttell owns 320 acres of splendid land on this

line. He has just completed a fine new house.

John and Carl Stengel both are big farmers and are happy and contented.

J. B. Garrison and brothers own a section of almighty fine land.

Louis Oswald is making money and doing well. Mr. Oswald owns 240 acres of nice land and we wish him

Pat and John Sullivan are young men who are farming 240 acres of land. They have quite a large crop of everything and it looks well.

P. J. Case is an old settler having lived on his present farm 31 years. We enjoyed our visit with Mr. Case and hope sometime in the future we may be able to call again.



Photo from Mrs. Sam Huntley taken in 1914 Grace United Brethren Church. Right to left: Rev. Trace, minister; Rev. Durham, a missionary; Mrs. Durham, Mrs. Trace, and Rev. Durham's daughter.

We turned in for the night with John Sheridan. We knew John and his family when they lived down by Exeter. Mr. Sheridan has a fine home and his hospitality is known the entire country over. He is the assessor for Bennett township and so far as we heard has given entire satisfaction, a fact we like to mention.

We stopped for dinner with George M. White and a finer dinner we never sat down to. The kindness of Mr. White and his family is appreciated. We were invited to call again and that is just what we will do some day soon.

J. A. Johnson has a fine 160 and is treasurer of Bennett township. The funds of Bennett township are safe in the hand of Mr. Johnson.

G. E. Mitchell is farming 160 acres of choice land. He has the following acreage sowed to crops: 100 acres of corn and 50 acres of wheat.

L. F. Launstein is another farmer who has a mighty lovely home. Everything about the place looked clean and neat and this is why we think he is prosperous and doing well.

Well, we meandered along till we came to Henry Fessler's place. Mr. Fessler is supervisor from the third district and is sure enough a jolly fellow to meet. When his term of office expires we think the people will say, well done thou good and faithful servant.



Taken in 1921 on Highway 41. Moving the second E. U. B. Church from Clay County.

G. H. Meyers was hoeing in his garden when we called to say hello. Mr. Meyers and his family are among the best people in Bennett township.

David Kreichbaum is another one of the good citizens of Bennett township. Mr. Kreichbaum owns a beautiful and well improved farm.

P. H. Hoarty owns 320 acres of land on this line and has his place stocked with a fine herd of cattle. Mr. Hoarty said he was doing well.

Fred Bieser lives right across the road from Mr. Hoarty's. Mr. Bieser has a good crop but we are sorry to say he is not having very good health. We hope to soon hear of his return to good health.



Photo from Nellie Sheridan

Camp meeting on Church grounds (about 1914). Rev. and Mrs. Durham were the missionaries. Seated in second row from front, left to right: Mrs. Brotherton, lady unknown, man unknown, Mrs. Samuel B. Mann, Mr. Burroughs, between Mrs. Mann and Mrs. Ezra Harrington, Mrs. Burroughs, between Mrs. Harrington and Mrs. Solberg, Albert Talkington holding child.

J. J. and Dan Murray own a large tract in this locality. We didn't have time to call on the boys but the neighbors all told us that they are doing nicely.

Julius Schinzel lives over on the north line of Bennett. Somehow we could never catch him home before. Mr. Schinzel is quite a large farmer and a good one, too.

When we called to see A. F. Schulz we found him sick in bed.

Mr. Schulz, Sr., owns a fine farm on the Bennett and Geneva township line.

Charles Whitaker wasn't at home when we called.

Bernard Rotter was cultivating corn and we stopped to say a word with him. Mr. Rotter owns a fine farm of 160 acres.

August Rotter is farming 160 acres of land. He has the following crops: Wheat 25 acres, oats 15 acres, and 80 acres of corn.

We found T. O. Huston making hog pasture. He had just received a consignment of wire from Cleveland, Ohio, and was busy getting it in shape. Mr. Huston has 30 acres planted to peach trees and they are bearing some this year. His farm is a veritable paradise with trees and flowers. We will slip back some day when the peaches are ripe.

C. B. Sypher is farming the E. A. Cushing farm.

We called to see John O'Brien but he was down in Omaha with a carload of hogs. Mr. O'Brien owns 720 acres of land. He also owns something like 150 head of cattle and about three acres of hogs. When Mr. O'Brien came to Fillmore County he didn't have the beautiful home one sees today, but he worked hard and had the help of a good wife, and then his boys grew up and little by little wealth came his way until finally he triumphed and today he is reputed one of the best fixed men in Fillmore County. The writer is glad to note this fact because we know Mr. O'Brien to be a splendid citizen.

David Isley, Ole N. Karlberg, and C. J. Lundberg were people we called on.

S. B. Mann owns 400 acres of choice land in Bennett township. Mr. Mann paid us a goodly sum on subscriptions for which he has our hearty thanks.

William Stolldorf and Oscar Solberg live along this line.

Both are good farmers.

We are now at work in Momence township and are happy to say that our success in the past has been far beyond our expectations. We always speak with respect for those who don't agree with our politics. $-P.\ J.\ K.$

THE OBLINGER LETTERS

Greatly enriching the early history of Fillmore County are the Oblinger Letters. These consist of a series of letters written through the years 1872 to 1880 by a young homesteader, Uriah W. Oblinger, and his wife, Martha Thomas Oblinger, to members of Mrs. Oblinger's family back in their old home in Indiana. Not written for publication, they give an intimate first-hand description of life on a Fillmore County homestead.

Beginning with the young homesteader's determination to have a home of his own, they provide a vivid picture of almost every phase of homestead life. The search for a claim, the filing thereon, building of the sod house, breaking the first sod, the Easter blizzard of 1873, the grasshopper years, hard

times, etc., are all there.

The Oblingers' letters were preserved by the Thomas family, who recently presented them to the Nebraska State Historical Society. To the courtesy of the Historical Society and the kindness of Mrs. William Lennemann of Orleans, Nebraska, to whose mother most of the letters were written, and of Mrs. Margaret Oblinger Sandon of Denver, Colorado, the youngest daughter of the Oblingers, who was born on the homestead on October 11, 1877, we are indebted for the privilege of including a few extracts from them in this history of our county.¹

These letters are of particular interest to the authors of the Bennett precinct story, as the Oblinger homestead was in that immediate locality. The homestead map of Fillmore County (see Bennett homestead map) shows that it was located on the SW ¼ of Sec. 32, on the present Highway 41, 1¼ miles east of the Clay County line and in the same section with the Mann homestead. The Oblinger land, now the Nuss estate; the Giles Thomas land, now the Henry J. Kamler estate, was cornered on the northwest by the E.U.B. Church

by the one in which the writer's home is located.

Mrs. Oblinger's older brother, Giles Thomas, from whose dugout house many of the letters were written, lived on the SE ¼ of Sec. 4, Momence township, which cornered Sec. 32 of Bennett, the Oblinger section. A younger brother, Sam, sometimes referred to in the letters as "Doc," lived on a homestead. The homesteads of many of those mentioned in the letters may be found in these maps.

Giles, Sam, and Uriah had come to the county in October, 1872, in search of homesteads. Giles, a soldier, took his homestead on the SE ¼ of Sec. 4, Momence, now the Henry J. Kamler home where Carl Kamler lives. Sam had taken

land in Sec. 2, Momence.

In one letter Uriah speaks of his determination to have a home of his own; of his search for a claim; of his intention to jump an abandoned claim; of the procedure required for doing so; and of the wonderful land, smooth-lying and "rich as cream." He mentions a number of neighbors, such as a Mr. Entwisle and a Mr. Elliott. It should be understood that although the ordinary claim jumper was universally despised, no opprobrium was attached to a man who "jumped" a fully abandoned claim. Jumping, or contesting, of a fully abandoned claim was reliably estimated at $2\frac{1}{2}$ filings on every homestead claim in Nebraska. The average was probably not that high in Fillmore County. —Nellie Sheridan



Photo from Nebraska State Historical Society
Uriah W. Oblinger family about 1874: Uriah W., daughter Ella, and
wife Martha Thomas.

[Editor's Note: The letters—or extracts from letters—that follow are printed exactly as they were written except for very minor changes in punctuation and paragraphing.]

Uriah W. Oblinger to his wife, Martha ("Mattie") Thomas Oblinger:

Sabbath Nov. 17, 1872 At Giles House

Dear Wife and Baby:

You guess right when you think I am homesick. But it is not to go back to Indiana. It is to secure a home right here and that I think can be done. It is going to cost some privations, but I have made up my mind to stand them for the sake of a home.

I know it will seem pretty rough to those who have never tried to do without wood or timber, but it looks rougher on paper than the reality seems. As to water, there is plenty of it by digging pretty deep. And good too, and never failing. As to the streams, I do not want land with one of the streams here on it, for they are very crooked, cutting the land up bad and the banks are so steep that they are hard to get down to. Besides, there is considerably fever and ague along them and the land is pretty sandy, too. Back from the streams is a better quality of soil, no fever and ague, and the land is very even and nice and almost every section near here can every foot be plowed and cultivated with a very few exceptions. The claim that Giles and Sam has taken can every foot be plowed.

There are many more letters than those we have chosen extracts from to quote here. The Historical Society hopes to publish the whole collection at some future date.

South of us the land is more broken, being a good many wet places and hilly between.

There was Methodist preaching last Sunday about 4 miles south of here. Two weeks from today there is preaching by the same man at Brother Elliott's ¼ mile east from here. An Englishman, Mr. Entwisle (a bachelor Nett with 160 acres), said if the neighbors would build a sod church he would furnish the wood all winter for it. So you can see what church privileges are at present.

I like the neighborhood pretty well. There are several English families here and I think they are good neighbors. I have been hunting for a good claim ever since I came from Beatrice but all the good ones are taken that are near here but I have found one nor-west of here about 1½ miles that is a splendid piece of land that was homesteaded about a year ago and the man is in Michigan and don't intend to come to it and has never done any work on it. It is in the Lincoln district and tomorrow I start there to jump it as he has forfeited all claims to it by not commencing improvements in six months. All I can do this trip is enter complaint against it and go through legal form to have it canceled. It will cost \$10.50 besides the homestead fee when the papers come back from Washington canceling it from the present homesteader back to the government.

I will mail this at Lincoln and tell you the success I meet there. I have traded my wagon off for another and got \$27 to boot. I have also traded my shotgun off for a rifle. Oh, I killed a wild goose last week. It made 4 messes for us big eaters. I set right on Jenny's back and shot when I killed it. I can drop the bridle and shoot whenever I please and she will stand like an old sheep. I think more of her every day. She is fat enough now for any use and I have drove her about 1,000 miles since I started besides what I have rode her hunting for a claim. Old Nelly's ribs stick out in spite of me. Besides, she hurt me this morning but hurt herself as bad while she was doing it. I took her out of the stable to exercise a little and started across the prairie riding her with a halter and when I started back she run with me and I could not get her stopped till she run on some plowing close to the stable and fell, pitching me over her head and turning a somerset after me and rolled on my left leg with my right sticking up over her belly and no one near me to help me out.

I caught her by the forelegs to keep her from striking me in the face and head with them while she pounded me in the back and ribs with her hind feet and I tell you I held manfully trying to turn her over from me to keep her from killing me. I finally succeeded by her struggles to raise her enough to draw my leg out and it was useless for a while, I tell you. She skinned her head in three places and cut a small gash about an inch long in the front of her shoulder. The boys are gone about 28 miles from here to husk corn on the shares and Mr. DeWolf had started to his brother-in-law's about 18 miles from here so you see I was entirely alone and had to get out the best I could. Well, I must do up my evening chores and then more will be written.

November 20, 1872

Well, I promised to write more as soon as my chores were done but Mr. Elliott and wife came and spent the evening with us so I did not write any more and here I am in Crete at the Hotel 20 miles southwest of Lincoln where I have been to complain against a homestead. I am in a fair way now for a home but I will have to make 2 trips to Lincoln yet. My trial for the claim is the 20th of December when I will have to appear at the land office in Lincoln with 2 witnesses to prove that the man has been gone more than 6 months and has never did anything on it. Then the papers will be sent to Washington and his claim canceled and as soon as they come back I can homestead it, which may be 2 or 3 months yet. But I am sure of a home now and there is not a square inch of it but what is rich as cream and can be plowed and I can stand almost anywhere on [it] and see it all. There is a well near the corner of it only 67 feet deep, which is shallow for this country. Giles well is 124 feet deep. There is 3 families living by my claim so that I can build on any part of it and they will not be over 1/2 mile from us and all native born

Americans so you see we will be better off for neighbors than we expected to be. We have had some very cold breezes from the Nor-west that make a fellow shiver, I tell [you]. But I am not scared yet and to tell my opinion I like it better every day that I am here.

I took dinner today with Mr. Vandoran (Joe's uncle) and I tell you they [were] glad to see me come in. They said it did them good to see some one from their old neighborhood. They are living in the best house they were ever in and are doing well and are well pleased, so you see when I go to Lincoln I will have some place to get my grub - and I tell you it takes a lot to do me now. I can eat from the time I get up till bed time and go to bed hungry. If it serves you so when you get here it will take all we can raise to eat. I have not seen Giles and Sam since Monday week. They went off toward Beatrice 28 miles to gather corn on the shares and left me hunting for a claim. Sam need not stay on his land only go to it and stay a short time every six months and then go off and work somewhere and put his wages in improvements is all the law requires of a single man. There is a great many of them here doing that way and [it] is the best thing they can do. I think if Father was here he would be tempted to do just as we did when he would see the land. There is a good many come just to look but as soon as they see the land they go to the land office as fast as they can get

Well, Ma [Uriah's pet name for Mattie], I have got Plato yet and I am going to keep him just for you. He killed two skunks last week and we had plenty of musk for a while. It made him awful sick; he vomited like everything. You ought to see him chase the swifts. They are similar to a fox only smaller. There is but one dog in the neighborhood that can out-run him; he can run almost as fast as a greyhound.

I am going to try to get hauling here and if so I will gather corn on the shares. Well, Ma and Baby, a sweet goodnight and may God keep you from harm and bring you safe to my western home.

—Your loving husband

Uriah to Mattie:

Sabbath December 1, 1872 At Giles House

Dear Wife and Baby:

I am again at the pen talking to you through its silent medium and a great satisfaction it is to be thus blessed but more so if you were here with me and us occupying the homestead I have in view. . . .

Ma, I don't want you to get discouraged about our situation yet, for I am not. I did not come here to be baffled off so easily. I am going to have my land before I leave here if I live and have health, if I have to sell my team and take the money to live on, and live here alone till I can get a deed for a piece of land, and then I am confident that I can live when I have 160 acres of my own. So you can just make up your mind that I am going to have a home for Ma and Pet. When once my homestead papers are filed on a piece of land you can hold it as well as me, if I am called away; and if I am called before [the papers are filed], you can homestead 160 acres and hold it, for the law says soldiers' widows and orphans can have the same right as the soldier himself; even the guardian for a soldier's orphan can take a piece for the orphan as well as the soldier himself. Some are doing so at this time. So you see Uncle Sam has been mindful of those who stood by the country in her hour of peril by providing in a great measure for those who were ever nearest and dearest to us.

Well, Ma, we were all at church today and a good meeting we had. Some got up and said they wanted to cast their influence on the side of Christianity that were not professors. This is more than they will do in Indiana, where there is more and better church privileges than we have here.

Ma, the longer I stay here the better I like it. There are but very few old families here. They are mostly young families just starting in life, the same as we are, and I find them very generous indeed. We will all be poor here together and grow up together and I hope be happy together.

Ma, you know I was saying when I left home, just for

fun, I would be a single man when I got here, but I soon found that did not pay. When I would ask anyone to show me vacant land, about the next question was: Have you a family? When I answered in the affirmative they were ready to show me a claim, for they are anxious for people to come in who will be permanent settlers, for that is what we need to make the country. Nearly ½ of the claims here are taken by single men. The section that Giles is on has 3 single men. The one that Doc is on has 3 and you might say 4, for one man came from England and left his wife in Chicago till he could come and get a claim, and when he wrote for her she sent him word that she was going back to England and would not come, so he is here alone. Is that the way you are going to serve me, dear wife? If it is, just send our baby, and then I guess Ma will come too. . . .

Well, I have been down to tend Mr. Robinson's things for him (he has gone to Beatrice as a witness for Mr. DeWolf) and when I came back Mr. Elliott and his wife were here, so

I did not get to writing till just now. . . .

Ma, you know I expected to be a good way off from neighbors when I left home, and you will know by my former letter that I am happily mistaken, and I think, taking everything into view, we have good neighbors. I do not know of one near that drinks, and we can count the improvements on some 75 to 80 farms from here, and that is more than we can say of our old neighborhood. . . .

Well, Ma, I must tell you something about prices out here. We can buy Sterne's make of goods right here for about 5 cents more per yard than it costs at retail at the factory, his flannels and his jeans both. And groceries and other goods

are no higher than they are in Indiana.

I am trying to make a trade with a man for his cow. He wants a well and I am trying to get the job of digging it for the cow. . . .

I am not discouraged yet nor anywhere near it, and the longer I stay here the better I like it. I think that there is a bright future for Nebraska and us with it. I think you will certainly like it here, for mud there has been none yet to speak of and never is. There is always nice grass to walk on and the best roads in the world. You can go at all times and never mud bound. . . .

I think that anyone that is not able to own a farm in Indiana or any of the older states and make their living by farming are foolish for staying [there] any longer than just to get enough to live on. If I had come here when we were first married and put in as many hard licks here as I have there, I would have a farm of my own now pretty well improved; as it is, I am just where I was then — just starting. It is going to be rough starting, as I always told you, but when started it will be ours. I want you to make up your mind to have to take it rough for a few years and then you will not be disappointed. I will make the way as smooth as I can for you, but the best will be rough. Those that are here seem to be as happy as larks. They are all homesteaders yet there is not more than one in 25 that has a deed for their land.

Uriah to Mattie:

Lincoln, Nebraska Sabbath, December 22, 1872

Dear Wife and Baby:

I am at Lincoln this evening, and the boys, I suppose, are looking for me out in Fillmore County. I was to have been back this evening. I left there last Wednesday morning and came to the trial for my claim on Friday at 1:00 p.m. It was decided in my favor, so you can rest now as I know where I am going to make our home. . . .

After my trial I got ready to start back and it commenced snowing, and as there is a very wild country between here and Crete and the distance 20 miles or more and the time 3 o'clock, I concluded to stay till Saturday morning. (I am stopping at Mr. Vandoran's.) Well, Friday evening 2 men called to spend the evening here, and lucky for me it was, too, for they were wanting teams to haul ice, and as the horse disease is here they were hard to get, so I got work right on the spot and there will probably be more chances when I am through this job. It will be some 7 or 8 days' work for me at

\$3 per day and board myself. I only brought the clothes I had on, but I thought I would put up with anything to be earning something. My horses I thought had just the common distemper till I came here (and very light at that) but here they tell me it is the horse disease. If it is, they have had it very light and are about over it.

There is another chance here soon for teaming or at least I think so. If they get the iron soon for a railroad they are building here, I can get to haul ties. If I can get work here I

will stay all winter.

[He calculated that steady winter work would provide enough money to send for his family early in the spring. But he wrote home on January 26, 1873, that he had worked only three days for the railroad. Then old Nelly fell and hurt herself; after nursing her back to health, he sold her for \$100. Although the railroad had recruited labor by promising to pay promptly on the 20th of each month, he discovered that the company was involved in a management squabble back East and had not paid any of its local bills since "October last." For his three days' pay, he had to argue—successfully, he reported with pride—and then got not cash but an order for coal and groceries, which Mr. Vandoran managed to turn into cash for him.]

Uriah to Mattie:

Bachelors' Hall, Fillmore County March 23, 1873

[He is still at Giles's house, but looking forward to the arrival of his wife and baby girl, who are due to start West just one month from

that date.]

. . . Plows have been going full blast for 2 weeks now, and all the spring wheat is sowed and some oats. The grass is starting a little but it is too dry for anything to grow very fast. We need a warm [rain] now to freshen things a little. We have had but one soaking rain since we have been in the state, and that was soon after we came here around the last of October. We get our rain here in the summer time and none in the winter. Besides, the soil is of such a nature that it holds moisture a long time. We have had no rain for about 5 months and but little snow, and yet the ground is moist within an inch of the top. What we most need rain for now is a warm one to warm up the ground. . . .

Oh, yes, don't forget any of my books. Bring every one from least to largest, for I am going to look over my school

books and teach next winter . . .

Mattie to her mother and family: May 19th 1873

At home in our own house, and a sod at that, and just ate dinner. Dear friends as I have an opportunity to send a letter to the office I will send you a few hastily composed lines.

Billie Mote came to our house Saturday morning, he is going to Grafton this afternoon so I will not have time to write much. We have [had] considerable of rain since I came here. Saturday night it rained very hard. It is too wet to plant corn. Some are ready but have to wait a day or so for the ground to dry off. The plants and strawberrys that I brought I put on Giles' place. I was looking at them last evening. They look very promising, the Dialetre especially. We went to Mr. Cambels yesterday to church and Sabbath school. They live seven miles south of here. The minister failed to come so there was society meeting. The Cambels are real Kentuckians, wish you could hear them talk. We took dinner with them.

Uriah and Billie are talking. WAC is lying on the lounge and Ella is teasing him for his book. We moved into our house last Wednesday (U.W.O. birthday). I suppose you would like to see us in our sod house. It is not quite so convenient as a nice frame but I would as soon live in it as the cabins I have lived in and then we are at home which makes it more comfortable. I ripped our wagon sheet in two, have it around two sides and several papers up so the boys think it looks real well. Uriah's made a bedstead and a lounge so [we] could have something to sleep on. The only objection I have we have no floor yet. Will be better this fall, I got one tea cup and saucer and the corner of the glass on the little hero picture broken. Pretty good luck, I think. My goods got here two days before I did. Uriah had taken them out to Mr. Houks. Uriah was plowing sod this forenoon talks of planting some this afternoon. He has 20 acres surrounded, have 10 of it broke. Doc and Billie and Uriah C. stayed with us. I know you would have laughed to see us fixing their bed. We set boxes to the side of the lounge and enlarged Uriah's bed for all of them. We enjoyed the fun and they enjoyed their bed as much as if they had been in a nice parlor bedroom. U. C. and Doc sung while I got supper. They call Doc "Sam" out here, sounds very odd to me. Wish you could see his whiskers shaved all off but what is on his chin and lip. I told him I wanted some to send you but he could not see it. He has worked one day at his house.

I have got acquainted with some here. They are not hard to get acquainted with. The boys went to Sutton Saturday afternoon. I went along to see the town and country. On our way we seen three antelopes. U.C. shot at them for fun. Charlie, if you was here you would never get done looking for vou can see ever so far. Coming from Sutton we could see the county seat which was 11 miles from us. We got a letter from you. U.C. says tell Kate D. that he glories in her spunk and for peace and joy to go with her but she must not do so when she comes to Nebraska. There is some here looks as though they would like for some girls would come around. I am real sorry to hear of Aunt Eliza's ailments. Hope she may get well soon. I saw J. Arnwot on the cars, he told me that two of the Swigart boys and their wives started to Oregon the same morning I started so Rose Thomas has gone farther west than I have. The other woman was a Larose.

I am washing today. This afternoon is little cloudy with the sun shining occasionally. Ella is as hearty as she can be and has an appetite like a little horse. I never cooked for such appetites as I have since I been here. Sometimes I think I will cook enough of some things for two meals but the boys clean them every time.

We are all well. I must close for this time. I am as ever, your sister and daughter. Our love to all.

—M. V. O.

Mattie to her family:

At Giles's, Monday morning August 25, 1873

. . . Yesterday we had preaching (Methodist). I feel sorry for our preacher [Mr. Heckman] for he is so timid. It seems as though he has no confidence in himself and it hurts his speaking very much. He is a very poor man. Has a homestead and of course, like the rest of us he must work hard and he has not much time to prepare sermons for Sunday and he has always been a local preacher. He says he will try to keep us together until conference and then perhaps we may get someone else that can preach better. We may get a better speaker but no better man. The Presbyterian preacher will be here in two weeks so we will have preaching every Sunday now after this and Sunday School, too. . . .

Mattie to her family:

[Undated, but probably about December, 1873]

I think Geo. and Griffin would do well to come west if their money will not go far enough there for them. If they don't watch the corners pretty close we will be as well off as they are in a few years. We can say now that we own 160 acres. All it wants is improving and I am sure it is a healthy place. Poor little Earny, it is too bad he must have the chills so much. If I was them I would be willing to sacrifice some of my enjoyments to endure a few privations for the sake of having health in my family. I am very sure they would be healthier here but I shall not urge them to come for fear they would not be satisfied and then we would be to blame. Do you ever hear how Al Shoap likes the west. Is he in the grasshopper regions? Tell Doc we will write to him soon to be patient and wait. I am anxiously waiting for the barrel to come. Think we will get it this week or next. I assure you we will feel very thankful to you all for what is in it. Oh, yes, we got a dime worth of Banbo apples in Fairmont which was seven. I tell you they were good. Ella thought so. I left her at Mr. Heley's when we went to Fairmont. Well, I will have to stop writing. Guess there is a piece of paper for each of you this time.

Mattie to her family:

April 25, 1874

... I wish we could get a good preacher to preach for us. I think after our schoolhouse is finished we will have to try to get Bro. Heckman started again. We did not go to hear Father Spears last Sunday as Uriah had been working the oxen so hard it looked like a sin to drive so far with them on Sunday and I was very glad we did not go for about noon it commenced raining and rained very hard in the afternoon. . . .

Mattie to her family: [Undated, but apparently between April and November, 1874]

. . . dinner and just come home from Sabbath School. But few were out. Some that attended were at a dance last night and of course feel too badly used up to go to Sabbath School. There was a special few of us there and only 3 families of us that make any profession at all and those that don't want to, run the thing to suit themselves. Are too contrary to listen to anything but their own will and you know that will not work. But however, we have hope that it will be different after a while. As there are so few regular in attendance it is hard to hit upon any regular routine of business each Sunday. Consequently we will do the best we can. . . .

Mattie to her family:

November 24, 1874

long time. Well, we have had no meeting for quite a while as our old minister had quite a hard spell of sickness this fall and has not been able to preach since. Some think he is done preaching. We are getting real hungry for meeting. I think if ever there was a missionary needed, there is one needed here. There is a plenty of work to do. There are but few men here that can preach and support their families too, and the people are not forehanded enough to hire a minister. How I would like to be in a genuine old Methodist meeting once more. I suppose it will soon be time for you to have protracted meeting again. How I would like to attend one of them. . . .

Mattie to her family:

January 11, 1880

While Uriah sings and the girls wash the dinner dishes the preacher and his wife drives up so here is a stop.

Monday evening after supper the preacher and wife stayed all night. Brother Johnson preaches every two weeks for us - preaches after night. Mrs. Johnson and I did not go as it was rather cold for her to go. She has a babe only 2 months old. It was fretful all evening after they came. Brother Johnson is a splendid preacher and he is well thought of. He came on this work in October. (We have our Conferences in the fall.) I never saw his wife before last evening. I like her appearance very much. She seems so common and sociable. Brother Johnson is a Kentuckian. He has been in this state 23 years. Last night before he started to church he said "Now, Sister Oblinger, as you are not going to church I would like some corn bread and sweet milk for my supper when I get back and that is all I want." I had it ready for him and how he did feast on it. I cooked other things but he just ate his corn bread and milk. When they started home we gave them a jug of fresh milk, some meal and butter and potatoes. It does not insult them to give them eatables like it did the man that was on the work before him.

Well, now, something else. Uriah is repairing the minutes of their last literary society which was held last Saturday night. They have some big times debating. The question for next Saturday night is "Resolved, that Intemperance causes more sorrow than War..."

[The following letter about her parents was written by Maggie Sandon. To whom it was written is not known, and it bears no date. The location of the manuscript letter is also not known. The Oblinger letters given above were checked against their originals at the Historical Society; this letter follows, with no changes whatever, the typescript given to the compilers of this history:]

Uriah W. Oblinger and Martha V. Thomas married March 25, 1869, near Onward Cass Co. Indiana. Lived in that vicinity til the fall of 1872. Uriah and his brother, Horace, and Sam and Giles Thomas (Martha's brothers) decided to go west. Traveled in two covered wagons. Landed in Fillmore County, Nebraska. Uriah took a homestead. Giles bought a mans right who wanted to leave. Giles was 31, would be 32 Dec. 16, 1872. Sam filed on an 80 acre homestead — the West 1/2 of the NW 1/4 of 8-6-4 and remained in Fillmore Co. at least a year. Sam returned to Indiana without taking land. A small house was on the place Giles bought so Uriah and Giles lived there; also a straw covered sod stable. Uriah did not build on his land that fall. Took his team and went to Lincoln where he got work till spring. Returned to his homestead to build a sod house. The walls were up and ready to put on the roof when the terrible Easter storm on April 13, 1873. A three day blizzard. Some people lost their lives and much of the stock perished. Uriah was still living at Giles house so they were safe, but could not get to the barn to feed and water the horses (3 days).

When Uriah went west in the fall of 1872 he left his wife and a 2 year old daughter (Ella) at the Thomas home. When the sod house was ready in the spring of 1873, he sent for them. Martha had kept the dishes and bedding. Uriah had taken 2 chairs and a small cook stove with him in the wagon. Dishes and bedding were shipped to Crete, Nebraska (Railroad was not built through Fillmore Co. yet) (R.R. was completed through Fillmore in Aug. 1871 but due to a quarrel between the town fathers the R.R., trains did not stop in Sutton at that time.) Uriah met them in Crete. Ella was only $2\frac{1}{2}$ years old but could faintly remember it and how glad

they were to all be together again.

A home was established in a "little old sod shanty on the claims." Uriah had plowed some land, and planted, wheat and corn. Also a garden and got a few chickens and a couple of little pigs. Wheat had been harvested; corn was just tasseling nicely. It was getting dry so they were wishing for

rain. This was in 1874.

At dinner one day Uriah wondered if it was going to rain as it seemed to be getting dark. "I can't see the sun," he remarked. On going outdoors, he called his wife, "Come out here, I never seen anything like this." The air was so full of grass hoppers, they could not see the sun. They soon began dropping and settled on all growing things, till everything was covered. Chickens ate hoppers until they could hold no more. Uriah turned the pigs out. They ate hoppers also till they could eat no more. Uriah thought he might save the corn by mixing trash and manure together. Martha drove the team while Uriah put the mixture in small piles. It was somewhat damp, so he set it on fire to cause a smudge; this kept the hoppers off for a while, but when the smoke ceased they soon had the corn. Every thing was gone in a 24 hour period. All green vegetation except the buffalo grass was gone. Pumpkins and squash were near enough ripe so the eating of the vine leaves did not spoil them.

Hoppers stayed only a few days and left as suddenly as they came. Evidently left no eggs as there were no hoppers

next year.

The stove they had was a little No. 7 cast iron one. The house was built all one room. Corn stalks left by the hoppers dried up. Uriah would cut and tie them in bundles, carry in and store them in a corner by the stove. Then would cut them stove size, with his pocket knife. That was all the fuel they had except a little wood he had hauled from Elk Creek about 25 miles away. Sod houses are warm so they did not have it too bad.

The first season on the homestead they had no milk,

butter, meat or lard.

Uriah had made a table and some stools from the boxes the goods had been sent in from Indiana. Also bought a little lumber and made two bedsteads, so those with a few boxes from the stove was all the furniture they had.

On Feb. 4, 1875, I (Ella) saw an Indian for the first time. The date is remembered for that night a sister (Estella) was born.

As this account is presumably Maggie Sandon's, and there is now no way of checking sources, this curious reference to "I (Ella)" is unexplainable; we can do no more than print it as written.

At dinner Uriah saw a man walking across the prairie, thought it was a neighbor, but soon saw it was an Indian. Martha had just finished baking bread. Uriah took it and hurried to the cellar. (An Indian will not go into a cellar so the bread was safe.) Indian just walked in - they never knock—and said "How." He carried a gun. Uriah took it and set it back in a corner out of the Indians reach, and managed to keep between the Indian and his gun. The Indian took a little red purse out of his pocket (he was wearing pants) and a blanket around him with a narrow strip of pink calico wrapped around his head. His hair was hanging to his shoulders. He held out the purse and said "five cents." Uriah said "no money." Then he said "pork" and pointed to his mouth. Wanted meat. Uriah said "no pork." They gave him food which he ate sitting by the stove, then he left and Uriah gave him his gun after he was outside. Uriah had to bring the dog inside to keep him from attacking the Indian. Ella was only 41/2 years old, but remembers it all quite vividly. Uriah broke out more land that year, 1875. Set out some trees and the homestead began to look better. Built a larger sod house and put in a floor. The first only had the hard packed dirt. Also dug a well. Had been hauling water from a neighbor. Had a garden now, so they began to live a little better. A neighbor (widow) let them have 2 cows on the shares so they had milk and butter. They had to sell the pigs that ate the grass hoppers for lack of corn to feed them. After getting the cows they got a pig so that year they had meat.

In those days they took wheat and corn to the mill, about 20 miles North, for grinding. Toll of a certain number of pounds for each bushel was taken by the mill to pay for the grinding. A nice crop of potatoes also was raised that summer. On October 11, 1877 another girl was born — Maggie Esther. Good crops on what land was cultivated was making homestead life look better. Then in Feb. 1880 Martha became very ill in confinement. After 3 days she passed away, and the child (a little boy) born dead, was buried in the mothers arms. She was about the first buried in what was then the "Dave Myers" cemetery. Name now is Fairview. I believe it is about 11 miles West of Geneva and 3 miles South. The homestead was 11 miles west of Geneva on the north side of the road. It is the South West Quarter of the section 32-7-4. Uriah stayed on the homestead that summer. Hired washing done and the bread baked. Also had help during harvesting

and threshing.



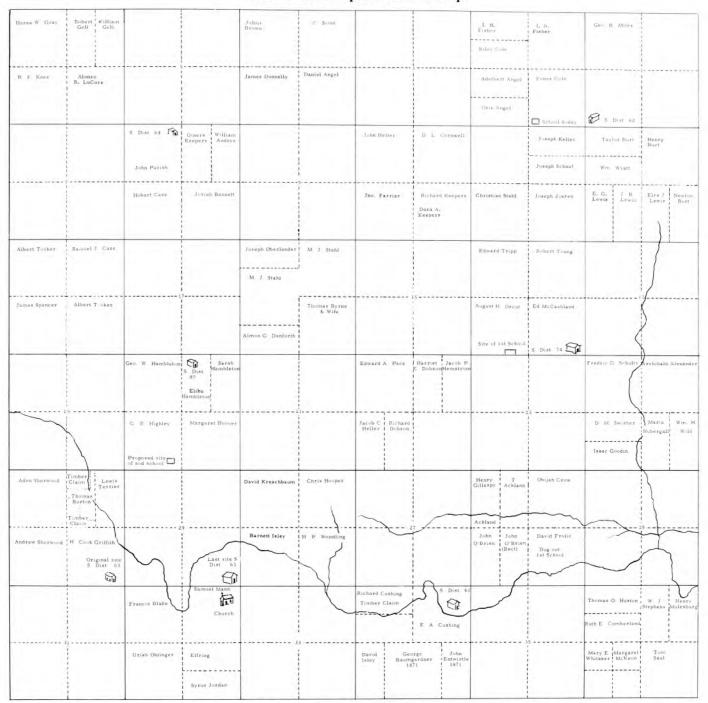
Photo from Nebraska State Historical Society Headstone in Fairview cemetery in Momence Township.

Maggie was $2\frac{1}{2}$ when her mother died, and had always been a delicate child, so the ministers wife cared for her that summer.

Ella and Stella were 9½ and 5 years old so stayed home and assisted in keeping house. All liked mush and milk, fried mush and corn bread. Uriah taught Ella how to do all of them and she continued doing them the same all her life.

In the fall of 1880 after corn and wheat were harvested, Uriah decided he could not continue to manage alone. So had a sale in Jan. 1881 selling everything. Then went to Min-

Bennett Township Homestead Map



nesota where his parents lived; also his brothers and sisters who were married, He left Ella at Menominie with her mother's sister and husband (S. Bailey). Estella was left with his brother Horace Oblinger and Maggie with his sister, the Travers. The Travers and Oblinger had no children of their own.

Uriah then worked at different places. In Oct. 1881 he married again. In July 1883 he decided to return to Fillmore Co. He traveled by covered wagon (he had sold the homestead). Left Minnesota on July 4th, arrived in Grafton, Nebr. Aug. 4, where Giles Thomas was living. Rented a place about 1½ miles from the homestead. At that time it was known as the "Fellows place," where Bill Fenskies son, Otto now lives. A half mile east of us was the schoolhouse No. 60. So Ella, Estella and Maggie all attended school there. It was Maggie's first school.

We lived on that farm through 83, 84, 85; left the spring of 1886. Hearing of new land being opened in Kansas he went there in the fall of 1885. Took a timber claim as his homestead right had been used in Nebraska.

In April 1886, we were on the move again in a covered

wagon. This time with an ox team. Arrived at the timber claim in Gove Co., Kansas, May 15, 1886. A dugout was the home this time. There were 3 more girls and a boy by this time. The little boy died that summer, 9 months old. Ella was married in Dec. 1886, age 17 years. County was organized in 1887. Uriah was appointed Clerk of the District Court, so we moved to Gove City in Sept. Then at regular election almost 2 years later he was re-elected. Many of the settlers made their final proof on the land at the Clerk's office. Timber claim had been sold, so we were soon on the move again in the covered wagon. This time for the Ozarks in Missouri. Visited Ella, near Danbury, Nebr. While there, Estella, a young lady by then, who taught school, was unknowingly exposed to the measles. In a few days they were very evident. A doctor at Downs, Kans. pronounced it measles. Of course no one would let us in with a contagious ailment. There were four other girls who had not had them. All came down with them at once. We kept traveling however, and all recovered very nicely.

Missouri did not prove to be the garden of Eden he thought, and a farmer going from the Kansas and Nebr. plains

to the rocks of the Ozarks would not like it. Estella married her Nebraska sweetheart and returned to Danbury. Uriah soon went there also in the covered wagon and a few months later the family went by train and Nebraska was the home for all of us thereafter. Uriah, Estella and Nettie (a half-sister) are all buried at Danbury, Nebr.

Ella and family moved near Irmiter. She died in 1958 at the age of 88. Maggie (Oblinger) Sandon has lived in Denver since 1917 and is the only one of the 3 little girls living on the homestead that is living.

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Taken March 18, 1915 Oscar Solberg and two brothers opening a road near the Solberg home.





Photo from Mrs. H. E. Wild Mr. and Mrs. Richard Dobson (born Harriet Davis). Mr. Dobson homesteaded the E $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 22 in Bennett township. He was a member of the State Legislature during the 1890's and was instrumental in securing the location of the Girls' Training School at Geneva.

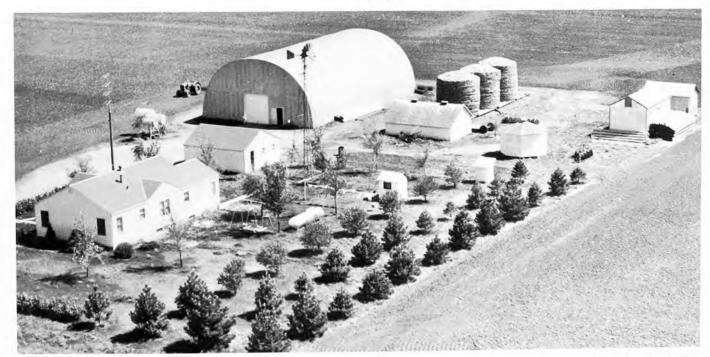


Photo from Harold Everts

Aerial view of the Harold Everts farm in 1953. A Bennett township farmstead built up from the beginning; the construction of the house in 1947 was followed by other buildings in the next few years.

Bryant Township

Bryant township occupies the southwest corner of Fillmore County (T5, R4W). It was presumably named for Edward Bryant, who homesteaded the N ½ of the SE ¼ of Sec. 14 in 1872. It is bounded on the north by Momence and on the east by Hamilton townships, on the south by Thayer County, and on the west by Clay County. Nebraska Highway 74 follows its northernmost section line from east to west, passing ¼ mile N of Shickley. The Beatrice-Hildreth line of the Burlington runs WSW out of Shickley, and the Fremont-Superior line of the Northwestern runs SSW from Shickley to where the Thayer County line meets Secs. 33 and 34.

The land is generally level except where Little Sandy Creek flows mostly southeastward through four sections (19, 20, 29, and 32) in the southwestern quarter of the township. Here there are more trees and the land is quite rolling, affording good pasture. A smaller stream, Dry Sandy Creek, rises in

Sec. 3, turns south into Sec. 10, and then flows eastward past Shickley. The soil is a rich, loamy loess which is very productive when enough moisture is available either from rainfall or from deep-well irrigation. In 1966, a total of 101 irrigation wells were registered in Bryant precinct.

The Burlington Railroad's main line through the northern end of the county, when it was finished in 1871, brought a great influx of settlers. During the 1870's, many settlers, Swedish immigrants predominating, came to Bryant township. Drouth and grasshoppers halted settlement for a time in the early part of the decade and caused some who had already staked claims to relinquish them and return to the East.

Among the names of early settlers, we find those of William Kline, Robert Campbell, the Lambert family, Peter Nelson, Jacob Pearson, E. S. Rothrock, A. M. Horner, J. L.

Bryant Township Homestead Map

itate of ebraska	Gertie Anderson			L D Phillips	Andrew J Williams			Daniel H May	Chency A. Shepard		
	Nels Anderson										
wan Nelson	N W Swanson (1873)	5		Albert Hines	Cheney Shephord		3	Wm. M. Van Buren Thomas D Van Buren	Peter M. Van Housen		1.
		Olof Wm. E. Wa Bergquiat	rthen			William McBeth	Alfred A. Beach (early 70's)			Jacob A. Schmitz	David May
7		John J. John Harnett Danielson	James Watmerc	1		Wm. B. Stout	Wm. H. Davis (1676)		ı	Wm. Kline	Wm. Smithson
Dist P. Aderson	Olof Samuel Olson Bjork			State of No	rbraska			Louisa H. Roe	Wm C Milroy		
Frank F Reed	Carl Sandburg	17		1	6	4	15	Morris Peter Manson Manson	John E. Bryant Wm. Miller		í
	ŗ.	Robert Axtel	Wm ⊂ Young			Neis Anderson (1872)	James C. Fister			Reeves Miles	Elisha White (1671)
1	9	Edwin R. H. ws	David Thempson	2.		John C Hunter	Thumas Smith Nathaniel T. Smith (1873)	2	1	Wesley Telor	
Niis Edgar A Nison Howe	Gardner G. Prate			Eddy Randsil	Isaiah Lambert			Wm. Keeler	Samuel Teter (1871)		
Agnes McAleese	Geo. D. Burdick	- 29		Wm H- Spears	Wm. Rever	2		Elijah Shepherd	Joseph H. Springer	2	5-
		Hardinger Mardinger	Almon Livings G. Nelson Hoag			Lewellan Gon M. R. Hong Hong (1872)		135		Schmid L	
	31	James W. John	Chas II.			Elt S Rockrock (1878)	wm. A. Abraham William - Horner			34	ir.

Langsdorf, L. R. Hoag, the Davis family, Elisha White, and N. T. Smith. Some took homesteads, while others bought relinquishments, and some took tree claims. The Grange was an important organization during the settling of this part of Fillmore County.

Bryant township received its share of worthy Scandinavian immigrants. These accounts of Nels Anderson and Swan Johnson are apparently from contemporary newspaper articles (dates not available):

"In Bryant township in the midst of a large and prosperous Scandinavian colony, where the proverbial thrift and enterprise of this race is well displayed in highly cultivated farms, fine homes, groves, orchards, hedgerows, gardens and bountiful grain fields is the 152-acre estate of **Nels Anderson**, Esq., a native of Sweden, who came here from Illinois in 1873 with an ox team and \$10. He now has an estate worth \$25,000.

"He has now 900 acres under plow, grows 8,000 to 10,000 bu. of corn, 2,000 bu. of wheat, 2,500 bu. of oats, 800 to 1,200 bu. of barley, 120 tons of hay and millet, and large and profitable crops of broom corn. Keeps 70 head of cattle, milks 15 cows, has a few purebred shorthorns, and feeds a carload of steers and 100 pigs. He has \$2,000 worth of buildings, extensive groves, and other permanent improvements.

"Mr. Anderson is an intelligent, sagacious man of the world. He is an influential man of broad views and great public spirit and has a host of friends."

"Swan A. Johnson was born in Sweden December 10, 1863. In 1883, with the hope of bettering his financial condition, he came to America, accompanied by his sister, now Mrs. O. W. Peterson of Bryant township. Coming immediately to Fillmore County, he purchased 80 acres of wild land for \$720, or \$9 per acre. This he subsequently sold for a good price and bought a much better 80, 2½ miles from Shickley. At the age of 25, he was married to Mary Larson, also a native of Sweden, and a daughter of Lars and Margareta Johnson."

Olof Swenson was born in 1853 in Sweden, and came to Galesburg, Illinois, at the age of 16 years. My mother, Jennie Freeburg, was born in Sweden in 1856 and came to Galesburg when she was 19 years old. They were married February 6, 1879, and came to Fillmore County on February 1, 1884.



Photo from Harry Swenson

The O. T. Swenson farm in 1890. Mr. and Mrs. O. T. Swenson in center, Arthur Swenson on horse, Seth Liliedoll in spring wagon, Teckla in rocker, Bert in wagon with dog.

The Olof Swenson farm is the NW ¼ of Sec. 35. Originally railroad land, it was first sold in 1874, and a second time in 1879. Then, in the fall of 1883, it was bought by Olof Swenson for \$2,900.

Three of their four children were born in the same room of the farm home: Bert (of Stockton, California), Teckla (of Oelwein, Iowa), and Harry (myself), who still lives on the home place. Arthur, the oldest child, was born in Iowa. My parents lived on the farm for 32 years and in 1916 built a new home and moved to Shickley. They made arrangements to give the land to the children. I got the home place.

I also had three children [by my first wife, Clara Bjork], who were born in the same room in which I was born: Willard (of Carleton), Lester (of Lincoln), and Lavette, who passed away two weeks after her mother. In October, 1924, I married Beulah [Hayes], who had a daughter, Thelma, who lives in Texas. So I still have two sons and one daughter.

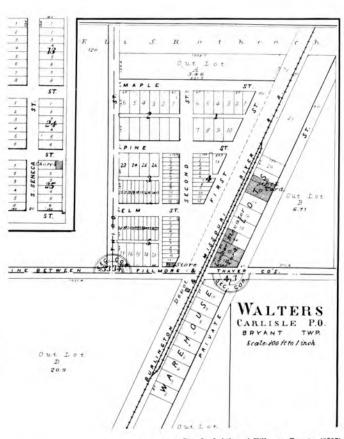
I have now lived on this place 51 years after my parents moved to town. So the Swensons, father and son, have lived on this farm 84 years. I quit farming in 1946 and I rent the ground out. In 1955, I put down an irrigation well.

—Harry Swenson

In 1885, the Burlington surveyed for a branch line to run from Beatrice west to Holdrege. It seemed for a time that there would be a trade center established near the Stockholm Church, which was the Swedish community center. However, because of the generous offers of William Kline and Robert Campbell, who owned farms in Sec. 12, 2½ miles E of Stockholm, a village site was laid out on their land. The town was named (according to Nebraska Place-Names) for Fillmore Shickley, an attorney for the Burlington Railroad when the line came through, who also owned land in the vicinity and was instrumental in getting the town located there.

Carlisle

Mr. and Mrs. George M. Hoag, with their son L. R. Hoag, came from Muscatine, Iowa, by covered wagon and mule team, in 1872, and homesteaded the NW ¼ of Sec. 34.1



Standard Atlas of Fillmore County (1905) Map of Carlisle/Walters in 1905.

In the summer of 1888, when the Northwestern R.R. extended its line from Geneva to Superior, it came across the east 80 of this quarter. A town site was laid out on the line between Thayer and Fillmore counties at the corner of Secs. 33 and 34. The railroad built a loading platform and a depot just across the line in Thayer County and called the station Walters. A little community sprang up, with a store combined with living quarters, stock-buying and grain-handling facilities, a blacksmith shop, and a post office.



Photo from Mrs. Charles Pritts The J. N. Lambert Store in Carlisle.

This account was contributed by Mrs. M. M. Hoak (died 1962) and Mrs. A. F. Wagers, daughters of L. R. Hoag.

When mail service became necessary, the Post Office Department declined the request for a post office because another town had too similar a name; and so the name was changed to Carlisle, in honor of John G. Carlisle, President Cleveland's Secretary of the Treasury. The railroad company continued to use the name Walters, but for all other purposes it was known as Carlisle. Two more residences were built, and it was a thriving little place for about 30 years. At first, church services were held in the depot waiting room, served by neighboring ministers or lay leaders from the Methodist Church at Davenport. When the District 87 schoolhouse was built, 1½ miles N of the village, a Union Sunday School was held there, and a church organization served by the ministers of the Christ Lutheran Church of Davenport. This lasted until about 1910.

As late as 1910, the village had a population of 30; but later everything was sold and moved away, and the land reverted to farmer owners.



Photo from Mrs. Charles Pritts Carlisle Elevator and Lumber Yard.



Carlisle Basketball team about 1910: 1 Floyd Swanson; 2 Jay Nedrow; 3 Harry Swenson; 4 Raymond Lambert; 5 Frank Maust; 6 Charley Anderson; 7 Galen W. Lambert.

CHURCHES

Stockholm Lutheran Church

One of the first objectives of the pioneers was to establish places of worship. It was quite natural that they should consider the necessity of a church and the spiritual welfare of themselves and their children, since they brought a strong religious heritage from their homelands. Early religious services were held in schoolhouses and homes.

The Swedish settlement in Bryant township was the first to organize a congregation, which became known as the Stockholm Lutheran Church. On December 28, 1875, a meeting was held at the home of O. G. Bergquist on Sec. 8 for the purpose of organizing a congregation. The first officers were William Miller, chairman, and Nils Anderson, secretary. Deacons elected were Nils Johnson, Morris Manson, and William Miller. O. G. Bergquist, O. P. Akerson, and O. Erickson were elected trustees. Others present at this meeting were Peter Manson, N. Nilson, N. W. Swanson, John Harnett, Herman Olson, John A. Johnson, and Olaf Olson, who presumably became charter members.



Photo from Mrs. Hulda Carlson Stockholm Lutheran Church and Cemetery.

A five-acre tract was purchased from Herman Olson on Sec. 9 for a church and a cemetery, and in the summer of 1881 the first Stockholm Church was built. Some time later it was decided to retain only a part of that land for the church and to deed the other part to what became known as the Swedish Cemetery Association. An adjoining two-acre tract was purchased as the site for a parsonage, which was built in 1883. The first resident pastor was the Rev. H. R. Miller; the church had previously shared pastors with Saronville.

There was a considerable increase in membership in 1898 and 1899 and the following years. The old church became too small, and in 1900 it was razed and a new church was built on the same spot. It is a 36' x 60' building with a steeple 70 feet high. There is a social room addition at the rear. In 1909, a new parsonage, with 12 rooms, not including the basement, replaced the old one. About this time the church reached its all-time high point in membership. The total membership in 1911 was 367, of whom 239 were communicant members.

The Stockholm church had its last resident pastor in 1932-1936. As the parsonage was no longer needed, it was sold and dismantled. During these later years Stockholm has shared a pastor's service with the Gethsemane Church at Ong. The following are the pastors who have served the church since its organization (1875-1967); confirmands number nearly 400.

ands number nearry	400.
J. Torell	1875-1870
C. J. E. Haterius	1870-1883
H. R. Miller	1883-1886
J. E. Swanbom	1887-1892
C. A. Bergendoff	1893-1898
C. A. Randolph	1898-1903
C. O. Gulleen	1903-1904
Carl A. Sward	1905-1913
C. T. Carlson	1913-1918

C. O. Isakson	1919-1923
J. A. Christenson	1923-1931
Glen A. Stenholm	1932-1936
A. Walfred Anderson .	1937-1941
J. H. Larson	1941-1943
Hilmer N. G. Larson .	1943-1956
Wendell Berggren	1956-1960
Various supply pastors	1960-1967
Woodrow WilsonMay	y 1967 —

Shickley Methodist Church

As in many churches, Sunday School preceded the church in the Methodist group of worshipers. Sunday School was held in a school-house on the northwest corner of Sec. 12 before the village of Shickley was organized. As settlers increased in numbers, and with the coming of the new town, the Methodist Church had its beginning in the summer of 1886. The first preacher was the Rev. David Fetz, the Carleton pastor (1884-1886), and Shickley church became part of a three-point circuit, the third point being Summit, a rural church midway between Shickley and Carleton.

Bob Campbell, who owned the NW ¼ of Sec 12, donated a lot (Lot 1, Block 2) in the new village for a church site. The building committee consisted of Elisha White, Bob Campbell, and Ed Wendell. Sanford Huston and Elisha White circulated the subscription list for the building fund. The edifice, which became the main part of the present structure, was built in 1886 and dedicated on September 4 in the same year. Names mentioned in the conference minutes of 1887 as contributors to missions are Sam Logsdon, John Burgess, Ida Knee Garver, Mrs. R. B. Schelp, J. Arganbright, Jennie Hedden, and Mollie Schelp. An 1887 Sunday School record book contains the names of R. B. Schelp, superintendent; Ed Stevens, assistant superintendent; Sanford Huston, Mollie Schelp, Mrs. Schelp, Mrs. W. E. Woodruff, and Mrs. Philby, teachers. The minutes of January 9, 1887, report: "Number present, 25. Penny collection, 37 cents."

In 1910, the church was remodeled by raising the building and adding an annex on the north, making a basement, and installing a furnace, giving the exterior its present appearance. In 1955, the interior was extensively renovated. Various houses in town were used as parsonages until 1922, when the Bergquist property adjoining the church was purchased for the pastor's residence.



Photo from Nancy Wilkins Shickley Methodist Church in 1963.

The Shickley church was part of the previously mentioned threepoint circuit until 1903, and at different times since it has been on a charge with Strang, Ohiowa, Ong, and Bruning. From its inception until the present time (1967) the church has been served by 30 pastors.

pastors.		
David Fetz	1884-1886	E. H. Tipto
H. A. Ewell		E. L. Jeamb
E. J. Bird	1889-1890	B. F. Kuhle
Francis Deal	1891-1892	C. H. Lind
E. F. S. Darby	1893-1894	E. A. Gaithe
Finley Smith	1895	Richard Gib
E. L. Wolff	1896	Arthur Bate
C. P. Metcalf	1897-1900	George S. (
E. D. Gideon	1901-1902	Harold B. I
Lawrence Yost	1903-1904	Grier Hunt
B. N. Kunkel	1905-1907	E. W. Price
K. P. Kilbourn	1908	Charles Flie
E. S. Burr	1909	Milton O'Co
R. F. Farley	1910-1911	Waldo Gree
E. B. Maxcy		Hugh Houc

E. H. Tipton	1917
E. L. Jeamby	1918-1919
B. F. Kuhler	1920-1922
C. H. Lind	1923-1927
E. A. Gaither	
Richard Gibb	
Arthur Bates	
George S. Goodwin	
Harold B. Lansing	1947-1950
Grier Hunt	
E. W. Price	1953-1954
Charles Flickinger	1954-1963
Milton O'ConnorS	
Waldo Greer	
Hugh Houchin	1966 —

Shickley Congregational Church

This writer has been unable to locate any record of the organization of the Congregational Church in Shickley, but there is a treasurer's book which records subscriptions beginning with August 1, 1887, and also various purchases of building materials and payments for labor, beginning with August 4, 1887, and continuing until September, 1888. The sums recorded, both receipts and expenditures, total close to \$1,000.

The one-room structure was erected at the south end of Main Street, about two blocks south of the Northwestern Railroad, which came through during the summer of 1888. Among the early contributors are the names of such pioneers as William Kline, W. H. Davis, E. Beitler, J. C. Robertson, Isaiah Lambert, Sarah Davis, Mrs. W. C. Milroy, William Lambert, A. A. Beach, J. W. Price, C. W. Beeson, Winter Price, C. W. Shickley, the Ladies' Society, and banker Harry Pattee. No list of the charter members has survived.

In the early 1900's, the congregation bought two lots (Block 10, Lots 5 and 6) a block north of the Northwestern tracks and one block east of Main Street; the church was then moved to this location, and a short time later a parsonage was built on the vacant lot.



Photo from Mrs. John Pearson Congregational Church and Parsonage.

No list of ministers is available. For a short time, Shickley was on a circuit with Grafton, where the pastor lived, and a part of the time with Strang, when the pastors divided their residences between the two places. Some of the ministers who occupied the Shickley parsonage were Dr. and Mrs. Reeves, the Rev. and Mrs. C. W. Preston, the Rev. and Mrs. Abraham Payne and family, and the Rev. and Mrs. Elijah White.

Services were held continuously until 1923. For short periods there was no minister, but the church school carried on, and for many years a union Christian Endeavor Society was strong, alternating their meetings between the Methodist and Congregational churches. When the Methodists organized the Epworth League, about 1908, the Christian Endeavor Society still carried on until thinning ranks made its continuance inadvisable.

Because of diminishing membership, the congregation decided in 1923 to disband. The property was sold and the proceeds were turned in to the state's Congregational headquarters. The church building was razed and the salvage made into a bungalow in the country. A house was moved onto the church lot, and that and the parsonage have been used as residences since that time. Most of the remaining membership united with the Methodist Church.

-Lorena Hoag Wagers

English Lutheran Church

About 1889 or 1890 a Union Sunday School, held in the school-house of District 87, was organized. Weather and traveling conditions were never so bad that W. C. (Grandpa) Robb didn't walk more than a mile to open the door for Sunday School. He was superintendent for many years. Early in the 1890's, the minister of the English Lutheran Church of Davenport organized a church group at the schoolhouse, with services on Sunday afternoons every two weeks. On the alternate Sundays, Sunday School would meet in the forenoon. The Rev. Baker was the organizer of the church congregation. Other ministers were Rev. Groh, Rev. Edwin Bollman, Rev. Matthis, and Rev. Poot. This church was discontinued about 1904.

Swedish Methodist Church

In 1887, before Shickley was founded, the Swedish pioneers in this area were visited by their first Swedish Methodist minister, the Rev. O. J. Swan. At that time, Rev. Swan was also serving a pastorate at Saronville. Religious services were held in a schoolhouse on the NW corner of Sec. 12, or in homes, rotating services with another group to the west, where Ong is now located. When a regular pastor was not available, Charles Wennersten, John Gustus, Swan Ekwall, F. F. Rudd, and other laymen took turns preaching.

Rev. Swan served this group for two years. Others who served the church after him were: V. F. Levin, John Jacobson, N. Peterson, John Lundeen, A. G. Engstrom, A. F. Vinell, O. W. Ostrom, and F. F. Rudd. In 1889, while A. G. Engstrom was pastor, a church building was erected in the new town of Shickley, on Lot 1, Block 15, at a cost of \$1,500. The building committee were Peter Hillgren, John Gustus, and Swan Ekwall. The Rev. H. W. Eklund of Worcester, Massachusetts, gave the dedication sermon. The remaining debt on the church was taken care of at this service through contributions by members and friends of the church.

Esther Lundgren recalled, in a letter written to John Johnson: "I taught a Sunday School class of young girls, including your sister Anna, Rena Gustus, my sister Jennie, Carlson's daughter, and the younger Zetterman girls. They were a sweet and lovable group, anxious to do things, so I organized them into a group and we called it the 'Busy Bee Circle.' We met on Saturday afternoons and made articles which were auctioned in the church with church members attending. My uncle John was the auctioneer and we netted \$25. With this we had a well dug for the parsonage. You remember the type where a bucket was dropped down and brought up by turning a crank. Were the girls thrilled over that well!

"Rev. Engstrom's family had stayed in Kansas and they were not in the best financial circumstances. In the blizzardous Nebraska winters, Rev. Engstrom wore a hat. At Christmas the young folks chipped in and gave him \$5 for a fur cap. This money he sent to his family, telling me they needed it more than he needed a fur cap."

John W. Ekwall provided a list of persons received into the church between 1889 and 1895:

(1889) Lillie and Josephine Gustus, Seath Lillidahl, Frederick Ekwall; (1890) Louis Peterson, Frank and Mary Danielson; (1892) Athos and Victor Wennersten, Theo and Leonard Ekwall, Rena Gustus, Mary Peterson; (1893) Lizzie Wennersten, Jennie and May Ekwall, Anna Johnson, Almeda Swanson, Minnie Zetterman; (1895) John Johnson.

John Ekwall's parents were the first couple married in the

church, on December 23, 1887.

The Rev. A. G. Engstrom was followed by A. G. Milton, who remained for three stormy years, during which his passion for "second blessing" and his strict enforcement of discipline caused about 50% of the members to be brought before a church tribunal and to be stricken from the church rolls. The church never overcame this handicap, since the wholesale unjust expulsion of so many caused nearly the whole congregation to cease attending. Some members joined the English-speaking Methodist Church, others the Stockholm Lutheran Church, and still others never re-affiliated with any church

In 1921, when the membership of the Swedish Methodist Church had dropped to 12, the English-speaking church was served by a former member of the Western Swedish Conference, the Rev. G. Lind, who also spoke Swedish. It was decided to cease holding separate services, and the remaining members were transferred into that church in 1925. As most of their children were already members there, the families were reunited to worship in the same church.

The church building, put up for sale, was bought by the local Ku Klux Klan; the proceeds of the sale were used to aid in the building of a parsonage in Wayne, Kansas, where the English-speaking church had merged with the Swedish church and had turned their property over to the Western Swedish Conference.



Photo from Kenneth Koch Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, built in 1918. This brick church stands in Shickley, but its story is told in Momence Township.

SCHOOLS

District No. 51, the first set up in Bryant township, was organized on September 13, 1872, although officers were not elected until March 1, 1873. School was held in sod houses before the building of frame schoolhouses. The first teacher was Simon Holsinger, who taught a term of 3 months and 25 days. The schoolhouse, located on the east side of Sec. 27, was not built until 1874. The carpenters were L. R. Hoag and his father, George M. Hoag. Another early teacher in District 51 was Belle Hoag.



District No. 51 (Sunny Side School) Picnic—about 1910.

District No. 52, in the northwest corner of the township (September 13, 1872), and District No. 53, (September 21, 1872), in the southwest corner, were organized about the same time. The first teacher in District 52 was Alice L. Howe; the first in District 53 was Belle Hoag.

District No. 54 was organized September 28, 1875, comprising Secs. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15, set aside in 1872 by County Superintendent J. A. Dempster for a school district. The first schoolhouse for District 54 was built on the northwest corner of Sec. 12. The first teacher was Anna Davis. On January 15, 1880. more land was added, and more still in 1883. There were deductions and additions until now District 54 includes Districts 49, 50, 51, 52, 55, 58, 59, 69, 77, 79, 86, 87, 92, and 93. The old schoolhouse was sold to R. B. Campbell for \$78 and a four-room frame school was erected in 1888 on the site of the present Shickley school. (For more on District 54, see Shickley.)



Photo from Langdren family

District No. 52 in 1912. Back row, left to right: Carl Rosenquist, Elmer Swanson, Emil Harnett, Adolph Nelson, George Harnett, Teacher Albert Peterson, Clara Bjork, Della Rosenquist, Nannie Harnett, Pearl Matteson, Edith Bjork, Mabel Johnson. Front row: Hosmer Brust, Edwin Gustafson, Stanley Landgren, Otto Nelson, Earl Swanson, Edward Rosenquist, Florence Swanson, Florence Gustafson, Marion Swanson, Eva Swanson, Ruth Rosenquist.



Photo from Leonard Carlson

District No. 53 about 1912. Front row, left to right: Amy Fisher, Viola Rousch, Kate Fisher, Howard Axtell. Back row: Leonard Carlson, May Fisher, Miss Schneider (teacher), Alma Rousch, Anna Anderson, Hulda Anderson.



Photo from Lawrence Licht Shickley School District #54. Football field built in 1962.

At first, there were only these four districts in the township. with nine sections to a district. By 1887, the growing population made more schools necessary. A new division was made in September, 1887; land was taken from Districts 52 and 54, and **District No. 86** was organized (August 11, 1887). Belle Hoag held a meeting at the Peter Nelson home on December 17, 1889, for the purpose of organizing **District No. 87**, comprising lands taken from Districts 51 and 53.



Photo from John Carl

District No. 86 about 1909-10. Front row, left to right: Vivian Bergquist Miller, Harold Nelson, Johnny Hanson, Paul Hanson, Emil Hendrickson, Victor Hendrickson. Back row: Miss Daisy Sissel (teacher), Harry Pearson, Clarence Hanson, Clara Nelson Lentfer, Harry Hendrickson, Selma Hendrickson Harnett, John Pearson, Rebecca Hanson Cline, Victor Nelson, Effie Peterson Johnson, Oscar Johnson, Lillian Hanson Carlson, Florence Nelson, Harry Carlson.



Photo from Galen W. Lambert

District No. 87 (North Carlisle school) in 1900—Teacher Edna Rice at left, with bell.

It was decided to move the old District 51 building from the east side of Sec. 27 to the west side, which was the center of the new district. A sleet storm had left a heavy coating of ice on the ground, and by placing skids under the building, it was easily moved across. This was done in the latter part of February, 1888, and three days of the current school term were finished after the move.

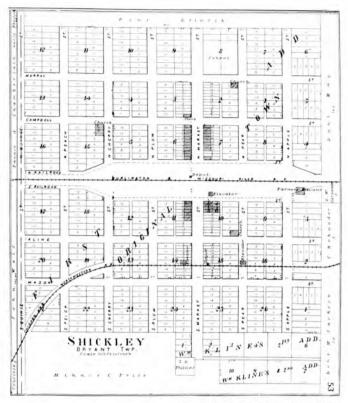
District 51 built a new schoolhouse on the east side of Sec. 26, one mile east of the original location. District 53 moved their building farther west to Sec. 30. The District 52 building was located on Sec. 8

Among early school board members were Samuel Teter, Elijah Shephard, E. S. Rothrock, Mrs. Joe Ireland, L. D. Phillips, F. F. Rudd, A. N. Anderson, Eddie Randall, G. N. Hoag, J. W. Cassel, and Peter Nelson.

A school year in the early days was from April to April. The length of the school term was three months. Teachers' salaries ranged from \$20 to \$30 per month. Other teachers who taught in Bryant township in the first few years, besides those already named, included Levi Beanblossom, Jennie Williams, Blanche Warner, C. Beminderfer, B. L. Burr, C. E. Jones, Mary Hughes, J. G. Davis, Nettie Howe, J. E. Bryant, Phoebe Davis, Sarah Davis, Clara Strang, Alfred Bates, Clara Stickel, and C. W. Pinkerton.

Schoolhouses served as community centers. They were used for literary and debating societies, for grange meetings, and as polling places. Before the building of churches, they also served for Sunday Schools and church services, thus contributing greatly toward binding the settlers into a community.

No rural schools now operate in Bryant township. District 54 has absorbed 14 other districts, and five buses are required to transport the students from the surrounding areas to and from school. In 1952, a meeting was held at Eddie Randall's, and Districts 52 and 53 were attached to Ong in Clay County.



Standard Atlas of Fillmore County (1905)
Map of Shickley in 1905.

Shickley

A great deal of the history of Shickley is included in the following essay, "Shickley: Community Co-operation in Economic Decline," written in 1941 for a sociology assignment at the University of Nebraska by a Shickley native, Miss Marjorie Johnston (later Dean of Women there, and as of 1967 College Counselor for the University Extension Division). As it is seldom that any Nebraska community has been the subject of any such detailed study, we include it entire. Although the period of "decline" may be over (as we hope it is, and as the census figures for 1950 and 1960 may indicate), this account no doubt reflects the history of many another Nebraska town in which pioneer co-operation still survives.

Introduction

Many villages located in the farm areas have shown a decrease in population and an economic decline in recent years. At one time these villages were the important trade centers for the surrounding farms, but with coming of improved roads and faster means of transportation many people now go to larger communities to do their trading. The recent years of drouth and low prices for farm products have caused a still greater decline. Such has been the fate of Shickley, but in spite of the economic decline and the decrease in population there is a stronger community spirit and a greater tendency toward co-operation. People who have lived in Shickley many years or perhaps all their lives seem determined to keep this community a desirable place in which to live. ("Community" refers to the incorporated area and is here used interchangeably with "village.")

Geographical Setting

Shickley is located in the south-central part of Nebraska in Fillmore County. When the first settlers came to this part of the state all they saw was a vast expanse of level prairie country. There were no large streams and thus few trees. It was 20 miles to the North Blue River and the same distance to the South Blue. The site of the village comprises an area of 160 acres of level land with a gentle slope to the south and is bordered on the north and east by a small meandering stream which is usually dry. If one gets above the buildings of the village he is able to see for several miles in all directions. A good supply of water is found far below the surface of the ground which makes it necessary to drill deeply for wells.

The soil of the surrounding farm area is very fertile but has a gumbo content which bakes hard in time of insufficient rainfall. The levelness of the land and the absence of many trees makes it possible for the hot winds to sweep across the fields and within a few days do much damage to the corn crop. Rainfall is very uncertain and this area often receives little rain from the last of June until the middle

of August. During years of sufficient rainfall, the yield per acre for corn and wheat is high. These uncertain conditions, which have been characteristic of the history of this community, have made economic incomes unstable.

Historical Background

The last of the sixties saw a few pioneers coming to south-central Nebraska. They came from Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois in covered wagons filled with the necessities with which to start a new home. In 1870, there were many settlers coming to this part of Nebraska. Many of them stopped in the northeastern part of the county where the main line of the Burlington was to cross the county. Here the first village of the county was founded, which was called Fairmont and which was to be the main trade center for several years. The next year the settlers decided to choose a spot near the center of the county for the county seat, which was called Geneva. In 1873, the county was divided into townships.

During this time a group of Swedish people had taken homesteads in the southwestern part of the county known as Bryant township. There were many newcomers until 1873, when the grasshoppers destroyed crops and gardens. There was much suffering that winter and the county tried to vote bonds for relief but they failed to pass. It was then that Bryant township decided to vote bonds which were found to be too small to give the necessary relief but gave evidence of united action on the part of these early settlers. For the next few years there were few newcomers to this part of the country because of these conditions.

Most of the homes of these early settlers in Bryant were dugouts or sod houses, since there were few trees and it was 14 to 30 miles to the trading centers. Few trips were made to these places and then one or two men would go for several families in the neighborhood. There were plenty of wild game and the gardens and crops supplied many of the needs. The families helped each other in many ways and there existed a fine spirit of co-operation and friendliness. A church was built in 1888 and the place was called Stockholm. Here would have been the logical site for the trade center and these Swedish people wanted it here.

In 1885, the Burlington surveyed for a branch line to run from Beatrice to Holdrege. This line was to go within a few hundred feet of the Swedish church and these settlers began to plan for the site of the village. Three miles east of the church were the farms of William Kline and Robert Campbell, who wanted the village to be located on their land. For this reason they offered to give many lots to the railroad if it crossed their farms and to sell land cheaply to the newcomers. Thus the site of the village was determined and immediately a store and blacksmith shop were started. The village was named Shickley in honor of the attorney for the Burlington who was also a land-owner in this area. He later started the first bank in the village.

The village was laid out with the tracks dividing the community into two parts. Mr. Kline owned the land south of the tracks and Mr. Campbell owned land north of the tracks. Each man tried to interest the newcomers to choose his land, and for several years this competition existed. The village was incorporated March 20, 1888, with a population of 200. In the same year, the Northwestern R.R. surveyed for a branch line to run from Superior to Fremont, crossing the four south blocks of the original town. At first, most of the business places were located facing Market Street in the two blocks between the Burlington and Northwestern tracks; but there was a gradual trend toward the blocks of Market Street north of the Burlington. By 1910, most of the business houses were located in this area, leaving many empty buildings on the south side, which were finally rebuilt into homes.

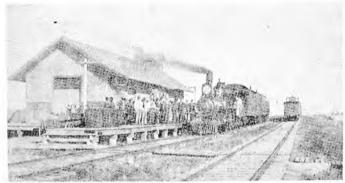


Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now One of the first Northwestern trains into Shickley.

Growth and Decline

With the coming of the two railroads and the reports of good crops the farm lands were quickly taken up. Each year saw several more business places added to the village, which made it a better trade center. Although the Swedish people were disappointed that the trade center was not located at Stockholm, they were glad to have one so close and became loyal supporters of the community.

Population steadily increased until 1910 (its peak year) and then began gradually to decrease. All figures after that for 1888 are those of the U.S. Census Bureau:

1888	200	1930	389
1890	307	1940	342
1900	372	1950	316*
1910	429	1960	371*
1920	396	1000	011

* The figures for 1950 and 1960 have been added by the editor, for continuity.

By 1910, there were three general-merchandise stores, a bakery, two drugstores, a post office, two banks, a meat market, a millinery shop, two hardware stores, a furniture store, a saloon, two blacksmith shops, three produce stations, a farm-implement shop, a printing office which published a weekly paper, four elevators, two lumber yards, two doctors, two undertakers, a photographer, one school, and four churches. There were two passenger trains and two freight trains daily on each road. Businesses prospered and crop yields were usually good, with an occasional low return when the rain fall was insufficient. From 1915 to 1922 the village supported a picture show regularly. Since there were more cars in the village and the surrounding farm area, the roads had been improved and people did not now do all their trading in Shickley. Between 1920 and 1930 there were many changes in the business ownership in the village.

Shortly after 1930 the general-merchandise stores gradually became grocery stores with a few items of dry goods. People were beginning to go to larger places to get their clothing where there was a greater selection from which to choose. Today there is only one store that can be called a general store and it carries very little in the way of clothes. The bakery finally closed, for it could not compete with the trucks that brought bread from larger places. In 1930, the Farmers Bank was bought by the State Bank which still serves the village. The printing shop finally discontinued the paper in 1922 and it closed soon after this. Now the news of the community is printed in the county paper. Today there are two churches instead of four and also only two elevators. There is no hotel but there are two cafes. There is only one lumber yard which has done little business the last few years since there have been few new-buildings. There has been no doctor since 1936 and no resident dentist since 1934. The Northwestern passenger service was discontinued in 1937 and the Burlington in 1940. Each road has a tri-weekly freight service and has continued to keep an agent at the station. This great decrease in train transportation was felt after the main highway was placed one half mile north of the village. Truck service then took the place of train service. The village now has three garages which seem to do a fair business since nearly everyone in the community owns some kind of a car.



Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now" Burlington Depot, Shickley.

Property has greatly decreased in value the last ten years. People have not had sufficient incomes to make the necessary repairs during this time. In 1930 the property was assessed at \$215,499 and in 1940 the assessed valuation was \$194,144. Property brings a very low price at present so there is little sold. Rents are lower than in 1930. At present there are about eight houses that are vacant.

Public Life

The first 30 years in the history of Shickley might be called a period of individualistic growth dominated by economic interest. People were getting started in business and were anxious to succeed so that they gave little attention to village improvement. Only with decreasing population and declining business did the people in the village become more community-minded and think of civic improvement and ways to counteract the attraction of larger trade centers. The members of the village board in the early days seemed little interested in improving the community. Not until 1923 when the board was composed of more progressive men did the village take much action to make Shickley a modern community.



Photo from Mrs. John Carl V. P. Nelson in his shoe shop in the 1920's.



Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now"
The Livery Barn (foreground) which later became the Community
Building.

Until 1923 the village had no general system of electric lights. In 1914, a merchant moved to Shickley to go into business and, having been accustomed to lights, decided to install a small plant in his store to supply the necessary electricity. In a few months he was furnishing power to all business places and the church. Not until 1923 did the village vote bonds to connect with the Blue Valley Power Company and wire the entire village for lights.

About the same time five of the men in the village, realizing the need for a community building which could be used for a school gymnasium and for other social gatherings, bought an old livery stable to rebuild. The Woman's Club was much interested in the project and helped by taking one-third of the building, which they made into a library, dining room, and kitchen. The remainder of the building was made into a large gymnasium with a fine hardwood floor which can be used for roller skating. The building is used by all organizations in the village and the surrounding rural areas.

In 1927, the business men in Shickley organized a commercial club for promoting plans to make Shickley a better trade center. One of the first things the club did was to gravel Main Street and several of the side streets. In 1930 the men worked hard to get the main highway [Nebraska 74] to go one mile north of the village. Their efforts were successful, but they soon realized that this highway was to cause a greater decline in business. Now Shickley was on a well-improved highway to Hastings, a distance of 50 miles, York 40 miles, Beatrice 50 miles, and Lincoln 80 miles.

In 1934, the village board took action to lay out an electrically lighted kitten ball diamond. Once a week, on the nights the stores were open, the neighborhood teams competed and at the end of the season had a tournament. These means served to attract people to the village for two summers but were replaced the next summer by a free moving-picture show which is still found to be effective. During the winter the merchants sponsor a drawing for a free basket of groceries each Saturday afternoon. For the past several years the businessmen have had a community Christmas tree and a Santa Claus on Saturday to distribute treats to the children. Whether the money expended for these means to attract people to trade in Shickley brings back greater returns in business is doubtful, but at least it shows that the men are alert and doing everything possible to keep the community from further decline.

Business was the poorest from 1935 to 1940, but in spite of these economic conditions the village installed a fine water system in 1940. The cost of the system was \$32,000, but half of the cost was supplied by help from the Works Progress Administration.

Religious Influences

Religion has played a great part in the growth and development of Shickley. Nearly everyone in the community is affiliated with one of the churches and the result has been to develop citizens with good morals and high ideals. Most children are brought up in the Sunday School and become members of the church at an early age. The youth, as a whole, have been outstanding for good moral conduct and there has been little evidence of delinquency.

Religion has perhaps influenced the community in another way. The many churches in such a small area have tended to separate the village into groups rather than unite it. There has been little evidence of conflict among the churches, but also little unity and co-operation until recent years.

The Swedish church had been built before the beginning of the village and because of a common language and tradition these people remained apart from the life of the community. Since a number of families in the village were members of this church it affected the early life and unity of the community. In 1922, there was a split in the membership and a number of the people joined the Methodist Church. At present this church has no resident minister and as a result its unifying influence has been lost.

In 1879, a settlement of German people, five miles north of Shickley, built a Catholic church. Although this church has largely a rural congregation, several families in the village are members of this church.

A year after the incorporation of the village the Methodist church was built. The first building was small and with the growing population it was replaced by a larger building in 1910. About 50% of the membership is rural. In 1930, there were 195 members and in 1940 there were 138. In the same period the minister's salary declined from \$1,200 to \$900 with the result that this year the church must share the services of the minister with a neighboring village. The members are determined another year to raise the salary so that they can have a full-time minister, for they fear the church will decline and they realize the good influence of a strong church in the community.

The Congregational church was organized in the same year as the Methodist church. The membership of this church was never very large, with the result that it disbanded in 1922 and many of the people joined the Methodist church. A group of Swedish people in the village built a Swedish Methodist church in 1888 but the services in this church were discontinued after 1905. These people, too, joined the Methodist church.

The other church that is active today in the village is the German Lutheran church. The membership is about 80% rural people with a total membership of 134. Until recently the church, as a whole, remained apart from the activities of the village.

Several families in the village are members of the Mennonite church 3 miles E of Shickley. This church had its beginning in 1895 when a few families of this faith came from Indiana and in a few years built a church which today has a membership of nearly 300. Although these people, by religion and by tradition, tend to be "church-centered" and so somewhat withdrawn from "community" interests of more secular sorts, they are earnest, honest people, and very religious, so that their influence in the community has been distinctly good.

All the churches in and near the village have influenced the growth and development of the community. They have done much to instill high ideals and Christian standards of living. In the past few years there has been more co-operation among the churches, which has resulted in greater interest in the public life of the community.

Education

When Shickley was incorporated there was a district school just outside the limits of the village. Here the children in this part of the township had attended school for several years. The same year that the village was incorporated, a four-room schoolhouse was built. This school included just the eight grades, but the following year two grades of high school were added and in 1891 the first class was graduated. A brick building was erected in 1908; the eleventh grade was added in 1910 and the twelfth in 1916.

The school has kept pace with the changing curriculum and offers manual training, typing, music, and, at one time, offered home economics. For several years it had a fine band and many students who were taking private lessons on instruments. The school makes good use of the public library and the library board co-operates with the school in trying to secure books that are needed in school.

The school has been affected by the economic decline. Salaries dropped considerably from 1930 to 1940. The average salary in the grades in 1930 was \$765 and in 1940 \$652. During the same period the amount received from taxation and tuition was \$10,000 in 1930 and \$9,000 in 1940. The enrollment has decreased from 100 to 98 in the same period and thus a smaller number of teachers were needed as grades were combined. For the past few years the school board has been very conservative and perhaps they have reduced salaries and other expenditures more than necessary.

The school has always felt the effects of the large settlement of the Mennonites who do not believe in higher education and rarely send their children to high school and thus reduce the amount of tuition which would normally come from this large farm area. The past few years there has been a slight increase in the number of young people from these homes that are coming in to high school.



Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now" Original school building of District 54, Shickley.

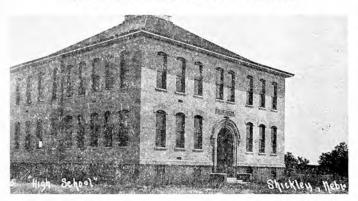


Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now" Shickley High School, built in 1908.



Photo from "Shickley-Then and Now"

Shickley's modern school, built in 1954 at a cost of \$218,000. In 1953 a new district, No. 54R, was formed consisting of 15 reorganized districts and parts of two others. This plant provides modern classrooms, a gym, a large stage, a kitchen and lunchroom, a shop, and offices.

About 25% of the graduates attend college or business school for a year or two. Most of the young people who do go away for a college education do not return to the community to live. Many of them become teachers, nurses, engineers, businessmen, and stenographers.

The village has been fortunate in securing good teachers in spite of the low wages. Shickley looks to the teacher for leadership in the church and public affairs, and much of a teacher's success depends upon her participation in community life. Teachers, as a whole, like to live in Shickley and usually stay there for several years although they do not feel they are paid well. They like the friendly and hospitable spirit of the people living in the village.

Population and Family Life

The early settlers in this village and the surrounding farm area were Germans, Swedes, a few French, and Pennsylvania Dutch. There were many families who came from the eastern states whose ancestors had lived in this country for one or more generations. The predominating influence of the population has no doubt been Swedish. Many customs of these people still prevail in the community. The "afternoon coffees" with Swedish rolls and cookies are still common in the homes and are enjoyed even by people who have not been reared in Swedish homes. Of late years these people mingle freely in the

community and are much interested in its activities. Their interest in music has been a great asset in the musical training in the community.

The Pennsylvania Dutch and Germans who belong to the Mennonite church have been little interested in the affairs of the village. They are somewhat clannish and do not favor higher education for their young people. They believe that the way to keep their young people from becoming sinful is not to allow them to associate with other young people and become worldly-wise. Only in recent years has the hold of the church weakened and the young people have begun to break away from the church and marry those of other faiths. Often these young people join another church and have associations with other groups. The Germans who belong to the German Lutheran church have been more interested in the public life of the community but have never taken as active a part as the Swedish people.

Despite the variations among these groups making up the population of the village, there has been little evidence of conflict. In recent years there has been a tendency for these groups to act as parts of the community and not so much as separate units.

The people living in Shickley are noted for the friendly and welcoming spirit which is extended to all newcomers. Every possible effort is put forth by the people of the village to make these strangers like their new home and feel a part of it. There is a genuine spirit of good will existing throughout the community and there is seldom any evidence of conflict in religious or political life.

Family life is still important in this community. There were no divorces in 1930 and only one in 1940. There were four marriages in 1930 and five in 1940. It is still a common practice for the entire family to go to Sunday School and church. This is especially true in the Mennonite families. Dinners between families are still exchanged and many social affairs include the entire family.



Photo from Deb Wit

Harold Barney, early telephone technician, in 1910.

The following statistics give some idea of family life in the community [1967 figures have been added for comparison]:

community [1967 figures have been added for compariso	1967
No. of families	139
No. of home-owning families	•118
No. of renters	21
No. of families with telephones	127
No. of families moving in	No data
No of families moving out	No data

Of the families in town, 28% consisted of 1 person; 30% of 2, 33% of from 3 to 5, and 9% of from 6 to 9 persons. The average-sized family consisted of 3 persons.

These statistics show that the population of the village is quite stable, since so many families own their homes. They also show that a large percentage of the population is composed of older people, since there are so many families with one or two persons. This fact was further verified when 125 people voted in the last election—37% of the total population. There were four deaths in the village in 1940. In 1930, there were six births; in 1940, there were only two recorded. Since there is no doctor, many of the children are born at the hospital

in Geneva and their birth is recorded as from there.

The typical home in Shickley is a 1½ story frame building. A very small percentage of the homes are modern due to the lack of a water system. A large percentage of the homes connected with the water system when it was put in and plan to install sinks and bathroom equipment when incomes are higher. Many homes have had a windmill to furnish water. A number have been put up in the last few years so that people could water their lawns and gardens during the drouth. It was found to be much cheaper than electric power, since there is seldom a day in the summer that the wind does not blow. There have been no new homes built in Shickley during the last 10 years. Homes and yards are well taken care of, although at present there are places in need of paint and repairs.

Social Organization

Much of the social life of the community centers around the several churches. Each church has its own organization of the women of the church which is known as the "Aid Society." These groups sponsor food sales, bazaars, dinners, and other money-making affairs during the year. Each group meets twice during the month in the afternoon for a social time and a pay lunch. In recent years these lunches have been well attended by members of other groups. It has become a custom to invite each group once during the year to a special meeting. These recent practices are evidences of greater cooperation among the churches. Once a year the Catholic church has an all-day picnic with a dinner, bazaar, and dance. This is well attended by the people in the village even though it is held on the church grounds, five miles from Shickley. The businessmen make an effort to attend, as much of the trade comes from these people.

The Woman's Club is very active in the community. It has a membership of 38 ladies from all the churches and from the rural districts. Its outstanding achievement was the establishment and sponsorship of the village library. This was begun in 1924 with 200 volumes and at present has 2,000 volumes. For a number of years the club paid the librarian and bought all the new books, but at present the village appropriates \$200 each year for books and the librarian is paid by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The library board is composed of members from the club and they still select the books. In 1927, the club sponsored a historical pageant which included many people in the community and rural area. It was given in a pasture on the edge of the village in a spot that formed a natural amphitheater. People came from many miles to see it.

The men's Commercial Club is for both social and business purposes. It has a membership of 24 men and has done much to establish good feeling among the businessmen and to promote the interests of the village. The men organized a Volunteer Fire Department in 1933 after the business section was in danger of being

destroyed. This organization has its social meetings, too.

There are a few social clubs and many family get-togethers. People in Shickley enjoy themselves in many ways. Occasionally they go to a larger place to see a show but in recent years most of their recreation had to be found at home. All activities of the school such as plays, basketball games, and carnivals are well attended by

the people of the community.

The young people enjoy the roller-skating rink in the community building. It is operated by one of the businessmen and is open every Thursday evening. It is well patronized by the young people of the surrounding villages and affords clean and wholesome amusement. At present there is no Boy Scout or Camp Fire group. At one time both organizations were active in the community, but when incomes were reduced by the drouth and depression these groups gradually ceased to function. Each church has some organized activity for its young people.

Relief

Since Shickley is chiefly a trade center for an agricultural area, business is dependent upon farm crops. Since 1934 this community has suffered from the effects of the drouth and the pests which accompany a dry period. During this time there have been four years of almost complete crop failure. During this time there was the depression when business in general was very poor. As a result of these conditions the farmers' incomes have been greatly reduced, which in turn has made business poor in Shickley. Many people who were still paying for their farms were not able to keep up their payments and consequently lost them. A number of these farmers were older people who had planned to retire in a few years and live off the incomes from these farms. Several of these people are now receiving "Old Age" assistance.

The farm relief program has been of great benefit to these farmers. Many of them could not have continued on their farms without this assistance when their crops failed. With this program they have managed to keep going and to earn a living and thus keep off of relief. This aid has also made it possible for business in the village to keep growing, since the farmers have purchasing power. The Agricultural Conservation Office reports that approximately 98% of the farmers in the Shickley trade area belong to this farm program. The average farm would receive about \$250 from this office.

As a whole, the people in Shickley have been glad of the assistance that has been offered by the government. At first many were hesitant about asking for Old Age assistance but finally came to it. When crops are good again and business conditions have become normal the people will be glad to get along without this assistance. There will no doubt continue to be quite a few Old Age grants because of the number of old people in the village. At present the County Assistance Office reports the following grants of assistance given in Shickley:

Old Age assistance	18
Aid to dependent children	6
Aid to crippled children	1
WPA	7
CCC	4
NYA	5
No. using the stamp plan	23
County relief	5

The Assistance Director for this area reports that the trends for assistance at this time are toward an increase in Old Age assistance grants and a definite decrease in WPA, CCC, and NYA. He states that among the youth and physically fit, many are moving to urban dis-

tricts, mainly in California.

During this period of drouth and depression many of the people in Shickley were forced to give up luxuries of many kinds. Cars have become old, some houses need paint and repair, lawns need reseeding, and trees need to be replaced. Property has not suffered as much neglect as in some other communities near by. Many farmers have left and gone to other areas to farm or to work for someone. There have been few changes in business ownership during this time.



Photo from Frank William

Threshing—about 1900. 1. Frank K. Williams; 2. Loyd Davis; 3. L. F. Fisher; 4. A. W. Isberg; 5. Oscar Isberg; 6. Charles Isberg.

Conclusions

The economic future of this community depends a great deal on the forces of nature that produce crops. If the yields from farm products are good, business will be better and schools and churches will again have funds to improve. Houses and buildings in general can be painted and repaired, trees replanted and lawns reseeded.

The economic decline has not been accompanied by a decline in the spirits of the people. They have been quite hopeful and optimistic and have done what they could to make the community a better place in which to live. The greatest evidence of this spirit has been the installation of the water system. Now people hope to have modern homes as soon as they can afford it. Last Arbor Day a row of trees was planted on each side of Main Street to replace the ones that died during the drouth. The land north of the railroad tracks had been planted with trees several years ago but most of these had died so these, too, were replaced. The trees in the cemetery are being replaced and plans to reseed the lawn are being made. These plans show that the people are hopeful for the future of the community.

Some of the farmers have done some research concerning the future of the crop outlook. They are inclined to believe that there will perhaps never be a crop certainty because of the type of soil and general lack of rainfall in this area. Since there is a large supply of water underneath the ground, many farmers are having eight-inch wells drilled on their farms and these are pumped by tractors to irrigate the fields in times of insufficient rainfall. The first well was tried out in 1938 and proved to be so successful that seven more have been drilled and other farmers plan to in the near future. The total cost of the well is about \$1,800 and it has been found to be rather inexpensive to operate. It is felt that a well will more than pay for itself in two seasons. The owner of a garage has rigged up an outfit for digging such wells and employs a crew of several men. These wells may mean a bright future for the community.

At present people in Shickley are very hopeful. The harvests this summer and fall were the best in several years. Merchants report an increase in sales. Winter wheat looks better than it has for some time. The people have hopes that incomes will soon be large

enough to support a doctor.

Although Shickley can never hope to become much larger, it will probably never get much smaller. Some families have sought homes elsewhere, but the people who have business and home interests in the village are determined to keep this community abreast of the changing times. There is not much future for young people unless they wish to farm. Few business places can afford to keep a clerk and there is no opportunity for those who wish a professional career. Thus Shickley can never hope to keep many young people in the community. It will no doubt continue to be a home for retired farmers and older people because they like to live in Shickley.

Most of the following account of Shickley is drawn from the booklet Shickley: Then and Now (Diamond Jubilee History, 1888-1963), compiled by Laura Pearl Koch, Lorena Wagers, Margaret Vough, and Carl Wennersten:

These are some of the business firms and professional people in the early days of Shickley. The inserted dates indicate when each person or firm came to the town. This list is incomplete because of

lack of information.

General Merchandise: August Schneider; T. J. Winters; C. W. Beeson; Wilson Bros.; James Bodkin (1886); J. W. Hanson; John Ekwall (1887); Peter Bergquist; Van Timmerman; Thoma & Arends; Limback & Beach; Oscar Johnson & Son; Alfred Rosenquist (1903); Farmers' Store-Carl Sanburg, proprietor; J. L. Doud; Jake Dorbin; Ed Snodgrass (1925); J. A. Fisher (1915).



Photo from John Carl Peter Bergquist General Store (later the J. A. Fisher Store).



Courtesy of Nebraska Signal W. S. Hughes Drug Store in 1891.

Groceries: V. D. Johnston (1914); Glen Pumphrey (1931). Millinery: Mrs. W. E. Woodruff; Mrs. C. W. Beeson; Gustus & Peterson; Rose Brittenham.

Drugs: Hardinger & Ireland; W. S. Hughes (1891); Charles Colson; Elmer Hanson; Glen Hoag.

Lumber and Coal: Bolton Bros.; H. I. Converse (1892); Wake & Thornton; Nye-Schneider-Fowler Co.

Hardware: W. C. Milroy; McPherren Bros. (1901); Rowlison & Long; Long & Wennersten.

Meat Markets and Butchers: Joe Davis (1887); Edward Blott; John Hiermier; J. R. Phelps; William Heiser; Charles Shaw; Schafer Walters.

Implements: Pius Reinsch; Huston Bros.; Clint Smith.

Furniture and Undertaking: H. A. Miller & Son; Long & Wennersten.

Flour and Feed: Henry Schott; D. W. Carlson; John E. Brown. Restaurants: Charles J. Phillips (1891); Jim and Sam Garrison; J. C. Boe (1901-1942); Camp & Richie.

Livery Barn: Charles Kreger (1887); J. B. Morris; Mike Fitz-patrick; Claus Frantz; Ike Beller; Charles Gehrke.

Creamery: Bush Bros.

Bakery: Harry Aydelott; Chris Hansen; Harold Bergquist.

Jewelers: Charles Bergquist; V. A. Beresford.

Photographers: W. S. Reed; M. M. Hoak (1906).

Barbers: Charles Buehrer; Frank Axelson; Cal Brown; Nick Marson; Ed Franzen (1903-1918); Harry H. Johnson.

Blacksmiths: Frank Johnson; Dan North; George Beeson; Chris Zehr: Ben Alfs.

Grain Elevator Men: William Gehrke; George Powell; William Van Buren; Joe Laur; Clint Smith; Frank Anderson; Charles Witt. Shoe Repair: William T. Craig.

Physicians: T. C. Canine; Royal Woods; A. J. Chamberlain; George A. Harris; E. A. Wilson; C. G. Delfs; C. W. Wiggins.

Tailor Shop: Captain Joe Thomas.

Dentists: H. G. Patterson; John Arthur DeMamphrey; J. Q. Adams; Guy Van Slyke; Dr. Jaecke.

Painter and Wallpaper Hanger: Seymour Thomas.

Wells and Windmills: Nels Rosenquist; Ed Stevens.

Auctioneers: L. R. Hoag; Loren Teter.

Carpenters: Jacky Wallace; John Carlson; A. A. Vough (and wheelwright); Sylvanus Lamb; Samuel C. May.

Harness Shop: Joe Ertel; Ray Merryman.

Burlington Section Foreman: Robert M. Jackson (1887). Hotels: Midland—Jerry Coffey, proprietor; Columbia—A. M. Baldwin.

Photo from "Shickley-Then and Now" Frank Johnson (standing), early Shickley blacksmith, and his cousin, Mr. Lindgren. This picture was taken in Moline, Illinois, where Mr. Johnson learned the blacksmith trade, in 1874.





Photo from "Shickley-One of Shickley's two early hotels-The Midland.

With the advent of automobiles, garages and gas stations were established. The first garages were those of McElroy & Russell, and Charles Bergquist, who later sold to Fred Geise. Chris Gratopp, W. C. Milroy, and Emil Krause were owners of early cars.

In 1910, Shickley had four elevators, District 54 school, and four churches. Each railroad ran two passenger, mail, and express trains and two freight trains daily. From 1915 to 1922, the community supported a picture show regularly. With the coming of automobiles and better highways, Shickley was no longer the only trade center for the community and there were many changes in business ownership between 1920 and 1930. The general-merchandise stores became

groceries, the bakery gave way to trucked-in bread, and there were no hotels but two cafes instead. The weekly newspaper, the Shickley Herald, was discontinued in 1922; after that, the county paper published in Geneva disseminated the news. The Congregational and the Swedish Methodist churches discontinued regular worship services in the 1920's because of small memberships and their church properties were sold and eventually removed. That left two churches within the village, the Methodist and Zion Lutheran, and several rural churches, to serve the community. The rural churches are the Stockholm Lutheran, 2½ miles W of town, St. Mary's Catholic, 4 miles N; Salem Mennonite, 4 miles SE, and Bethel Brethren, 4½ miles S on the county line in Thayer County. The Northwestern R.R. discontinued passenger service in 1937 and the Burlington in 1940. Each road continues its freight service, but the Northwestern station was torn down in 1967. There has been no resident doctor since 1936.

As of 1967, business enterprises were the Alfs Grain & Fertilizer Co.; Alfs Implement & Well Drilling Co.; Biegert Bros. Fertilizer Co.; Busse's Circle Foods; Busse's Repair Shop; Dick's Shoe Shop; Erb's Plumbing Shop; Gay's Skelly Service: Hatcliff Barber Shop; Janet Jean's Beauty Salon; Johnson Feed Mill, Inc.; Lauber Electric; Lichti Bros. Oil Co.; Lohmeier Repair; Merryman Repair & Mobil Service; Neuhaus IGA Store; Nickel Hardware & TV; Rosie's Place; Schafer Plumbing; Shickley Feed & Produce; Shickley Grain Co.; Shickley Lumber Co.; Shickley State Bank; and Jim Weinrich,

barber.

Another business was one in which Dave Steider pioneered about 1940, the addition of frozen food lockers to his already established produce business. The frozen food lockers added much to housewives' convenience before home freezers became so numerous. The lockers continued until 1960 when Lichti Bros. bought the site and erected their new building.

In 1923, the town voted bonds to wire the village for electricity and contracted with the Blue Valley Power Company for current. In 1940, a \$32,000 water system was installed, half of the cost borne by the Works Progress Administration. A sewer system and disposal plant for the town were installed in 1954 at a cost of \$83,000. Thanks

to these conveniences, nearly all homes are modern.

A building long important in Shickley's social and recreational life is the community building on North Railroad Street, facing the park. Originally a livery stable, in the twenties it was converted into a community hall. The west third of this building houses the public library and the club room and kitchen of the Federated Woman's Club. The library was founded by the Woman's Club in 1923, but is now supported by village tax levy. There are over 4,000 volumes in the library and nearly 20 magazines are received regularly. The rest of this building was floored with maple and was used as a skating rink for many years. Later the floor was tiled and used for basketball before the new school gymnasium was built. Other activities for which this space was used were banquet hall, dance floor, Red Cross Bloodmobile, irrigation meetings, and Farm Bureau and Soil Conservation programs.



Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now" Shickley Community building, formerly a livery stable.

The businessmen have been more or less consistent in keeping alive a Commercial Club, always interested in community betterment. Some of its concerns have been better lighting and improved streets. The village board has been in full accord with these improvements. In the early days, Fourth of July celebrations and Chautauquas were events of interest.

The people of Shickley have always been sports-minded and have backed many cup-winning teams in basketball, baseball, and softball. During the drouth and depression years of the thirties, kitten ball was played on a lighted field by both sexes and there was keen competition from neighPhoto from "Shickley-Then and Now" Shickley Girls' Basketball Team.



Stella White Nora Wennersten
Pearl Koch
Clara Gratopp Gertrude Powell

ap Row, Left to Right: Charles Ruth, (?) Meyers, Arthur Vough, John Kach, Glen Hoog, Rolph Johnson, Verr Bottom. Lower Row: Roy Wennersten, Clay Thomas, Paul Newman.



Shickley Baseball Club, 1913.

boring teams. This was a real morale-lifter for everyone in

those depressing years.

Shickley has had two major fires which destroyed busi-

Shickley has had two major fires which destroyed business places on Market Street. In 1920, the Farmers Union Store, the drugstore, and the hotel were burned, with a loss estimated at \$20,000 to \$30,000. The V. D. Johnston Meat Market and Grocery were destroyed in 1932. Volunteer fire departments came from Ong, Carleton, Davenport, and Geneva and kept the fire from spreading to adjoining buildings. Another disastrous fire occurred on the night of May 21, 1918, when the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church was struck by lightning and was a total loss. The congregation replaced it with the present brick building on the same site on West Murray Street.



Photo from John Carl

Shickley's Main Street in 1912 (looking north). Notice Fire Department on the west side, just beyond the drugstore.

Early fire-fighting equipment was a hose cart and bucket brigade, with the water supply coming from town pumps powered by windmills. One was on the corner of Market and North Railroad Streets and the other on the corner of Market and Campbell. At one time Shickley was known as "Little Holland" because of its many windmills. After the Johnston fire the need of better fire-fighting equipment was emphasized, and in May, 1932, a Volunteer Fire Department was organized. There were 25 original members. The first truck was bought in the summer of 1932, a Chevrolet equipped with a chemical tank, hose, and buckets. Gradually, additional and more up-to-date equipment has been added, including a fully equipped rescue unit in 1961. In 1950, a new all-steel fire house was built to house the firefighting equipment, financed 50-50 by the village and the rural fire district.

In the early days of Shickley many Civil War veterans were residents and there was a strong Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) organization. An old photograph of G.A.R. members pictures Isaac Beeson, Joseph Thomas, Sam Strayer, Samuel Teter, L. D. Phillips, John Hiermier, Mike Fitzpatrick, Cheney Shepard, Albert Herrick, A. A. Beach, William Shuster, Sylvanus Lamb, John Foster Pinkerton, and W. C. Milroy. A later organization of veterans is American Legion Post 164, which was organized in 1919 with 28 charter members. The American Legion promotes Americanism and patriotism in the community. In 1963, the Legion sponsored a flag-selling campaign to promote the flying of the flag. Market Street was testimony to the success of the campaign on Flag Day, June 14, and on July 4, when "Old Glory" was flying from a staff in front of nearly every business place. The Legion sponsors high-school students' participation in County Government Day, held in Geneva each year. Memorial Day services, honoring fallen comrades, are held annually at the Shickley Cemetery and the Stockholm Cemetery. Every year the American Legion sponsors the sale of poppies, the proceeds of which go to handicapped veterans. The Legion stands ready to give community service and co-operates in worthy projects. The present membership is 25, with the following officers (1967): Gordon Johnson, commander; Kenneth Hofferber, adjutant; Don Barney, service officer; Reiny Ackerman, finance officer; and the Rev. Hugh Houchin, post chaplain.



Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now" Big corn crop of 1896, with some 70-bushel yields.



Photo from Frank K. Willia Deering cornpicker about 1921—Frank Williams on picker.

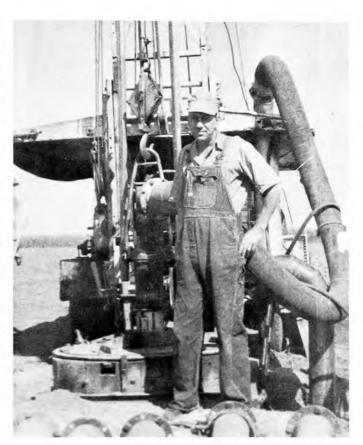


Photo from "Shickley—Then and Now"

John B. Alfs—first Fillmore County citizen to get into the irrigationwell business, and his original drilling rig.



Photo from Mrs. C. W. Flory First irrigation well in Fillmore County, drilled in 1936 (Charles W. Flory by well).

The development of Shickley, like that of any other Nebraska community, has been varied; for the village had its "ups and downs," brought about largely by the fluctuating rainfall. This area is purely agricultural and drouth immediately affects the economy. In 1896, there was a bumper corn crop which resulted in long cribs for storage being built on the railroad rights-of-way. Corn was sold for 13 cents a bushel. The drouth of the 1930's, aggravated by national depression, found Shickley at low ebb. In 1930, the assessed valuation of the town was \$215,499; by 1940, it was down to \$194.144. A recovery from this condition came with the use of deep wells for irrigation. Geologists have long told us of the lake of water underlying this area, and in 1936 the first well was drilled on the Charles Flory farm, tapping this wonderful supply for irrigation. The growing season of 1937 showed its worth in insuring plenty of moisture fro crops. From this beginning, all of Shickley's trade territory is now dotted with deep wells. Much credit goes to John B. Alfs. who self-constructed and assembled deep-well drilling equipment and was the first in Fillmore County to get into the business of drilling irrigation wells. Fertilizing became a necessity, and this gave rise to fertilizer-distribution businesses. Yields zoomed and the huge storages maintained by the two grain companies are mute testimony to the value of deep-well irrigation. Drouth-resistant sorghum grains have also made their contribution to the changing economy. All this has been reflected in the business of the town and in the increase in property values. Shickley is truly a "big little town."

Lodges

Through the years, Shickley has had several fraternal orders. The earliest was the Shickley Masonic Lodge No. 178, chartered on June 20, 1889. The first Master was William M. Van Buren. This lodge became extinct on September 2, 1905, and its remaining membership transferred to Geneva.

Shickley Lodge No. 194, I.O.O.F., was instituted on June 2, 1892. The 16 charter members were R. B. Campbell, W. S. Hughes, J. A. Smith, S. W. Light, W. H. Cooksey, Peter Bergquist, T. C. Canine, Alfred S. Strayer, D. E. Rusmisells, John McHale, Joel P. Morris, David Butler, Michael Fitzpatrick, Nels Swenson, Cheney A. Shepard, and Albert J. Murphy. This lodge is still active and meets every Monday evening. The 1967 membership is 22.

—Data supplied by John E. Pearson
The Leona Rebekah Lodge, No. 241, was instituted February
10, 1908, with 13 sisters and 20 brothers as charter members, namely:

Gertrude M. Powell S. F. Wagers Gusta Frantz W. Mevers Naomi Hagenlocker H. L. Long William Meyers W. S. Hughes M. Lorena Hoag Emilie Meyers William Mansfield John Boe Lena Boe P. M. Hagenlocker Will Vough E. S. Thomas H. B. Thomas Mary M. Smith Dick Ferguson Emma Frenzen George Davis Lena Sanburg Emil Krause B. N. Kunkel Mary Sherbondy Walter Dodge Ed Frenzen Inez Dodge N. T. Smith Harry Schuster J. L. Doud Claus Frantz Katie Schott

The Leona Rebekah Lodge has met on the first and third Tuesdays of each month and has continued to be an active lodge for the past 59 years. The 1967 membership is 25.

—Data supplied by Mrs. John E. Pearson A charter for the local organization of the Royal Highlanders was granted in September, 1907, but the organization was discontinued in August, 1919. There were also short-lived chapters of the Ancient Order of United Workmen and the Modern Woodmen of America.

Pioneer History

The following first-hand account of Shickley's early days, written by Mrs. Harriet Anderson, is presented in her own words:

You ask me to give you a "History of Shickley." I will try but there will be many items of interest that I have forgotten. To those who have been so far from a town it caused a great excitement to think of having a town within a few miles. Of course, we women did not go very often. Sometimes once or twice a year and we did not think so much about the "fashions" as we do now.

Our first trading place was Fairmont and then Grafton, Sutton, Carleton, and Edgar. We traded also at Davenport. At first there was only one store, kept by a Mr. Stump. They lived in the rooms at the back of the store. That was the only house in Davenport at that time.

In 1884, they began to talk of a railroad being built from Beatrice through this part of the county. Everybody was thankful to hear about it. But in 1885 there was more than talk. A road was surveyed and

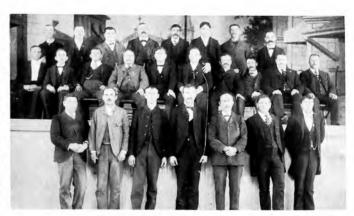


Photo from Rev. John W. Ekwall Modern Woodmen Drill Team in 1890.

every day we were glad to hear that it had been surveyed through such and such a man's farm. Now Mr. Kline was glad to see them survey where they did but a Mr. Schmutz did not want to be so near a town. He traded his homestead of 160 acres to R. B. Campbell for his farm of 240 acres near the Catholic Church and Mr. Campbell moved to Mr. Schmutz's farm, known now as where A. E. Miller lives.

In the spring of 1886, the "town" was surveyed and Mr. Kline and Mr. Campbell were very generous with the lots, giving so many to the railroad and they would give to anyone who started up a business a lot for \$1.00. There were three stores started at once, Mr. Winters on the south side and Oscar Johnson and Mr. Houchin & Cavanaugh on the north side.

A Mr. Wilson built a furniture store where the Opera House now stands and a Mr. Mercer kept the first lumber yard where Mr. Thornton's lumber yard is.

A contractor by the name of Lather built, with Mr. James Flory's help, many of the buildings, and everyone was busy and trying to do their part in making a town. They succeeded in getting quite a number of good businessmen located here. It seemed no time until there was a man ready to start some line of business. Soon Mr. Coffey had a hotel up and Mr. Ross put up a drugstore and a Mr. McDougal a restaurant, then a blacksmith shop. Mr. Campbell was real-estate man and postmaster. His mother, Mrs. Woodruff, was dressmaker and milliner. It seemed to us something grand to have our letters and papers come to Shickley after so many years of getting mail from Carleton. We all rejoiced over it and thought of those long cold rides and often disappointments over the mail.

I remember my first trip to Shickley as plainly as if it occurred last month. I did not go to town much on account of not being very strong and could not stand the rides very well. usually being sick afterwards, so when Mr. Anderson asked me if I did not want to see the new town, of course I said I did. But it seemed to me we were there so quick. We all went to Mr. Winters' store first and there I made Mrs. Winters' acquaintance. She invited me into their rooms at the back of the store where they lived. A firm friendship lasting as long as she lived here was made. Afterwards we went to visit the other stores, buying something at each place, as I told them I would treat them all alike. I enjoyed my visit to Shickley, coming home much pleased with the new town, and I always had a warm friendship for the people in Shickley.

After the town was surveyed, Mrs. Clara Ekwall bought two lots where Mrs. N. T. Smith's house now stands (R. T. Johnson home). She built the first dwelling house. She had come here to live, bringing her four children, Fred, Theodore, Leonard, and Jennie. She bought lots in March and soon commenced to build. That house is part of Amos Frieden's home and it was moved to its present location by Harvey Johnson, he having bought it later.

In the meantime, Mr. Winters and Oscar Johnson had built their

In the meantime, Mr. Winters and Oscar Johnson had built their stores and Mr. Milroy had also built a hardware store on the south side.

A bank was built and opened by a Mr. William Shickley of Geneva. Then it was decided to name the town after Judge Shickley, who lived at Geneva. He was much respected all over the county.

On the 19th day of August, 1886, at 10 o'clock A.M., the first train came into Shickley. Of course it was a construction train, and it did not get to Ong until the 29th of August.

At this time Mr. Houchin & Cavanaugh had their store built, so Mr. Cavanaugh built a dwelling house. That house is now owned by Mr. Mansfield. Soon after, they began to build the Congregational Church, where Mrs. Augusta Swenson now lives. Then in 1887 they built the Methodist Church. Many other buildings were put up and there began a feeling of rivalry between the North and South Shickley which was not pleasant, and some made statements that they would not trade with one another. There were three elevators

built. Of course, that was a great benefit to the farming community.

Our first doctor was a Dr. Fish. He built an office south of where
the Opera House now stands. They lived upstairs, but he did not
stay long, not being very successful.

We sometimes went to other towns but did most of our trading at Shickley.

In the fall of 1886, I went to Illinois for my first visit to my old home. My father being here, he persuaded me to go back with him. I had always had a longing for my old home but my mother was not there to greet me so I felt so lonesome that I lost all care to live there.

I returned satisfied to stay in the "Wild and Windy West" and Shickley looked good to me. One thing, people from the East thought it was uncivilized and that Nebraska people were like Indians, but

we got over caring for what they thought.

In a few years the Northwestern was surveyed and they thought they should have bonds voted to help them and threatened to miss Shickley unless the bonds carried. The day of the election was one of the worst days seen in Shickley and if there had not been good men on guard there would have been crime committed. But the bonds carried. There was hard feelings for many years over it. When I see the quiet elections since women have the right to vote I rejoice and am glad the saloon is of the past. I hope we will so vote that it will never come back again.

We have always had good doctors here. Dr. Canine succeeding Dr. Fish. Then Dr. Woods, who was our friend and doctor for many years. He moved to Geneva but he sold out to Dr. Harris. Shickley was too slow for him, so he sold out to Dr. Wilson, who built up a good practice. But Dr. Wilson liked farming better. Then goodnatured Dr. Delfs came along and after he left, Dr. Wiggins moved

here.

When the school districts were located, there was a schoolhouse built west of Shickley. There were quite a number of schools in Bryant township and they were all used to have Sunday School and church in.

I remember one teacher, a Miss Dyson, that had homesteaded where T. E. Johnson now lives north of town. Her sister and she lived together and both taught school, going or riding on their ponies night

and morning, and they were liked.

Shickley Schoolhouse was built in 1887 and Mr. Neal was principal in 1888 and 1889. If there were any other teachers, I do not remember them, but I think that there has been a great interest in the Shickley school, and all unite in wishing that all may co-operate to make it one of the best in the county or state.

I think that some day we may be proud of some of our young people. There may be someone who may be President of this great country. One wish I give you all, that you may all live such a good life and do so much good that we will rejoice that you went to school

at Shickley.

I have given you a slight sketch of the early history of Shickley but I think that it is very imperfect. I hope you will all help to make Shickley so grand that a better historian than I will be found to give you a good history of the Little Town we all love.



Photo from Leonard Carlson

Farm home of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Hanson, built in 1883. Left to right: Mrs. Arthur Vennell, Mrs. Victor Pearson, Mrs. Hjalmar Olsen, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Hanson, Anna Hanson, Mr. and Mrs. Nels Johnson.



West side of Market Street (about 1920). Bank is the third building from the left.

Banks

When a bank was needed in the community, articles of incorporation for the Shickley State Bank were issued September 19, 1887, signed by T. H. Beekman, C. F. McGrew, Harry Patee, G. Schneider, John Donovan, Jr., George E. Black, and G. W. Clawson. A meeting of the stockholders on January 1, 1888, elected F. H. Beekman, president; C. F. McGrew, vice-president; Harry Patee, cashier; board of directors, F. H. Beekman, John Donovan, Jr., C. F. McGrew, George E. Black, and Harry Patee.

In 1909, William Matzke and W. A. Snare organized the Farmers and Merchants Bank. On March 29, 1930, the Farmers and Merchants Bank was bought by the State Bank,

which still serves the area.

Our Trip Out West and Early Days by Mrs. Harriet Anderson

In the year of 1872 my husband [Nels] came to Fillmore County, Nebraska, to Wm. Miller's and while there he chose 160 acres of land. As he was a soldier he went to the land office at Beatrice to homestead it. But he found that it was already homesteaded so he chose another 160 acres that was not taken on Sec. 22. It is still owned by the family today.

We intended to move in the fall of 1872 but sickness prevented us. In the spring of 1873, April 21st, my husband, myself, and our two little girls, Nellie age 2 years and Adelia 6 months and my two brothers, Nathaniel and Thomas Smith left our loving parents in Rock Island County, Illinois, to come to the broad and fertile prairies of Nebraska. To me it was a sad day and I can hear my mother's words as she kissed my good-bye: "I will never see you again in this world." Oh, how true it was!

We went about 25 miles the first day stopping to visit a sister of Mr. Anderson over the Sabbath Day. My father would not let us start on Friday as he thought it unlucky so we started on Saturday to

please him.

It commenced to rain Sunday night. It was a dismal morning to start out on such a long journey in wagons. A friend of my brothers and myself had come to see us and he brought us a bucket of honey which was quite a treat to us and which we enjoyed. Our parents and friends had seen that we were well equipped with things to eat but my appetite failed and the first week was very hard on me and I was sick. I realized that every step was taking me farther from my mother. My husband tried to persuade me to leave them after the first week of our trip and go by train to Fairmont and wait for them there. But to that I would not consent as he had promised to buy me a cow with the money I saved by coming with them in the wagon.

My brother Nathaniel drove the wagon that the babies and I were in as my husband's wagon was heavily loaded with our household goods and here we had more room and it was more comfortably

fixed so that no rain could trouble us.

I got better the next week and I began to take more notice of our trip. Our oldest girl began to get so well and strong. She had been so weakly and everyone thought we would lose her on that long trip but it sure agreed with her and her father saw that she had all the milk

she could drink and good food to eat.

I remember one farm we stopped at. It looked like rain and the man told us to drive inside his barnyard and to shelter under his shed. When he heard one of the children cry he came and asked me and the children to come into the house. I thanked him but said I would rather stay in the wagon. The next morning when we were ready to start my husband went to him as he was milking and asked if he would sell ½ gallon of milk. He said, "I will give you a gallon of the best milk you ever had." I thought so too when we stopped early for dinner. There was such a lot of butter in the jug.

I never had any liking for the roads in Iowa. We sure found them bad but the people were kind and there were many things that were



Photo from "Shickley-Then and Now"

East side of Market Street (about 1920). Old Midland Hotel is the second building from the right.



Photo from Everett Landgren

This barn burned in the summer of 1899. It was insured in the old Fillmore County Mutual Insurance Co. and caused considerable concern among the stockholders because of the sizeable assessment to cover the loss. Pictured at right are Nels Anderson and his niece Gertie Landgren. The other persons are not known.

interesting and amusing. Some were so ready to let you know they had a gun and were afraid of something being stolen from them. I remember two men that passed us. They had a light spring wagon and a good team and were going at a good speed. They stopped and asked where we were going. The boys said to Nebraska. They said, "We are also." They said, "We are going near Fairmont." We told them that was our intention also. They wished we could travel together, but our wagons were too heavily loaded. They said they had passed the same wagon we had and they had showed their guns and let them know they did not want company. But with wishes to meet these people again they went on. The next day in the afternoon we passed them. One of their horses was sick so they were resting. They asked how far we would go before we camped. We told them about 10 miles. They said they would try and make it and camp with us. Well, we had our supper and they came and a very pleasant time the men had. We left them the next morning and went on. Late that afternoon they passed us again. We were going to have our dinner (we always just took a lunch at noon). One of the men called out, "Why don't you milk one of those cows around you?" My brother said, "These boys are afraid to hold the cow while I milk." So he left his team, came and caught the cow and Tom milked. He got a quart of milk. They had a good laugh and went on. The men met many times in Fairmont but they moved away again.

I did not know the state of Iowa was so hilly. After the first week I got used to having such a small space to move around in, but I was glad when we reached Plattsmouth, Nebraska. There we crossed the river in a ferry boat. We found the roads different. We met many covered wagons leaving Nebraska. They were discouraged over the Great Easter Blizzard on the 14th day of April. They would not live in a place where they had such storms. Now what they said made me feel bad, for I had a fear of living on a prairie and they said the wind blew so hard that houses and wagons had to be chained or they would blow away. My husband told them we were going on and try it

anyway.

We stopped in Lincoln one night. I thought it was not much of a place as it had only been the capital 3 years. We went to Wyuka Cemetery to see the grave of Mr. Anderson's sister who had died the fall before. Her husband, Charley Foster, was in Lincoln. He came on out with us to see his land. He had homesteaded the spring before in Fillmore County, when Wm. Miller did. (He was Nels Miller's father.) We were all acquainted with Mr. Miller in Illinois.

After leaving Lincoln we camped near the Insane Asylum on Salt Creek and I assure you that salt water doesn't make good coffee. I threw that coffee out and insisted that we have some well water which my husband got as he liked his coffee as well as I did.

We reached Fairmont Saturday noon making us just three weeks on the trip. When we drove through Geneva, my husband said to me, "This is the county seat." I said, "Where is the courthouse?" He said, "That will be here soon." We did not see many houses after leaving Geneva. I remember a James Merryman place. It began to look very stormy and not much of a road so I thought it much farther than it was.

We arrived at Mr. Miller's just as the storm came and I was glad to be in shelter. There we heard that our land had been preempted or jumped and that was sure discouraging after such a long trip. My husband was persuaded to go to Beatrice to the Land Office where he found that the land had never been canceled. He was told to move onto it.

We lived on one side of the 160 acres and our opponent on the other side. He used to come and order us off but it did him no good.

There were a number of soldiers that had taken claims. They came to us and said they would go and put this man's goods on his wagon and send him off. He was a bachelor and no one liked him. My husband had started a law-suit for the land which he won. We had a sod house built that fall. We were neighbors and friends with this man for a number of years.

The next year was a hard one as our money was used for the lawsuit. We had a very hard time as the grasshoppers or locusts as some
called them came, and I must say they could eat. I had a very nice
garden which I took great pleasure in and in one hour's time there
was nothing left. All I could find of my onions were the holes where
the onions had been. Our potato vines were ate to the ground. Our
25 acres of sod corn was gathered that fall in a water pail. Just a few
kernels of corn on a small cob. We had a few acres of spring wheat
which had been cut before the grasshoppers came. We talked over
what we should do but decided we would stay on the land. We did
but it was not fun! We killed our cow so we could have meat and
that was a hard thing on me. I thought that I could not get over that
but we had no money and if we left the land we would lose it. So we
tried to keep up our courage.

I remember one Sunday afternoon that Mr. Miller came and brought me a small bucket of sweet milk. I made coffee for him. (Mr. Anderson being away.) We had bread and coffee without sugar or butter. As we sat at the table he said to me, "Hattie, have you ever told your parents how hard you are having it?"

ever told your parents how hard you are having it?"

I said, "No, I will never tell my mother. She would worry about

He said, "I feel sorry for you, as you had such a good home, to have it like this."

When he started to ge he said, "You tell Nels to come tomorrow and get a cow I have." I told him we could not pay him but he said, "You can some time."

The next morning Mr. Anderson went and got the cow. Oh, how glad I was! Our son Frank was born the 21st of February. I had made a pound of butter. I thought it was so nice to have butter on my bread. Mr. Anderson wrote to my parents that we had a son and my father sent me \$10. When the girls came in with 5 cents of sugar and 24 cents of dried fruit, I think it was apples, I thought I was rich.

Mrs. Bergquist who took care of me and did the work charged us \$3 for 10 days as nurse and doctor. Our nearest doctor being at Sutton. There was no one but Mrs. Bergquist and she was so pleased to get that money.

The first summer we had to go to Fairmont for our groceries. Then in the fall Carleton had a store and a blacksmith shop so we felt as if things were improving.

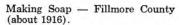
In the spring of 1875 the ground was covered with small grass-hoppers. They ate the wheat and oats and garden as fast as it came up. In May a cold rain and snow came and they disappeared and again we had hopes.

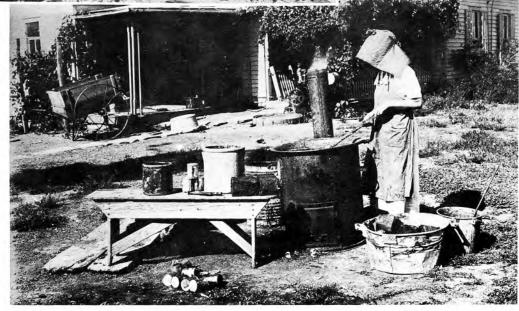
We were needing a well as we had been hauling water in barrels all this time and how many times I had longed for a cool drink of water and to have all I needed when I washed. That summer we had a well dug and that was a great deal.

I also had such a longing for pie plant pie. So one day I picked sheep sorrel which grew in abundance on the breaking. I made a crust using cream and sweetened the sheep sorrel with molasses. We liked



Making Sorghum—Fillmore County (about 1916).





it and when anyone came I made a pie.

One of the things I remember was the wild geese. They sure were a hard thing on our wheat for many years and nearly destroyed it. But with all our losses we managed to live and always had good friends no matter what church they belonged to. As neighbors and friends the early settlers to one another were very dear and early trials drawing us together.

In 1884 or 1885 they began to talk of the B. & M. Railroad being built. There was quite a talk of where a town should be located and at last the location was chosen and named "Shickley." We thought it a great improvement as we had traded at Fairmont, Sutton, Grafton, Edgar, Carleton and Davenport. Now to have a town so near to us we were well pleased

we were well pleased.

Now don't think we did not have any amusements. We had dances and mush-and-milk parties. Then we were not so particular about our dress and no one ever criticized the other and many happy

days and evenings we had.

I think now my happiest days were spent in a sod house. We felt that everyone was a friend and neighbor. We were so glad to have people move here. Some were good and some were bad but we tried to be neighborly to all.

I often think when hearing people talk of hard times what would they have called it to never have any money coming in or to go and get trust or to have to be afraid we would have to leave our land.

I can not tell you how we lived. I asked one lady if she could. "No," she said. "I only know that I often wondered where our next meal was to come from."

There were many things sent to the grasshopper sufferers that were never given to them, and for all the aid that they got it would never have kept them alive very long. But I think that I would rather buy a piece of land than homestead but when you homesteaded in early days everybody was poor and there wasn't much money.

Blizzard of 1888

F. O. Nelson of San Jose, California, sent this letter about the great blizzard:

Well do I remember early that January morning as a 12-year-old trudging across fields to the Beach schoolhouse 2 miles W of Shickley, with the wind blowing lightly from the southeast, temperature about 15 above and the snow 18 inches deep. It was the softest, fluffiest, and biggest-flaked snow I have ever seen. It continued to fall intermittently until nearly noon. Just after the noon hour, about 1:30, the wind turned to the northwest and the 50-mile gale that followed picked it up and it all seemed to take to the air at once.

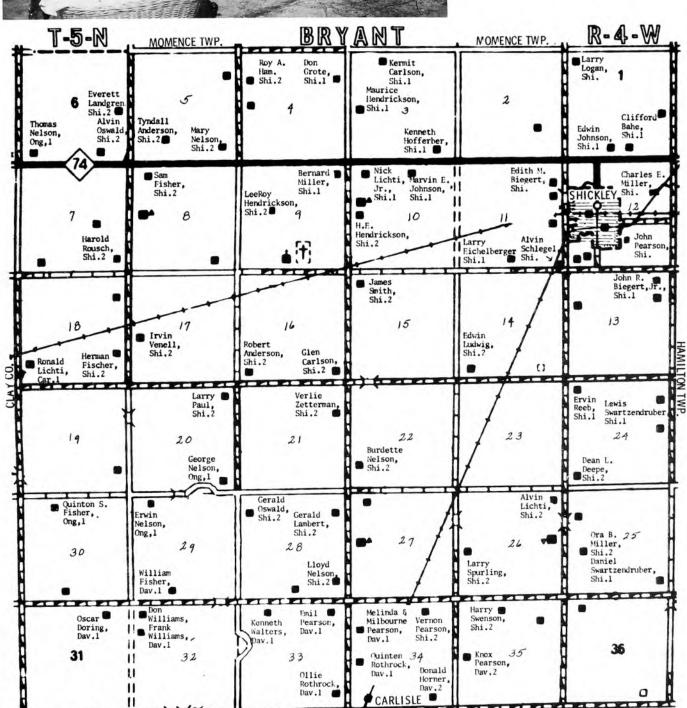
Our teacher would not let any of us leave for home unescorted. My father came for me afoot because he could not force his horses to face it. As we made our way home we could at times see the clear sky above but never at any time more than 10 feet ahead. We finally made the mile and a quarter by following a fence, a railroad, and the last

part of the distance between two hedge rows.

The teacher and some of the pupils whose parents could not make it remained at the schoolhouse all night. Fortunately, that time the coal bin was full.



The approach of modern comforts — wash day lightened by a gas engine (about 1916).



Chelsea Township

The tenth township to be formed in Fillmore County when it was surveyed in 1870 was named "Chelsea" after the first white child to be born (about 1868) within its 36-mile area. The boy, Chelsea Raines, lived with his family 1½ miles south of the former Chelsea Church site, where he and other members of the family were listed on the earliest church records.

Chelsea township is bounded on the north by Madison, on the east by Glengary, on the south by Belle Prairie, and on the west by Stanton townships. It is crossed from west to east on its first section line below the Madison township border by Nebraska Highway 41. The city of Geneva just barely overflows into its northwestern corner. Its two southern tiers of sections are crossed by the south fork of Turkey Creek, which zigzags from northwest to southeast, leaving the township near the middle eastern boundary of Sec. 36.

The comparatively level topography and the fertile soil of Chelsea township are well adapted to agriculture. Therefore, the raising of corn, wheat, oats, milo, and alfalfa, together with livestock feeding, poultry raising, and dairying, constitute its chief industries. In 1887, however, there was on Sec. 6 a cheese factory, and another sprang up a few years later on Sec. 17. Also, James Cook, on Sec. 13, and Mr. Hinton, on Sec. 17, operated sorghum mills. To these mills people brought their sorghum and had it made into delicious syrup, on shares. The syrup was used as a sugar substitute and as a spread on bread and hot cakes. Two blacksmith shops, one owned by Austin Shackelford on Sec. 23 and the other by Jerry Vance on Sec. 2, performed a very necessary service for the farmers round about.

There has never been a trading center in Chelsea township, or the smallest portion of a railroad track. There are no large streams, and no heavily wooded areas. Osage hedge, however, growing along roads and surrounding many fields, is living testimony of the effort our pioneers made to relieve the bareness of the prairie. Hedgerows also served as fence lines; some farmers kept them attractively trimmed. In time, apple orchards became common; but most of our present tree-planting is confined to windbreaks or drouth-resistant and disease-resistant varieties about the farmstead.

The people who live in Chelsea township are, for the most part, of Irish, German, Swedish, or Czechoslovakian ancestry. The Czechs have become more numerous in the last 20 or 25 years, probably because of the township's proximity to a Czech community.

In the early history of Chelsea township, farms rarely consisted of more than 160 acres, and many were much smaller, so that farm homes then were much more numerous and closer together. Fourteen families once lived on Sec. 14, as compared with two farm homes found there at present, those of Clarence Higel and Frank Kotas. A clump of trees, a granary, or perhaps a barn are all that remain to mark the place of a one-time dwelling, and even those marks are rapidly disappearing. Although most of the farmhouses in the township were built 50 or more years ago, many have by now been remodeled into comfortable and attractive modern homes with all conveniences. Many of these improvements have come about since the arrival of rural electrification in 1949.

For the most part, Chelsea township has escaped major disasters. It shared with other communities two epidemics of diphtheria, the blizzard of 1888, and the influenza epidemic of World War I. Periods of drouth have been common, but severe hailstorms and true cyclonic winds have been infrequent. To this writer's knowledge, there has never been any loss of human life by fire or wind, and not more than a half-dozen traffic fatalities. Among traffic accidents, one train-car collision, on June 18, 1933, took the lives of three people: Lee Bailor, his son Robert, and Frances Bumgarner.

The 1918 influenza epidemic took a severe toll in the community, three of those stricken being members of one family: Mr. and Mrs. Bill Strothkamp and one of their six children. One unusual accident occurred in 1914 or 1915 when Johnny Kolz was killed while operating a grindstone which disintegrated. Another man, Charles Sprout, was killed (April 25, 1918) when struck by a horse. In 1892 Edward Brooke was fatally injured in a fall from his windmill.

Livestock casualties have caused severe financial setbacks and disappointment to most farm families. One example was the experience of Ed Nelson when he was building his house in 1908. The family was depending on the sale of 160 heavy hogs to meet a share of the cost. Shortly before the house was completed, the hogs were stricken with cholera, and the burning of carcasses became a regular morning chore. One blind pig was all that remained when the plague had passed. In the late thirties, a strange disease commonly known as "sleeping sickness" attacked horses, and many died or became blind. The discovery and use of various vaccines have been effective in curtailing such losses among livestock.

Numerous farm buildings have been lost by fire. The Ben Hafer farm, now the William Bures place, lost both barn (1901 or 1902) and house (1920). Mrs. Hafer was publicly commended for her bravery in rescuing all the horses from their burning barn; an insurance company presented her a check for \$150.

After several successive years of drouth during the early 1930's, a few farmers began to ponder the possibility of pump irrigation. The first well drilled in Chelsea township was on the Ed Nelson farm five miles east of Geneva near Highway 41, in 1939. No more wells were drilled, however, until the early fifties, when lack of rainfall again became a problem. By the end of 1966, there were 58 wells, and more were being drilled.

Increasing costs of production, higher standards of living, and the steady improvement of farm machinery have revolutionized farming practices here as elsewhere. The man doing diversified farming in the 1960's has a small fortune invested in a complete line of equipment. His machinery will include one or more tractors and the accompanying plow, cultivator, disc harrow, drill, planter, mower and rake, manure spreader and loader, baler, combine, forage cutter and blower, cornpickers, and elevator. In addition he may have a grinder, a milking machine, a truck, and at least one car. The farmer who irrigates has a further investment in the well, the motor and the power that runs it, and a mile or more of irrigation pipe. He may also have a sprinkler and fertilizing equipment. And along with the machinery, of course, go the expenses of operation and repair.

Except in the realm of cattle feeding, farm chores have lessened. Although most people raise a certain number of chickens, an increasing number of farm families buy their milk and milk products. The farm vegetable garden is much smaller than in former years — on some farms, now non-existent. These and many other changes are more or less the result of modern living conditions. Not all are good, but not all are bad.

The practices of 50 years ago, and even less, now seem almost unreal to the people who experienced them, and utterly unbelievable to those who have not. Then, all farming operations involved a great deal of time and hard work in comparison to the amount of production. Although the binder was considered a wonderful improvement over previous methods of harvesting, it took one day of steady cutting to complete 20 acres of wheat. Operating the binder and driving four fly-tortured horses at the same time was a man-sized job. It was wise to change teams at noon, if possible. Other members of the family, women included, and hired men or boys followed the binder and gathered up the bundles, setting

them in shocks of 12 to 18 bundles each. In this way the grain was kept in good condition until the threshing crew arrived, which might be several weeks later.



Photo from O. E. Nelso

Company threshing rig of Alpine District, 1922. Owners of rig: J. A. E. Nelson, Mark McCartney, Clarence McCartney, Herb Roberts, Donald Fisher.

Walferd Peterson operated one of the first large threshing outfits in Chelsea township. The separator was powered by a steam engine which had to be supplied with water and burning straw or coal. The crew consisted of the separator man, the engineer, and the water boy, who hauled water in a tank-wagon from the nearest large water tank. Eight men with racks and teams, assisted by four field pitchers, loaded and hauled the bundles up to the separator and pitched the bundles into the feeder, one at a time. The straw was blown up and out into a huge golden-colored stack, and the grain rolled from a spout into a wagon. Three scoopers tended the wagons and hauled the grain to a bin, where it was shoveled off by hand.

By the long-drawn noon whistle of the steam engine, the housewife and her helpers (usually neighbor women) knew that 18 or 20 hungry men would soon have their teams fed and themselves "washed up" for dinner. Without benefit of refrigerator, frozen foods, or ready-mix, a bountiful meal was served. Water was carried from the well, and freshly churned butter was brought from the cave or the milk tank. Bread and pies had been baked in a cob range that kept the kitchen at a consistent 100° Fahrenheit most of the day. Preparations for the evening meal or afternoon lunch began as soon as the dinner dishes were finished. The three crew men usually stayed overnight, for their job of "getting up steam" would begin early the next morning. Barring bad weather or breakdowns, a job was usually completed in two or three days, and the outfit moved on to the next farm. About ten jobs completed a season.

The threshing operator hired little help beyond the engine crew, as each farmer on the "run" (about 10, as a rule) furnished his own labor and equipment — such as team, rack, wagon, or whatever — on each of the jobs. Five cents a bushel was charged for wheat and three cents for oats, to cover costs and provide a slight profit. The first steam thresher engines burned straw; later coal was used. The operator paid for the coal but the farmer being served was responsible for having the coal hauled from town.

The earliest threshers were not equipped with knives for cutting the twine around the bundles of grain, nor was there a swinging blower for discharging and depositing the straw. It was usually the task of some boy to stand and cut the bands as the bundles were pitched into the feeder. It was important that the pitch be at just the right angle, or tempers were apt to flare.

Harvest time was always a fascinating experience in spite of the heavy work involved, but corn picking was, for most people, the hardest and least glamorous of farm jobs. There were, however, individuals who took a great deal of pride in the speed and efficiency of their work and were available for hire, at about three cents a bushel and board and room. More than one young man came by what little cash he had through corn-picking jobs that sometimes lasted well

into the winter. It was not always his to keep, for there were some hard years when his money had to pay for the family's groceries. A corn picker's equipment consisted of shucking mitts and a peg or hook strapped to his wrist and hand to assist in dislodging each ear of corn from its stalk as he worked down the row or rows. His team and wagon kept slightly ahead of him and to the side. Bangboards attached to the wagon kept the ears from going overboard as they were tossed in. A well-trained team started and stopped at the picker's command. If picking in fairly good corn, a man could get one load in the morning and one in the afternoon; and, of course, each load had to be scooped off by hand. The only way to complete a job of this kind was to stay with it day after day, week after week, no matter what the weather or one's own ailments, until the work was done. It was not uncommon for wives and older children to help when possible. Small children were sometimes bundled up and taken along, part of the time riding in a little wagon tied behid the shucking wagon. After chores and supper were done, mother patched shucking mitts by the light of a kerosene lamp, while

Small wonder, is it, that the mechanical cornpicker, introduced about 1918, gained favor so rapidly?

About ten years later, the combine for small-grain harvesting was introduced in the township. Clarence Nun was one of the first farmers to own one; it attracted a great deal of attention.

The tractor preceded both. The first three-wheeled plow tractor in the township came into the possession of Arthur Larson, who won it in 1916 as a prize for obtaining the most subscriptions to the Omaha Daily Bee.

Cars steadily became more common. By the purchase of a two-seated "Jackson" in 1908, Emmor Fox became the first car owner in Chelsea township. A ride around the section was a great thrill for neighbors of the Fox family. About 10 years later farm trucks were introduced. These became another great advantage to the farmer, particularly in getting his grain and stock to market. Before this time, cattle were driven to the nearest stockyard and shipped by train to Omaha and other central markets. If the distance was less than six or seven miles, hogs could be driven also, but more often they were hauled by team and lumber wagon. In hot weather, they were loaded in the evening and hauled at night in order to avoid the heat. It took a long time to drive even a few miles because the horses had to walk to lessen the jarring of the wagon. Any driver who permitted his team to trot was very apt to reach his destination with at least one dead animal.

With the increase in motorized vehicles, road improvement became a necessity. Highway 41, which was graded by the state with horse-drawn graders, in 1924 became the first graveled road in Chelsea township. Now (1966) it is an all-weather road, fully "black-topped." Two county roads intersect at a point four miles east of Highway 81 and two miles south of Highway 41. All the unsurfaced mail routes are now graveled, and maintained by the township.

Organization vitally concerns any community, and Chelsea township is no exception. The first township meeting was held on April 3, 1888, when Robert Stewart was chosen clerk and J. M. Piersol moderator. A levy of two mills was voted for roads and three mills for all other purposes. At the next meeting, in June, Jonas Miller was appointed constable and an overseer was appointed for each of the four road districts.

The districts were numbered from right to left, beginning with No. 1 in the northeast corner of the township; these remain the same today. The earliest township record is a book of minutes kept from 1888 to December, 1915, by the following clerks: Robert Hastings, Morgan Warner, C. F. Heinciker, J. H. Morgan, W. C. Peterson, P. J. Hafer, T. M. Andrews, J. F. McCartney, J. W. Hafer, A. B. Miller, F. Hafer, L. C. Brooke, W. J. Sloan, and H. A. Warner. The main items of business concerned (as they do at present) the maintenance of roads, expenditures connected with the tax levies, and the election and appointment of township officers and supervisors.

Rileyen H. Jewett	Freegrace L. Sexton			Geo. Webst	P. ter	Christian A. L. Voigtlander			Jasper N. Spivey	Owen D Wilson, Jr	David Jackson			
Daniel W. Haskins	Harvey As Gottlieb Winchell Yeager		;	Freder Heiders	rick stadt	William D. Wilson		3	Jeremiah Vance	Geor	ge M. oper			
	1	William Merrill	Charles F Andrew Vick F.				Orson 1	B. Folden				Fran McCa	cie riney	Motthey Young
							Edward C.	James N. Hastings		1				
		Henry R. Deming	John F. Blain				Edward C. Clow	Alijah Archer		1		Jymes Bell	Jonas Lawrence	Moses Taylor
							John Archer							
Lewis Rockwell	Charles A. Warner		1			1			James H. Robinson	Tho:	mas F.			
	1		1		School	Land		İ	Walter Churchili		ac H.			
Bidwell H. Brown	Edward Brooke		17			1			Benjamin F. Ryman		roly			3
			1			1					lliam celford			
		William Warner	Thomas Thompson				David Warner	Frederich Hohensee				Cy M:	rus	Salathiel Stanley
		Richard Kinsey						Daniel Miller						
	19	Adam Bailor	David H. Conant		7		S. R. Piersol	Austin C. Shackelford		23		John And	W, rew	Robert E. Hastings
			Henry Conant				Louis Hohensee	John R. Piersol						
William Yates	William Yates			Milton K. Wellman	Thirza Wellman	Joseph M. Piersol			Benjamin Morgan	Sam Ra	nuel E.			
			1								an L.			
Simeon Albro	Thomas C. Wood		29	Cyrus McPher-1	Heinrich Struck- meier	Carl Charlotte Pfingsten Struck - imeier		27	Jesse S. Griffith	Joh Mul	n W Ilikin		2	
	1								ElishaT. Chester	1				
		Henry Plattner	George Finister				Simeon Chester	Mary E. Taylor						
	1			-						1			Sehoo	Land
	1		10000					i and the same	100 Table	1. 7.5.		100 E 100	Jenos	

Chelsea Township Homestead Map

The organization of school districts began early in the seventies and continued for 10 years. A brief history of each appears elsewhere in this account.

Some present-day children might have been delighted with the educational policy of our pioneers, as the first school terms lasted only three months; but these short terms rather quickly grew longer. By 1885, most of the districts were holding school for six or eight months and, by 1915, nine months. Teachers received \$20 or \$30 a month and boarded, if necessary, at a home near the school for a dollar or two a week. Because there were more and larger families, school enrollments were larger; the average was about 45 pupils, with ages varying from 5 to 19 years. The fact that there was a "new teacher" almost every year would seem to indicate that teaching was often an arduous task. Maintaining discipline must have been a job in itself, especially during the winter term when "big boys" went to school for the fun of it, and if the teacher was pretty.

The teacher did her own janitor work and taught reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic to all ages. Geography and grammar were for such older pupils as could afford books. Slates and slate pencils for much written work helped to save paper. Classes recited about every 10 minutes from a

long recitation bench at the front of the room. For lack of space, double desks (for two pupils each) were crowded together, and extra pupils were seated on a bench at the back of the room. Children walked to school, and on cold winter days sometimes carried hot baked potatoes or hard-boiled eggs in their coat pockets to warm their hands and to supplement the noon lunch. Frozen sandwiches were not a novelty; and dinner pails, along with wet mittens and overshoes, occupied strategic places around the heating stove in the center of the room. If only as much heat could have stayed near the floor as went to the ceiling! In spite of the long black stockings and high laced shoes that children wore, feet were cold and faces hot. Playground equipment was unheard of, but nothing was more fun than a Fox and Goose ring in the snow.

The county superintendent visited each school once or twice a year. In 1881, County Superintendent Dempster recorded: "Severe winter interfered with progress of winter schools. Late spring keeps many little fellows on the farm. Schoolhouses mostly substantial." In 1882 he wrote: "More demand for advanced grade teachers. Much good resulted from Institute Week. Motto, 'Good Wages for Good Work.'" By 1900, salaries had risen to \$45 or \$50 a month. In 1921,

some teachers received as much as \$100 dollars, but salaries had declined to half that amount by 1940. After that slump, however, came a decided increase, and by 1950 teachers were receiving around \$180 a month, with greatly improved teaching facilities.



Photo from Oscar Nelson

Chelsea Women's Club (January 29, 1931). Lower row, left to right: Mrs. Howard Snodgrass, Mrs. Lyman Brooke, Mrs. Mike Kelch, Mrs. Tom Hall, Mrs. George Mason, Mrs. Irvin Lange, Mrs. Colon Murphy, Mrs. Harry Hall. Upper row, left to right: Mrs. Lester Brown, Mrs. Harry Garrett, Mrs. Cleve Hafer, Mrs. Ross Brown, Mrs. Snodgrass, Mrs. Bertha Meyers, Mrs. Woods (mother of Mrs. Ross Brown).

Thirteen women became charter members of the Chelsea Extension club in 1921. They were Mmes. Lyman Brooke (president), John Stevenson (secretary), Charles Sprout (treasurer), John Hafer, Lyle Sprout, Verl Wilson, Cleve Hafer, Joe Purdy, Roy Purdy, George Mason, Ed Hutchens, William Watmore, and Clair Yates. Although Mrs. Brooke is the only charter member now living in the township, the club has been active in extension work since its beginning and has had for several years an average of 30 members. The club has contributed to several worthy causes and has given a boost to many new homes, for sons and daughters of its members are always given a gift or "shower" when each is married.

Mrs. Brooke was also leader of the first 4-H Girls' Club in the township. It was founded in June, 1923, the first members being Helen Mason, Lela, Hazel, and Mable Hall, Bonnie Brooke, Helen Nunns, and Bonnie Myers. Most of Chelsea's boys and girls have since been members of 4-H clubs and have won their share of honors in the various divisions. Helen Nunns, Frances Roberts, John Brooke, Helen Mason, and Eugene Anderson have been winners of coveted Chicago trip awards. John Nelson won the State Public Speaking Contest in 1953.

Since 1915, most of Chelsea township's young people have attended Geneva High School. At that time, regular attendance, for some, required a bit of doing. Three boys-Fred Rhoda, Glen Berger, and Waldo Schupbach - rode horseback a distance of eight and nine miles each morning and night. Some drove a horse and buggy about the same distance. Others paid, or worked, for room and board in town. Along in the 1920's, Model T Fords became popular means of transportation; but even as late as 1945, Rudy Jirkovsky rode a bicycle almost nine miles twice a day. On the whole, Chelsea students acquitted themselves very well. Most of the boys enrolled in agricultural courses and took part in athletics. Girls have been interested in home economics and secretarial training. Music also has held the attention of both boys and girls. Several have won scholarships. Christie Nelson was elected to Girls' State in 1954 and edited the Genevan the following year. Anne Jirkovsky was selected queen of the Spring Festival in 1949, John Nelson king in 1953, and Richard Nun king in 1954. Doris Miller, Darlene Podlesak, and John Nelson are the only Chelsea products of recent years to have graduated from college or university, but several have attended for two or three years; and a number of girls have received normal-training certificates from Geneva High School and taught rural schools in this community and elsewhere. Jesse Mason, son of the late George F. Mason and Libbie Mason, graduated from the College of Agriculture in the 1930's. Doyle Mullikin, son of an early pioneer, J. W. Mullikin, was one of the first graduates of the University School of Medicine in Omaha. Until his death in 1963, he practiced medicine for more than 50 years at Chester, Nebraska. -Wilma (Mrs. O. E.) Nelson

CHURCHES

As noted in the school district accounts, Sunday schools and special religious services were held in a number of the township's schools almost as soon as the buildings were constructed. The need for a church presently arose; the site selected was adjacent to the little Bethel Cemetery located at the north line of Sec. 24. A grant was obtained from Salathiel Stanley, who owned the NE ¼, and the United Brethren Church was built here by donated money and labor in 1880. The Rev. Mr. R. G. Carter was the first fulltime pastor; a small house on the Ben Morgan farm served as a parsonage. This was moved to Strang in 1886 when a U. B. church was constructed there. From that time until about 1915, the Strang pastor served both charges, services being held at the Bethel Church on Sunday afternoons. Some of the early pastors were Ben Morgan, T. B. Cannon, Mr. Brink, Mr. Hayden, Mr. Bittner, Mr. Webb, Profit Gregg, Mr. Parker, Mr. Abbot, and Mr. Lunde. Each, of course, drove a horse and buggy. When pastors made "calls" during the week, meals and overnight lodging were, quite naturally, provided by the farmers. More often than not, the preacher's remuneration took the form of farm produce, which he hauled home in the back of the buggy. There were years when he received as little as \$250 in cash.

In 1884, the Methodist Church, through a loan from the General Conference, was built on a plot of ground given by Cyrus Macy, located on the corner west of the U.B. Church and Bethel Cemetery. This church, composed mostly of old soldiers, disbanded in the late nineties and stood idle until Robert Hastings purchased it, about 1897, intending to move the building to his farm. He had virtually begun the moving operations when the U.B. people persuaded him to let them buy it. The former U.B. building was sold to August Peterson for \$340 in 1898. The church then reorganized, with the Rev. E. H. Pontius of Geneva as pastor. The Rev. Miss Willamette Marks held revival meetings, and the church progressed for some time. There was an active Ladies' Aid, whose members, with the help of their families, "put on" many a chicken dinner, oyster supper, or ice-cream social. These affairs involved a tremendous amount of labor; for, without kitchen or dining facilities, it was necessary to move home equipment to the church and back again by team and spring wagon. Food was served at improvised tables in the church sanctuary, the only place available.

In 1928 a full basement was added, and the congregation felt very fortunate to have such improved Sunday School facilities as well as a kitchen and diningroom for social affairs. A Delco lighting plant was installed. Two coal and cob ranges, an oil stove, and a German heater for the dining room supplied the necessary heat. All the water was pumped by hand from the schoolyard pump across the road and carried in buckets or "Johnny cans" (10-gallon cream cans) to the basement. For the gallons of coffee consumed and the mountains of dishes to be washed, water naturally had to be heated on already crowded stoves. Those were the days far cry from the streamlined equipment of the modern church kitchen where all the steaming-hot water needed is available at the nearest faucet. Even so, the Chelsea church ladies enjoyed an enviable reputation for good cooking and "plenty of

as long as the church existed.

Student pastors from York College supplied the pulpit during the late twenties and early thirties. Raymond Bryant and Homer Crosby (between 1927 and 1935) perhaps served the longest periods. After that, the resident pastors of the Geneva United Brethren Church conducted preaching services on alternate Sunday mornings until the last years of Miss Mann's ministry (1950-1951), when services were held each Sunday morning at ten o'clock and the Sunday School at eleven. Pastors preceding Miss Maude Mann were the Revs. A. W. Swanson, Glen Cane, H. J. Plymesser, H. A. Dierdorff (during whose ministry the Revs. Richardson and



Chelsea Church about 1926. Evangelist Rev. Mouer holding Bible. Raymond Bryant, Student Pastor (arrow).

Mouer conducted a successful revival in 1938), and E. D. Sell. Miss Mann began her seven years of service in 1944.

In 1948 the church edifice again underwent much-needed improvement when, under the leadership of Wilson Miller, the sanctuary was remodeled and attractively decorated. A furnace, electric lights, and other equipment were installed with the arrival of rural electrification. Again, both labor and money were generously contributed by members and friends of the church. Impressive dedicatory services were held in June, 1948, and the community was justly proud of the improvements. It is a sad commentary, however, that in spite of these valiant efforts to preserve a rural church, a combination of conditions and circumstances arose which made it increasingly difficult to support the church program. In 1954, a depleted congregation voted to disband. Most of the families transferred membership to the Geneva Evangelical United Brethren Church, where the Rev. Wayne Schreuers, who had recently come to this pastorate (his first), following a brief tenure by the Rev. Milford Vance, ministered from 1954 to 1956. (The Evangelical and United Brethren denominations were merged in 1950.) In 1956 the church building was razed by Joe Vavra, a Saline County farmer, who purchased it for \$500. The plot of ground was sold to Bernard Weiss, an adjacent landowner, for \$50.

Chelsea Church, as it was commonly known, touched the lives of many persons over the years. It, and they, benefited in proportion as each individual gave of himself and his means in Christian service.

The record of 1887 discloses a membership of 69 persons, including such family names as these: Wallam, Jacoway, D. Miller, Cook, Wilkison, S. Yates, Larkin, E. Nelson, Morrison, Shobeck (Schupbach), Steele, Folden, Jackson, Piersol, Chelsea Raines, and Whitzel. Other names are Cloyd, and Nettles (a Negro who worked for Mr. Yates). In the 1890's we find the names of Mr. and Mrs. John Archer, Sarah Peterson, Mr. and Mrs. W. Eaton, Osier and Mary Cook. Names of the early 1900's include O. Stone, Flora and Lucy Nunns, Harrison, McCartney, Churchill, Mullikin, Michaels, Owens, Mahan, Rhoda, Miller (family of Jonas M.), Leonard, S. Lynn, F. Hall, Powell, R. Myers, Elton, Saylor, and Hidey.

The following persons were members of the church at some time during the period between 1925 and 1953. Many

of the older people, of course, were members before 1925:

Mr. and Mrs. E. O. Schupbach, Eunice, and Clifford Mr. and Mrs. Schuyler Berger, Mildred, Howard, Robert, and Donald

Mrs. Charles Weiss, DeVee, and Bernard

Mr. and Mrs. Wilson Miller, Lucille, and Doris

Mr. and Mrs. Roy Miller, Charles, Marie, Clair, Hazel, Irvin, Joan, and Suzan

Mrs. Charles Miller

Mr. and Mrs. Alvah Miller and Louise

Effa and Maude Miller Mr. and Mrs. Fred Fox

Mr. and Mrs. J. A. E. Nelson, Silvia, Verna, and Oscar

Mrs. Oscar Nelson, John E., and Christie-Lou

Mrs. Roy Yates

Mrs. Cecil Fox, Delores, Alvin, and Dorothy

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Churchill and Melvin

Helen, Edna, Edgar, and Fredrick Nunns—children of Fred and Ora Nunns

Robert Nunns, Sr., Ruth, Roine, Robert, Richard, and Francis

Mrs. Francis Nunns, Carol, and Faye

Mr. and Mrs. Lester Brown, Doris, Mervin, and Merle Ila Zoe Brown

Vorus, Bonnie and Verle Myers—(children of Ed and Audra Myers)

Mrs. Vorus Myers

Clarence, Hazel, DeVee, John, and Bernice Nun—children of Wenzel Nun

Mrs. John Nun, Richard, Rodney, and Rex

Harry Fox (husband of Bernice Nun), Deryl Dean, and Shirley

Earl and Kenneth Baumann

Mr. and Mrs. Clair Christiancy, Ardith, Evelyn, Rodger, Clair, Jr., and Robert

Mrs. Howard Peterson, Zelma Mae, Velma Jean, and Paul Forest

Libby, Clayton, and Herman Jirkovsky

Mr. and Mrs. Claude DeWitt

Mrs. Bessie Rhoda, Lillie, Helen, and Edna

Mrs. Leslie Myers (Alma), and her children, Blanche, Lola, and Donald Shapley

Eleanor and Richard McDonald

Mr. and Mrs. Emil Bernasek, Caroline, and Rodney Donna and Patricia Koahler



Photo from O. E. Nelson Interior of Chelsea E. U. B. Church after remodeling in 1948.

The earliest recorded names of Sunday School officers are dated June 29, 1884. They were T. B. Cannon, superintendent; J. M. Piersol, assistant superintendent; P. L. Cannon, secretary; S. E. Piersol, assistant secretary; Nettie Cooper, librarian; and Minnie Piersol, treasurer. The four Sunday School teachers were Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Cooper, Mr. Jacoway, and Mr. Dan Miller. Included in the minutes of each Sunday service were several questions which were to be answered the following Sunday. Some examples are: "How many times is ague mentioned in the Bible?" "What verse in the Bible has all the letters in it but one?" "What was done with the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath?" "Where was Moses when the light went out?" The total collection of the four classes rarely exceeded one dollar.

It is not possible to list the good works of faithful individuals who served in an official capacity or otherwise during the life of Chelsea church. We can but give briefly a few outstanding facts of a statistical nature which are of interest

to its people.

J. A. E. Nelson, who died in October, 1962, at the age of 86, had the honor of being the oldest continuous member of the church. His name appears as "Eddie" Nelson on the earliest class record of 1884. The five-mile walk to and from the church when he was nine years old did not prevent his regular attendance. Next in the line of longevity is Effa Miller, whose name appears 10 years later. Effa is the fifth of 12 children born to the Jonas Millers, all of whom were living until the death of Bertha (Mrs. George Churchill) in 1945; five of the children are still (1967) alive, though no longer in Chelsea township. Eight of the children became members of the church. Of these, Alvah, Roy, Wilson, and Alma established homes within the township, while Viola, Effa, and Maude continued living on the home place until 1945. Johnnie and his family also resided near by for a few years. To our knowledge, nine brothers and sisters, occupying seven different homes, set a record for simultaneous residence within the township.

Comparatively few funerals were held at Chelsea Church. Among them were those of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hastings, Charles and Sarah Folden, Mrs. Sophia Rhoda and her three sons, Dave, Frank, and Charles, Erwin Schupbach, and Schuyler Berger. The old Bethel Cemetery is rarely used now, although the township still provides \$75 yearly for its maintenance and upkeep. Cyril Bernasek became caretaker in 1949 and in 1967 still serves in that capacity. The present members of the cemetery board are Fred Fox, Oscar E. Nelson, and Cyril Bernasek. According to a statement made by Osier Cook, there were few graves when he came to Nebraska in 1878, but the diphtheria epidemic of 1879 resulted in numerous deaths and additional graves in the little cemetery. There are now 167 graves, of which one of the oldest is that of Robert Steele; its marker and one other are dated 1872.

The two weddings held at the church were those of Lucille Miller to Leo Oschner in 1949 and of Ardith Christiancy to Harold Schmid in 1951.

Many social functions of a party nature were held in the church basement. Included in these were many "family nights" when all ages met and participated in well-planned homemade entertainment, bridal showers, receptions, anniversary observances, 4-H gatherings, and class parties. There are perhaps 30 "fiftyish" men and women of the Chelsea community and elsewhere who vividly recall the "Young People's Class" of which they were members. The good times they had were largely due to the tireless efforts of Mrs. Fred Fox, their teacher for many years. To our knowledge, all these former young people are solid citizens today. It is unique that 10 members of the class, the children of both Wenzel Nun and Robert Nunns, Sr., were motherless at an early age. These families gained the admiration of all who knew them by the capable way in which they met such misfortune. Clarence and John Nun and Bernice Nun Fox, and Francis, Robert, Jr., Richard and Robert Nunns, Sr., all have established homes in the township.

— Wilma (Mrs. O. E.) Nelson



Photo from Mrs. Fred Fox Chelsea E. U. B. Sunday School Class taken before 1920. Back row, left to right: Sylvia Nelson, Hazel Nun, Beatrice Nun, Verna Nelson, Robert Nunns, Hazel Fox, Clarence Nun, Mabel Yates, Cecil Fox, Florence Fox, Teacher Mrs. Fred Fox, Francis Nunns, Glen Berger, Waldo Schupbach. Front row, left to right: Ralph Nun, Ronald Fox, Howard Pontius, Harry Fox, Fred Rhoda, Richard Nunns.

SCHOOLS

County Superintendent J. B. Lewis notified John W. Mullikin that **District No. 30** ("Dudley") was formed on December 16, 1880, comprising Secs. 25, 26, 35, and 36. Twenty-six qualified voters were informed of the meeting to be held on December 28, 1880, at the Mullikin home. Mr. Mullikin leased two acres of land on the NE corner of Sec. 35 for the school and stipulated that the school building could

also be used for religious purposes.

The first term of school opened for three months on December 19, 1881, with Miss Ella Merrill as teacher at \$30 a month. Twenty-eight pupils were enrolled, ranging in age from 5 to 19 years. The subjects taught were reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, with geography and grammar added for those who could afford books. A large pond on the west side of Sec. 25 marks the spot where sod was taken for the first sod schoolhouse. By September 1, 1884, an 18' x 20' frame building was completed; two additions were made later. The first school board voted to hire only male wachers, but because these were scarce, lady teachers were procured.

District 30 was first called "Pleasant Valley" and school records are headed thus. Later it came to be known as "Dudley," possibly because a country post office in the Mullikin home was called Dudley, and mail was addressed to Dudley, Nebraska. Harvey Ryman delivered the mail by cart and horse. His wife Emma helped when her husband was

busy.

Dudley School was the scene of many community affairs such as "literaries," singing schools, spelling bees, box suppers, and the like, as well as religious services. Miss Lillie Rhoda (to whom we are indebted for most of the information concerning District 30) recalls plainly the long, low, unpainted mourners' bench which was used in revival meetings. Her grandfather, Mr. Mullikin, had a fine tenor voice and conducted singing schools in Districts 30 and 32, and led the

singing in the tabernacle in the maple grove on his farm across from the school. He could preach sermons, conduct funeral services, and offer prayer. Musically, he was selftaught, and started his own children and those of neighbors in music.



School District No. 30, 1931. Front row, left to right: Frances Schupbach, Gerald Wiswell, Harold Wiswell, Clair Miller, Charles Miller, Wayne Hall. Second row: Hazel Drummond, Dorothy Molthon, Elaine Molthon, Irene Hall. Back row: Thelma Wiswell, Doris Hafer (teacher), Gladys Molthan, Alice Schultz, Marie Miller.

Director

rear	Teacner	Director
1881	Ella Merrill	A. T. Drummond
1882	Theda Johnston	A T Drummond
1883	Nettie Richardson	A T Drummond
1884	S. T. Drummond	
1885		
1000	H. B. Wallace	
4422	Mary Foster	
1886	Mary Foster	
1887	S. J. Spelde	A. T. Drummond
	Eva Purviance	J. W. Mullikin
	O. H. White	J. W. Mullikin
1888	Nellie L. Coffin	T O Cloyd
1889	Lillian Donovan	A T Drummand
1890	Tillian Danasan	A. T. Drummond
1000	Lillian Donovan	A. T. Drummond
	W. H. Allen	
1891	Clara Wickizer	
1892	Esther Piersol Lyon	S. J. Hall
1893	Gertie Clark	S. J. Hall
1894	S. T. Conner	A. T. Drummond
1895	Bertha Thompson	
2000	Nellie Matson	
1896	Ella Purviance West	
1897		
	Mary Davis	
1898	Ora Ogg	
	Carrie Neyhart	
1899	Carrie Neyhart	S. J. Hall
1900	Bessie Bailor	S. J. Hall
1901	Mable Combs	S. J. Hall
1902	Alta Andrew Priefert	
1903	Grace Babcock	
1904	Bell Rowe	
1904		
	Lottie Putnam	
1906	Erdel Harrington	S. J. Hall
1907	Clarence Fry	S. J. Hall
1908	Wilhelmina Schneider	
1909	Alma Toren	S. J. Hall
1910	Bertha Mathewson	
1911	Grace Heiderstadt	S. J. Hall
1912	Stewart Heiderstadt	
1012	Electa Dot Hastings	G M Galbraith
1913	Vinetta Miller	G M Galbraith
1914	Elmer Bradley	C M Calbraith
	Elmer Bradley	G. M. Galbraith
1915	Elmer Bradley	G. M. Galbraith
1916	Francis Stephens	O. Mullikin
1917	Clarice Overhalser	
1918	Alice Neyhart	
1919	Anna Totemeier	S. J. Hall
1920	Sarah Kyker	S. J. Hall
1921	Margaret Hogan	C. M. Bernasek
1922	Margaret Hogan	C. M. Bernasek
1923	Helen Matejka	C. M. Bernasek
1924	Helen Matejka	C M Bernauek
200	(closed)	Claude Hall
1925	Day M. Clabor	Claude Hall
1926	Rose M. Sieber	Claude Hall
1927	Juanita Nicholson	Claude Hall
1928	Juanita Nicholson	Claude Hall
1929	Juanita Nicholson Coughran	Claude Hall
1930	Lela Hall	Claude Hall
1931	Doris Hafer	Claude Hall
	AS A STORY OF THE	

1932	Erma Schultz	e Hall
1933	Erma SchultzRov	Miller
1934		Miller
1935	to 1937 (closed) Roy	Miller
1938	Max GarlandRoy	Miller
1939	Evelyn RitcheyRov	Miller
1940	Fern MostRoy	Miller
1941		Miller
1942		Miller
1943		Miller
1944	Virginia WrightRoy	Miller
1945		Miller
1946		Miller
1947	Lillie RhodaRoy	Miller
1948	Lillie RhodaRichard	Sieber
1949	Lillie RhodaRichard	Sieber
1950	Lillie RhodaRichard	Sieber
1951	Lillie RhodaRichard	Sieber
1952	(School closed)Lillie	Rhoda

District No. 32, commonly known as "Chelsea" because of its proximity to the former Chelsea United Brethren Church, was organized in 1872 and originally consisted of Secs. 13, 14, 15, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 35, and 36 of T6, R2W. John W. Andrew was instructed to notify all legal voters of the place of meeting. Other schools eventually absorbed some of its territory, so that the district now includes only Secs. 13, 14, 15, 23, 24, and a part of 22. Early in the century a neat two-door school building replaced an earlier frame structure. It stands on the SW corner of Sec. 13, facing south on a graveled east-and-west road. There are the usual outdoor toilet facilities, some playground equipment, a fuel house, and a recently covered and motorized pump. The last teacher, Miss Lois Most of Ohiowa, who attended Fairbury College two summers, drove the family car a round trip of 24 miles each day to teach her eight pupils.

The earliest record of a school business meeting was signed by Director J. A. Larkin, April 2, 1882. The contract for the drawing of coal and cleaning the schoolhouse was let to the lowest bidder: to Walferd Peterson at 99¢ a ton, for coal, and to J. Wollam, \$1.25 for cleaning. In 1891 O. L. Stone was allowed \$3 for taking the "senses" of school children between the ages of 5 and 12 belonging to District 32. There were 66 children listed, 60 under the age of 18. These were members of the following families: W. C. Wollam, D. Cook, G. H. Simmerman, J. W. Andrew, R. E. Hastings, J. J. Miller, M. Warner, D. Miller, A. L. Shackelford, J. A. Larkin, J. Jones, D. Warner, W. Churchill, J. B. Miller, J. Simburg, H. G. Ryman, M. Menace, J. A. Peterson, J. Wollam, Jim Borland, R. Nunns, J. Peterson, O. L. Stone, and C. Taylor. In 1890, Mae Bailor taught 63 pupils for \$270 over a period of 154 teaching days; the value of school books and apparatus was \$60.

Year	Teacher	Director
1879	J. B. Sexton	E. F. Chester
1880	J. B. Sexton	J. W. Andrew
1881	Walter White	D. Cook
1882	Mary Gale	D. Cook
	T. J. Whitzel	J. A. Larkin
1883-4	NI I	
1885	Mary Sprout	D. Cook
1886	Many Count Cook	D Cook
1887	Mary Sprout Cook	D. Cook
1888	Annie I Ballard	J. A. Larkin
1889	Alice A Crell	
	Hattie Russell	J. A. Larkin
	Mae Bailor	U. L. Stone
1890	Mae Bailor	O. L. Stone
	Louise McDermott	O. L. Stone
1891	Lulu Arrowsmith	O. L. Stone
	Louise McDermott	O. L. Stone

The following teachers taught at some time during the next 10 years: Jessie Sprout, Seldon Moore, Mr. Overton (brother of the U.B. pastor), Lydia Babcock, Maude Mosier, and Bertha Thompson.

and I	bertha Thompson.	0 7 0
1901	Bessie Bailor	O, L. Stone
1902	Hattie Russell	J. A. Larkin
1903	Irene Hollister	J. A. Larkin
1904	Carrie Course	J. A. Larkin
1905	Carrie Sauer	J. A. Larkin
1906	Nellie Deaver	J. A. Larkin

1907	Daisey Yates	J. A. Larkin
1908	Josephine Schneider	J. A. Larkin
1909	Josephine Schneider	J. A. Larkin
1910	Josephine Schneider	J. A. Larkin
1911	Pearl Swails	J A Larkin
1912	Earl Hill	Roy Vates
1913	Blanche Zinc	Roy Yates
1914	Ivy Wythers	Roy Vates
1915	Lucille Kretke	Roy Vates
1916	Lucille Kretke	Roy Vates
1917	Lillie Rhoda	Roy Vates
1918	Lillie Rhoda	
1919	Sarah Kyker	Claude Ogg
1920	Lorine Griffin	Claude Ogg
1921	Lillie Rhoda	Claude Ogg
1922	Lillie Rhoda	Claude Ogg
1923	Lillie Rhoda	
1923	Edith Hranac	
1924		
1926	Edith Wolter	
	Edith Wolter	
1927		
1928	Ann Taborsky	
1929	Ann Taborsky	
1930	Ann Taborsky McPeck	
1931	Ann Taborsky McPeck	
1932	Ann Taborsky McPeck	
1933	Mildred Thomas	
1934	Mildred Thomas	
1935	Ann Sluka	
1936	Blanche Jirkovsky	
1937	Blanche Jirkovsky	
1938	Mable Gewacke	
1939	Mable Gewacke	
1940	Alice Druba	
1941	Alice Druba	
1942	Alice Druba	
1943	Blanche Cecrle	
1944	Betty Sluka	
1945	Betty Sluka	
1946	Betty Sluka	
1947	Betty Sluka	Harry Fox
1948	Arlene Larson	Harry Fox
1949	Mary Ann Placek	Harry Fox
1950	Wilmetta Rippe	Harry Fox
1951	Loretta Rippe	Harry Fox
1952	Loretta Rippe	
1953	Betty Novak	
1954	Willa Jean Kotas	
1955	Lois Most	
1956	Lois Most	Harry Fox
	2013 117030	

District No. 35 ("Prairie Flower") consisting of Secs. 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33 of T6, R2W, was organized by John W. Barrows, deputy under County Superintendent G. W. Gue. Mr. Barrows notified J. W. Breg that the first meeting for election of officers would be held at the nearest central point in the district on Saturday, March 16, 1872, at one P.M. Sections 28 and 33 and a part of Secs. 20 and 21 were allotted to near-by districts as they were organized.

The schoolhouse was a small frame building facing the road that bounds Sec. 30 on the east, the school grounds being the northeast corner of a quarter belonging to Oscar Peterson of Geneva; the land reverted to him when the property was sold in 1954. The building was purchased by Walter Ebbeka

and Jim Bumgarner.

Among the earlier pupils of this school were children from the Tyson, Heller, Nicewander, Anderson, Yates, and Brooke families. Mrs. Maude Brooke Stringfield recalls that eighth-grade graduation was a very important occasion in her school days. Jessie Morgan was her eighth-grade teacher and Charles Smrha the county superintendent who officiated when she and Harvey Leonard graduated. Both were required to give a 20-minute discourse on some subject of their own choosing and composition. Maude's topic was "Light and Darkness."

Some of the family names appearing on record books since 1915 are Bailor, Christiancy, Ebbeka, Fidler, Hall, Kelch, Leonard, Lowe, Myers, and Trenary.

Year	Teacher	Director
1879	Lillie Stultz	Robert Stewart
1880	H. W. Warner	Willis Zader
1881	Lucy Clark	V. S. Annschrold
1882	Alice Bailor	Richard Kinsey
1883-4	No record	
1885	Alma Luke	N. G. Taylor
1886	Lillie Huston	
1889	No record	

Some of the teachers after 1890 were Minnie Heller (1899), Myrtle Williams, Jessie Morgan, Al Smith, and Laura Smith Schupbach.

1904 Romayne Hayes 1905 Mrs. Anne Johnson 1906 Mrs. Anne Johnson



Photo from Oscar Nelson

District 32 School ("Chelsea"), about 1900.



Photo from Esther Janing

School District No. 35—1921. Left to right: Robert Bailor, Laurence Weinerth, Earl Purdy, Tom Weinerth, Verna Oakes, Edith Ebbeka, Bonnie Myers, Alice Purdy.

1907	M. P. Ames, Amy Garrett	
1908	H. D. Matthewson, I. E. Cronin	
1909	H. D. Matthewson, I. E. Cronin	
1910	Ruth Sapp	
1911	Essie Crowley	Frank Bailor
1912	Harriet Ray	Frank Bailor
1913	Harriet Ray	A. V. Morgan
1914	Lucille Kretke	A. V. Morgan
1915	Esther McDonald	
1916	Zella Lamb	
1917	Estelle Steele	
1918	Nelli Murphy	John Hoff
1919	Nelli Murphy	Henry Ebbeka
1920	Nelli Murphy	
1921	Esther Bordner	James Bumgarner
1922	Ruth Horne	James Bumgarner
1923	Alta Priefert	
1924	Marjorie Glenn	
1925	Mrs. Florence McCaulley	
1926	Myrtle Melvin	Harry Hall
1927	(No teacher)	
1928	(No teacher)	
1929	Eleanor Bruce	
1930	Bernice Ashton	
1931	Bernice Ashton	
1932	Bernice Ashton	
1933	Leona Cromwell	
1934	Leona Cromwell	
1935	Phyllis McKibben	
1936	Gesine Muchow	
1937	Gesine Muchow	
1938	Dorothy Keil	Harry Hall
1939	Dorothy Keil	
1940	Dorothy Keil	Harry Hall
1941	Dorothy Keil	Harry Hall
1942	Virginia Baker	
1943	Alice Druba	Norbert Gergen
1944-56	(School Closed)	

District No. 45 ("Blain"), consisting of Secs. 4, 5, 7, 9, 16, 17, and 18, was organized May 14, 1872. County Superintendent John A. Dempster instructed Henry King to notify every legal voter within the district that the meeting for election of officers would be held at the King home on Saturday, May 18. The first officers elected were John F. Blain, director; William Sprout, moderator; and John Christiancy, treasurer.

Blain schoolhouse, so called after a pioneer family who lived near the school, was located on the NW corner of a farm now belonging to Vinetta Miller Eaton, 2 miles S and 2 miles E of Geneva on Sec. 16.

At the turn of the century it had an unusually large enrollment, which made it necessary to build an extension and hire an extra teacher for the lower grades. The annex was later removed.

Most of the early schools had bimonthly programs called "literaries," which featured not only "ciphering" and spelling bees but also local musical and debating talent. Because of their size, regularity, and quality, the literaries at Blain appear to have been outstanding. For a time, Sunday School and church services were also held in the Blain schoolhouse.

The schoolhouse was also the township voting place; the children enjoyed having Election Day off, but many had to shuck corn on that day.

This school was closed in 1951. It continued to be used as the voting place until the building was sold to Robert Nunns, Jr., in 1954 and was moved to Geneva, where it became Ed McClusky's workshop.

There are two three-generation groups identified with Blain school. One is that of Fred Nunns, Sr., his children, and the children of Fred Nunns, Jr.; the other consists of Robert Nunns, Sr., his sons Francis and Robert, and their children. Two-generation families are Mrs. William Watmore and children, and Lyman Brooke and children.



Courtesy of Francis Nunns

School District 45 taken at school picnic May, 1949. Back row: Robert Strothkamp, Carol Nunns, Faye Nunns, Richard Larson. Middle row: Bobby Nunns, Tom Nunns, Dale Nunns, Richard Strothkamp, Fred Nunns, Shirley Nunns, Dianne Larson, Vaden Myers. Front row: Diane Robare, Linda Hutchens.

Year	Teacher	Director
1875	Parthenia Matson	
1876	Parthenia Matson	
1877	Maggie Stewart	
1878	Arthur Evans	
1879	Eva Selby	
1880	Mary E. Deming	
1881	Mary E. Deming	
1882	Lucy J, Clark	
1883-87	No record	
1888	J. B. Lewis	
1889	No record	
1893	Minnie Carson (primary)	
1893	Flora Houchin (juniors)	
1898	Mr. M. P. Ames	
1899	Lou Thompson	
1900	Lou Thompson Mary E. Deming	Gilbert Owens
1904	S. M. Beadle	Gilbert Owens
1905	Herbert McCartney	Gilbert Owens
1906	Lydia Linnert	Gilbert Owens
1907		E. J. Delaney
1908	to 1912 Meda Welty Katherine Jennett	F J Delaney
1913	Gertrude Sughrue	F J Delaney
1914	Gertrude Sughrue	F I Delaney
1915	Georgia Timmerman	H A Warner
1916	Georgia Timmerman	F. J. Delanev
1917		
1918-20	No record Nora Miller Heath (4 yrs.)	I. C. Brooke
1921	Lola Churchill	I C Brooke
1922	Mrs. John Eller	L C Brooke
1000	Esther Sughrue	I. C. Brooke
1923	Esther Sughrue	Mrs Fred Nunns
1924	Pearl Lapcheska	Mrs Fred Nunns
1925	Rose Komarek	Mrs Fred Nunns
1926 1927	Velma Butterbaugh	L C Brooke
	Velma Butterbaugh	L. C. Brooke
1928	Jeanette Reynolds	L. C. Brooke
1929	Jeanette Reynolds	L. C. Brooke
1930	Lorene Hofferber	L. C. Brooke
1931	Lorene Hofferber	L. C. Brooke
1932 1933	Lorene Hofferber	L. C. Brooke
1933	Frances Roberts	L. C. Brooke
1934	Lorene Hofferber	L. C. Brooke
	Lorene Hofferber	R. F. Dwyer
1936	Lucille Mitchell	R. F. Dwyer
1937 1938	Alice Sluka	R. F. Dwyer
1000	LaVerne Swanson	R. F. Dwyer
1938	Katherine Yetman	R. F. Dwyer
1940	Namerine Teunan	

Marguerite Churchill	R F Dwyer
Marguerite Churchill	R F Dwyer
Alice Druba	R F Dwyer
Alice Druba	Dave Robare
Doris Strothkamp	Derrel Hutchens
Doris Strothkamp	Derrel Hutchens
Florence McCaulley	Derrel Hutchens
Darlene Podlesak	Derrel Hutchens
Mary Ann Reinsch	Derrel Hutchens
Children transferred to District 75	Truttenens
	Marguerite Churchill Marguerite Churchill Alice Druba Alice Druba Doris Strothkamp Doris Strothkamp Florence McCaulley Darlene Podlesak Mary Ann Reinsch Mary Ann Reinsch Children transferred to District 75

..Derrel Hutchens continues as director District No. 65 ("Alpine") was formed when, in accordance with the petition of 20 legal voters of School District 2, County Superintendent John Dempster, on February 26, 1873, set apart Secs. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, and 12 of T6, R2W, to constitute the new district. He notified Mr. H. G. Cooper that the meeting for election of moderator, director, and treasurer. would be held in the Cooper home on Saturday, March 8. 1873, at 2 P.M. Mr. Cooper was instructed to notify every legal voter five days previous to the meeting. The Cooper family occupied a sod house just south of the present William Bures home on Sec. 2. An acre of land on the southwest corner of the Cooper farm was designated as school land, and a frame schoolhouse was erected a few steps from the road, facing south. In 1904 this was torn down, and the lumber was used in building a new schoolhouse the same year. It boasted a belfry and was considered one of the better school buildings in this area. The board was usually very cooperative in supplying the needs of teachers and pupils.

School programs, picnics, and other affairs were well supported by the patrons of the district. It had quite a large enrollment until about 1930, when the number of pupils began a gradual decline. Although there were but a half-dozen children left by 1947, the patrons of the district worked at the schoolhouse during the late summer to make extensive and much-needed repairs on the interior. It presented a very attractive appearance during the remaining few years of the school's existence. In 1953, District 65 contracted with District 75 to send the children to the Geneva school. The yellow school bus has since become part of daily life as it makes its

Some of the families whose children attended school in District 65 were Archer, Bell, Sluka, Churchill, Wythers, Roberts, Hafer, Ward, Wilson, McCartney, McDonald, Podlesak, Votipka, Novak, Bures, Frycek, Kovanda, Koahler, Fox, and Nelson (the only family to have three generations attend District 65).

regular route morning and evening.

Year	Teacher	Director
1872	Eleanor Matson	Director
1873	Eleanor Matson	
1874	T. J. Whitzel	
1875	Eleanor Matson	
1876	J. D. McHelvey	
1877	Eleanor Matson	
1878	Maggie Stewart	
1879	Parthenia and Eleanor Matson	
1880	Luella Harbaugh and Chester Metcalf	
1881	Luella Harbaugh and Sydney Purviance	
1882	D. L. Beatie	
1883	Eva Davis, Hattie Whitzel, and H. P. Wilson	
1884	No record	
1885	Grace Porter	
1886-87		
1888	Mae BailorO.	D Wilson
1889-90		D. Triloui
1891	Hattie Gardner	D. Wilson
1893	Rose OwensO.	
1894	George Porter, Bertha Sheldon, Minnie Carson. O.	
1895	Ada AllenJ. F. 1	McCartney
1896	J. S. Moore	McCartney
1897	J. S. Moore	McCartney
1898	Anna ThompsonJ. F. J	McCartney
1899	Maude McCartney HellerJ. F.	McCartney
1900	Chan Wickinis	
1901	Charlotte Goold	
1902	Julia M. Osterlick J. F.	
1903	M, P. AmesJ. F.	McCartney
1904	A. W. Larson	
1905	Nellie Pflug and Mae Bailor	
1906	Ida WaltonE	
1907	Verna MowryE	
1908	Mae BailorE	



Photo from Oscar Nelson District 65 School ("Alpine"), about 1908.

1909	Mary Donnehue	M. D. McCartney
1910	Mary Donnehue	M. D. McCartney
1911	Lucy Cullins	
1912	Helen Edgecombe	
1913	Anna Burke, Tom Ashton	M D McCartney
1914	Ruth Watson	M. D. McCartney
1915	Alma Miller	
1916	Sarah Miller	
1917	Anna Jicha	
1918	Marie Ayers	
1919	Beatrice Taborsky	
1920	Edna McCartney Kreycik	Allen McDonald
1921	Iris Ward	
1922	Iris Ward	
1923	Verna Nelson	
1924	Verna Nelson	
1925	Verna Nelson	
1926	Verna Nelson	
1927	Helen Wilson	
1928	Rose Hammond	
1929	Rose Soukup	
1930-31	No record	
1932	Helen Nunns	Fred Fox
1933	Helen Nunns	
1934	Helen Nunns	Fred Fox
1935	Alice Sluka	Fred Fox
1936	Ann Sluka	Fred Fox
1937	Ann Sluka	
1938	Ann Sluka	
1939	Blanche Jirkovsky	Fred Fox
1940	School closed	Fred Fox
1941	Helen Bernasek	Fred Fox
1942	Helene Wasserbauer	Fred Fox
1943	Mrs. Shirley Rosse	Fred Fox
1944	Blanche Cecrle	
1945	Alice Druba	
1946	Alice Druba	
1947	Alice Druba	
1948	Betty Novak	Mrs. C. E. McCartney
1949	Betty Novak	Mrs. C. E. McCartney
1950	Dorothy Hiatt Van Horn	Mrs. C. E. McCartney
1951	Betty Novak	Mrs. C. E. McCartney
1952	Betty Novak	Mrs. C. E. McCartney
1953	The District contracted with I director).	District 75 (Richard Poch,

District No. 76 ("Centennial") included Secs. 27, 28, 33, and 34 of T6, R2W, when it was organized on February 5, 1876. County Superintendent John A. Dempster requested J. M. Piersol to advise all legal voters of the meeting to be held February 19. A part of Secs. 22 and 21 were later added to the district. A new frame building replaced the old one in 1910. It was considered quite a nice building, and it still maintains a lonely vigil on the corner of Sec. 28 which belongs to the Warner family. Because there were so few school-children after 1945, the district paid tuition and transportation for each until 1953, when it contracted with the Geneva school district.

The names of 40 pupils appear on the "Teacher's Daily Register" of 1900. Some of the family names are Bechtel, Christiancy, Demaree, Fiedler, Jones, Leff, McDonald, Parker, Saylor, Tonkinson, Wellman, and Woodworth.

Year	Teacher	Director
1879	Emma Zerba	M. K. Wellman
1880	Parthenia Matson	J. M. Piersol
1881	Parthenia Matson	J M Piersol
1882	Emma Cooch	J M Piersol
1885	Clara Masters	E. O. Wellman
1886	S. T. Drummond	E. O. Wellman
1888	Mary James	E. O. Wellman
1889	Annie Thomas	E O Wellman
1890	S. D. Purviance and Annie Wilson	E. O. Wellman
1891	Elva Dempster	E. O. Wellman
1892	Clara Wickizer	Walter Christiancy
1893	Fanny Purviance	Walter Christiancy
1894	Minnie Heller Warner	Walter Christiancy
1895	W. H. Odell	Walter Christiancy
1896	Carrie Neyhart	
1897	Alta Andrew Priefert	Walter Christiancy
1898	Alta Andrew Priefert	Walter Christiancy
1899	Eva Bahr	Walter Christiancy
1900	Alta Andrew Priefert	T. H. Tonkinson
1901	Laura Smith (Schupbach)	
1902	Kate Lincoln	C. Cumpston
1903	Blanche Heald	
1904	Blanche Heald	
1905	Emma McCartney	
1906	Mabel Bailor	
1907	Mildred Timmons	
1908	Mamie Lenhart	C. Cumpston
1909	Mamie Lenhart	
1910	Mr. Jay Buckles and Miss Maude Sh	
1911	Stella Stelle	C. E. Cumpston
1010	Dot Hastings	C. E. Cumpston
1912 1913	Dot Hastings	C. E. Cumpston
	Eva Huston	
1914 1915	Myra Snodgrass	
1916	Mildred Timmons	
1916	Hazel Huston	
1918	Hazel Huston	
1919	Ethel Love	
1920	Anna Totemeier	
1921	Eila Griffin	
1922	Gladys Allen	
1923	Ada Myers	
1924	Ada Myers	
1925	Ada Myers	
1926	Ethel Loomis	
1927	Elizabeth Shurtliff	
1928	Anna Thomas	
1929	Anna Thomas	
1930	Anna Thomas	
1931	DeVee Weiss	
1932	DeVee Weiss	
1933	DeVee Weiss	
1934	DeVee Weiss	
1935	Ruth Stickell	
1936	Blanche Shapley	
1937	Blanche Shapley	L. L. Myers
1938	Dorothy Bassett	
1939	Dorothy Bassett	
1940	Lucille Miller	

1940

Lucille Miller

1941	Fern Most
1942	Pauline Wagers
1943	Norma McCluskey
1944	Norma McCluskey
1946	to 1949Otto Otten
1950	to 1957Verle Meyers



Photo from Mrs. Clair Christiancy Sr. School District No. 76-1909. Front row, left to right: Herb Saylor, Otto Stofer, Dick Christiancy. Second row: Albert Cumpston, Rosie Richardson, Audrey Christiancy, Miss Homes, Ann Stofer. Third row: Clyde Michaels, John Stofer, Frank Saylor, Boyed Homes, Loyed Homes. Back row: Marie Richardson, Edwin Hall, Ralph Myers, Clair Christiancy, Claude Saylor, Fred Stofer, Vern Christiancy, Ed Stofer. Teacher Maude Sherrard.

MAIL AND PHONES

Gleye McCaulley and Henry Reinsch served for many years as mail carriers for most of Chelsea township. Linus Walters, who began in 1955, is the present carrier. Good roads and a car permit him to cover the area in about four hours each morning. Not so fortunate was Robert Carson, one of the first carriers to the community. With team and cab, allowing for the time he took at noon to rest his horses and to eat a lunch, it took him eight hours to cover his 18mile route. Miss Minnie Carson vividly recalls the pleasure it gave her father when Mrs. John Stephenson invited him in for a warm meal, as she often did. The Stephenson place, now the William Watmore farm, was about halfway on the route. Mail carriers were frequently called upon for services beyond their specific duties. Mr. Carson often delivered messages to people along the route. On one occasion he found a sample of dress material in a mailbox with a request that he please match the material and bring it out on the route the next day or so. "No matter how cold, how deep the snow or impossible the conditions," recalls Miss Carson, "nothing



L. L. Myers

Photo from Oscar Nelson

Hauling poles from Geneva for the Chelsea-Alpine Telephone Company about 1905.

mother or I could say would ever stop him from trying to make his route. We put in many a worrisome day."

With the formation of the Alpine and Chelsea telephone companies in 1905, long wires stretched between tall poles became for the first time a part of our roadside landscape. Chelsea people could now "call up" the neighbors, summon a doctor, or contact people in their county seat. Such convenience is now recognized by most rural families as a necessity. The farmers themselves installed these local lines and have spent many long hours since keeping them in shapeoften under trying conditions, for ice and storms take a heavy toll almost annually. The Chelsea company maintained 12 miles of line and had 20 customers. The last officers were Robert Nunns, Jr., Derrel Hutchens, and Bill Watmore. The Alpine company had 71/2 miles of line and 6 customers. Its first officers were Emmor Fox, Ed Nelson, and Mart Mc-Cartney; the last officers were Fred Fox, Harry Fox, and Oscar Nelson. All these smaller companies have now been taken over by the Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Company and merged into the nation-wide dialing system.

FAMILIES

John W. Andrew, son of Henry and Sarah Andrew, was born in Indiana, April 8, 1843. From Indiana he moved to a farm near Fennimore, Wisconsin, where he resided when the "call to arms" was issued by President Lincoln. He enlisted August 26, 1861, and was mustered into service at Madison on August 29, 1861, as a private of Captain Mark Fennicum's Company "H." 7th Regiment, Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, Col. Joseph Van Dorn commanding. On September 14, 1862, he was wounded in the battle of South Mountain, Maryland, and had to enter a hospital. He later re-enlisted in the 8th Wisconsin Infantry and served another eight months, until the close of the war. He served his country as a soldier and as a sergeant for a total of three years and eight months. He received a certificate of honorable discharge on September 5, 1864, returned to his home in Wisconsin, and resumed farming near Fennimore.

On January 5, 1868, John Andrew married Marcia Arvilla Zerba. To them six children were born: one son, Ira, and five daughters, Lillie, Clara, Alta, Effie, and Blanche.

In April, 1871, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew, with Lillie and Ira, came to Fillmore County in a covered wagon and settled in Chelsea township. He homesteaded the SW ¼ of Sec. 24, T6, R2W, and obtained his patent from the United States government on September 25, 1878. They made their home here until 1910, when they rented the farm and moved to Geneva. Their first home was a sod house in which Clara was born on December 1, 1872. The rest of the children were also born on the homestead in Chelsea: Alta, October 8, 1876; Effie, April 25, 1885; and Blanche, August 16, 1887.

The family experienced the hardships of two great blizzards, the Easter storm of April 14, 1873, and the Great Blizzard of January 12, 1888. In both storms, they saved their livestock by taking all into the house, where all lived together until the storm had passed. Snowdrifts all but buried the home and the few farm buildings. The nearest town was Fairmont, about 16 miles away. The grain had to be hauled all that distance by team and wagon. Wheat seemed to be

the main crop.

Mr. Andrew was active in the civic, educational, and religious life of the community. He was a member of the G.A.R. and the United Brethren Church. The church was built on the northeast corner of this Sec. 24, and a cemetery just west of the church. Soon after, the Methodists built a bigger, better church on the northwest corner of the same section. The first schoolhouse was located near the north border of Mr. Andrew's homestead. Later, the school was across the road, just north of the Methodist church. Mr. Andrew was a member of the school board for many years.

The community was sparsely settled and could not support two churches, so the Methodist church stood idle for several years, until it was purchased by the U. B. church and the U. B. church was torn down and hauled to the farm of

Gus Peterson. I doubt whether this church is standing today. I know the homestead was not sold until several years after the death of Mr. Andrew, August 11, 1935. He was 92 years, 4 months, and 3 days old. At the time he was living with his son Ira near Orchard, Washington. Mrs. Andrew passed on at her home in Geneva, March 6, 1917, at the age of 70 years, 3 months, and 9 days.

Blanche died at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, in Lincoln, Nebraska, December 12, 1923, age 36 years, 3 months, and 27 days. Alta Andrew Priefert died October 24, 1927; Clara Andrew Peterson died September 24, 1928; Lillie Andrew DeWitt Thomas died November 11, 1931; Ira Marvin Andrew

died April 13, 1952.

I, Effie Andrew Johnson, am the only one left. I'll be 81 years old on April 25, 1966. I am doing the housework and living with an 89-year-old lady in Sterling, Illinois. I have a daughter and two sons living here in Sterling and Rock Falls. Raymond Johnson and Leta Thome live in Rock Falls and Donald Johnson lives in Sterling. I also have a son, Ira, living near Dunning, Nebraska. My oldest daughter, Nellie Johnson Cole, passed on May 11, 1937, leaving four small children.

My oldest son, Glen Andrew Johnson, passed on March 18, 1954, leaving three sons and one daughter, all nearly grown. I have 15 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.

and 22 great-grandchildren.
—Effie Andrew Johnson

The SE 1/4 of Sec. 18 in Chelsea township was homesteaded by Edward Brooke in 1871. He came from Illinois with a team and wagon and a breaking plow, built a house, and put down a well which, after being deepened, is still in use. In the fall of 1873 he asked Miss Minnie Warner to come to Nebraska, and they were married on January 1, 1874. Six children came to bless the home, but in 1892 Edward fell from his windmill and the farm was left to his widow, who passed away three years later. When the estate was settled, the place went to the eldest son, Lyman. He and his wife, the former Ella Ward, still live on this place and enjoy the comfort and convenience of a modern home which they built in 1913. Their son John and his family also reside in Chelsea township. Their daughter Bonnie (Mrs. Sumner Harris) lives –Mrs. Lyman Brooke in California.

Walter Christiancy purchased the NE ¼ of Sec. 27 from the Burlington R.R. in November, 1883. He improved it, and he and his family lived on the place until his retirement in 1922. His son Clair and his family then moved to the farm and lived there until 1954 when they and their son Robert moved to Geneva. Since that time their son Rodger has farmed the land, and he and his wife are now living on the place.

—Mrs. Clair Christiancy, Sr.



Sod house of Walter Christiancy on NE ¼ of Sec. 27, Chelsea Twp., about 1880. The children are Bert Christiancy and Belva Christiancy Saylor.

Walter Churchill (1841-1923), naturalized citizen, and his wife Jerraldine Kirchner (1845-1911).

Walter Churchill came from Bristol, England, in 1858. He went from New York City to Pennsylvania, where he worked for a wagon maker. It was there that he met Jerraldine Kirchner who was, at that time, working for a family who were horse trainers. In a few years' time, enough money was accumulated to make it possible for them to get married and set out by covered wagon to "the West."

Crossing the Mississippi River at Keokuk, Iowa, and the Missouri River at Nebraska City made the trip venturesome. Their first child was born in Iowa, and so the young couple lived there briefly before deciding to go farther. Their final destination was a homestead on the S ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec.

14, Chelsea township (1871).

A sod house was built in the middle of the section. It was there that several of their children were reared. Later on, a frame house and barn were built on the section line.

The hardships were many, but their faith in a new land carried them through. On one occasion a big blizzard came in the seventies. The wife put her apron over the horse's face and led it into the house. The oxen were poorly sheltered in a straw shed. Their hides were so badly frozen that the hair came off (after a time). The story originally was that the wind was so violent that it blew the hair off. The latter is only partially true.

In the summer months, churning, bread-baking, and other household chores were done at night so that all of the family could work in the fields during the day. A hasty nap at the ends of the furrows afforded much-needed sleep in the

daytime.

The family has come a long way from the pioneer life, but I think each one has an appreciation for the background

inherited from the forefathers.

The family of Walter Churchill: Emma Mullikin, Mary Ellen Peterson, Eva Friday George, Walter A., and Albert, all deceased.

—Stella Churchill



Walter Churchill family taken about 1903. Back row, left to right: Emma (Mrs. Ora Mullikin), George, Mary Ellen (Mrs. Gus Peterson), Walter A. Front row: Albert, Walter and Jerraldine Churchill, Eva (Mrs. John Friday).

Allen T. Drummond came from Lancaster, Missouri, in the fall of 1880 and purchased school land, the SW ¼ of Sec. 36, one-half mile south of Dudley school. He, his wife, and their three sons and two daughters occupied the place in 1881. Their daughter Ida and her husband William Gewecke now own the place. The house and barn built by Mr. Drummond are still standing.

Emmor Fox (1851-1910) and his wife Harriet Morrison Fox (1851-1930). He came to Nebraska in 1881 and settled on a farm in Chelsea township. His first marriage was to Sarah Lawrence. To that union were born Lewis Fox and Dora Fox McPherson. Fred Fox is the only child of his second marriage.

—Stella Churchill



Joseph G. Fox (about 1900).

Joseph Gardner Fox (1831-1917) and his wife, Almyra Shuck Fox (1847-1929).

Joseph G. Fox was born in Pennsylvania and went with his parents to Ohio in 1841. There he grew to manhood, and served in the Civil War (Company "G," Ohio Regiment) in 1864. His second marriage was to Almyra Shuck. The couple resided in Ohio until 1885, when they chose Nebraska for a new home with a future. Joe, as he was known, came before the family and worked for a time on the "Moze" Taylor farm, thus earning enough money to bring his family here.

In 1885 Almyra had a furniture sale in Ohio, packed a few things, and came the many miles by train to their new home. She provided for her children by packing a lunch of chicken, hominy, bread, and sugar. When four days were over and their destination was reached, their food had long been exhausted, as the chicken and hominy had spoiled and had been thrown out the car window. A wagon was awaiting them at Fairmont. The sewing machine, feather bed, and quilts, as well as seven children, were loaded, and all were ready for the short ride to the Emmor Fox home in Chelsea. It was there that they spent their first night in Nebraska. The next day, they took their meager belongings and took up residence in a farmhouse about a mile away and lived there for several years.

Their most harrowing experiences were snakes coming through their sod house floors, and the blizzard of 1888. In great emergencies, corn was parched and used to make "coffee." Corn-meal mush provided a sustaining diet many a time.

The children of Joseph G. Fox were: Eva Wolverton, Cora Shackelford, Orpha Jesse, Gepha Churchill, Lemma Miller, Edgbert Dow, Edmond Low, and Robert W. Fox. (For Cora and Robert, see under *Shackelford*).

Orpha Fox, daughter of Joseph G. Fox, married Charles Jesse in 1893. They farmed in Fillmore County until 1903, when they moved to Ohiowa and ran the mill there. But



Home of Emmor Fox, 1893. Included in the picture are Emmor Fox by the buggy, Fred Fox in the buggy, Lewis Fox on the wagon. Insert picture shows Emmor Fox and daughter, Dora and son, Lewis.

Charles and Orpha lived only a few more years after that. They had four children. Edith, widow of Glen Chadderdon, and her son Bud live in Los Angeles. Bertha and her husband, Ernest McGuire, live in St. Louis, Missouri. Their son Bob, a helicopter pilot, is married and lives in Laguna Beach, California. They have a married daughter.

Howard Jesse and his wife (Inez Engel) farmed east of Geneva for many years. Retired, they now live in Friend, Nebraska. Charles Jesse, Jr., is deceased. —Stella Churchill

J. F. (Frank) McCartney bought the NW ¼ of Sec. 12 as a homestead relinquishment in the fall of 1872. The following spring he brought his wife Elma and her two small sons by covered wagon from Rock Island, Illinois, to a sod house located near the southwest corner of this farm. A year or two later he built a frame house on the north side of the quarter. The family occupied this until 1898, when they built the present two-story house, which faces Highway 41 to the north. Small evergreen trees brought from the Platte River and set out in the front lawn in the 1870's are venerable trees today. Twice a year needed supplies were hauled by wagon from Beatrice. A large orchard furnished apples and cherries for the family, which ultimately consisted of eight children: Will, Charlie, Mart, Maud, Clarence, Herbert, Emma, and Alta. Maud, Mart, Herbert, and Emma taught in rural schools. Herbert received a degree in 1911 from Iowa State, Emma graduated from Omaha General Hospital and was one of the Red Cross nurses who served in France during World War I (1918). She passed away in 1931 and is one of the war dead honored each Memorial Day at the Geneva Cemetery. The elder McCartneys retired to Geneva in 1906. The original farm is now owned by the Nelsons.

—Miss Carmen Heller



Photo from Mrs. Cliff Wilson Mr. and Mrs. Frank McCartney—1918.

Joseph McDonald, descended from Scottish ancestors who spelled the name "Macdonald," came from LaSalle County, Illinois, in February, 1875, and purchased the NE 1/4 of Sec. 1, T6, R2W from local land agent H. G. Bliss at Fairmont, representative of the Burlington R.R., for \$3.75 an acre. He paid part of the money in advance and then hired out to a man in Illinois for two more years in order to pay off the balance. In 1881 he married Eleanor Kinrade, who had come with her parents to the Burress community in 1879. Two daughters and two sons were born to them. Allen died of pneumonia in 1920, two years after his father's death. Harold and his family have lived on the farm almost continuously since that time. Joseph McDonald, a very meticulous man, rather specialized in the raising of purebred Duroc Jersey hogs. -Wilma (Mrs. O. E.) Nelson



Photo from Harold McDonald taken 1899 Left to right: Esther McDonald Axtell, Clarence McDonald, Joseph McDonald, Bertha McDonald Fisher, Ella Kinrade McDonald, Allen McDonald.

Abraham B. Miller came from Wabash, Indiana, in the fall of 1881 at the age of 19 years. In 1883, he purchased from the state of Nebraska 160 acres in Sec. 16, T6, R2W, and in 1887 and 1889 he purchased 80 adjoining acres. In December, 1889, he leased two acres in the NW corner of Sec. 16 for District 45, known as the Blain school.

Mr. Miller batched in his home for several years; later, on February 22, 1888, he married Miss Mary Foster in Springfield, Illinois. They then came out to their farm where they lived until they moved to Geneva in 1916. The Millers had four children; Vinetta Miller Eaton, of Geneva; Inez Miller Spangler, of Des Moines, Iowa; Ross Miller, of Nashua, Iowa; and Helen Miller Fisher, of Lincoln, Nebraska. Mr. Miller passed away in 1929 and Mrs. Miller in 1940. The farm still owned by Vinetta Miller Eaton and Inez Miller Spangler.

-Mrs. Vinetta Eaton



Photo from Vinetta Miller Eaton Vinetta Miller.

The Abraham Miller Farm Home in Sec. 16, Chelsea. The girl in the buggy is Vinetta Miller.

John Walter Mullikin and his family were early pioneers in Fillmore County. John Walter was born September 10, 1839, at Bridge Town, Maryland. In 1845, with his parents, he moved from Maryland to Middlefork, Indiana. He grew up without formal education, but few of his day had a better self-taught education. He served as an instructor in the newly established county schools of his community. He served in the Federal Army in the Civil War from 1861 to 1865 in Company "K" of the 18th and Company "H" of the 118th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, and was mustered out of the army early in 1865.

On April 16, 1865, he was married to his boyhood sweetheart, Helen Elizabeth Beard. Elizabeth was born at Middlefork, Indiana, January 19, 1846; her parents originated in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Guests had assembled for the nuptials; but just as the minister was about to begin the ceremony, a messenger rode in on horseback with the shocking news that President Lincoln had been assassinated on April 14. Mr. Mullikin scarcely had the presence of mind to go through the ceremony; he felt that more war was inevitable.

The government furnished Civil War veterans with lists of land available out West. A tree claim of 120 acres on Sec. 26 in Chelsea township was selected. A Mr. Chester had not been able to prove up on his claim because of illness, and Mr.

Mullikin purchased his rights.

In 1872, the family, with five small children—Everette, Perry, Orrin, Atley, and Iza—moved from Indiana by covered wagon to the newly acquired claim in Nebraska. The claim was not without improvements: a dugout for a home, a barn, and many trees that were growing on the place. More and more trees were planted; at one time, there were four productive fruit orchards.

Bessie Rue, the second daughter, was the only one of the children born in the dugout (on August 6, 1876). On December 14, 1893, she married William Rhoda of Chelsea township. Within the next three years a frame house was erected over the dugout. Between 1879 and 1891 the five younger children were born: Burke, Doyle, Olga, Owen, and Ida. The oldest daughter, Iza Inez, passed away on December 19, 1880, at the age of nine.

As the sons grew up, all left home to seek work elsewhere. The parents never saw all their large family at any one time. When they celebrated their golden wedding in 1915, eight of

the 10 children were present.

The pioneer life of the Mullikin family was typical of that of all early settlers. There were hardships, privations, and prosperity, all dependent largely on the whims of the weather and of insect pests. The family went through two great blizzards-the Easter storm of 1873 and the Great Blizzard of January 12, 1888. At one time in the early 1880's, Mr. Mullikin operated a post office in his home. The address was Dudley, Nebraska. Harvey Ryman went by horse-drawn cart to Fairmont three times a week to carry the outgoing and to bring the incoming mail. When Harvey was not able to make the trip, his wife, Emma Zerba Ryman, made it for him. For several years Mr. Mullikin operated a cane press. Farmers for miles around raised their own cane, which they brought to the mill to be pressed; the juice was then cooked until it formed molasses. Stored in large barrels, molasses was the only sweet enjoyed by the pioneers. Members of the family recalled the first brown sugar in bulk obtainable in some stores. The introduction of white sugar was an event never forgotten. A cider press was a busy place every fall; homemade vinegar was a necessity.

Because he was capable, Mr. Mullikin extracted aching teeth for family and friends. He was also able to fill cavities in

teeth, a great aid in the early days.

Elizabeth Mullikin capably met all the challenges of pioneer life in the new country. She was resourceful, thrifty, and industrious; her hands were never idle. Her crafts, arts, and skills were unsurpassed. She carded raw wool and spun thread with which her knitting needles supplied mittens, hose, and scarves for her entire family. During the growing season, her preserving and pickling kettles were always in use. In a countryside lacking professional aid, Mrs. Mullikin was an

angel of mercy in sickness. Her home remedies, teas and brews of native plants, were known to be most helpful. Her skills, almost unknown to the present generation, included the making of kraut, hominy, butter, cheese, and homemade soap. Lye for making soap was obtained by soaking wood ashes in water and using the water with pork or beef cracklings. Other skills included drying and preserving of fruits and vegetables in the sun. What the pioneer woman lacked in conveniences, she made up in resourcefulness.

Mr. Mullikin, an avid student, was far ahead of his day in educational interests. He organized District 30 in December, 1881, and was a school board member for many years. The corner of the NE ¼ of Sec. 35, Chelsea township, was leased to the newly organized school district for as long as the school remained operative. This plot was on Mrs. Mullikin's land across the road from the home. She recalled that her father in Indiana had given three different corners of his land for school purposes. She insisted that District 30 lease the plot, which would thus belong to the then present owner of the land when the school was finally abandoned. Her fore-

thought proved to have merit.

The schoolhouse was used for religious purposes—Sunday school, preaching services, and revival meetings. All the family took part in the religious services of the community. Mr. Mullikin knew music. He not only taught his own children to sing and to play instruments, but he also started several young men of the neighborhood on musical careers. Singing schools were a delight to all who attended. Mr. Mullikin possessed a sweet tenor voice that was unsurpassed. When called upon, he was capable of delivering a Sunday sermon. At one time, he was called upon to conduct a funeral service. He was known to have made a study of many religious creeds, as well as the platforms of all the political parties of his day.

Mr. and Mrs. Mullikin remained on the farm for 32 years. With their youngest daughter, Ida, they moved to Cherryvale, Kansas, in October, 1904. Mrs. Mullikin passed away on March 9, 1925, and Mr. Mullikin on October 17, 1926.

All ten of the children married. There were 41 grand-children. Their son Doyle graduated from the University Medical School at Omaha and was a practicing physician at Chester, Nebraska, for more than 50 years. The daughters Ida and Olga were teachers; Ida retired in 1956 after teaching for 35 years.

In 1966 the surviving members of the family are Owen N. Mullikin of McMinnville, Oregon, and Mrs. Ida C. Mitchell of Chester, Nebraska.

—Miss Lillie C. Rhoda



Photo from Lillie Rhode

The John Walter Mullikin family taken on April 16, 1915 at the Golden Wedding Celebration of Mr. and Mrs. Mullikin. Back row, left to right: Burke, Owen, Doyle, and Atley. Second row: Olga Perry, Bessie Mullikin Rhoda, Orrin, Ida Mullikin Mitchell, Everette. Seated: Mr. and Mrs. Mullikin.

Walferd C. Peterson was born September 23, 1866, in the province of Kalmar, Sweden. His parents, Johannes and Sarah "Johnson," and four of their children came to the United States, leaving Emma and Walferd in Sweden with relatives. There was a Swedish settlement in Galesburg, Illinois, so that was where they went. After a time the family had earned enough money to send for the two children, and they came over on a ship which took three weeks to make the trip. At the time Emma was 11 and Walferd was four years old.

On settling in Galesburg, the family assumed the name of "Peterson," as it was the custom in Sweden at that time to take the name of the father's father and add "son" to the name, and hence the family became "Peterson."

After Emma and Walferd came to Illinois, Walferd contracted what we now know as polio. In early days little was known about this disease or ways of treating it; and so Wal-

ferd was left a cripple for life.

His formal schooling was very meager; the older boys in the family took him to school in a wagon when the weather permitted, or when the work on the farm was slack. Even though he did not get much education at school, he was an avid reader and mechanically minded. He always kept abreast of the times. Since he had been denied schooling, he was eager to see that his children all got a good education.

In the year 1879, the family heard of railroad land that could be purchased in Nebraska. At that time all the homestead land was taken, but they pooled their money and had enough to buy land in Chelsea township, Fillmore County, southeast of Geneva. The records state that "Eighty acres of land was purchased from the Burlington and Missouri River Rail Road Company by Johannes Peterson, for the consideration of \$600.00. Legal description, the E ½ of the SE ¼ of Sec. 15, T6, R2W of the Sixth Principal Meridian."

The family had to haul lumber from Fairmont to build their home; it took many trips and many days to get the material. They endured many hardships like everyone else

in those early days, but they were of sturdy stock.

When Walferd was a young man, he got a job traveling for an implement company. His mode of transportation was by horse ("Old Flora") and buggy. One of the towns in his territory was Sidney, Iowa, where a John Chaney was the implement dealer. His wife and their young daughters ran the hotel, the only one in town, and Walferd made his head-quarters there when in that area. Walferd had a good voice and loved to sing, so in the evenings the young people would gather around the organ in the "parlor" and sing. Rosalie Chaney played the organ and sang. It was on these occasions that he met Rosalie and wooed and won her. In October, 1896, he drove "Old Flora" to Sidney and they were married. He had established a home just south of the one where he had spent his boyhood, and for many years was a farmer.

The work on the farm became too strenuous, and so he decided to run for the office of county clerk. He was elected in 1906 and appointed Alfred Rosenquist as his deputy. After his term of office, he returned to the implement business, later ran the Ford Garage, and, during the last few years of his life, had a filling station across from the southeast corner of Courthouse Square. During the years of the implement business and the garage, Lyle Cumberland was his "right-

hand man" and a very close friend.

Walferd was always inventing ways to compensate for his not being able to walk far or to work as others did. He made his arms do much of the work for his legs, and thus developed great strength in his arms. He contrived a way to fix a girl's bicycle (as this was easier for him to handle), put the chain on the left side, so that he could pedal with his one good foot, and built a small platform on which to rest the heel of the crippled foot. Before the streets were hard-surfaced, it was difficult for him to ride on the frozen, rutty roads in winter and the muddy roads in summer. A city ordinance prohibited the riding of bicycles on sidewalks, but the city councilmen made one exception: they allowed Mr. Peterson to ride on the walks because of his affliction. The children of the town always respected his handicap and

would step off the sidewalks when they saw him riding down the street. Walferd often expressed his appreciation of this privilege.

It was a source of satisfaction to him when, riding past the schoolhouse playground on his bicycle, the young boys would ask him to stop and chin himself on the bars, as he

could far outdo any of them.

Mr. and Mrs. Peterson reared a family of nine children, all of whom were graduated from the Geneva High Shcool and all of whom attended the University of Nebraska: Mrs. Leta Tomlinson of Chino, California; Mrs. Dazel F. Camp of Geneva, Nebraska; Mrs. M. Murle Abrahamzon of Ralston, Nebraska; Dr. John C. Peterson (deceased); Mrs. Rose L. Hammond of Lincoln, Nebraska; Mrs. Marion L. Calder of Lincoln, Nebraska; Mrs. Helen M. Biba of Carbondale, Colorado; Frank W. Peterson of Homestead, Florida; and Dr. Paul L. Peterson of Lincoln, Nebraska.

Both Walferd and Rosalie Peterson were useful, respected citizens, serving their community in many ways. Mr. Peterson was on the school board from 1919 to 1922 and both of them were active in the Congregational Church until their health failed. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1946 at the church, with all their children present, and

many of their grandchildren.

Walferd's greatest pride was his family. Now, his grand-daughter Mary Camp Portwood and Dr. David Portwood, a Geneva dentist, and their family are taking their place in the community he so respected and loved. —Mrs. C. C. Camp



Photo from Mrs. Dazel F. Camp taken in 1946 Family of Mr. and Mrs. Walferd Peterson. Left to right: Mrs. Leta Tomlinson, Mrs. Dazel F. Camp, Mrs. Murle Abrahamzon, John, Mrs. Rose Hammond, Mrs. Marion Calder, Mrs. Helen Biba, Frank and Paul. Seated: Mr. and Mrs. Walferd Peterson.

Many of the early pioneers in the West had their origin in Europe. This was true of the Frederick Rhoda family, early settlers in Fillmore County. Frederick Rhoda and Sophia Siefert were born and raised in Schwerin, Mecklenburg, a province of northern Germany. These young people embarked from Hamburg in the early 1850's. By train they journeyed from New York City to La Porte in northern Indiana. Why they chose Indiana is not known; they may have known someone there, perhaps a relative. Both were able to find employment at once in the new land.

After their marriage they lived for a few years at Flint, Michigan. By 1862, Mr. and Mrs. Rhoda and two sons, Frank and Charley, were back in Indiana. Glowing accounts of cheap land and abundant crops "out West" were ever before them. In 1863 or 1864, the family again moved, this time to a farm near Atalissa, Iowa. Here their next children, David,

William, Sophia, and Emma were born.

A friend of Mr. Rhoda's wrote of the prosperity of the prairies of Kansas. In July, 1870, the family went by covered wagon to the home of a friend near Lyons, Kansas. They found no prosperity—in fact, only dire poverty and near starvation. Mrs. Rhoda and the three younger children took a train at St. Joseph, Missouri, to return to Indiana. Mr. Rhoda, Frank, and Charley made the trip back by covered wagon. The story is told that the boys made most of the trip

on their ponies. In Kansas they chased herds of antelope. By the spring of 1871, the family was on a rented farm owned by General Orr near La Porte. The next nine years on the farm were fairly prosperous ones. Crops were good—all gleaned and threshed by hand. The youngest children of the family, Marshall and Ella, were born here. Their third son, Marshall, born March 9, 1872, lived but eleven days.

The "Call of the West" was ever present, thanks to the advertising of the railroads. In 1878, Mr. Rhoda came to Fairmont, where he was met by H. G. Bliss, land agent for the C. B. & Q. Railroad. From Fairmont, they drove overland by horse and buggy to see available land. The N ½ of Sec. 25 in Chelsea township was chosen. The price was \$6.60 an acre. All was virgin prairie. There were trees in sight along Turkey Creek and on some tree claims. Several settlers were already well established in dugouts. Henry Wilson, later county judge of Fillmore County, was hired to start breaking the prairie.

Between 1879 and 1880 the family made preparations for moving to Nebraska. In July, Mr. Rhoda became ill with typhoid fever. Before this, he had suffered an injury to the pancreas, caused by the kick of a colt. The injury, aggravated by the attack of fever, brought his untimely death at

the age of 40, on August 7, 1880.

With the help of her four sons, Mrs. Rhoda proceeded with their preparations and held a farm sale on September 30, 1880. An immigrant car, with Frank and Charley in charge, was loaded with livestock, furniture, and family posessions. The rest of the family followed by train, arriving in Fairmont on October 5, 1880.

The family lived in a rented house in Fairmont for six weeks. During that time, the sons, with the help of carpenters, erected a small frame house on the NW ¼ of Sec. 25, set up

shelter for the livestock, and dug a well.

Early years on the prairie were filled with hardships and homesickness. Armed with ambition, hard work, and their own crafts and skills, they soon found things shaping toward a better outlook. Having grown used to natural woods in Indiana, they simply had to plant trees. They planted and tended long rows of osage hedge; a large grove of native trees gave shelter and protection around the buildings; and an apple orchard flourished for many years.

In thinking of those times, it is easier to think of what there wasn't than of what there was. The first three-month term of school opened in District 30 on December 19, 1881, and was attended by four of the Rhoda children. Chelsea,

District 32, held spring terms which they attended.

The sod for making the schoolhouse in District 30 was taken partly from the SE 1/4 of Sec. 25. By 1883, a small

frame building replaced the sod schoolhouse.

In the spring of 1881 they planted their first crops: spring wheat and barley, and later buckwheat and oats. The new land did produce good crops when drouth, grasshoppers, and hail didn't interfere. The nearest town was Tobias, where the surplus grain was hauled overland. A load of wheat to the mill meant flour for bread for many months.

The Rhoda boys owned the first wire-tying binder in this area. Remnants of this binder are on display at Pioneer Village, Minden, Nebraska. The brothers also owned a road grader, a well-digging outfit, and a horse-powered corn sheller. All were put to frequent use in the neighborhood.

Abundant wildlife meant food for the pioneers. Grouse, prairie chickens, and quail were the most numerous. The story was told that flocks of prairie chickens on their way to roosting ground would blot out the setting sun. The bliz-

zard of 1888 destroyed the game by the thousands.

As the country rapidly filled with settlers, the Rhoda family was drawn into the many activities of the community. There were religious meetings at the schoolhouses, as well as revival and protracted meetings at the Brethren church and tent camp meetings in the groves of near-by farms. The brothers helped build Chelsea Church. There were spelling bees, singing bees, and literaries at the schoolhouses, and quilting bees in every home for the ladies. When a new barn or granary was built, a square dance was held, attended by

young and old from far and near. There were several excellent fiddlers and callers in the area. Pioneer life was not all hardship and hard work: there was plenty of entertainment as well as spiritual life.

The Rhodas acquired other farms near their original purchase. Charley Rhoda lived on the old home place until the 1920's. All of the land is still in the family. Emma, William, and Charley married. There are 8 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren, and 16 great-great-grandchildren. Ella Rhoda, whose 95th birthday was October 5, 1967, is the surviving member of the family.

—Miss Lillie C. Rhoda



Courtesy of Lillie Rhoda

The Frederick Rhoda family taken about 1887. Back row, left to right: William, Emma, David, Ella. Front row: Charles, Mrs. Rhoda, Frank.

In 1872, William Shackelford (November 20, 1813- February 9, 1898) and his wife, the former Catherine Miller (January 10, 1823-August 25, 1909) of Troy, Ohio, came from Clinton County, Indiana, to Fillmore County. They had joined the great company moving westward. Not all their five sons and daughters came to Nebraska. A son, Austin C. Shackelford (November 2, 1847-June 21, 1928) and his wife, Delana J. Like (December 13, 1852-January 6, 1921), whom he had married in 1870, homesteaded in Chelsea. They took 80 acres—the N ½ of the SE ¼ of Sec. 22, T6, R2W. Also in the company of pioneers were daughters, Elvira, with her husband Matthew Young, who also homesteaded, and Clara (Mrs. O. Stone). Another daughter, Eliza, came the following year (1873) with her husband, James Swayze. Many close relatives remained in Indiana and Ohio.

At a later date, Austin C. Shackelford gave a Signal reporter an account of the famous Easter storm of April 13, 1873: "It began with a light rain. Early in the afternoon the rain turned to snow and the storm continued three days with tremendous violence. It was all open country here then with nothing to check the wind or provide shelter for man or beast except the rude dugouts and sod stables."

William and Catherine saved many old letters. Eliza wrote to them from Russiaville, Indiana, January 2, 1873: "Did mother's trip out there make her sick or did it cure her of that neuralgia? Clara, you must not eat too much buffalo meat, you will get to be a giant. Are you going to school? You must write to me." At that time, letters were addressed to Empire P. O., Fillmore County. One from their son told of the cold weather in Indiana and then continued: "I would like very well to have that Jack rabbit's cotton tail that you promised me to go in the toe of my boot for I froze my big toe so it hurts."

A note from a niece, Ida Compton, in Troy, Ohio, April 24, 1873, remarked, "... there was an excursion going out to Nebraska and ma had a notion to go but she did not like to go by herself, it was \$29 there and back." Catherine's brother George wrote: "You speak of those Mexican cattle with their long horns, they are quite a show." Other letters told how Mat Young helped the Swayzes get located. On February 9, 1875, from Covington, Ohio, George Miller wrote to his sister Catherine Shackelford: "... they are making up a car load of provisions here to send to Nebraska to the sufferers. There

was also some, over \$300, sent to Missouri from here." (George's daughter and family had settled in Missouri.) On June 27, 1875, L. Sims wrote from Clinton County to William: "I understood you wanted some dandelion seed, they seem to be scarce, but I'll send a few if that is not enough let me know and I will send more. I suppose you only wanted to get a start of them." Sims wrote again on July 10, 1875: "... I am truly glad to hear that you have escaped the grasshoppers."

From Nebraska, on July 14, 1875, Eliza Swayze wrote: "... this finds us well at this time. It rains here every day or night and has for the last month and the crops are very slim here. There is no harvest at all and no corn over four inches high. The gardens, nobody ever got a smell of anything they planted. Everybody is pretty disgusted here. The grasshoppers have about all left. We have had some of the hardest storms here this summer that ever was. We looked for our house to go lots of times. It shakes like the cars starting every storm. It has blown off twice but not since we lived in it. If nothing happens we don't expect to stay here longer than a couple of weeks for Jim is about run out of work."

Letters sent to William and Catherine Shackelford in the 1880's were addressed to Alpine, Fillmore County.

The Swayzes stuck it out. June 4, 1883, Jim Swayze wrote to a friend: "We have come to life again. I rented the farm east of my house where we went to look for the deer tracks but we live where we did. I have 37 acres of oats and 25 corn, give one-third corn and one-fourth oats. I bought a team on time. We have a cow paid for. Have been fishing several times, got some nice pickerel. Tell the old man if he wants to squirrel hunt to come down. There are lots of them here, can kill all he wants close to the house, both kinds, gray and fox squirrels. It has rained more here than it ever did in Indiana but has not damaged anything yet for me. Council Bluffs washed off last Saturday, only 28 lives lost. Corn looks good. Come over as soon as you can."

A letter to William Shackelford, August 7, 1888, was addressed to Dudley, Fillmore County. He was a Methodist and a Mason. After the death of her husband in 1898, Catherine returned to Indiana to spend her last years with relatives there.

William had sold out when he left Indiana, bringing notes from the sale which were later handled by Lewis and Cicero Sims, brothers, bill collector and lawyer, of Frankfort, Indiana. A letter from William's brother, S. H. Shackelford, of Tipton County, Indiana, said that he sent the Swayzes's boxes by freight after they came to Fillmore County in the fall of 1873. Catherine's brother, Elliott Miller, had a dry goods store in Troy, Ohio; her brother George later sold his bookstore there and moved to Covington, Ohio. Their parents died a few years after Catherine came to Nebraska. The mother's letters to Catherine expressed deep regret at not seeing her daughter again.



Machine shop of Austin Shackelford (left), and son, Jason (standing in center of picture).

In addition to farming in Chelsea township, Austin C. Shackelford operated a blacksmith and machine shop in Dudley. For recreation, he gave singing lessons to a group of young people who met for practice in the Chelsea church. Without an organ at first, they used a tuning fork and song books.

The children of Austin and Delana were Jason D., Minnie (Mrs. Robert Fox), Frank, Ina (Mrs. Albert Eslow), Daisy, Oska, Elva, and Nellie. Three sons had died in infancy. The greatest tragedy which ever came to this family was in 1894: within 34 days the four youngest children, girls aged 5 to 14, died of diphtheria, the last one on the day before Christmas.

There were crop failures, and Austin's barn was struck by lightning and burned. Bees outgrew their hives and moved to the house; some of the siding had to be stripped off to remove the honey. Like all the early settlers, they set out fruit trees of all kinds, berries, rhubarb, and Osage orange hedge for fence posts. Most of these grew abundantly.

In April, 1896, Jason D. Shackelford married Cora Fox, daughter of Joseph G. Fox. A month later, Jason's sister Minnie married Robert Fox, brother of Cora. Minnie and Robert moved to a farm near Ohiowa. Austin moved from the homestead to Geneva, a block east of the mill, where he operated a blacksmith shop with his son Jason. Years later, Jason had his own shop on the east side of the Courthouse Square. He played a cornet in the Geneva Band. As a pastime, he learned to crochet beautifully, taught by Cora, who was a dressmaker. They had no children.

Austin attained a high degree in the Masonic Lodge and Delana was in the Eastern Star. They were Methodists. Their daughter Ina became a skilled tailor. Ina met and married Albert Eslow in California, where she worked. They moved to a homestead in Canada; but the change of climate from the Imperial Valley was too severe, and Ina died a short time later.



Mr. and Mrs. Austin Shackelford (about 1910).

Robert Fox (June 13, 1866-June 22, 1951) and his wife Minnie (September 27, 1874-May 16, 1944), with their infant daughter Grace, moved in 1899 from the Ohiowa farm to the Shackelford homestead in Chelsea. Their daughter Ruth was born in this same house where her mother had come to life. Minnie gave organ lessons, and Robert continued his sideline of watch and clock repairing, which he had learned as a young man in Gallipolis, Ohio. He had come to Fillmore County in 1892, seven years after the arrival of his father, Joseph G. Fox. Later Robert moved to farms west of Geneva. Grace died in 1961. Ruth, a University of Nebraska graduate, became a medical technologist. After working 30 years in Verona, New Jersey, she retired and now lives in Geneva.

Austin's son Frank graduated from Geneva High School in 1898 and became a pharmacist. In 1908, he married Anna Masters, a schoolteacher from Exeter. Geneva relatives went to the wedding in Exeter, making the trip by train. Frank later moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota. Frank and Anna had two daughters. Melva married Chester Burton, a lawyer

in Duluth; they have two sons, Bruce and Gary. Dorothy, remaining in Minneapolis, married Stanley H. Raitz, now deceased. They had a son, Darryl, now a helicopter pilot, married and living in Miami, Florida; and a daughter, Judy (Mrs. Jerry Pertl), of Minneapolis. The Pertls have two sons, David and Douglas; Mr. and Mrs. Darryl S. Raitz have two sons, Mark and Jeffrey.

Oscar L. Stone and his wife Clara (daughter of William Shackelford) had a son, Delbert, and a daughter, Zella, who went to school and grew up in Fillmore County. The Stones later moved to University Place, Nebraska (now a part of Lincoln), where they lived near Matthew Young. Delbert, a widower, lives in Lincoln. His son Dale lives in Chicago, Illinois, with his wife and son Craig.

Zella, widow of John Schoenholz, lives in Davenport, Nebraska, next door to her daughter Gladys (Mrs. Royal Hardinger). Royal is a pharmacist. Their son Don is married, lives in Lincoln and has a son, Jeffrey, and a daughter, Shari. Don Hardinger is an auditor in the Labor Department of

the State of Nebraska.

Matthew Young and his wife Elvira (daughter of William Shackelford) settled on a homestead in Fillmore County in 1872, on coming to Nebraska from Indiana. Matthew served in the Union army during the Civil War, Company "G," 89th Indiana Regiment of volunteer infantry. He was a Methodist and a Mason. They had five children: Mrs. O. P. McNees, Mrs. S. J. Pester, Mrs. J. L. Vodra, Bertha, and A. H. Young. They moved from the farm to Geneva in 1904, and in 1907 to University Place, Nebraska, where Matthew died in 1911.

—Ruth Fox

In the spring of 1888, Mr. and Mrs. Leonidas Stephenson sold their land in Champaign County, Illinois, and moved to Geneva, Nebraska, where they bought a farm southwest of town and a home in Geneva (now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Gibbons). They lived here until Mr. Stephenson passed away in 1895 at the age of 75 years. Mrs. Stephenson continued to make her home in Geneva with a widowed daughter, Mrs. Anna Buckles, who came to keep her company. Mrs. Stephenson passed away at the age of 90.

In 1889, a son, Henry Stephenson, and his family came from Illinois to Geneva. He purchased the farm now owned by the Lauber brothers. They lived here many years, later moving to Franklin, Nebraska, where they passed away.

In 1890, another son, John Stephenson, and his family sold out in Illinois and moved to Fillmore County, locating two miles east of Geneva on what is now Highway 41, on the farm now owned by the Nichols brothers. The John Stephensons had three children, Alice, Helen, and Willard (who died at the age of 18). Mrs. John Stephenson passed away in 1942 and Mr. Stephenson in 1947.

In 1892, Mr. and Mrs. John Babb, parents of Mrs. John Stephenson, came from Illinois and purchased the farm which is known as the Stephenson home place, now farmed by William (Bill) Watmore, son of William and Alice Stephen-

son Watmore.

The Stephenson farm now owned by Helen Stephenson Shickley and Alice Stephenson Watmore was homesteaded



Mr. and Mrs. John Stephenson and children, taken in 1890. From left to right: Mr. Stephenson, Helen standing in front of Alice, Mrs. Stephenson holding Willard.

by Frederick Heiderstadt in the early 1870's. This SW ¼ of Sec. 4 was a tree claim and had a 20-acre ash grove along the south line. Mr. Heiderstadt was the grandfather of Mrs. Ed Watmore, Mrs. Susie Ward, and Fred Meyer.

Alice Stephenson Watmore started school in District 45, called the Blain school. The William Sprout young folk—Grace, Lee, and Melvin—who drove a team and spring wagon to school, picked up the children of Mrs. Nancy Purviance, Fannie, Lee, and Willis; Alice Stephenson rode with them. The Sprouts lived on the farm now owned by Mrs. Effie Larson and occupied by her son Don and his family. The Purviances occupied the farm now owned by Mr. and Mrs. James Bernasek.

At the time there were two rooms in Blain school, with 90 pupils and two teachers. Professor Lewis, father of Mrs. Flora Houchin, was the teacher at the time of the 1888 blizzard. Other early teachers were John Burke (father of Mrs. Alice Hassler, Miss Julia Burke, and Mrs. John Koehler), Milton Ames, Ed Lane, Frank Brannick, Mrs. Anna Buckles, and Robert Case.

—Mrs. William Watmore Sr. (Died August 18, 1966)

There is one Chelsea resident whose early life differed from that of most people. He is Charles Weiss, better known as "Charley." At the age of seven, he was one of 24 orphan boys brought to Geneva from New York in 1889 under the auspices of a group known as the Children's Aid Society. He went first to the Fred Stewart home west of Geneva, but began work at an early age for several farmers in the Chelsea community, one of these being Emmor Fox. By dint of work and saving, he was able, with the help of his wife, Lola Owens, to start farming on a rented place and eventually to acquire his own land and property. His residence in the township has been continuous, and his son Bernard and his daughter DeVee Anderson have farm homes in the Geneva area.

Two other boys who came to Chelsea township with Charley were Andrew Holt, who made his home with the Jimmy Robinsons across the road from the Wilson Miller farm, and John Cuneo, who stayed with the Cash Bumgarners, just west of the Fred Fox home, until he was 17. For many years he wrote, from his new home in San Francisco, appreciative letters to Mrs. Flora Bumgarner, who spent her latter years in Geneva. (She died in 1961 at the age of 100 years and 4 months.) "Andy" Holt, now deceased, married a Geneva girl, Marcella Flory, and served as lineman and finally as manager of the Geneva Telephone Company until the family's removal to York. Mrs. Robinson made her home with the Holts for many years.

—Wilma (Mrs. O. E.) Nelson

TOWNERS Wilson TWP GRESSEA MADISON TWP R-2-W

Comparison Wilson TWP GRESSEA MADISON TWP R-2-W

Lower Wilson Wilson Two Double State of the Comparison of the



Photo from Fred Fox Taken about 1929 Chelsea Church with Rev. Ray Hinkle standing near the church.



Photo from Fred Fox Rev. E. H. Pontius



Photo from Mrs. Melvin Anderson Five horse hitch on two bottom plow



Photo from Fred Fo Harvesting on Fred Fox farm in 1914. James Delaney on binder.



Photo from O. E. Nelson Oscar Nelson and his 1926 Buick



 ${\bf Photo~from~Mrs.~Melvin~Anderson} \\ {\bf Wheat~shocks}$



"Topsy" Driving horse and buggy owned by Charles Weiss. taken in 1906.



Photo from Mrs. Melvin Anderson Loads of Prairie Hay

Exeter Township

Exeter township, in the northeastern corner of Fillmore County, is bounded on the north by York and on the east by Saline counties, on the south by Liberty and on the west by Fairmont townships. The land is fairly level. Indian Creek rises in Sec. 18 and flows northeast into Sec. 4, where it turns eastward to Saline County and later joins the West Blue River. A branch of Johnson Creek rises near the southern edge, in Sec. 33, and flows northeastward, zigzagging through Secs. 23, 24, and 25 toward Saline County and the Blue. In 1966, the township had 33 irrigation wells in operation.

The township is crossed from east to west, just south of its center (through Secs. 24 to 19), by the main line (Chicago-Denver) of the Burlington R.R., closely paralleled by U. S. Highway 6. The Fremont-Superior branch of the Northwestern R.R. slants across it from the northeast to the southeast corner (Secs. 1 to 31). Both railroads pass through

the village of Exeter.

Warren Woodard was the first settler in what later became known as Exeter township, settling here in 1870.

A special meeting of the County Board was held on May 27, 1871, for the purpose of dividing the county into Commissioner Districts. The county was to be divided into three districts by two east-and-west lines; thus each district would be 8 by 24 miles. The north district was to be designated No. 1, the middle district No. 2, and the south district No. 3. This put Exeter township into District No. 1.

On February 6, 1872, Orlando Porter was appointed road overseer for Precinct 1. On March 16, 1872, Warren Woodard was appointed to the same post, as Mr. Porter

failed to qualify.

A meeting of the county board on November 9, 1872, decided that the county should be divided into precincts six miles square. The date for the reorganization was set for Tuesday, January 7, 1873. The meeting for Exeter township

Exeter Township Homestead Map

William C. Anderson	John W. Atkinson				Henry Hammond	Bennett Erwin				B. H. Bruner	Thoma	dson	Joseph S. Proven- cher			
John S. Dart											Reuben Lawren	E. ce	Harvey Wright			
Willard C. Woodworth	Charles H. Dorathy			5	Michael Sweeley	Lemue. Meac	т.			Luana C. Barnes Widow	Nathan Babco	ck j	Jacob F. Shelbol		1	
		John R. Drommond		Parkerson Ryan				Frank E. Graves	James Bivins		-		1	William Miner	Darius J. Cook	
	 	T. C Chambe	rlain	Lawrence Ryan		,		James A. Luff	James G. Haner	1	·	i ii		Aaron Lindley	Henry Dykes	Albert Miner
James F. Keller	Calvin P. Angell									James N Sewell	John Abigal Tanner Rice					
Benjamin F. Stilley	Henry Wiszmann			7	Sc	16 hool Land -				John Tanner					- 11	
		S. A. Shelly	Wm. Wright	James W. Dolan				John P. Kettlewell	Harrison A Sturdevant	Rice		Rice		Margaret Malcolm James Alexander	Samuel Dailey Wm. Skadder	
	19	John N. Dayton	Wm. N. Babcock	Horace G. Smith		- 21		Edward D, Young	Minor orphan children of Sturdevant	ļ		i :		Alenzo Rice	-	
John E. Ingham	Job Hathaway				Warren Woodard	Nesbitt Taylor	Thomas B		Samuel E. Root	Fritz Metzger	Peter Becker	James Treaster		Johann Becker	Nichola Baker	
				29					27						25	
Willard D. Paine	Elmer G. Wilcox				Charles Boyce	Caleb J. Litch	Lester S. Litch (Heirs)			Orson Hager		Abram T Hager				
		Joseph I Dickson		Henry C, Young			i	James W. Eller	Daniel S. Williams							
	1	Alfred Dickson Oliver I Chapma		John T. Borland		33	-,	James Horne	Richard Taylor		3	,		Sch	lool Land	

was to be held in Exeter. Officials at this time were: Judges of the election, C. J. Chamberlain and Harvey Wright; clerks of the election, Warren Woodard and Michael Sweeley; justice of the peace, N. S. Babcock; constable, William Miner; road supervisor, O. P. Chapman.

Exeter township included the following school districts: Nos. 20, 22, 23, 24, and parts of 94 and 95. School terms averaged from 2½ months to 4 months; teachers' salaries ranged between \$25 and \$40 per month. Homestead maps in the county clerk's office show that most homesteads ranged from 40 to 160 acres.



Photo from Mrs. T. D. Clarke

School District No. 22, taken during the 1896-97 school year. Top row, left to right: Nanny Brown, Minnie Menke, Anna Becker, Herb Decker, Ollie Dumpert, Herb Jensen, Frank Brown, Homer Decker, Lenard Courtwright, Anna Menke, Ora Rice, Mary Becker. Middle row: Ed Becker, Clarence Brown, Emma Long, Barbara Dumpert, Helen Becker, (behind) Frank Becker, Sophia Menke, Tracy Becker, Minnie Becker, Charley Trauger. Front row: Paul Becker, Nettie Long, Jessie Long, Lizzie Becker, Ann Alexander, Rosie Dumpert, Dora Becker, Lettie Rice, Alice Long, Louise Becker, Lottie Cook, Katie Knox (teacher).



Photo from Mrs. Guy Brown Sr.

District 95 in 1912-1913

In the picture (not listed in order) are: Walter Howarth, John Barbur, Sam Eurich, John Krejci, Mary Krejci, Mildred Dyer, Anna Sladek, Lizzie Eurich, Mable Rose, Emily Horne, Mamie Ruhl, Willie Miller, John Miller, Lloyd Steyer, Frankie Krejci, Gladys Dyer, Lucile Barbur, Ruth Horne, Lillie Miller, Harold Dyer, Frankie Loukota, Willie Eurich, Dorothy Horne, Mamie Loukota, Clara Miller, Tommie Rose, Vera Miller, Jimmie Loukota, Ernest Dyer, Alice Miller, Hazel Sircin, Willie Sircin, Julia Rose.

FAMILIES

There is more, much more, to be said about our early pioneers and homesteaders than can be compressed into any one book. Much time, thought, and effort have gone into preparing this material. It could not exist even in this condensed form without the *Pioneer Stories* of the Rev. G. R. McKeith (collected for the purpose of recognizing pioneers' Memorial Day, June 14, 1914, and published at Exeter in 1915), and the articles entitled "Pioneering in Nebraska," written by Miss Elula Smith (later Mrs. Ben Smrha) about her father, Dr. H. G. Smith. Many of our elder citizens have given much of their time and effort in trying to help piece together the events and stories of pioneer life. Many things would not be recorded on paper if it were not for their memories of the past.

Mrs. T. D. Clarke was asked to compile the history of Exeter, and had started on this, but her health forced her to give it up. Some of our information is from her previous efforts. Mr. and Mrs. N. F. Whitmore, the Lesher Blouchs, the Frank Cravens, and the T. D. Clarkes were most helpful with information, and with clippings and pictures from past years. Dr. Claire Owens, although 90 years old and blind, was extremely helpful because of her remarkable memory. Another source of information was the cemeteries, with dates, spellings, and sometimes causes of death.



Photo from L. T. Blouch

Rev. George R. McKeith, pastor of Baptist Church from 1913 to 1917 and author of *Pioneer Stories* of Fillmore County.

Without doubt, there are many things that could have been written down, given time and space. We wish to take this opportunity to thank all who helped in any way with the compiling of this material. If anyone in our community, or their pioneer ancestors, has been left out, the omissions were certainly not intended.

-Mrs. Robert E. Trauger (Exeter township) and Mrs. Roy Stubbendick (Exeter town)

Mr. and Mrs. James Alexander left Aberdeen, Scotland, for Exeter, Nebraska on June 22, 1872, and eventually arrived at Pacific Junction, Iowa. Here they were left on the open platform without a home or shelter; but they had some beds and rugs, and, the weather being fine, they unpacked these and spread them carefully on the platform. With the starry heavens for a covering they passed the night. They next made their way to Lincoln, and on to Exeter. The party consisted of six people: Mr. and Mrs. Alexander, two small boys, a grandmother, and a girl who looked after the children. Mr. J. K. Barbur happened to be near by when they got off the train and offered to take them to their destination.

Mr. Alexander bought the rights of a homestead—the S $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 24—for \$50 and sent the necessary filing fee of \$14 to Lincoln. It was not until some time afterward that he learned that the money had been used for some other purpose. This meant that, in the eyes of the government, the land was not his, and he had to pay the \$14 a second time. Such was the character of some of the people with whom the pioneers had to deal.

They rented an old soddy on the adjoining land for \$1 a month. The house had but one room, and the roof leaked so badly that they had to use umbrellas in rainy weather. The floor, being dug out, made a good receptacle for water, and was at times more like a duck-pond than anything else. Probably the rent charged was sufficient for such a house.

During their sojourn in this house they were called upon to celebrate their first July Fourth. Mr. and Mrs. James Horne, having heard of the new arrivals from Scotland, and being themselves of the same hardy stock, naturally felt inclined to make a friendly visit, and made the Fourth of July the occasion. With their two children, they called upon the Alexanders, who at this time had no stove, chairs, table, or bedspreads, but they had brought with them some of the Scotch oatmeal, the real thing, that makes their people sturdy and strong, and some tea and cheese. With these and other good things they celebrated their independence.

They made a dugout on their own land for a home. This also had only one room, wherein they had to make the most of little space in this broad land. The capacity and furnishings of this house were at times taxed to their utmost potential. On one occasion when Mr. Alexander was attending prayer meeting in town, seven wayfaring men presented themselves asking for a night's shelter. Here indeed was a task, but with the hospitality of the West, these men were taken in and sheltered, being made as comfortable as possible on the

floor, while the members of the household slept on boxes.

They were often brought to church services by Harry Sturdevant, a charter member of the Exeter Congregational Church. He had a good measure of the old-time religion in his soul; in fact, it was "pressed down and running over," and so great was the overflow that the journey by wagon was made lively with his singing. So real was his experience of the love of Christ which sought outward expression that where he failed in voice volume, he made up with his feet on the bottom of the wagon.



Photo from Laura Pflug

Exeter Cowboy Band

On June 18, 1885, the Exeter Band attended the National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic in Portland, Maine. The Exeter Band was chosen as State Department Band of the G.A.R. in competition with the bands from Fairbury and Steele City. The band had fine silver-plated instruments and owned about \$1,500 worth of property, including a band wagon.

Mr. John C. Bonnell, an officer of the Burlington system, served as publicity man throughout the trip. As he gave the boys the title of "Cowboy Band from Nebraska," large and curious crowds were always in evidence.

The members making this trip were: John Lewis, Will Lewis, Charles Dorthy, M. L. Mead, J. W. Eller, Charles Bartlett, Sam Logan, Joe Hassler, Charles Parish, Henry Fisher, J. C. Wilson, Charles Pflug, and Job Hathaway, all of Exeter. In order to fill in some of the parts where the regular members were unable to go, Silas B. Camp and Ed Dempster of Geneva and D. C. Moffatt and Charles Finnacle of Friend were taken. Frank Osborne, a colored man, was taken along as property man.

The officers were Joe Hassler, president, J. C. Wilson, leader, and Job Hathaway, drum major. Circled, Colonel Nathan S. Babcock.

T. C. Allen came to Exeter in 1891, bringing his family a year later. During the next few years he worked at various jobs. He had always been interested in road improvement and so he began selling road equipment such as graders and steel tiling, which had just been invented and manufactured by Lee Arnett of Lincoln.

During the off season Mr. Allen often drove Dr. McCleary's team when the doctor made calls. On these trips over all kinds of roads, he conceived the idea of using some kind of heavy drag that could be pulled over the roads as they dried so that the ruts could be filled and not be allowed to get deeper and deeper.

Dr. McCleary supplied the money to construct the first drag. They decided to pass the idea along to the whole township and their drag was used for many years. Thus Mr. Allen was responsible for the first "Good Roads" development in the state of Nebraska.

Colonel Nathan S. Babcock came from New York State in 1871. As the railroad ended at Lincoln, he made his way to Seward, and walked on from there, looking for a family near Indian Creek. Nothing like a house could be seen anywhere, until at last he noticed a stovepipe sticking out of the ground on a little hill. Closer investigation revealed a dugout, with one of the best rooms he ever saw. He afterward made his way to Exeter, where the only house visible was the one built by Warren Woodard. While crossing the country, he noticed the horses acting rather queer; then a man mysteriously put in an appearance, asking the colonel what he was after. He assured the man that he was after no mischief, when the man said, "But you have your horses on my house!"

When the colonel brought Mrs. Babcock to their claim — the E $^{1}\!/_{2}$ of the SW $^{1}\!/_{4}$ and the W $^{1}\!/_{2}$ of the SE $^{1}\!/_{4}$ of Sec. 2, T8, R1W—they came in a wagon without springs, and their seats were wooden chairs, less than an ideal outfit for a 50-mile trip over the prairies. Their household goods did not arrive for a week after, so they built a fire on the hillside. They cooked their meat on the end of a stick, boiled the potatoes in a teakettle, and for plates used shingles, which, with the companionship of silverware, provided quite a contrast in dining experience.

Out here, there was nothing to distinguish weekdays from Sundays. They lost track of the Sabbath for a time, and were no doubt glad when they once more knew one day from another. Rattlesnakes were numerous then; no less than 36 were caught in one day. Colonel Babcock had several rattles to show for his efforts.

Talking of the grasshopper plague, they told of having given to a brother back East an account of the numbers and destruction of the invading host. The brother wrote back, "That is a good fish story you have out West." They finally sent him a small piece of soil about an inch square so he might see the grasshoppers hatch out, instructions being given as to what to do. That small piece of earth contained so many young grasshoppers that they never more doubted the western story.

Mrs. L. T. Blouch gave Bess Streeter Aldrich this portrait of the colonel:

"Colonel Babcock, who served in the Civil War, was an aristocratic-looking man who always wore his full uniform on Decoration Day, and rode his beautiful black horse with much dignity. What a thrill we children used to have when we visited their home and saw his sword and all of the rest of an officer's regalia hanging on the wall. He even took the sword down and let us take it in our hands."

Mr. and Mrs. William N. Babcock came to Nebraska in the fall of 1870, remaining through the winter in Ashland. Mr. Babcock took up a claim on the E ½ of the SW ¼ of Sec. 20 in February, 1871, and they moved onto it in May. This land adjoined that of Dr. Smith, part of which is now included in the town.

Their first shelter was a tent made of four sheets sewed together, a home not destined for long life. Within their first week here, they were favored with a typical Nebraska storm, which just after midnight brought down their tent so completely that it could not be re-erected. They made their way barefoot toward the Smith home, being assured they were on the right land by locating a furrow which the doctor had struck around his claim. They made what runs were possible with each lightning flash, finally reaching the dwelling. They were welcomed gladly by Mrs. Smith, who told them she could well guess what had happened. The following day revealed the sad condition of their belongings. The men went that same morning to secure lumber for a more permanent home, during the building of which the Babcocks stayed with the Smiths.

During their brief tent life, Mrs. Smith was their first caller. Making her way across the prairie, she had to wade through a ditch. On reaching the other side, she found a large rattlesnake in the grass. She knew that the Babcocks slept on the ground and wondered if she should tell Mrs. Babcock about it. Thinking that if a snake were near her home, she would like to know about it, she decided to tell her. But Mrs. Babcock just laughed and didn't seem frightened.

Mrs. Babcock had to go to the Woodard home, a mile away, whenever she needed a pail of water. Since Mr. Woodard was also the postmaster, she also had to go there for the mail. During one of those trips, she was overtaken by a storm and had to wade through water waist deep to get home.

On another occasion when she was caught in a storm, and sought shelter in the Smith home, she caught Mrs. Smith going through one of her wet-weather experiences. She was sitting on the bed with her umbrella up and with basins placed around the floor,

catching the water.

The Babcock sod house was 12' x 14', and in this building she taught the first local school, having as pupils three Woodard children, Charles Smith, and her own boy, Fred. In this small home, too, she provided lodgings one stormy night for a family of eight persons

who were passing through.

It was not uncommon for men to get lost on the prairie. Perhaps the women were not so venturesome, and yet they must have been courageous at times. One dark night when Mr. Babcock was away from home, a man knocked at the door, saying he was lost, and could they direct him to Dr. Smith's house. Nothing daunted, Mrs. Babcock went out and put the man on the right trail, telling him to look for the lighted lantern which the doctor kept burning, and he would surely find the place.

Mrs. Babcock helped Dr. Smith when a nurse was needed. A Mr. Sheldon asked Dr. Smith for help and as a result Mr. Sheldon came to get Mrs. Babcock. They set out in the wagon. After traveling for some time they realized that they were lost; then they saw a house which the doctor thought was his home, but to his disappointment it was not. They went on again, and at last they saw a light. On approaching the house, they had found the right one.

One Sunday morning an Indian looked through the Babcocks' window, and before any information could be given, he was in the house. On looking around the room, he saw a scarlet shawl. Then he commenced saying some sort of rigmarole, the only word she could understand being "papoose." So, taking it for granted that he wanted the shawl for his baby, Mrs. Babcock let him have it. Then he admired Mr. Babcock's cap, and, anxious to get rid of him, they gave him the cap also. The Indian was delighted and left.

The Texas cattle passed over the prairie, often 15,000 in a

The Texas cattle passed over the prairie, often 15,000 in a herd. One day a cow strayed from the herd and was seen by the Dolan boys. They, of course, could not undertake catching her alone, so they sought the help of Woodard, Babcock, and Smith. These set out after the cow — no easy task, for if the cow saw them first, it was sure to go for them. Sure enough, the cow saw them and was about to make a rush at them, when they all fired, bringing it to the ground. The cow was quartered, each man getting a quarter of beef. As the Dolans had no place to store their share, it was packed away with Babcocks' beef on the sod roof. All went well until about midnight, when wolves scented the meat and would have had it, for they had already brought it to the ground. If they had not been able to frighten the beasts away, the beef would have been lost.



Photo from Edith Kranda

Main Street looking north. Dr. O. P. Baker's Dentist and Real Estate office is the second building on left. He practiced in Exeter from 1880 to 1912.

Dr. O. P. Baker first visited this neighborhood with "Joe" Shaub, who at that time was a grain buyer along the Burlington. After visiting for some time, the doctor found it necessary to go 2 miles out of town to the Willard Payne place to eat and sleep. During that visit he bought a quarter section of land one mile east of town and then went back to Morrison, Illinois, where he told the merchants about Exeter. As a result of his description of this country and its possibilities, he sold five farms without the buyers' ever coming to look at them.

In February, 1874, he built a house on the farm he had bought. But a neighbor thought the country was getting too thickly settled, so he sold his 80 acres and left for the West. In September, 1874, he brought a party of 275 land-seekers from Illinois, and, even though that was the grasshopper year, he sold five farms in one day. Again, in 1875, he brought out a party numbering 265 persons and succeeded in locating 230 people within 16 miles of Exeter.

Dr. Baker advertised these Nebraska lands extensively and, though at that time a nonresident, he did a great deal to help to settle this country. He moved to Exeter in 1880, and thereafter made

his home here. Being a dentist, he became the first dentist to practice in Exeter. He continued to practice here about 32 years; then, owing to failing eyesight, he sold out. He had worked continuously in his profession for 46 years.

—From "Pioneer Stories"

John T. Borland had made his way from Crete to Pleasant Hill, where he met James Horne, who persuaded him to come out nearer his place. He accepted the help offered, and Mr. Horne helped him to locate on the SE ¼ of Sec. 32, one mile west of his own homestead. Mr. Borland returned to Illinois, and, making everything ready, he and his wife, with their goods, returned with a mule team, commencing the journey on April 17, and reaching the homestead on May 12, 1871.

On reaching their homestead, Mr. Borland made a kind of gypsy tent or cabin, by making walls of sod on which he placed the top boards of the wagon box, and the wagon cover. In this home, the size of an ordinary wagon box—containing one room which did service as kitchen, bedroom, and living room—they lived nearly three months. The cookstove stood at the entrance, with the cooking plate just inside the tent, the back part and pipe outside. Their straw bed covered the floor, and of course was on the ground, but was carried outdoors in the daytime to give moving room.

The first July Fourth celebration held in the neighborhood was at Turkey Creek, in 1871, when a Rev. Beggs of the Free Methodist

Church gave the address.

Mr. Borland soon erected a sod house with a shingle roof and a board floor, and plastered throughout with a mixture of lime and sand. Being some 3 miles from the railroad, they were not visited by either Indians or adventurers, but they had their share of visits from coyotes, which relieved them of their chickens and turkeys. They also lost small pigs in the blizzard of 1873. Otherwise they were comfortably fixed.

An interesting note on the grasshoppers was the way Nature freed the country of the pest. Their visit left millions of eggs in the soil, waiting to be hatched in the spring. But that next spring was varied. After a few warm days helped to hatch out the young grasshoppers, there would come a cold rain or snow, which killed them off. This happened several times until hardly a grasshopper remained

nained.

Mr. Borland had the honor of bringing the first load of lumber into the town of Exeter. It was secured at Crete, and used in the Smith & Dolan store building.

James W. Dolan left Corning, Iowa, February 1, 1871, and reached Lincoln the same day. After learning, at the U. S. Land Office at Lincoln, that the first location where there was plenty of land was Fillmore County, he took the stage to Crete, with John F. Evans, an old army comrade. From Crete, they walked westward, following the grade stakes of the railroad. He reached the Warren Woodard home in the evening and spent the night. The following day, Mr. Woodard took him to look at government lands in the vicinity. He selected the NE ¼ of Sec. 20. He then walked back to Crete, took the stage back to Lincoln, filed his claim, and pre-empted, in the name of his brother William, the NW ¼ of the same section. This was about February 20, 1871.

He went to Lincoln on April 13 and bought lumber to build a house. It was hauled from Lincoln to the land in one wagon load with one team of horses. The total cost of the lumber, with one window, and one door, was \$43. The hauling cost \$12. The house measured 12' x 14'. He used siding boards for the roof, as being less expensive than shingles. The hardware cost \$3. A young Englishman, William Haimes, the principal local builder at the time, assisted in the building. The entire cost of the house was approximately \$65. A box bed of boards was built in one corner of the room. An empty nail keg and a soap box were used for seats. These and a small board table made up the furniture.

Black crickets were plentiful during the summer and entered the house in large numbers. They enjoyed roosting on and chewing Mr. Dolan's clothes during the night. It was his custom before dressing in the morning to give the clothes a good shaking to dislodge the crickets. One morning while performing this daily stunt, he disturbed a good-sized rattlesnake that had entered through the floor during the night by way of an accommodating knot-hole. The snake replied to the shaking of the clothes with his rattle-box, so Mr. Snake had to be disposed of the first thing that morning. Rattlesnakes were not as numerous as crickets, but there were too many for comfort.

James Dolan's farming outfit consisted of one yoke of oxen, costing \$135; one secondhand farm wagon, \$70; one 12" breaking plow, \$29; and a limited supply of hand tools, spade, axe, hammer,

He and his brother William dug a well 40-odd feet deep, and broke up 30 acres of prairie on their claims during the spring. This was mostly planted to corn, which did fairly well and helped to inspire confidence, there being at that time much discouragement and doubt as to the country's future. Some hay was cut in the slough, using an Armstrong Mower.1 The corn was also cut and saved with the hay for feed. All this came in handy the following winter. During the summer, while farm work was slack, he sometimes walked to Crete, where he worked at unloading lumber, for which he was paid \$1 per carload. During the summer of 1871, the B. & M. R.R. was extended from Lincoln to Hastings.

In the fall of 1871, the new town having been located, Mr. Dolan disposed of his farm apparatus and engaged in merchandising with Dr. Smith as a partner. He later abandoned storekeeping to enter the lumber and grain business, erecting one of the best

modern grain elevators on the Burlington line.

On October 4, 1876, he married Ida M. Hager, the second daughter of A. T. Hager, another early pioneer and the first treasurer of Fillmore County. In the spring of 1880, Mr. Dolan disposed of his business interests in Exeter, and moved to Indianola, Nebraska, where he engaged in banking and real estate. There he served on the school board for 24 years and was a state Senator from the district in the sessions of 1883 and 1885. In October, 1904, he moved to Los Angeles, California. —From "Pioneer Stories"

R. H. Downey, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Downey, came to Nebraska with his parents in May, 1871. His father homesteaded the W 1/2 of the NE 1/4 of Sec. 2, Liberty township, in June, 1871, and he lived with his parents in a sod



Photo from Robert Trauger

The Last Remaining Soddy in Fillmore County This home was built by Robert Herman Downey, and he and his family moved into it on November 5, 1889. The walls were three feet thick, plastered on the interior. They boasted a wood floor, and enjoyed a most comfortable home in all seasons. This picture was taken in 1912, shortly before it was torn down.



Photo from Robert Trauger Mr. and Mrs. Robert Herman Downey, about 1933.





Photo from Robert Trauger

John Downey (left) and William Downey (right) in 1890. William was the father of R. H. Downey, John of Sherm Downey.

He married Anna Coates in 1886 and moved to Council Bluffs. Iowa, where he worked for two years in a railway freight house. While they lived there, a daughter, Pearl Anna (Steyer) was born (October 18, 1887). Feeling that the city was not the best place to raise a family, he returned to Exeter. Their first son, Chester H., was born on October 14, 1889, while they were briefly living with his parents.

Then, on the SW 1/4 of Sec. 36, Exeter, near his father's place, they built in 1889 a large two-room sod house, with walls 3' thick, plastered walls and ceilings, and a wooden floor. This sod house saw the births of another daughter, Ethel Leona (Trauger), on September 10, 1891, and another son, Harold L. Downey, on July 2, 1894. The family lived in the soddy until 1904, when they moved into a newly constructed frame house.

In addition to farming, Mr. Downey engaged in well digging. He was first in partnership with his uncle, Chester Stephens, but later bought out Mr. Stephens's share of the business. The sod house, which had the distinction of being the last in Fillmore

County, was not torn down until 1916.2

Chester Downey married Edith Kail in 1923, and Harold Downey married Louise Diekman in 1918. Harold had one son, Glenn L. Downey, who now teaches at the University of Nebraska. Glenn's children are Robert Alan, Linda, and Barbara.

R. H. Downey retired and moved into Exeter in 1923. Mrs. Downey passed away in 1934, and Mr. Downey in 1937. Their children, all now deceased, passed all their lives in the Exeter community. Pearl Anna, who married Elzie Steyer, died on June 16, 1953; Chester died on May 16, 1966; Ethel Leona, who married Charley Trauger, died on October 5, 1964; and the youngest, Harold, died on June 20, 1963.

Sherman R. Downey was born on December 27, 1867, in Mendon, Michigan. He came to Nebraska with his parents around 1875. They made the journey in a covered wagon pulled by a team of horses. Mr. Downey remembered that one of the horses was completely blind, and that his parents had started the trip alone, but were joined by six different families along the way.



Sherm Downey in 1902

Mr. Downey vividly recalled the loss of the family dog on the trip. When they discovered that the dog was missing they turned back for 2 miles to where some men were working on the road. The men declared they knew nothing of the whereabouts of the dog, but Mr. Downey always felt they had taken him, as he had seen his pet just before they encountered the road crew.

During the six-week journey, and until they obtained suitable shelter here, John Downey and his sons slept under the wagon, and the womenfolk slept inside. They settled on the SE corner of Exeter township and built a sod house which had a sod roof for three years until it was replaced by a shingle roof. Mr. Downey declared that a "soddy" made a quiet, comfortable home.

He recalled an interesting experience with their oxen. While still residing in Michigan, his father had taken Sherm to the mill to grind some sacks of wheat. They had stopped the yoke of oxen near the mill pond and had just stepped into the mill when they heard a big "splash!" Investigating, they found the oxen swimming in the cool, refreshing pond with the overturned wagon floating along behind. The sacks of wheat were salvaged and dried, and another trip was made to the mill to obtain the much-needed flour.

Sherm Downey was married to Edith Dreher in 1904. They moved to Glenwood Springs, Colorado, where he was in the hardware business for two years. Returning to Exeter in 1906, Mr.

1 Younger readers may not at once recognize this as a joking name for a scythe.-Editor's note.

² Mrs. Harold Downey, who supplied the Downey birth and death dates, tells us that the "Old Downey House" pictured in G. R. Mc-Keith's *Pioneer Stories* with his account of William Downey (with whose Liberty township story we seem also to have placed it) was -Editor's note. in fact the R. H. Downey soddy described here.

Downey and Bert Dyer opened the Dyer & Downey Implement

While they lived in Exeter, two daughters were born: Dorothy (now Mrs. Wayne Alvord, of Dallas, Texas) and Geraldine (Mrs. Edward Fitzgerald, of Lincoln). In 1928, they moved to Grafton, where Mr. Downey operated an implement business during most of the next 40 years. In recent years, Mr. and Mrs. Downey divided their residence between Grafton and Memory Manor in Exeter. They celebrated their 63rd wedding anniversary in 1967, and on December 27, 1967, he celebrated his 100th birthday. The couple had three grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Mr. Downey passed away in Exeter on February 2, 1968.

Thomas B. Farmer came to this area from Bloomington. Indiana. In October, 1870, he arrived in the neighborhood in company with Warren Woodard. He spent the winter near the Blue River in the Sutton and Grafton district, trapping mink and beaver, and living on grouse, rabbits, and turkeys shot in the neighborhood. Here, with a companion, he had made a small dugout, but was often alone for several weeks at a time. Once, while he was alone, he came back from looking over his traps and found near by several hundred Omaha Indians. He was naturally somewhat alarmed. But these Indians were out hunting and fishing, with no intention of injuring anyone. He saw them go into camp, after which a few would come around and look into his shack, but in no way interfered with his property.

In the spring of 1871, he homesteaded on his claim, the E 1/2 of the NE 1/4 of Sec. 28, and built a sod house. Later he returned to Bloomington, where he was married on March 18, 1873. When his bride came to Exeter, she expected to see a town, and wondered why she was dropped off the train onto the open prairie. "Why am I left here?" she asked. "Where is the depot?" Then she found, to her amazement, that the town of Exeter consisted of one building,

the store recently erected by Messrs. Smith & Dolan.

In due course the grasshoppers relieved them of five acres of corn, besides their garden truck, and the mosquito netting from the windows

They became the parents of Frank Farmer, born in 1874, who became a nationally known singer. Mabel Farmer Manning, born in 1876, a lifelong resident of Exeter, was a great help in the compila-

tion of this history. She passed away on October 15, 1967.

Henry Hammond, a native of Indiana, went first to Illinois, and then came to Nebraska. In the fall of 1870 he filed on the NW 1/4 of Sec. 4. He then went to Nebraska City, where he worked during the winter, and settled on his homestead in the spring of 1871, having only a yoke of oxen and \$5 in money with which to start the new life. Like most of the pioneers, he met with many reasons to be discouraged; but he held on with faith and confidence, until, finally successful, he raised a worthy family and lived to an honored old age, the satisfactory results of years of honest toil.

About one year after he homesteaded, he was married to Catherine (Kate) Drummond, sister to "Pat" Drummond; her sister Margaret married Michael Sweeley. These all homesteaded about

the same time and in the same neighborhood.

In the winter after their marriage they received word that Mrs. Hammond's sister was very sick, so they set out that same night to do what they could. After staying overnight, they returned the next morning to find that their house had been robbed and burned, and they were left with nothing but what they had on. There was abundant evidence that the house had been robbed as well as burned, for several half-burned articles were found in parts of the room out of their proper places, and the fire had been so clever as to completely burn (?) several good-sized chunks of meat, without completely burning the wooden cask in which they were packed. The culprits were never definitely located, though it was never thought likely that anyone had come all the way from Florida, or any other outlandish place, to commit such a deed upon the struggling poor.

Because of this misfortune many people advised them to give up and return East, but they decided to remain and fight out life's battle on the claim. During the winter he would haul firewood for 8 or 10 miles, often in the severest weather with no warmer clothing than his overalls. Their daily fare was mostly milk and corn meal, varied only by a change to corn meal and milk. They were thankful for having a good cow for whose contributions to their bill of fare they were very grateful. Mr. Hammond, who was a Civil War veteran, said he thought "The Army rations in wartime were never more limited than in this case."

During the great blizzard, many people in the neighborhood were suffering with the measles, and Mr. Hammond lay ill. The snow found its way inside through a crack in the north side of the roof, gently and imperceptibly, yet definitely accumulating. By morning there was a wagonload on the floor, the beds were covered, and quite a quantity of snow water lay in the hollow places of the sick man's pillow. The fires were out and no firewood could be

found anywhere. Mrs. Hammond never felt more hopeless or discouraged in her life. But soon Michael Sweeley came to the rescue with his arms full of kindling, and helped in other ways. He afterward had to dig through five feet of snow to recover the Hammond

The grasshoppers were just as considerate with the Hammond farm as with any in the district. After their visit, 60 rows of corn stalks contained only half a bushel of corn. A remarkable thing regarding the grasshoppers was their surviving a heavy hailstorm. Although they lay so thick everywhere, and the hail came so thick and fast that it could be scooped up by the pail full, it seemed that the hail had not killed the grasshopper. But it was not a "survival of the fittest."



Photo from Leo Gibbons

Henry G. Hammond's barber shop in 1895. (Notice the photographer in the mirror.) Henry G. Hammond was the son of Henry Hammond.

Job Hathaway, Willard Payne, and Elmer Wilcox came together, in the spring of 1871, from Greenwood, Illinois, in covered wagons. They settled on Sec. 30, one mile west of town. Mr. Hathaway filed on the NE 1/4, Mr. Wilcox on the SE 1/4, and Mr. Payne on the SW 1/4; the remaining NW quarter was taken later by the Rev. John E. Ingham. In due course Mrs. Hathaway came West and was met by her husband in Lincoln.

Mr. Payne built a frame house in the middle of the section so that a portion of it was on each claim, and they all lived in the same house, each homesteader having his particular corner. In this way they met the requirements of the law by each man sleeping on his own land. This house ultimately became the property of Mr.

Hathaway.

On one occasion a man came up to the house on horseback and asked for a night's lodging. Mr. Hathaway was away and Mrs. Hathaway did not like the idea of having the strange man in the house, so she asked Mr. Payne what he thought. After looking the man over, he decided it would be all right, as the man looked respectable. The man slept with Mr. Payne, and some time during the night, Mrs. Hathaway was alarmed to hear that Payne was receiving a good pounding and shouting to the man, "You donned old fool!" The fight seemed so real that Mrs. Hathaway jumped through the bedroom window, and was making her way to the neighbors' when she heard the call, "Come back, lady! Come back, It appeared that the stranger had been dreaming about a fight, and in his sleep had commenced to let fly at Mr. Payne. Needless to say, the man was full of apologies, but it hindered Mrs. Hathaway from ever again taking a stranger into the house.

Charles Hole came to America in 1870, from West Pennard, near the famous city of Glastonbury, Somersetshire, England. After spending some time in Boston and in Detroit, he made his way to Exeter in April, 1872, and homesteaded 80 acres 3 miles S of town, the W 1/2 of the SE 1/4 of Sec. 6, Liberty township.

Mr. Hole married and settled in Exeter in 1878. Then, in 1881, he built a home here, and in 1915 they had the distinction of being the only residents to have lived in one house for so long a time.

Mr. Hole had come to Exeter with a Frank Appleby, a carpenter, who died at the Warren Woodard residence in the spring of 1872. He was the first white man to be buried in this vicinity.

James Horne was a native of Low Coats, Lanarkshire, Scotland. After working as an engineer on the Caledonian Railway, he came to America in 1853, where he found work with the Hudson River R.R. (later the New York Central). In 1858, he visited his old home and there married Jane (or Jenny) Miller, and the couple soon came to America. They settled for the next 11 years in Poughkeepsie, New York,



Photo from James Barbur Mr. and Mrs. James Horne.

where he continued working for the railroad. They then moved to Illinois, where he worked for the Illinois Central R.R. for some five years. He had already bought 90 acres of Illinois land; so that when the "Western Fever" broke out, he was a ready candidate for infection. He first had a look at Canada; that did not seem promising, so he visited Kansas. That did not impress him, either; but Nebraska did.

He returned to Illinois, sold out his interests there, and home-steaded 3 miles SE of Exeter, on the E ½ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 4, Liberty township. There he built a sod house. A few years later they moved across the road into Exeter township (the SW ¼ of Sec. 34) and built a frame house, living there until his death in 1902. It was told of him that when he began farming, his knowledge of the art was so slight that he had to ask how to unhitch a horse; but he became a successful and highly respected farmer.

The children of James and Jane Horne were Will, George, Agnes, James, Francis, Lillian, John, and Ben.

After his father's death, James F. Horne in 1903 moved his family onto the home farm in Sec. 34. He had married Edith Alice Howarth on November 8, 1900. To this union five children were

born: Emily, Ruth, Dorothy, Richard, and Esther.

James and Edith Horne replaced the frame house in 1924 with a new one and lived there until his death on July 14, 1934. His son Richard and mother Edith Horne and daughter Esther lived together here until Richard married Doris Hetherington on October 12, 1940. To this union were born Frances, James Richard, and John Carl. They lived on this farm until Richard's death on November 1, 1961.

Richard's son James and wife Sandra, sons James Talbot and Richard Ray, are now living on the Horne farm. A Horne family

has been living on this farm for 97 years.

Jane Horne passed away in January, 1916, and Edith Howarth Horne on February 24, 1952.

Frank Augustus Lewis was born in Piper City, Illinois, September 1, 1873. He came with his parents to a farm near Exeter as a young lad and attended school in District 22.

On January 30, 1895, he was married to Minnie Frances Trauger. They lived at Hebron for several years, then moved to Exeter where Mr. Lewis began working for the Smith Index Factory. He remained with this firm for 53 years, retiring in 1955. He was a lifelong member of the Congregational Church, serving as treasurer for 20 years, and as deacon for 43 years.

Mrs. Frank Lewis was interested in civic affairs and served as Worthy Matron of Exeter Chapter 256, O.E.S. She was also a member and Regent of Stephen Bennett Chapter of the D.A.R.

Mr. Lewis passed away on February 3, 1959, and Mrs. Lewis on November 12, 1961.

—Mrs. Robert E. Trauger



Photo from Hazel Jorgenson Will Buck, son of early Exeter settler F. M. Buck; father of Mrs. Mable Coates. Mr. Frank Lewis' mother was a sister of Will Buck.



Photo from Mrs. Ted Jorgenson Mrs. Will Buck

Mr. and Mrs. Caleb J. Litch homesteaded here in 1870 on the E $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 28. They built the onestoried part of their frame home in 1870. The two-story addition, in 1872, made their home one of the first two-storied homes with an open stairway, and other such fine details, to be found in the county. They had one son, Lester, who in young manhood homesteaded the W $\frac{1}{2}$ of the same quarter (where Gerald and Margaret Becker now live). He died as a young man.

C. J. Litch passed away in the early '80's. Charley Trauger's father, M. E. Trauger, had a story about Mr. Litch's passing. Mrs. Litch had asked Mr. Trauger to take a telegram to the depot, wiring for a former minister to come and conduct the burial services. The message said that Mr. Trauger would meet the train and bring the minister to the Litch home. Somewhere along the line, the message got mixed up, for when the minister got off the train, he showed great shock. He finally stammered, "Why, Mr. Trauger, I came here to conduct your funeral, and was under the impression I was to be

met by Mr. Litch!"

Both Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Litch lie buried in the center of the Exeter Cemetery, and their graves were at one time surrounded by four large pine trees.

This farm is owned today by Mr. Charley Trauger, and the original family house is still standing.

—Mrs. Robert E. Trauger

Lemuel T. Mead, a native of Fort Branch, Gibson County, Indiana, came to Nebraska in March, 1870, bringing his wife and little son; his two daughters followed later. They settled in Lincoln, where he worked as a wagon-wright for David Bowen, the first blacksmith in Lincoln, Mr. Mead being the first man to do the wood work.

In the fall of that year, he came out West and secured a claim, but returned to Lincoln and worked there till spring. They came to the homestead—the SE ½ of Sec. 4—in March, 1871. Their first house was one room, 18' square. Their first barn was a tent, and during the severe winter their cow's mouth was badly frozen, but with careful nursing it recovered from that misfortune. Mr. Mead recalled one year when it was so cold that he harvested his wheat

wearing an overcoat.

On one occasion they gave dinner to some Pawnee Indians. When it came to the helping of themselves with the butter, they simply took a chunk in their hands and ate it clear. There was no need for knives or spoons; "they were in no degree fastidious," (as Rev. McKeith phrases it), "but were evidently quite original,

fingers having been made long before spoons.'

A neighbor named Wright, with his wife and children, were once going to town with Colonel Babcock, who provided the conveyance. When about half a mile from Mead's home they were overtaken by a fearful windstorm. None of the party could remember just what happened; but they found themselves lying in Mead's wheat field. The wagon box in which they were sitting was carried off the running gear and tipped over into the field. The party was badly bruised but not seriously hurt. Because of the apparent damage to the young wheat, Colonel Babcock suggested payment, but Mr. Mead said, "We will wait until harvest and see how things turn out." The incident became a standing joke with Mr. Mead, as he always said he had better wheat on that particular spot than anywhere else in the field.

Mr. Mead built a sod workshop and did a great deal of wagon

repairing and other work for several years.

One of the most pleasing sights in those early days was the prairie mirage, when, in the clear weather of early morning, they would often see that wonderful illusion which often proved such a snare and disappointment to weary travelers on the plains. This optical phenomenon would sometimes give the effect of a vast lake, or a river with trees growing on its banks, or a great city. At other times it would come more as the "Looming," when distant unseen objects would be observed in the sky, the town of Fairmont being reflected in that way. People used to say, "The air is rarefied." So one morning the Mead boy went out of doors, and upon seeing the mirage, ran into the house saying, "Oh, Mama, the air is glorified this morning!"

Mr. Mead lived on the homestead 11 years, then moved to Exeter, where he died on April 17, 1901, in his 75th year. Mrs. Mead lived until February 8, 1913, and was 82 when she passed away. They both joined the United Brethren Church held in the Redfern schoolhouse. Mr. Mead remained a member until his death. Mrs. Mead was a

member of the Methodist church when she died.

Mrs. Mead's genealogy showed her family related to General Robert E. Lee, and Mr. Mead's traced a relationship to Sgt. John Prichett, a soldier of the Revolution.

Louis Menke came from Germany and homesteaded along the Blue River north of Exeter about 1870. He married Anna Becker and they made their first home in a soddy. At that time they got supplies from Crete. In 1873, they moved, with one child, to a farmstead 2½ miles E of Exeter and built a log cabin. This was their home for several years before they built a frame house. The old house and the new both stood until 1940.



Photo from Lillian Barkmei The Louis Menke Log House in 1939

The Menkes raised nine children on this farm. They were Rica (Dumpert), Mary (Jansen), John, Anna (Barkmeier), Minnie (Hammond), Sophia (Mathews), Lena (Mathews), Henry, and William. Two children died in infancy. The father, Louis, died in 1902. Mrs. Menke continued to live on the farm until 1917, when she moved into Eventer.

William H. Miner came from Illinois in 1870 and located on the NW ¼ of Sec. 12. He lived through the first summer in a tent, which became a well-known landmark and a place of call for many of the incoming travelers. The countryside was one vast open plain without a shade tree, and wild animals appreciated even the shade offered by tall grass or weeds. Once, an antelope was enjoying what shade a large sunflower could give, when Mr. Miner crept up and shot it. In that easy way he secured a supply of good meat.

At one time Mr. Miner had gone to Weeping Water for a load of corn and was within 3 miles of Cordova when he became lost in a snowstorm. He dug his way into a snowbank and crawled in with his blankets, staying there until morning, the horses having to make the

best of the situation.

An Irishman named Pat McMann, whom he had known in Illinois, was passing over the plains to Colorado and called upon him. When he left Mr. Miner, he gave him some nails as payment for his hospitality. These nails were kept in a tub and Mr. Miner, needing some one day, put his hand into the tub and grabbed a rattlesnake.

Jacob Pflug at the age of 16 joined the Union Army and

Jacob Pflug at the age of 16 joined the Union Army and was mustered out in May, 1865. He married Hannah Sayles of Lyons, New York, on November 6, 1865, and on November 7 set out for Nebraska. From St. Louis he rode on a load of goods to Nebraska City. In April, 1866, Mrs. Pflug took a train to St. Louis and then came by boat to Nebraska City.

They lived in Nebraska City until 1868 and then moved to Lincoln, where he and his brother had a grocery store at what is now 10th and P Streets. There were no walks in Lincoln in those days and many times the streets were very muddy. They attended the ceremony of the laying of the cornerstone of the first State Capitol. A picture of their small son, the late Jake C. Pflug of Ohiowa, and one of the small son of Lincoln's Mayor William T. Donovan were placed in the cornerstone.

In 1871, he took a 160-acre claim about 5 miles NW of Exeter (the SE ½ of Sec. 12, Fairmont township) and for a number of years clerked in Dr. H. G. Smith's general store. Many times he walked the 5 miles to and from work. The general store included dry goods, groceries, hardware, implements, and the post office and real-estate office.

In 1881, he sold the farm to Philip Schaefer, Sr., whose son, Philip Schaefer, Jr., still owns it. He then engaged in the implement business in Exeter from 1882 until 1909, when he sold out and retired

on account of failing health.

Mr. Pflug was prominent in the early history of Exeter and held many places of trust. He was for many years a member of the school board and also superintendent of the Methodist Sunday School. He was a member of Lincoln Lodge No. 19 of the Masons for more than 50 years. Mrs. Pflug was the first Oracle of the Royal Neighbors when it was organized in Exeter.

Mrs. Pflug were the parents of 14 children. Mrs. Pflug died November 30, 1908, and Mr. Pflug on August 20, 1923.

-Mrs. Herbert Howarth

John Redfern came with his parents from England, and lived for some time in Peoria, Illinois. He came to Nebraska in 1870 and lived for three years near Nebraska City. When they arrived at the Missouri River, it was frozen over, but

as the ice was too thin to be safe for heavy traffic, they walked across it in knee-deep snow, and had to wait some time for their goods. They settled on land 3 miles N of Exeter, and had a family of seven children to care for, and only one span of mules with which to start life in the new land. They built a sod house and passed through the usual pioneer hardships, surviving hail, blizzards, and grasshoppers. One day one of the boys went around the house to pick up what he thought was a piece of black cloth; to his surprise, he found it to be a rattlesnake.

Their house was open for preaching services and Sunday School, Mr. Redfern being a great Sunday School worker. "Father" Green would preach there,—an old man who was one of the best known and most respected characters in the district.

John Redfern died on November 17, 1901.

Alonzo Rice, a native of New York State, came to La Platte (formerly Lorimer Mills), Sarpy County, from Pennsylvania. After working there for about three years he came with his brother, Palmer, and secured a claim on Sec. 14, the S ½ of the SE ¼, July 30, 1870. The only thing visible on the prairie when he located was a tent used as a home by "Bill" Miner; there were no houses, and the nearest thing to a tree was a sunflower.

To find one's bearings when traveling over the prairie, one had to look for some stovepipe sticking out of the ground—the sure sign of a dwelling—and then ask their township, section number, and pro-

bably the lay of the land, north, south, east, and west.

The nearest town and post office was Camden (which old maps show to have been 3 or 4 miles S of the present Milford). Alonzo Rice set out early one morning to go there. It was his custom when traveling in the dark to note the location of a certain star, but after he had gone some distance, somehow the stars got changed around and he lost his "lucky star" or "star of hope." After continuing for some time, still believing he was going in the right direction, he recognized, as the dawn came, not far away his own house. He guessed that the horses, realizing the aimlessness of the effort, had made tracks for home.

During those early days, Mr. Rice would go to Hebron, on the Little Blue, and work in the stone and lime quarries. The sections west—Sec. 15, and a school section—remained open prairie for some time after he located, and antelope grazed there in the summer time. Mr. Rice remembered the coming of James Alexander. The canny Scot, "brand-new fro' the land o' heather," had failed to locate his land (the NW ¼ of Sec. 24) and Mr. Rice had to help him find it. The growing corn on the Rice farm was a source of wonder to the stranger, as it was so unlike anything he had seen growing in the old country.



Photo from T. D. Clarke

Mr. and Mrs. Palmer Rice, taken on their Golden Wedding anniverversary in August, 1914, at their farm home 2\%4 miles NE of Exeter.

Palmer Rice, brother of Alonzo, worked for 5½ years as a day laborer in the lumber woods of Pennsylvania, and in 1869 moved to New York State. He and his wife decided that their chances for success there were too limited, and he secured a covered wagon and three horses and started westward. They set out on April 25, 1870, in spite of snow that had fallen in the forenoon, and made their way to Nebraska. For many miles along the road, as they passed through the villages, the covered wagon was such an unusual sight that the youngsters called them Gypsies, and in some places they were not allowed to camp. The journey to La Platte took seven weeks.

After staying a few days with Alonzo at La Platte, Palmer Rice took the ferry across the Platte River, rode on a construction train to within 7 miles of Lincoln, and then walked to the city. There he inquired about homesteads, and found many people ready to offer information, and especially willing to help them locate in their particular county. The description of this area seemed especially favorable. When he returned to La Platte, the brothers decided to come out and secure homesteads.

They made their way to Camden, an old freighting town, where they met Fred Roper, a land agent, who brought them into the country to see the land. Liking this neighborhood, they decided to locate here, selecting the S ½ of Sec. 14. They stayed overnight with the Miner brothers, who at that time lived in a tent, and the next day had dinner with Schuyler ("Elkhorn") Jones. They located the land with Mr. Roper's help. He counted the horse's steps from Miner's corner, and then looked for the next stake, which at once gave them the situation of the land. It was decided that Palmer would take the S 1/2 of the SW 1/4, brother-in-law John Tanner the N 1/2 of the SW 1/4, brother Alonzo the S ½ of the SE ¼ and their mother the N ½ of the SE ¼.

Then they returned to La Platte, but came out again to the

claims in the fall and put up a sod house, made some hay, and again went back to La Platte for the winter. In January, 1871, Palmer Rice helped to move Mr. Tanner onto his claim, and on the return trip had his first experience of Nebraska's cold weather. Not being prepared for it, he had a hard time to keep going. If he had in the least missed

his way, he would have frozen to death.

He made another trip in March, bringing Mrs. Rice and part of his goods. The sod house in the meantime had shrunken so much that the winds had no difficulty in finding their way into the house, especially at the eaves. Because of the cold house, Mrs. Rice was ill

for some time afterward.

Palmer made another trip to La Platte in April to help move the other relatives to their homesteads. At Camden, he saw Dr. H. G. Smith, with a load of lumber, nails, etc., stuck fast in the Blue River. He went at once to the doctor's assistance. With some chains and ropes, they braced the wagon to bear the strain and then hitched the extra horses and soon had the wagon on dry land.

The loss of corn crops to the grasshoppers in 1874 induced many people to return East, but the Rices decided to remain. Fuel would be scarce that winter. So they set up the stove in the cellar and lived there, using cornstalks for cooking and heating. One day when Mr. Rice was in the field cutting cornstalks, some Indians came by the house. Mrs. Rice, although alone, was not afraid, as she knew

their dog would keep the Indians at bay, and he did.

Many of the local farmers were afraid to sow their wheat the spring after the grasshoppers' visit. It was feared that the large number of their eggs left in the soil would make a wheat crop impossible. But Mr. Rice, believing that there was no great risk, secured extra land, farmers supplying the wheat and accepting his note. The average yield was 12 bushels an acre. The first sales brought 55 cents a bushel, but the price rose to \$1.30 a bushel. Mr. Rice had made a good speculation.

During his first year here, this district was under the jurisdiction of Saline County, and settlers paid their taxes there. Then Fillmore County was organized. Mr. Rice sat on the first election board for four townships, the meeting being held in James Horne's yard. Mr.

Horne was away buffalo hunting at the time.

The Tanners' four-year-old son, Alonzo, was buried on the Palmer Rice farm.

Mrs. Jennie Roper Rogers ("Aunt Jennie") was born Jennie Abbott, in El Paso, Illinois, the daughter of English parents. She had two brothers, Sam and Frank. Their father spent much time and money trying to prove that he was heir to a wealthy estate in England. Jennie attended Mt. Carroll Seminary at Mt. Carroll, Illinois, where "Frank" Hubbard was also a student and the two girls formed a friendship which lasted many years. Jennie was invited to a nutting party at the Hubbard home and there met the elder brother Elbert, who later became a well-known author. A girl who later became Mrs. A. J. Sawyer of Lincoln attended Mt. Carroll, and she and Jennie became fast and in fact lifelong friends.

Jennie taught school at least one term. Then at 19 years of age she was married (after prayer meeting) to Schouler Roper. The newlyweds, with Sam, Frank, and their mother, came to Nebraska in 1873, in a covered wagon, crossing the Missouri River on a ferry at Brownville. They took up a claim near Exeter, where there was not much to be seen but prairie grass which billowed in the wind "like the waves of the sea." This was a tree claim and many fine old cottonwoods which Jennie helped to plant are still standing. They lived in a sod house. Jennie and her mother fought a prairie fire one day when the men were away and saved their buildings. One vivid memory was of holding a lantern all night while the men tried to remove a horse from the well into which it had fallen. A little son, Charles, was born the following summer. He later became the founder of the Roper Mortuary in Lincoln. At times it was necessary to place an umbrella over the baby to keep him dry when the rain came through the roof. One time, soon after the birth of one of the children, a pig wandered in at the unscreened door when Jennie was left alone for a



Photo from Cora Rogers Merritt L. Rogers and wife (Jennie Roper Rogers)

few minutes, and tipped over the slop pail. At Christmas time the Ropers and Farmers took their two babies (Charles and Frank) and journeyed to Crete to have the babies' pictures taken. They had wrapped them up so snugly that both babies broke out with the heat.

They later moved into a frame house. One day when Jennie and the baby were at home alone the Indians came, tried the doors (which were locked), and snooped all around the place. She had seen them coming and hid herself and the baby in the box stairway, trying to amuse the baby, so he would not cry, by counting the buttons on the front of her dress. Her husband did not get home until dark, but the Indians had long since gone.

They moved to town, bought a little home, and went into the restaurant business. Three more sons were born, one of them dying in infancy. Then the husband died, leaving Jennie with three little sons and a mortgage on the house. Sympathetic friends made up a purse and paid off the mortgage. Then the young widow went to work to support her family, doing dressmaking, nursing, and whatever there was to do. There were no widows' pensions in those days.

Her two brothers, one of them married, had gone on to western Nebraska, and settled on a ranch on Pumpkin Creek, near Bayard. Two children were born to Sam and his wife. Soon after Jennie became a widow a call for help came from the brothers. Sam and his wife were stricken with typhoid. Jennie went and did what she could, but both died, leaving two little orphans, a boy and a girl. Jennie brought them home with her; then her own children took the fever and her son Carl died. Relatives of her husband, living in Illinois, offered to take her brother's two children to raise, if she would bring them there. After reaching Illinois her brother's little boy became ill with the fever and died.

She returned to Exeter and again took up the struggle to make a living for herself and two sons. There was always time for work in the little Baptist Church, of which she was a loyal member for years. There was also always time to give many babies their first bath, nurse the sick, and help prepare the dead for burial. She became Aunt Jennie, Aunt Jen, or Auntie Roper to most of the children in town.

In 1905, Jennie Roper married my father, Merritt L. Rogers, and became our second mother. The Rogers family came to Nebraska from Illinois about 10 years later than the Ropers. There was a triple wedding ceremony when my father and Aunt Jennie, and my two sisters, Ruth and Bessie, were married. Ruth and Clint went to Chicago to live, and Bessie and Valentine Babcock went to western Nebraska. Mother said, "One flew east and one flew west and one flew over the cuckoo's nest!" I was the one that flew over the cuckoo's

Among the pioneer experiences which I have heard her tell many times were the grasshopper invasions, and the great blizzards. During one blizzard Frank and Sam Abbott were caught in the barn for 24 hours, drinking the cow's milk for food. And the grasshoppers were so numerous that they covered the sun.

When sewing for a living, she made wedding dresses for brides, then tucked in a bouquet for the bride, fashioned from bits of fern leaf and pink begonia blossoms from her own window. Many times she was called on to dress the bride and then attend the wedding as an

honored guest.

Before coming to Nebraska she and her mother sent to friends in England for enough black silk to make a dress for each. These friends cut several lengths for the skirts and sewed them together, thus evading the duty. Jennie wore her dress just twice before leaving Illinois, and when they wanted to tree-claim their Nebraska land she sold her silk dress for \$20. (They needed \$14.) She also brought 20 yards of newly woven rag carpet and sold that when they were in need of cash. She said, "Oh, yes, I sold everything I had which was salable," when I jokingly said, "But you did not sell the baby," her eyes twinkled and she replied, "No, everyone had babies.

My father was employed in the Tag Factory and earned very good wages for those years. He and Mother took great pride and joy in remodeling the home, installing a hot-water heating plant, water, electricity, and a telephone, and the front porch which they always enjoyed so much. It was a real satisfaction to both to reserve onetenth of their income to use in generous support of their church and Baptist missions, besides many other good causes.

This has not been written with any idea that it was a literary gem, but only as an effort to record a few of the events in a very outstanding life of a pioneer woman of great character and courage. Bess Streeter Aldrich was particularly interested in the story about the silk dresses.

—Julia Rogers Blouch

Parker Ryan was born at Waterloo, New York, and afterward lived in Peoria County, Illinois. He came to Nebraska with his brother Lawrence Ryan, Pat Drummond, Michael Sweeley, and Henry Hammond in 1870. They filed for homesteads in that year, Parker Ryan taking the NE ¼ of Sec. 8, Lawrence Ryan, the SE ¼ and Pat Drummond, the NW ¼ of the same section. Michael Sweeley settled on the SW ¼ of Sec. 4, and Henry Hammond on the NW ¼. Mrs. Ryan and the children left Peoria in March, 1871. They stopped a week at Afton, Iowa, where Mr. Ryan met them and brought them on to Lincoln. They completed their journey here in wagons, arriving at the homestead on April 6, 1871. For some time after they arrived, they camped, using the wagon beds for sleeping.

Five days after their arrival, the two Ryans, Drummond, and Sweeley set out for Lincoln to obtain goods and machinery. On the next Sunday morning, bright sunshine promised a pleasant day, but before long clouds began to gather and rain began to fall, followed by a snowstorm which developed into a blizzard. Mrs. Ryan and her small children sought shelter in the wagon. A brother-in-law, Oliver Johns, nailed some carpet over the wagon front to help matters. Then he, with his wife and mother-in-law, went into the other wagon. Luckily, they had a barrel of crackers with them, although there was nothing eatable in the wagon with Mrs. Ryan and the children. The storm increased in fury and continued incessantly until two o'clock Tuesday afternoon, during which time the mother and little girl had nothing to eat or drink, and the baby just what was possible from a mother receiving no nourishment. Mr. Johns had come close a time or two to ask after them but was unable in the storm to render any help. When the storm abated, he speedily sought to relieve them. He found everything frozen so hard that an ax was necessary to cut a way into the wagon. Soon after they had been liberated and a fire started, the other men returned. They had gone no farther than Walnut Creek, where they were stopped by the storm. They had anxiously returned to see if their people were still alive. Their cattle were lost in this storm, but were afterward found near Turkey Creek. A homesteader down there had taken them in and fed them.

Shortly after the Ryans went into their new home—a house of one room, 14' x 16'—they had to entertain three gentlemen who were traveling through the country. Their visitors were a judge and two lawyers from Omaha. The accommodations were very scanty. It was decided that the judge and one lawyer would sleep on the table, while the other lawyer would sleep on a rug under the table. Matters would not have been bad, considering these limitations, had not the judge fallen off the table onto the lower lawyer, who happened to be lying at the time partly out from beneath the table, in an unconscious search for a softer place.

The homesteaders had to live close to their lands in those days, or someone was sure to jump their claim. When the Ryans were away once visiting friends in the East, on the return journey they met several men with two wagons. In conversation, the men told them they were on their way to jump a claim, giving the number and location of the land, which just happened to be the Ryans' homestead. Here was an opportunity to show tact and wisdom and to prove that "a closed mouth makes a wise head." They journeyed on, but when near the homestead the Ryans managed to get ahead of the other wagons, and had their wagon full length on the claim in time to retain it before the men realized what had happened.

The SW ¼ of Sec. 10 was jumped five times, three men losing their lives as a result. Two men were killed outright, and the third died of his wounds. Two of these men fought and killed each other, one being shot dead just as he ran his pitchfork through the other. Each lost his life as well as the claim.

One day two men rode up to the house and were asking particulars regarding the country when they noticed the well-marked trails of the Texas cattle. One of them asked the women if they were Indian trails! One woman, answering in fun, said they were. They looked rather frightened. They next asked if the women ever saw any Indians, and were told, "Yes, lots of them; we saw 20 Indians not long ago." (They did not add that they were seen in the company of a government agent.) This proved to be enough information for the men, for they turned their horses and fled back eastward, and, though the hat of one of them blew off, they did not stop to pick it up.

While the men were digging a well at Mr. Drummond's, one

morning Mrs. Ryan decided to go along. The screen door had been left open, and when they returned about 11 P.M. Mrs. Ryan thought she heard an unusual sound as she placed the baby in bed. Mr. Ryan assured her that he could not hear anything. After much reassurance she finally got into bed, only to jump out again declaring that she heard a sound like a muffled rattle. Her husband told her to get back into bed, and commented, "It's just like a woman to be frightened of the noise of a cricket." The next morning they were up early, Mr. Ryan returning to the well digging, and Mrs. Ryan getting ready to do the family wash. While she was busy about the boiler, the little girl came running out of the house screaming and shouting, "A snake! a snake!" On going inside, Mrs. Ryan saw the snake sitting on the bed "rattling to beat the band." It had been lying there between some quilts that were between the bed and the mattress, and right in the place where she had slept all night. When the bedclothes were pulled off for the washing, the snake had been liberated and made its way to the top of the bed. With a hoe, Mrs. Ryan attacked the snake. It would stand on its tail and strike at her, then coil and strike again. She managed to keep clear of its blows, and after great difficulty and determination she succeeded in laying the reptile low. Needless to say, there was no washing done that day. When Mr. Ryan returned he found his wife in a sad state; she could not speak, and he was at a loss to know what had happened. At last she struggled to the door and out to where the dead snake lay, and with one desperate effort, she said, "There's your cricket!" There was no going to bed that night, as everything in the house was turned out to make sure there were no more snakes around, for even the brave man had become weak at the thought of having slept in the bed with a rattlesnake. It had eight rattles and a button (nearly nine years old) and measured nearly three feet long.

The first crop on the Ryan farm was a five-acre field of oats, which seemed in every way satisfactory. As this was to be the first thrashed in the neighborhood, everyone was curious to know how it would turn out. On the thrashing day, the homesteaders gathered from far and near, bringing not only their horses to pull the wagons, but their other stock as well, as there would be no one home to feed and water them. Although the house was only one room, 60 men, women, and children were provided with dinner, and every horse had a taste of oats. The horses were tied up wherever possible around the place, and for each group a bushel basket of oats was thrown on the ground. This necessarily meant some amount of waste. When the thrashing was over, there being no money, the thrashers received 10 or 12 bushels of oats for helping with the work. Then, when Mr. Ryan came into the house, Mrs. Ryan wanted to know how he would take care of his oats, as he had no granary. "Oh! I think I can manage to take care of my share of the oats all right," he replied. Undoubtedly he could, for the quantity of oats that fell to his lot after his whole-sale feeding of his neighbors' horses measured half a bushel.

Charles C. Smith was born at Junius, New York, in 1866 and came to Nebraska with his parents in 1871. After high school, he went to Doane College at Crete and received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1887. Mr. Smith retained a lifelong interest in the college. He was secretary of the board of directors (1901-1915) and chairman of the board (1914-1915 and 1925-1934). He also earned a master's degree at Eastman Business College at Poughkeepsie, New York, in 1888.

As a young man Mr. Smith filed on a homestead near Grover, Colorado, and was cashier of a bank at Grover for a short time. He came back to Exeter and worked in his father's bank. It was then that he saw the need of the bookkeeping aid which he invented and began manufacturing in 1896.

In 1911, Mr. Smith was elected to the Nebraska Senate and served one term. He was a member of the National Stationers Association, director of Associated Industries of Nebraska (of which he was president in 1921), director of the Nebraska War Work Council of the Y.M.C.A. during World War I, state director of the Y.M.C.A. from 1917 to 1923, president of Exeter American Red Cross from



Photo from John Bacon Charles C. Smith

¹ This seems to be an error in McKeith's account. The blizzard described is clearly the blizzard of Easter Sunday, April 13, 1873. Parker Ryan's granddaughter, Mrs. Edith Hild of Lincoln, tells us that the arrival date (April 6, 1871) is correct, but that her grandfather was caught in the Easter blizzard of 1873 while bound not for Lincoln, but for Nebraska City.—Editor.

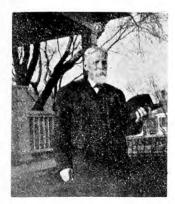




Photo from Mrs. Armin Bender Dr. and Mrs. H. G. Smith

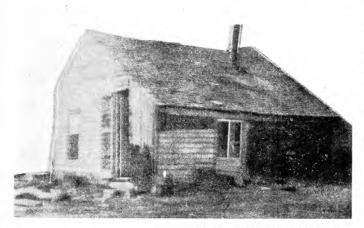


Photo from McKeith's "Pioneer Stories"
The first house built in Exeter, where Dr. H. G. Smith opened the first store.

1916, and director of the Nebraska Conference of Congregational Churches from 1918.

Mr. Smith married in 1892. He and his wife reared four adopted daughters. Mrs. Smith died in 1930, and Mr. Smith in December, 1951.

Dr. Horace G. Smith first arrived in Nebraska on January 1, 1871. He walked from Lincoln to Milford and then on to the future site of Exeter. He spent his first night here in the home of Warren ("Boss") Woodard. Then the only house in the neighborhood, this was on the NW ¼ of Sec. 28, ½ mile E of present Exeter, now the home of Leo Charles Becker.

While looking for a place to locate, he noticed survey stakes along a prospective line of the coming Burlington & Missouri River R.R., and another line of stakes about $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 miles to the south. Wanting to be near the railroad, he selected a homestead close to each line of the survey. He knew that either site might be taken before he reached the land office at Lincoln, and that the railroad would not be laid in both places. Upon his arrival in Lincoln, he found that the south location had already been claimed, and so he filed on the north location, the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 20. Fortunately, the northern survey line was the one chosen by the railroad.

Dr. Smith returned to Allegan, Michigan, to bring his wife and son, Charles, to the homestead. They came to Lincoln by rail, and from there west, they came in a heavily loaded lumber wagon. The first night was spent in a one-room farmhouse. It had two beds, one occupied by the owners, the other by the three Smiths. Two hired men slept on the floor. The next day, in attempting to go through a draw filled with water, they got stuck. Dr. Smith walked out on the wagon tongue, unhitched the horses, and rode out to get help. He borrowed a wagon, drove into the stream, and with the help of another man, little by little, they unloaded the stranded wagon until it could be pulled out. That night they spent in the vicinity of Dorchester. The third day, they arrived at their homestead. A house of boards and battens was built in such a way as to be ideal for a dry climate, but in about three weeks the rain came. Mrs. Smith found an umbrella too small to cover the bed and had to resort to carpets to keep the sleeping place dry. The house was the last one west at that time, the next being 22 miles away.

It was in this house with one room, two windows, and a door, that they entertained the gentleman sent out by the railroad to help the Town Company lay out the town. Since the nearest doctor was 26 miles away, Dr. Smith was called upon to care for the sick and continued to do so until another doctor located here.

Provisions were scarce in the immediate neighborhood. Dr. Smith had brought a good supply for their own use, but was not willing to sell out of his little stock. As a result, he decided to order a stock of goods from Chicago and open a store. An 8'x 16' room was added to the house, and two dry-goods boxes served as counters. The stock of goods arrived at Lincoln, but when he arrived there he did not have the money to pay the freight. However, an old friend, hearing of his plight, loaned him the money. So he gathered his goods and returned home and was able to meet the demands of the neighborhood through the little store. Soon Dr. Smith and James Dolan built a larger store, for general merchandise.

The Smith house was once visited by two Indians from a railroad car that had been switched off near the homestead. As was their custom, they stealthily drew near the house, looked through the windows, and then walked in. Mrs. Smith was scared at first. One of the Indians was carrying a bow about four feet across, and a quiver of arrows. After a serving of fried cakes and other eatables, they went away satisfied.

During a thunderstorm, a flash of lightning made its way down the chimney and melted the ends off the wires stretched across the store, strung with different kinds of tinware. The commotion can well be imagined. Fortunately the lightning missed the kerosene can and passed through the corner of the floor without causing a fire.

The first child born in Exeter was Anna E. Smith, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Smith. Their son Charles later made the family name widely known by inventing the adjustable tag. The first tag factory, founded by Charles C. Smith and located in Exeter, was known as the "Adjustable Index Factory."

When the post office was relocated in Exeter, Dr. Smith was appointed the first postmaster at a salary of \$10 a year.





Photo from Nesbit F. Whitmore Mr. and Mrs. Nesbit Taylor

Nesbit Taylor and his wife Mary Singer Taylor and family came to Exeter from their home near Covington, Kentucky, in 1871. The family consisted of two boys and four girls: John Edwin, Richard Lewis, Lucy Mary, Eliza Jane, Laura Ann, and Emma Alice Taylor. Nesbit Taylor bought land between the T. B. Farmer and the Warren Woodard homesteads—the W ½ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 28.

Mr. Taylor built a house and barn, planted many trees and shrubs, and in other ways improved the land. Many of the old settlers have told of the good times the local young people had at the Taylor home in the early days. The Nesbit Taylor family brought Southern hospitality with them and made every visitor welcome.

Mr. Taylor later bought an acreage adjoining the west edge of Exeter and moved to town. Part of this acreage became the Nesbit Taylor Addition to Exeter. Edward (or Ed) Taylor, Nesbit's oldest son, was street commissioner and sexton of the Exeter Cemetery for many years.

Two daughters married sons of early settlers, Charles Paine and William Dillon; another married Frank T. Whitmore, a young watch-maker from Boston, Massachusetts. He had a jewelry store in Exeter from 1880 until 1886. Edward Taylor brought his wife with him from Kentucky; Richard L. married Ella Barnes, daughter of another early settler.

The Nesbit Taylor family experienced all the hardships and tribulations common to the early settlers.

Nesbit Taylor, his wife Mary Singer Taylor, John Edwin Taylor and his wife Nancy Taylor, Lucy Taylor Whitmore, and Ella Barnes Taylor are buried in the Exeter Cemetery. —Nesbit F. Whitmore



Photo from L. T. Blouch

J. W. Taylor, born in Winchester, Va., in 1834, served in the Union Army and was held prisoner in Andersonville Prison. He lived in Indiana after the war until he came to Harvard, Nebraska, in 1888. He moved to Exeter the same year and started a grocery store. His daughter married T. S. Blouch.

W. H. Taylor was born in County Tyrone, Ireland, a country which has given birth to some of the finest pioneers. Mr. Taylor left Ireland at the age of four on a sailing vessel. The voyage lasted eight weeks, during which time most of the family, including himself, had smallpox. They first settled in Canada, in Carleton County, Ontario, in what was then an unbroken wilderness. Wild animals and Indians were their nearest and most numerous neighbors. Cutting down trees and clearing off the logs and brush was the bane of pioneer life in Canada; it was heartbreaking work compared with anything the early settlers in Nebraska had to contend with.

At 16, he left Canada and went to Seneca County, New York, an old settled county whose well-tilled fields, fine orchards, and beautiful lakes made it one of the most delightful counties in the world. So he became (as he said) a citizen of the United States by choice and not because of accident of birth; and such people ought to, and usually do, make pretty good citizens. Mr. Taylor said, "People, like cabbages, improve by transplanting, and transplanted brawn and brain rule the world." He was proud of having always been an asset to the country, and never a liability.

After working by the month on a farm and chopping wood, a chum and he took a wild-goose chase west, working as they went, till they crossed the Mississippi at Quincy, Illinois, their objective point being Leavenworth, Kansas. From there, they expected to drive mules across the plains to Salt Lake. They went no farther, and within a year Mr. Taylor was glad to find himself back in Seneca County, with a very poor opinion of the West.

Having saved some money, he turned his attention to securing a better education. Being blessed with a retentive memory, he soon mastered the common branches, and then obtained a higher education in the Waterloo Academy, the Fort Edward Institute, and the Oswego Normal School, teaching school between times.

It was during this time that Dr. Smith, who had known Mr. Taylor from the time of his coming from Canada, came out to Nebraska. Mr. Taylor came to Exeter on the last day of April, 1873,

and on the first day of May had a half interest in the firm of "Smith & Taylor." He was too late to get a homestead, but though he missed the homestead, he lost no time prospecting, and therefore suffered none of the privations some of the homesteaders went through.

Mrs. Smith kindly provided him with accommodations in their home, the only dwelling on the town site, with one room and a leanto, but he had a comfortable bed on a couch behind the cookstove.

J. W. Dolan had just opened a lumber yard but had his office in the store. He slept on the counter and opened the store in the mornings.

Mr. Taylor was, from the first, delighted with the gently rolling prairie, and never was homesick. It rained the first night of his arrival, and came very near keeping it up for the traditional 40 days and 40 nights, till the whole country was nearly flooded. In going from the Smith home to the store he would take off his boots and socks, roll up his pants, and wade through the water.

Some things in the new country seemed strange to him, such as the frequency and velocity of the windstorms and the amount of electricity in the atmosphere. He had not been long in the store, when a man came and asked if he had seen a stray railroad car go by. It seems that a boxcar with open brakes had been left on the siding at Fairmont, and the wind blew it onto the main track, and it went clear to Dorchester before it was headed off. In the usual thunderstorms of those days there was one continuous glare of lightning, and peal after peal of thunder.

Something that surprised him in the pioneers of Exeter was the ability of some who, from appearances, did not seem to have much. The county, towns, and school districts had all just been organized, and someone had to fill the offices, so nearly every boy or man held an office of some kind. One was justice of the peace, another notary

public, another constable, and some school officers.

A person appointed to an office, even if he had no special qualifications, but was of the right stuff, could soon qualify. These people had qualified, and he felt cheap to hear them using legal terms of which he knew nothing. Here is one illustration: "When the settlers began to break up the land it was difficult to prevent 'movers' from driving across the plowed ground. Two miles east of Exeter, a very youthfullooking boy from Maine was plowing with a team consisting of one ox and a cow. He was barefooted and arrayed in an old straw hat, a cotton shirt, and an old pair of overalls, held by one suspender with nails as buttons, when on the west side of his plowing, he saw a 'mover' drive onto the east side. He stopped his team and hailed the man. 'Didn't you see my sign telling you to keep the section line?' 'Yes! but this don't do any harm, and I'm in a hurry.' To which he replied, 'I don't care if you are, I can't have people driving over my plowed land, and I want you to go right back and keep the section line!' 'Guess I won't go back now,' said the man. 'Well, if you don't, I'll have you arrested when you get to Exeter!' 'Where is Exeter?' the man asked in surprise. 'Don't you see that building off to the west?' 'That's Exeter, is it? Then who will arrest me?' 'I will, I am the constable!' Then, with a look of contempt, the man replied, 'A hof a looking constable you are! Get up, ponies!' And he drove on and was not arrested, but no one enjoyed the joke more than Fred Sturdevant, the boy constable.'

Mr. Taylor missed the April storm of 1873, but had some experiences with Nebraska blizzards. One he did not forget was this: A party was being held at Walter Doyel's, 5 or 6 miles NE of Exeter, to which Mr. Dolan and he had been invited. It had been a beautiful, mild January day, and they hired a team and lumber wagon and started a little after dark for the house. Mr. Taylor did not know the way, but Dolan claimed he did. A gentle snow from the south began to fall soon after they started, and soon the wind whipped around to the north, and they were in a blizzard. They were soon chilled to the marrow, and could hardly see the horses, and got completely lost somewhere along Indian Creek. He said some uncomplimentary things to Dolan for taking him out on the prairie and losing him, but, finding that Dolan's hands got cold and numb, he took the lines and drove he knew not where; but after what seemed a long time, he spied a light and drove straight for it-and it happened to be Doyel's house. He often wondered how many may have been lost either in a forest or on a prairie. A person loses all sense of direction, hardly knows 'straight up," and can scarcely believe his own eyes when he comes to familiar scenes. Having been lost in a wood in Canada with night coming on, with bears, wolves, and panthers at no great distance, and again after dark in a blizzard on Nebraska's plains, he could testify that it is not an agreeable sensation.

But "Sweet is pleasure after pain." When they got into the house, the dance was in full swing, and the discomforts of the trip were soon forgotten, especially as this was where he first met the girl who became the lifelong partner of his joys and sorrows.

He had once an Indian scare. In the fall of 1873, the first telegraph operator had come to the office, and he was a man who never made anything less in the telling. On Saturday the news came over the wire, that the Indians were on the "war path" and had committed some depredations and had killed a few homesteaders about 75 or 100 miles west of Exeter, and the agent said they were headed this way.

On Sunday evening, the agent and most of the men folk were scattered in different directions, visiting their best girls. Will Dolan and Taylor were the only able-bodied men left in town, the rest being women and children. As they were eating supper by lamplight, the talk drifted mostly to Indians and the probability of their coming to

Exeter. The Indian stories went around the table, when all at once a big Indian stuck his face right against the window. Then he, with his squaw, came in and said, "How!" and, shaking hands all around, asked for something to eat. They naturally thought these two were the forerunners of the whole tribe, so Dolan and Taylor went out to reconnoiter. Every dog in the vicinity was barking. Taylor had a revolver, and Dolan had an old army musket, but there was nothing in the store larger than No. 8 shot. There was some bar lead, and this they hammered out and cut into slugs. Dolan, armed with the old musket, and Taylor, with the revolver and a corn-knife, did valiant picket duty most of the night. In the morning, the old Indian and his squaw called and were again supplied with food, and so ended the Indian scare.

Of this incident, Mr. Taylor said: "I had been used to Indians in Canada, where they had the reputation of being truthful, honest, and civil; no one in Canada thought of having any fear of Indians. When only 7 or 8 years old, I was often the only man (?) about the place, and we slept soundly with dozens of Indians camped across a narrow stream from our shanty. When I came to the United States, I was surprised to hear them spoken of as being dishonest, treacherous, and deceitful. It was simply a reflection of treatment. It is easy and popular to find fault with the English government (and it has faults in plenty); but the way England has always treated the Red Man and Black Man stands out in happy contrast to the way those people have been treated by any other nation.'



Photo from Charley C. Trauger

Trauger home, built in 1888, with Mr. and Mrs. M. E. Trauger and son Charley C. (taken in 1894). At this date (1968), the fourth generation of Traugers are still residing in this home. The house has been remodeled many times and there remain only five feet of wall that have not been changed.

M. E. Trauger settled in Exeter township in 1879, after first visiting here in 1877.

The ancestors of the Traugers in America were located in the province of Hessen Darmstadt, Germany. In 1747, three orphan children-Christian, Henry, and Eliza-embarked for the New World, arriving in Philadelphia on October 9. According to the custom of the time, they sold themselves to a merchant for their passage and worked at Shipport, Pennsylvania, to repay him. In 1767, Christian and Henry moved to Nockamixon Township, in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, purchasing adjoining farms, which are still in the Trauger name.

Lewis Trauger, grandson of Henry, migrated to Sussex County, New Jersey, in September, 1818. His son Elias, who was killed while serving in the Civil War, was the father of M. Edmund Trauger. M. E. Trauger was born April 7, 1845. He spent his boyhood on the farm, 11/2 miles SE of Flatbrookville, New Jersey, but found farming difficult in the mountainous terrain. His diaries, which he started in 1866, show that he supplemented his income by cutting hoop poles (for making barrel hoops) and railroad ties (for which he received about 40 cents apiece). He also taught school.

On November 19, 1873, he married Mary Caroline Hill. On August 16, 1875, they journeyed to Illinois and Iowa, visiting relatives and seeing for themselves if the stories of the "glorious West" true. In the spring of 1876, they left the land of their birth and moved to Morrison, Illinois, where a daughter, Minnie Frances, was born on

While living in Morrison, Mr. Trauger met Dr. O. P. Baker, whose glowing reports of the land around Exeter induced him to come out and see for himself. Arriving in Exeter on Friday, December 14, 1877, he stayed for a time at the home of the F. M. Bucks. He looked at land as far west as Grafton before returning to Illinois, but was most impressed by the Exeter area. Back in Illinois, he worked as a farm laborer and saved his money, to be able to establish a home in Nebraska.

Mr. Trauger and Lyman Beech, who settled in Fairmont township, rented a railroad car and loaded their belonging at Sterling, Illinois. They got to Exeter at 11 A.M., February 28,, 1879. In those days, when you rented a boxcar you were allowed to ride free in the caboose. Before they left Sterling, a man-name unknown-asked Mr. Trauger if he could ride in the car and look after the team of horses and the cow. He wanted to go West, but had no money. En route to Nebraska, they encountered a snowstorm and extremely cold weather. The fellow stated that he would have frozen to death had not the cow co-operated by lying down and allowing him to lie next to her.

In the Traugers' "Old Timers" Museum you will find today most of the furniture and machinery brought here in 1879. This museum was started by M. E. Trauger's grandson, Robert Edmund, in 1950

as a family hobby, to perpetuate the pioneer memories of this area. Mr. and Mrs. Trauger bought 80 acres of railroad land, the S ½ of the SW 1/4 of Sec. 27. They lived for one year on the F. M. Buck farm 11/2 miles S of Exeter and farmed this as well as their own 80

In 1880, they moved to Dr. O. P. Baker's farm one mile E of Exeter. That spring, they planted trees on the south side of their 80, planning to build there soon. But this plan was delayed by the fact that in 1883 he had the opportunity to purchase the N 1/2 of the NE 1/4 of Sec. 33 from Caleb Litch. In 1885, he purchased the 80 adjoining the original 80 he had bought in 1879. He then decided to abandon his proposed building site and instead built on the west side of the north 80, so as to be closer to the town of Exeter. Dr. Baker had made him a very good price on the 80 he had purchased from Mr. Litch. He sold this on January 7, 1893, and was forever thankful that he had done so, because of the drouth of the middle 1890's

A son, Charles C. Trauger, was born on September 22, 1886, while

they still resided on the O. P. Baker farm.

In 1888, his dream of a house of his own came true. The house was almost lost before they moved. While they were plastering the house, they had a stove in the upstairs to keep the plaster from freezing. Mr. Trauger had walked halfway home, when he felt that he should go back and check the stove again. When he arrived, he found that a live coal had fallen from the stove and had started a small fire on the floor of the hallway. He easily put it out, but was aways thankful that something had told him to return.

Mrs. M. E. Trauger passed away in 1923, and her husband on

May 30, 1934.

Charles Trauger married Ethel L. Downey on August 31, 1919. They had two sons, Donald, of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and Robert, of Exeter. Charles Trauger still resides on the farm with his son Robert, Robert's wife Shirley, and their children, Charles and Lynnelle, and Melissa.

The wagon tracks of a main trail leading from Exeter southeast to Turkey Creek are still visible on a strip of the Traugers' native prairie. Grandpa Trauger wrote in his diary that he had to string a barbed-wire fence across the farm to keep people from driving across his land.

M. E. Trauger was a charter member of the Exeter Methodist Church. Since he joined in 1879, there has always been a Trauger on the official board. He canvassed for shares in the Exeter Rolling Mills & Elevator Association, and also for the canning factory. He served on the school board of District 22 for a number of years from 1880 onward. He was also township treasurer for many years, and was a member of the board of supervisors during the construction of the present courthouse in Geneva in 1893.

-Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Trauger



Photo from Robert Trauger

Trauger's "Old Timers" Museum is located on the Trauger farm. Besides household, town, and farm items, it has a remarkable collection of threshing machines. The 1890 Frick Portable and 1893 Belle City Hand Fed thresher pictured here were used in Exeter's celebration of the State Centennial.

JOHN BARSBY AND WARREN WOODARL

ATTORNEYS at

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Office first door south of William's Hardware Store.

EXETER,

NEBRASKA

Warren Woodard homesteaded the NE 1/4 of Sec. 28 in 1870. This first homestead, although "out" in the township, actually set the stage for the founding of Exeter. Mr. Woodard was a lawyer. Before coming to Nebraska, he had lived in Michigan. As a member of Co. F, 10th Regiment, Michigan Volunteer Infantry, he had participated in 12 battles during the Civil War. After being mustered out in 1865, he spent two years in the nursery business in Illinois.

Mr. Woodard's house was the first post office, established in 1871, and named for him. He was postmaster until the post office was moved to Exeter proper at a later date. He was the first justice of the peace in Fillmore County, appointed in 1872. He was also one of the clerks when Fillmore County was organized in the spring of 1871. Many of the old deeds carry the acknowledgment of Warren Woodard.

The Woodards had four children: Eugene, May, Leon, and Arthur. In 1876, Mr. Woodard erected a 15-room hotel in Exeter, a two-story building which would house 30 people.

The Fillmore County Democrat reported, on May 13, 1893: 'Boss' Woodard was a welcome caller at our headquarters Monday. He was in a reminiscent mood, and gave us a little interesting ancient history. He told us that at the time he had the hotel here, he ran an express to Friend. The forms of the Exeter newspaper were set up here, and he carried them in his express wagon to Friend, where they were printed, and then brought them back the same way. In the words of A. [Artemus] Ward, or somebody else, 'Things is different



Photo from Laura Pflue

Mr. and Mrs. Willard C. Woodworth in year 1886. Daughter Laura, son Harvey, daughter Kitt, and son Ed.

Mr. and Mrs. Willard C. Woodworth came to Nebraska in 1872 and homesteaded on the SW 1/4 of Sec. 6, 3 miles N and ½ mile W of Exeter. When settling on their land, they were anxious to have everything in as good order as possible, so they spent their ready money on improvements. But that year's farming did not meet their expectations, and soon they needed for food the money which they had spent on the house, barn, and well. They had to go to Lincoln for credit, where fortunately the Farmers' Grocery Stores readily allowed them \$5 worth of provisions until a wheat crop was forthcoming to pay for them.

Eleven antelope ran on their claim for about six months after they located, and hunters would ride over the land in every direction. About that time, Mrs. Woodworth was very ill, and, failing to get hired help, had to do the work as best she could. One day a huntsman said. "Lady, you look sick; can I get you some water?" The man was not only kind enough to get a pail of water, but went out and shot a prairie chicken which he gave her, expressing the hope that she would soon get better. Then, after showing this unexpected kindness, the

stranger passed out of her life.

Some neighbors named Crooker living on Indian Creek had a siege of measles. Six in the household were stricken down at one time; so someone thought of asking Mrs. Woodworth, as there were two women in her house, she and her mother, and one might be spared. Mrs. Woodworth went willingly, hardly expecting to find conditions as bad as they were; and for three nights and days she never rested in her efforts to help them through, but one girl died in spite of all the care.

Some time later, Mrs. Woodworth had typhoid fever. Miss Crooker, a schoolteacher, called one day, and, seeing her condition, went home and sent her father and mother to look after her. They

remaind and cared for her until she recovered.

The Horton schoolhouse was the place of worship for their neighborhood, and they were members of the Church of God who worshiped there. In those early days, men would attend the services barefooted and in overalls, while the women wore large sunbonnets. In later days, "Father" Green of the U.B. Church, a native of Lancashire, England, and a York County homesteader, came often to preach; in fact, for a long time, he was the only preacher there. True to his native-country characteristics and training, he was a very "deep" preacher, and of great fervor in his devotions. He was always careful to kneel when he prayed; he was not ashamed to bow himself before his God. He would always spread a large red handkerchief on the floor-evidently to save his best trousers, even though the newness had long since departed. "There were giants in those days," men mighty in faith and prayer. He died about 1895, over 80 years old, and is buried in the Exeter cemetery.

Exeter

Exeter was located on the E 1/2 of Sec. 20. Most of the ground occupied by the village was a part of the original homestead taken by Dr. Horace G. Smith. He came here in January, 1871, to look at the land, and homesteaded on the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 20. In February, 1871, the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 20 was the homestead of James W. Dolan; the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ was the homestead of William Dolan; and the SW 1/4 of Sec. 20 was homesteaded by John N. Dayton and William N. Babcock, each taking 80 acres. The first homestead in the neighborhood was that of Warren Woodard, on the NE 1/4 of Sec. 28. This was the stopping place for many settlers as they first came to this area. It was also the first post office, called Woodard Post Office; the next nearest post office was at Lincoln.

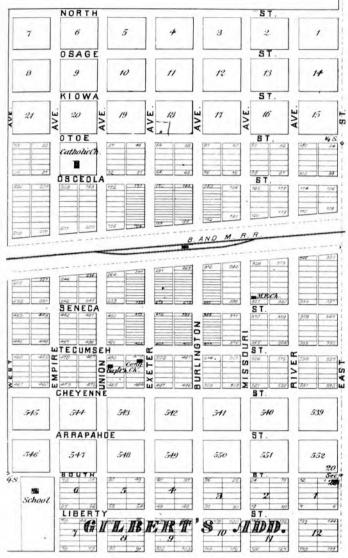
It was by chance that Dr. and Mrs. Smith located on a spot where the Burlington & Missouri River R.R. also located. (This lucky chance is described in the account of Dr. Smith). The Burlington extended its line from Lincoln to Hastings in the fall of 1871. The depot was built in 1872.

Few towns have been named in as unique a way as Exeter. The railroad proposed to build a line from Crete westward, with towns approximately eight miles apart and named in alphabetical order. It is believed that the name was suggested by some settlers from around Exeter, England, who had located in this area. Thus we have the towns of Dorchester, Exeter, Fairmont, Grafton, Harvard, Inland, Juniata, Kenesaw, and Lowell.

Dr. Smith had built a small house, and it was here that the gentleman sent out by the railroad town company was to meet with the people to decide on a town site. A. B. Smith surveyed the land. The land homesteaded by Dr. Smith and J. W. Dolan was considered a little too flat for a town, but this site was chosen anyway. Dr. Smith and Mr. Dolan each

EXETER

FILLMORE CO. Scale 600ft to linch SEc's 20:29. T8N.R1W.



Official State Atlas of Nebraska (1885) Map of Exeter in 1885.



Photo from Lillian Barkmeler Main Street looking north in 1909. The building in right background is Exeter's first hotel.



Photo from Edith Kranda

The Present Hotel

gave a share of their land for the town site. The post office was moved from the Woodard home to the site of the town now called Exeter and Dr. Smith was appointed postmaster. Dr. Smith had added a small lean-to onto his one-room house; this was to become the first store as well as the post office.

The first hotel was built in 1872, by L. Keneval. The first grain warehouse also opened for business in that year. The first marriage was that of J. W. Eller and Frances Hager, in November, 1872. The first schoolhouse was erected in 1873. Exeter was incorporated as a village on April 1, 1879.

During the time between the first homesteaders in 1871 and the incorporation in 1879, many changes had taken place. Many people had decided to settle here and had built houses, and some had put up places of business. The town was beginning to take shape. The Smith store became Smith & Dolan; in 1873, it became Smith & Taylor. Mr. Dolan opened a lumber yard and a grain elevator on the Burlington line.

When people gather in a community, they tend to form some kinds of clubs. One of the first, the "Lyceum," was a literary club, known as the Exeter Lyceum; in 1876, they had a Lyceum paper, the Exeter Evening Post, made up of poetry, wit, and wisdom, as well as discussions on political and theological topics. By this time, the second hotel had been built, by Warren Woodard. In 1878, many more businesses were opened, including two large grain elevators. The trees planted by the first settlers had grown enough to give some shade and to improve the appearance of the town. F. M. Ziska had opened a general-merchandise store in the late 1870's. This store was destroyed by a fire in 1889, along with many other business places.

A meeting had been held to form a school district, and it was decided to build a 24' x 36' wooden school building. The schoolhouse was also the meeting place of the Lyceum and many other activities, including Sunday church services. Some groups met in the second-story room of the new Smith store.

The churches were organized very early in the 1870's. The Congregational Church was organized in 1872, and so was the Baptist Church. The Methodists also organized



Photo from Edith Kranda

Christian Church and Parsonage (1905)



Photo from Robert Trauger

New sidewalk on Main Street, and Exeter's dray service (about 1910). (Note Nebraska State Fair advertising on fly nets.) In the dray: Harve McGleese, Dutch Moore, Vern Hiatt. On the sidewalk at left: Bill Brown, George Horton, Tom Walters. The three men on the right are unidentified.



Photo from Edith Kranda

Main Street looking south in 1905. Notice windmill and the curfew bell on the windmill tower.



Exeter Volunteer Fire Department about 1910.



RUINS AFTER THE FIRE AT EXETER, MONDAY NIGHT, APRIL 26, 1969

Photo from R. D. Erdkamp Ruins after auditorium fire, Monday night, April 26, 1909.

about this same time. It was necessary to hold their meetings together until they could build their respective churches. The Catholics organized in 1873. The Christian Church and the Christian Science Church were organized shortly thereafter.

Main Street today has changed considerably in 95 years or so. Then the street was just plain dirt and when it rained it was nothing but *mud*. And it was a few years before the wooden sidewalks were laid. Later it was graveled and in 1937 paved. At one time U.S. Highway 6 came right down Main Street but is now routed through the south side of town.

In the main intersection a windmill provided drinking water and supplied a horse trough. Many people got their water there until they could put down their own wells. Many also had cisterns to catch rain water, which was good for washing and bathing, but not so good as well water for drinking.

This windmill also had a bell on top, which rang every night at 9 o'clock, the curfew hour for children. They knew that they had better either get home before it sounded or really scamper the minute it did start to sound. This bell also sounded fire alarms and substituted for the ringing of church bells.

For many years, the only means of fire-fighting was the bucket brigade. Later, there was a hose, rolled up on a large wheel, which could be pulled to the fire. In 1905, two big air-pressure water tanks were installed near the present firehouse. The firemen have always been a voluntary group. The city got a fire truck in 1928, and a new one was purchased in 1961. But the firemen are still volunteers, usually numbering around 25. They are an extremely necessary and devoted group of men.

Exeter has been plagued by many fires. A fire started on the corner of the present Barkmeier store and burned south to the brick bank building on a Halloween night some time around the turn of the century. Another fire in the early 1900's started on the south end of the same block and burned all the buildings to the north, stopping again at the brick bank building. Another fire in the same period burned all the buildings north of the "Auditorium" and gutted that building also. Nearly one-half of the block on the east side of the main street closest to the Burlington tracks also burned in the early 1900's. This fire started in a bakery on the northeast corner of that block. The "Rink" was a victim of fire, and the brick school also burned in 1915. Most of these fires occurred before any fire equipment was available. So they relied on the bucket brigade for many years. By the time the brick school burned in 1915, the fire department had a water-pressure hose which did save the new school building that was nearly completed behind the old one.



Photo from Mrs. Ann Saunders

Mr. and Mrs. Emory Yates in front of their tailoring shop in 1902. The Yateses also had the first "picture show" in 1908. (This building, which stood where Erdkamp Motors driveway is now located, was Exeter's first saloon, called "The Blind Pig.")



Fire burned the east side of Main Street in the early 1900's.

Photo from William Ruhl



Photo from Joe Gephart

New sewer line in 1927—taken west of Dr. Wiggins' house. Lou Worthel, Bill Buck, unknown, "Bus" Baker, Art Buck, Joe Gephart, Dan Sullivan, Mr. Alexander.

In 1928, the water tower was erected, with a tank within a tank. The inner tank was to furnish water to the sprinkler system in the tag factory in case of fire. Mr. C. C. Smith, who contributed to the erecting of the tower, influenced its size and construction with a view to insuring the safety of his factory.

Exeter installed in 1927 a municipal sanitary sewer system, which includes a storm sewer system as well as a sewage-treatment plant.

Electricity came early to Exeter. Charles Smith installed a coalfired steam engine back of the tag factory for a power plant. There was an underground tunnel from the factory to the power plant. The people of Exeter benefited by being able to have electric lights and machines with electric motors. Housewives could have washing machines and electric irons. Mr. Smith sold this power to his fellow citizens until 1912 or 1913, when Consumers bought the power plant from him with the understanding that they would convert all the electric motors for alternating current from the direct current provided by the Smith plant. When Mr. Smith supplied the power, the electricity went off at midnight. As Exeter had electricity so early, it is a bit startling now to look at old pictures of Main Street and see the light-wires and the light hanging over the middle of the dirt street with no cars parked along it. With the passage of time, newer and better lighting systems were installed on the streets. The city council decided in 1955 to put the same kind of light along the highway as those on Main Street. They were to put 21 lights, three to a block, 150 feet apart, on the south side from the Dinneen garage to the Hiway Cafe.

The first telephone in Exeter was one put in between John Craven's place of business and his home. Mr. Craven's brother, who worked with the Bell Telephone system at the time, helped to install

it. Then a few people had their own telephone systems. There were 15 to 20 telephones with numerous wires running from one house to another. Eventually this worked into a larger group that wanted telephones. So there came to be a control and a central operator in the Exeter Enterprise office. At one time both the Independent Telephone and the Bell Telephone companies operated in Exeter.

In the early 1900's, believing that Exeter needed a playhouse or theater, W. H. Wallace got a company of businessmen together to build a theater. Among those contributing, besides Mr. Wallace, were lumberman John Craven, J. N. Cox, W. H. Taylor and J. M. Ziska (all in the dry-goods and grocery business), stock buyer Joe Coates, and John Ohm. The brick building, called "The Auditorium," was built about 1905 or 1906, with W. P. Wallace, son of W. H., as manager.

In 1908, Mr. and Mrs. Emory Yates installed movie equipment and Exeter enjoyed its first "picture show." These were silent pictures, and feeling and emotion were conveyed by overacting on the part of the actors and by the piano music that accompanied the show. Miss Ann Yates played the music for the movies and used cue cards that came with every film. Each show sent song slides and Miss Alice Howard sang, accompanied by Ann Yates (now Mrs. Ann Saunders). Later Bernard Nevin played drums to piano accompaniment. Mr. Nevin later taught music for many years at Midland College in Fremont.

Early in 1900, the Pflug Implement Store north of the theater burned, setting fire to and gutting the Auditorium, and destroying the blacksmith shop to the south. The owners immediately had the building rebuilt, with some changes. Instead of a flat roof and level floor with posts through the center to support the roof, it was finished



Photo from William Ruhl Rebuilt Auditorium after the 1909 fire.



Photo from Esther Jones Chicago & Northwestern Depot, taken at a July 4th celebration.



Photo from Cora Rogers

C. B. & Q. Depot, Exeter. Among this group are Mr. Steyer, Clifford Downing, Billy Anderson, Lou Allen, William Parrish, and John Downing.

with a self-supporting roof, a slanting floor, a larger stage, and more seating capacity. Mr. and Mrs. Yates installed new movie equipment in a completely fireproof booth. They took over the management at this time and purchased the Auditorium in 1918. Talking equipment was installed as early as 1928.

In those years the Auditorium, besides showing movies, was the scene of all school activities, home-talent plays, and a very popular group, the "Chick Boyes Players," who set a unique record of playing one night every two weeks for 19 years. After the death of Mr. Yates in 1935, the Auditorium changed hands several times. The coming of television ruined the theater business and the building stood empty for some time. This beautiful building is now used as a grain-storage bin.

F. A. Robinson, editor of the Fillmore County News, in 1913 installed movie equipment in a building north of the Klotz Pharmacy and named it "The Wonderland," but this venture was destined to failure, as Exeter was unable to support two amusement places.

In 1956, the Chamber of Commerce decided to see about a band shell for the up-and-coming band, so that the people could enjoy band concerts in the summer. Some donations were made and George Harrison was contacted. With the help of the vocational agriculture boys and some of the community-minded men, the band shell was built from plans designed by George Harrison and Tim Ruhl. Intended as a multi-purpose band shell, 32' wide, 20' long, and 12' high, it was built in six weeks on north lots by the water tower, and served for many enjoyable band concerts. It was later moved to the vacant lot in the middle of the west side of the main business district on Main Street. It has since been torn down to make room for the new bank building.

At one time, Exeter had two depots, adjoined by small parks. The Chicago & Northwestern depot was sold and torn down for lumber in 1951. The Burlington depot is still very much in use and has been remodeled just recently. T. J. Parker became the depot agent in 1965.

With the coming of so many people to Exeter in the 1870's, it was soon evident that a cemetery would be necessary. W. H. Taylor and Charles C. Smith were both actively interested in the needs of the town. Mr. Smith owned land and sold lots for the cemetery, a non-profit organization in which shares were sold to help meet the cost of upkeep. The town was given the cemetery in 1947, since when it has been tax-supported. Donations have been used for improvements, such as access of water and maintenance of roads and buildings. Some of the trees that Pat Murphy donated to the cemetery when it first started are still growing there.

A newspaper, the Exeter *Enterprise*, was started on September 29, 1877, by William A. Connell, who went broke after three months and gave up. His last issue was dated December 1, 1877. He was succeeded by William J. Waite, who revived the paper on January 12, 1878, and continued as editor for many years. The following is a business directory drawn from the revived *Enterprise* of 1878:

J. W. Dolan grain and lumber
H. G. Smith, W. H. Taylor and
P. W. McCauleygeneral merchandise
Failing Brothersgeneral merchandise and drugs
Hannes & Stilleyhardware and grain
J. H. Edneyhardware and implements
Dayton Brothersfurniture
Dr. G. W. Whipplephysician
Dr. R. Beecher physician
Job Hathaway livery
Warren WoodardCentennial Hotel
J. P. Kettlewellmeat artist (That was his own term)
Elias Petermanharness shop
T. B. Farmercontractor
S. F. Root boot and shoe maker
Charles Holeplasterer and chimney builder
John Barsbycollector
T. W. Lowrey & Cograin, flour, coal, and implements
M. Wiseman blacksmith

On April 3, 1879, the Exeter Enterprise, with proper booster spirit, had these things to say: "The demand for houses is on the increase; 25 could find renters if they were to be had." "Build a house and be in fashion." "Fillmore County is one of the best Eastern-advertised counties in Nebraska. It must be so; else why would so large and steady a stream of immigration be constantly pouring in?" In 1892, another newspaper, the Exeter Eye, was started. In 1893, this became the Fillmore County Democrat, and then the Exeter Democrat later in the same year. The name was again changed in 1899, to the Fillmore County News, and that name has remained.

Among pleasant gatherings were what were known as "The Sings," held in private homes, when the singing of favorite hymns was a delight to all. As many as 50 people would come from far and near to share in such gatherings.

One place of much activity was "The Rink," built originally for roller skating. It was a large building with a gallery or balcony around its inside. This came to be used for social functions such as dances and the big Fourth of July celebrations that the pioneers appreciated so much. At one end of the building was a stage, which was the scene of many plays, traveling shows, vaudeville acts, etc. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was one of the plays that a traveling group presented here. This building was later destroyed by a fire.

By 1882, the town had a population of more than 400. By that time the town had two banks, the Bank of Exeter and the Wallace & Co. bank. More clubs had formed, including the Odd Fellows, the Masons, and the Grand Army of the Republic. The old schoolhouse had been outgrown and

a larger school was in the making. The new building was to cost about \$7,000.

A foundry was started in 1910. Sam Spitz had been harvesting for people but decided to start making castings and molds so that he could make iron parts for machinery, such as wheels, cog wheels, and so on. The foundry was started in the town proper, but because many of the townspeople complained about the soot, about 1920 it was moved to Hastings (where it is still operated by Sam's son, Louis Spitz).

J. N. Cox started a general-merchandise store in 1884. Some time after the turn of the century, Exeter had a Y.M.C.A.; dates are not available, but it was of short duration. About the same time a Sons of Veterans Club was formed; dates for the organizing and disbanding of this are also not available. Exeter had a race track in the south part of town, used for horse racing. There was also a ball park near by.

The following list of businesses appeared in an 1893

issue of the Fillmore County Der Costello & Sweasy	
John Mohr	
J. N. Cox	
Craven Bros.	
Dr. E. L. Ramsdell	drug store
First National Bank	H. G. Smith
E. H. Buck & John Ohm	
Alta V. Robinson	
James Kelly	
I. T. Powell	
J. C. Smith	grocery store
A. S. Cookus	
John McDonald	photographer
W. H. Taylor	
H. S. Bedford	Exeter Roller Mills
J. C. Pflug	grocery store
C. H. Wullbrandt & Son	
Exeter National Bank	W. T. Taylor, president W. H. Wallace, cashier
J. A. Nye	
H. S. Greenawalt	
Henry Randell	
C. A. Songster	
Mrs. R. S. Crooker	
J. W. Taylor	
F. M. Ziska	
W. J. Nevins	
W. N. Babcock	ingurance

The same 1893 issue of the *Democrat* described the school: "The schoolhouse is a fine, large, brick, two-story building in the eastern part of town. Five teachers are employed at this time. The subjects taught are: Algebra, Rhetoric, General History, Civil Government, Bookkeeping, English Literature, Latin, Physics, Geometry, Botany, and Elocution. The total number of pupils in 1893—318." Dr. Claire Owens was the first music teacher in this school; she started teaching here in 1898, just after graduating from the School for the Blind at Nebraska City. (A full account of Dr. Owens apears elsewhere.)



Photo from Robert Trauger

Front of 1907 envelope of Joseph Coates

By 1907, many changes had taken place. The population had increased and more business places had opened or changed hands. Joseph Coates, a dealer in livestock, had all



Photo from Nesbit Whitmore Exeter Y.M.C.A. Left to right: Mr. Ingram, Mr. Whitmore, Mr. Holbrook.



Photo from Hazel Jorgensen Rothrock Hardware Store



Photo from Leo Gibbons Dr. McCleery's Office (1880 or 1890)

his envelopes printed with a glowing description of Exeter. The following passage is from the back of one of these

envelopes:

Exeter, Nebraska (The good roads town). Located 44 miles west of Lincoln, on the main line of the Burlington railroad at its junction with the Chicago & Northwestern. Has population of 1200. "The best little town in Nebraska." Exeter is the recognized trade center of a large territory in one of the most fertile regions in Nebraska and nearly all lines of business are represented. These advantages combine to make Exeter one of the most desirable business points, as well as a pleasant residence town, in the State, and progressive men will find opportunities here, both in capital and labor. Farm lands sell from \$60 to \$100 per acre, and a splendid system of modern roads reaches nearly all parts of our trade territory. Two telephone systems with their country lines reach almost every farm for many miles and

3 rural mail routes completely cover the territory with daily service. Its citizens are enterprising and progressive and will extend to all desirable comers a hearty welcome. Our excellent public school employs 9 teachers and carries the work to the State University standard. A Catholic parochial school employing 4 teachers will be open in September; 5 fine churches and another building; 2 banks; 4 grain elevators; 1 flouring mill; 2 hotels; 2 newspapers; 4 department stores; 2 drugstores; 2 hardware stores and other branches of business well represented. The professions include 4 physicians, 2 dentists, and no attorneys (in which line there is a good opening). Smith's Adjustable Index Tag Factory is located here and employs about 100 people. A cigar factory, laundry, bakery, pop factory, broom factory, canning factory, as well as a first-class clothing store would find a good location. Inquiries will be answered by J. C. Wilson, Sec. Commercial Club.

Just how much influence this letter had would be hard to say, but there have been a bakery and a canning factory here since that time.



Photo from William Ruhl

Catholic School-about 1907

In the 1890's and early 1900's, three famous personages visited Exeter, two Presidents and one unsuccessful aspirant.

William Jennings Bryan, one of Nebraska's most illustrious speakers and politicians, made his first political speech in Exeter. Mr. Bryan was attending the university at the time. A speaker was to come to Exeter for a Democratic rally, but canceled his appearance and Mr. Bryan was asked to take his place. The rally was held in the room above the Taylor store. Mr. Bryan later made two more speeches in Exeter; however, the dates are not available.

Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President of the U. S., made a short stop in Exeter in 1912. Although he was not scheduled to stop here, someone found that he was coming through on his campaign train. The train did stop and a few were fortunate enough to see him and Frank Craven was able to shake hands with him. This was when Mr. Roosevelt, opposed to the way President Taft was running the government, broke away from the Republicans and formed a third party, the Progressive party, or, as a lot of people called it, the "Bull Moose" party.

William Howard Taft, 27th President of the United States, also made a brief appearance here in 1912. The campaign train came through Exeter, stopping long enough for President Taft to say a few words. President Taft had defeated Mr. Bryan in the 1908 election.

It is also interesting that the mother of a man who ran for the presidency in later years (1964) was once a resident of Exeter. Josephine Williams, mother of Barry Goldwater, came here with her parents after she was out of high school. Her father ran a store in Exeter and was on the school board for several years. Josephine went to Arizona for her health and that is where she met Mr. Goldwater, the father of Barry. Evidently she recovered from her ailment, because she has lived a long life. Several Exeter people remember her quite well. She had a few relatives in this area.



Photo from William Ruhl

Left to right: Bert Dyer (in car), Sherm Downey, Mr. McClean (machinery salesman), and John Downey—taken in 1909.

By 1915, the town had grown enough to need more land for new homes, and so the SW ¼, Sec. 20, and part of Sec. 10 had been annexed.

It is interesting to compare 1915 prices with those of today. These market prices were found in the *Fillmore County News*, December 9, 1915.

Market prices 191	15
Wheat No. 3-93¢ No. 2	95¢
Corn	52¢
Oats	32¢
Hogs per cwt	\$6.00
Cream	33¢
Chickens09	1/2¢ lb.
Old roosters	.04¢ lb.
Ducks	.08¢ lb.
Geese	.07¢ lb.
Turkeys	.15¢ lb.
Butter	.25¢ lb.
Eggs—cash 24¢, trade	25¢

Advertisements of 1915
Dr. E. L. Armstrongchiropractor
J. A. Cravenlumber and grain
Dyer & Downeyimplement
Debus Broswholesale and
retail bakers
J. B. KlotzRexall store
Wallace & Cobanker
Farmers & Merchants Bank
Brown & Bickertmerchandise
Dr. F. T. Butzdentist
Dr. A. N. Housedentist

Exeter Electric & Power Co.

...real estate

						and ins	suran	ice
Gilpins						variety	sto	re
Karl F.	E. Wegener	, M. D			physician	and s	surge	on
Guy Ph	elps had ju	st bought	Mr.	Schriener's	interest	in Ph	elps	&
Sch	riener	7 Y				Ċ	rugg	rist

Potatoes, per bushel75¢ McKeag & Hill......

At this time Exeter had a population of 1,100. The above list was taken from just one paper, so the list of businesses is not complete.

In 1915, the Burlington and Northwestern railroads both had depots. Exeter had excellent rail transportation east or west.

Exeter is also well located as to highways. U.S. Highway 6 once went down the main street but it has been in the south part of town for quite some time. A major east-west road, it joins U.S. Highway 81 at Fairmont, giving access to north and south roads. Interstate 80, not far away, is a great help.

Library

The first library was actually a loaning of books by Mr. and Mr. J. B. Klotz. Mr. Klotz had a drugstore and a good supply of books that he was willing to share with others.

1910-1911: A library was started by the Exeter Dramatic Club, which sponsored plays, socials, card parties, and tag days to raise funds. A library of 1,000 volumes was established.

1915: The library was managed by the Exeter Library Association. Books were for everyone to use, whether members or not.

1936: The Exeter Woman's Club started a library again. It was taken over by the Exeter Village Board some years later and became a tax-supported library, with Mrs. Lillian Perry appointed



Photo from Mrs. Ann Saunders

Exeter Dramatic Club about 1911. Seated, left to right: Emory Yates, Ilma Agur, Eunice Wilson, Keith Graul. Standing, left to right: Willard Steyer, Murine Allen, Mary Ann Yates, Katherine Sullivan, Bernard Nevins.



Photo from Mrs. Elmer Horton

George Horton behind counter in his grocery store in 1920. This building now houses the Exeter Library.

librarian. Mrs. Perry has continued in that capacity since 1936 to the present time. The library was moved to its present location in 1938. There were 3,500 books on the shelves, but many needed to be discarded because they were too worn and so the real number would be less than 3,500.

1968: The library has a collection of 5,264 books. The Woman's Club has given \$20 yearly for the summer story hour and reading program.

Mr. and Mrs. Dick Manning gave a movie projector to the library in memory of Mrs. Dick Manning's father, Mr. John Schwab. Mr. and Mrs. Elmer McCabe gave a set of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in memory of Mrs. McCabe's father, Mr. Link. Many books, have been given to the library at various times by individuals or groups.

Banks

In the late 1870's, William H. Wallace of Morrison, Illinois, homesteaded on Sec. 28 in Exeter township. Soon after, seeing the need for some sort of financial aid for the community. Mr. Wallace made small loans to individuals. As an office, he used a small room in the rear of a harness shop, in which he placed a small iron safe, which thus became Exeter's first bank vault. He later organized Wallace & Co., a private bank, located on the present bank site. This bank later operated under a state charter, under the same name, and then became the Wallace National Bank, under a national charter. In the year 1882, the Bank of Exeter was also in operation.

The Wallace National Bank was operated by William H. Wallace as president until his death in 1926, when his son, William P. Wallace, became president. Lesher T. Blouch acted as bookkeeper, assistant cashier, and cashier from 1907 to 1946.

After some years, two other banks were organized in Exeter, the Exeter State Bank and the Farmers & Merchants Bank. The Exeter State Bank was later acquired by the Wallaces. It was operated separately for several years and was then consolidated with the Wallace National Bank. The Farmers & Merchants Bank and the Wallace National Bank were both liquidated in 1933 and the First National Bank of Exeter was organized with H. M. Link as president, Frank Craven, vice-president, and Lesher Blouch, cashier. Mr. Blouch retired from the bank in 1946, after having been affiliated with the banks for approximately 40 years. He was also treasurer of the Village of Exeter for 41 years. After Mr. Link's death in 1961, Elmer McCabe became president of the bank, Roy E. Stubbendick, vice-president, and Lillian Barkmeier, cashier.

In 1966, plans were completed for a handsome new bank building, which was built on the vacant lot two doors south of the former bank site.



Photo from Lillian Barkmeier

First National Bank, established in 1934. This building is now occupied by a barber shop.

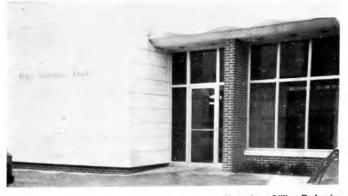


Photo from Lillian Barkmeier

New First National Bank Building (taken in 1968)



Street scene in Exeter, July 4, 1897—Royal Neighbors of America team drilling. Stores, left to right: P. W. McCleery's photo gallery; Lodge hall top floor, J. N. Cox dry goods on street level. Stores, right to left: T. B. Farney harness shop, Enterprise paper; Dr. E. L. Ramsdell drugstore.

Clubs and Organizations

1882: By 1882, many clubs had organized; however, exact dates are not available. The organizations at that time were the Masons, Odd Fellows, and Grand Army of the Republic.

1880: The I.O.O.F. started with 10 members; present membership, 23.

1883: Rebekah Lodge organized in 1883; present membership, 45. 1893: There was an organization called the Sons of Veterans Club,

but no other information is available. 1897: The Royal Neighbors of America organized in 1897 with

24 charter members. The R. N. of A. had a drill team at one time, and the Cordova and Milligan R. N. of A. transferred to Exeter Camp 504. The present membership is 43. 1898: The Woman's Club organized in 1898 with about 20 charter

members. Dr. Claire Owens was one of these and served as president of the club for four years, and as parliamentarian for 31 years. The club was inactive during World War I, but reorganized in 1926 and became a federated club. The Woman's Club sponsors the "Y" Teen girls. The present membership is 50.

The Bide-A-Wee Kensington Club had started in the early days as a birthday club and had Sunset Parties for ladies over 65.

1914: Masonic Lodge No. 283 was chartered in 1914; extinct in December, 1952.

1915: Clubs in existence in 1915 were the G. A. R., the United Workmen, Woodmen of America, and Knights of Pythias.

Chamber of Commerce: The exact date of organization is not known. It was known as the Commercial Club in 1907. This civic organization has grown considerably in the last few years. The membership in 1962 was 62; at present there are 101 members.

Lions Club: First chartered February 11, 1944. Once had about 35 members; reorganized, 1952; present membership, 16.
Business and Professional Women's Club: Organized in March,

1954, with 18 members. Membership in 1966, 23.
American Legion: William Sullivan Post No. 218, organized in

1926, named in honor of first serviceman from this community to give his life in World War I. Charter members, 10; present membership,

American Legion Auxiliary: William Sullivan Unit No. 218, the auxiliary, was organized in 1930 with 14 charter members. Mrs. Gertrude Clinton was first president. The ladies have been very active in the community. One of their yearly activities has been to decorate veterans' graves on Memorial Day. Present membership, 61.

Eastern Star: The Exeter chapter of the Eastern Star organized 1914.

D.A.R.: Exeter has not had an active organization of its own, but 5 or 6 ladies from Exeter were members of the Geneva and Fairmont groups.

Happy Hour Club: The Happy Hour Extension Club, organized in 1917, was first called the "Jolly Twenty." When the membership increased the name was changed. Present membership is 20.

Sunshine Extension Club: Organized in 1925 with 14 members; present membership, 10.

Evergreen Extension Club: Organized in 1926 with 12 members;

present membership, 13 Trilby Extension Club: Organized in 1930 with 14 members; pres-

membership, 16. Lady Bird Extension Club: Newly organized in 1966 with 9 mem-

There are various other clubs, as for bridge and similar functions. There are also many 4-H clubs, too numerous to list.

SCHOOLS

The coming of education to Exeter was described by Miss Elula Smith in the Fillmore County News, April 4, 1935. The first school was taught by Mrs. William Babcock

in her sod house. Her pupils were Fred Babcock, three Woodard children, and Charles Smith. The article does not give the year, but it must have been 1871 or 1872. County Superintendent G. W. Gue issued the usual notice: District No. 20 was to be formed of Secs. 19, 20, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33; he notified Job Hathaway that the organizational meeting would take place at Mr. Smith's store at one P.M. on February 9, 1872. The first officers elected were H. G. Smith, moderator; Job Hathaway, director; and Henry Young, treasurer.

Later, the citizens were summoned to discuss plans for a schoolhouse. Mr. Farmer was chairman of the first school board, Jim Dolan, secretary, and John Dayton, treasurer. Miss Smith wrote: "Mr. O. P. Chapman opposed everything that was suggested, but the majority ruled and plans were made for the building. When the meeting was about to adjourn, Mr. Chapman said, 'I move that \$100 be appropriated to provide a bell for this schoolhouse.' His motion went over big." The contractor for the building was Ben Stilley, and one of the carpenters was Mr. Farmer.

Soon after this meeting a 24' x 36' building was erected on the corner of Exeter Avenue and South Boundary Street. (This site is now, in 1966, a vacant lot at the NE corner of the intersection of Main Street and U.S. 6.)



Photo from Mrs. B. C. Songster

District 20 (Exeter Public School), built in 1882.



Photo from Mrs. Armin Bender Exeter Public School Faculty in the late 1890's. Back row: Mabel Farmer, Floy Clark. Front row: Mary Scherzer, Etta Morgan, J. T. McKinnon, superintendent.



Photo from Leo Gibbons

The old school burned in 1915, just as the new one (at left) was being

It was not many years before this building was outgrown. In 1882, the new brick building in the east part of town was finished and occupied. Mr. Chapman's bell was transferred to it and for many years summoned the children to school. It is said that when this building burned in 1915, the bell gave one last peal as it dropped into the flames. A new brick building was already being built, because the 1882 building was no longer large enough. Although the new building was very close, it was not damaged by the fire. Rev. G. R. McKeith wrote in 1915: "The last, but not the least of Exeter's improvements, is the erection of a \$40,000 school building, a magnificent, commodious, and well-arranged property, well fitted, and equipped to meet the needs of the town and district for many years."

During recent years, the Exeter Public School has undergone many changes and improvements. In 1945, the school was housed in one building and, because of the war, many departments needing improvements had to wait until equipment was available. One of the first improvements made was the building of a three-unit kitchen and remodeling of the homemaking department. Other improvements included lights for the football field; building the gymnasium-auditorium; fluorescent lighting for some rooms; new football bleachers; redistricting, which brought the buses and the establishment of bus routes; a Vocational Agriculture building; and a hot-lunch kitchen. Much obsolete and worn-out equipment has been replaced.

By 1961, standards and pressure by the State Department of Education for more playground space forced the school to use the football field to meet this requirement. The land east of the school was purchased for a new athletic field, football and track. The field was named "Scott Field" in memory of Scott Briggs who died while a senior in Exeter High. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Max Briggs.

As enrollment continued to increase, to provide necessary facilities the district voted a \$200,000 bond issue in 1965.



Photo from Burton Farmer New Elementary School (1967)

This amount was for the construction of seven elementary classrooms, a multi-purpose room, and kitchen facilities for the whole school. This new building is located south of the gymnasium. The old building has been remodeled to make more and larger rooms for the Junior and Senior high grades.

There are many organizations within the school system:

F. F. A. organized in 1954-48 members in 1966

F. H. A. organized in 1956-15 members in 1966

Pep club-67 members.

"E" club—35 members.
"Y" Teen club—83 members.

Student Council-15 members.

Music Dept.—89 students in vocal groups

Exeter has organized an M.A.T.H. honor club, called "Mu Alpha Theta." There are 18 full members and 8 associated members. There are two associated clubs, the "Y" Teen Council Mothers and

the Exeter Band Mothers Club.

Band	Athletics				
Stage band17	Football45				
Varsity band51	Basketball30				
Junior band34	Track25				
Roginners hand 39					

The Exeter Public School in 1966 had an assessed valuation of \$5,829,065 and a mill levy of 28.6. Exeter can still boast of its accomplishments in this department. The Exeter School has the lowest school-tax rate in Fillmore County, and ranks among the lowest in schools of comparable sizes.

There were 341 pupils attending the public school, which, combined with the 62 parochial pupils, gave a 1966 total of 403 pupils attending school in Exeter.

CHURCHES

In 1915, Exeter had six different churches or meeting places: Congregational, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Christian, and Christian Science. At present (1966), there are only the Congregational, Methodist, and Catholic churches. The others have either joined with other denominations or disbanded.

Congregational Church

In a room known as the Exeter Hall, over the H. G. Smith store, the Congregational Church was organized on March 31, 1872, with 11 charter members. They put up their first church in 1872. It was remodeled in 1907, with a 10-foot addition on the west, an alcove for the pulpit on the north, new seating, and a new furnace. In 1924, a story-and-a-half unit, 30' x 32', with full basement, was added on the south. The church has observed four major anniversaries, its 40th, 50th, 60th, and 85th. It owned a parsonage until 1964, when it was sold. In 1960, the church became yoked with the First Congregational



Photo from Mrs. Ted Jorgensen

First Congregational Church, Exeter

Church of Friend. The Rev. Donald Cassiday of Friend serves both congregations. One notable earlier pastor was the Rev. G. R. McKeith.

An article by Miss Belle Alexander (undated) provides additional

information:

"The settlement of this township began during the year 1871 and religious services were held in various homes in the neighborhood. The first preaching service was held at the home of J. K. Barbur. It was in this same home that the first prayer meeting was held and the first Sunday School organized. Services were held in Exeter Hall for about 1½ years and then moved to the new schoolhouse just finished on the corner of Exeter Avenue and South Boundary St. This building was a room 24' x 36', well seated with patent seats and answered the purpose very well. The Congregationalists were the first to organize but the Baptists and Methodists organized soon after. They continued to worship together until 1878, the Congregationalists furnishing the pastor one-half of the time and the Baptists and Methodists the other half. The charter members of the Congregational Church were John K. Barbur, Kate Barbur, Abram T. Hager, Clarissa L. Hager, Frank E. Hager, Orson Hager, Elias J. Hager, H. G. Smith, Catherine Smith, Harrison A. Sturdevant, and Rice Kelly."

In 1966, this church had 108 members, and Sunday School averaged from 50 to 60 members.

Christian Church

This note on the Christian Church was supplied by J. C. Wilson: "The Christian Church was started in 1898, on July 19, when 19 members organized the Church of Christ in Exeter. Those attending were two young boys, three men and their wives, three young girls, and eight other women. Brother Martin was the elder, Brother Starr and later Francis Hoot were the deacons; Mrs. Starr was the deaconess, and Mrs. C. A. Bickel was the church treasurer. After a few weeks 14 new members were added to the church. Fifteen months later a building was erected at a cost of \$1,400."

Twenty-five years later the attendance had reached 96 at the Bible School. The church held regular services until July 1, 1956, when they were no longer able to keep going, and decided to disband. The parsonage and church building were sold and removed from the lots. However, the Christian Women's Fellowship have had regular

meetings and in 1966 were continuing to meet.



Photo from Don John

Christian Church and Parsonage, Exeter (early 1920's)

St. Stephen's Church (Catholic)

The history of the parish of St. Stephen's at Exeter is not well known until 1873. It is probable that Father Kelly, who lived in Lincoln, passed through Exeter in 1870 and said Mass at the residence of F. McTygue south of town.

The first part of the old church was built in 1874 or 1875. Part of the priest's residence was built in 1878. In 1883, the residence and the old church were completed and some improvements were made. A new church was erected in 1901 and 1902. A parochial school was erected in 1907 and opened in September, 1907, with Dominican Sisters in charge. The new priest's residence was built in 1910. A storm damaged the church in 1918, and it was repaired and improved. The church was completely redecorated some time between 1940 and 1949, and an electric organ was added.

The school was remodeled in 1934. It has always had a good library and in 1952 the collection of books was accessioned and tabulated and many new volumes were added. A new set of encyclopedias was purchased in 1954.

The Dominican Sisters remained until 1940, when the Felician Sisters came; they are still there.

The St. Stephen's School and Home Association, formerly the

St. Stephen's P.T.A., was organized in 1935; one of its notable successes has been the hot-lunch project.

Msgr. Patrick Healy who came in 1949, celebrated his Golden Jubilee of ordination June 24, 1954. Upon the death of Msgr. Healy in 1956, Msgr. Henry H. Ingenhorst was appointed pastor of St. Stephen's and installed on October 3, 1956.

Extensive renovation of the church was undertaken in 1961, including a complete interior decoration and the installation of a new heating system. In the spring of 1964, St. Stephen's parish purchased property to serve as a convent for the teaching staff. The school building underwent some needed repairs and its educational facilities were considerably expanded. On September 17, 1964, Msgr. Ingenhorst celebrated his Silver Jubilee of ordination with the assistance of the congregation and visiting clergy.

St. Stephen's Church had 477 members in 1966 and the St. Stephen's Parochial School had 62 pupils.



Photo from Robert Trauger

St. Stephen's Catholic Church in 1902



Photo from R. D. Erdkamp

St. Stephen's Catholic Church as rebuilt in 1918.

Christian Science Society

The Christian Science Society organized in 1897. First meetings were held in a room of the Smith factory. In 1900, it changed its name to First Church of Christ, Scientist and met in a room above the First National Bank.

A concrete-block church was built in 1907, with Frank Craven the general overseer. He also laid most of the block. The church averaged 35 members. The congregation decided to disband in 1951 and the building was sold to the Assembly of God. Two years later this church also found it necessary to disband. The building was sold in 1953 to Ted Larsons, who remodeled it into a private home.



Photo from Mrs. Esther Jones First Church of Christ, Scientist (Exeter, 1907)

Methodist Church

As early as 1871, religious services were being held in private homes. The first Sunday School was organized 4 miles S of town and was carried on successfully for several years. The class was organized by the Rev. D. B. Lake in an 18' x 25' room above the H. G. Smith store, on the lot now occupied by the Barkmeier store; entrance was by an outside stairway.

From this class three denominations-Congregational, Baptist, and Methodist-were organized at different times during the year 1872. In 1873, the first schoolhouse was erected, and this was used

for some time by all the denominations.

Members of the different denominations took turns doing the janitor work and ministers came from near-by towns every two weeks for preaching services. After a few years, the school had to be given up and the Methodists found new quarters over the W. H. Taylor store. Rev. Davis from Indiana was the first resident pastor. He received the huge sum of \$450 per year and furnished his own house, which later became the first Methodist parsonage and served as such until the early 1900's. Until 1879, there had been no board of trustees, so the organization could not legally own property. In that year, J. P. Kettlewell, T. B. Farmer, C. A. Songster, W. L. Hildreth, Elias Peterman, and M. E. Trauger were named trustees. In 1880, there came some inclination to raise money to purchase lots on which to erect a church. The first effort was made at the close of a midweek prayer meeting at the home of a member. A collection was taken, but this fell short of the required amount. After the singing of a hymn, Mr. Songster suggested another collection, and this process was repeated until the needed amount was raised.

A 22-foot lot was purchased and the railroad company donated another, and, in 1881, the first Methodist Episcopal Church of Exeter was erected on the site of the present building. The structure was 28' x 48'. Eliminate the main auditorium of the present building and move the east and west ends together and you have the original

building.

Several years later the Epworth League sponsored the purchase of the bell which is still in use. The lighting system consisted of large kerosene lamps hung from the ceiling and heat was furnished by a large coal stove placed a little back of the center of the room. Later a large round "Oak" stove was placed under the building after the manner of a pipeless furnace.

In 1905, the Rev. J. W. Lewis convinced the members of the need for a more modern building and submitted a plan for the remodeled church, which was dedicated with fitting ceremonies in 1906.

The Ladies' Aid furnished the large north window and the G.A.R. donated the south one, with the understanding that they might use the building for their annual Memorial Services without charge as long as needed.

In the meantime, the board of trustees had purchased the building on the southeast corner of the block for a parsonage and during the pastorate of the Rev. W. Hull this building was extensively remodeled.

The church, as dedicated in 1906, was used with normal repairs until 1927, when, because of a substantial gift to the church, the members thought it advisable to refinish, redecorate, and fully modernize the building.

In the winter of 1934-35, the ceiling of the main auditorium was lowered and the church was completely redecorated. A large gas furnace replaced the former coal furnace and a gas floor furnace serves the west room.

In 1939, the church tower was made higher to house a "Singing Tower," a gift from Frank Farmer of Denver as a memorial to his parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Farmer. The tower may be

Photo from Mrs. Armin Bender Exeter Methodist Church (1881-1905). This church was cut in two in 1906 and the present sanctuary was built between the two parts. The tower was removed and placed in the angle.

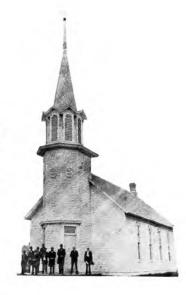




Photo from Edith Kranda

Exeter Methodist Church as remodeled in 1906. The church looked like this until 1927, when it was brick veneered and finished as it stands today.

heard in all parts of town and as far as 5 miles in the country. The Singing Tower here was the first in a Nebraska church.

In the spring of 1944, the Sunday School and Mission Study

Class gave the church an American flag and a Christian flag.
In March, 1945, the picture, "The Open Door," with its spotlight, was a gift from Frank Farmer. At the same time, the cross and candle holders were given by the Sunday School and Mission Study Class.

Sponsored by the W.S.C.S., a committee composed of Mrs. Pearl Steyer, Mrs. N. F. Whitmore, and Mrs. D. L. Hall prepared an honor roll of our World War II servicemen. An artistic frame was made and presented by Mr. and Mrs. Whitmore and a record book was presented by Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Trimbath. Mr. and Mrs. D. L. Hall presented a container for the record book and a group of friends had a spotlight installed for the display.

The church kitchen was remodeled in 1951. In 1959, the basement was remodeled and Sunday School rooms were partitioned off. At the same time a chapel for the M.Y.F. was installed in the east end of

the basement and a new furnace was also added.

In 1961, a new parsonage was erected. In 1964, the sanctuary was repainted, the church floors were refinished, and new furniture was provided for the pulpit.

At this time (1966) the church has approximately 250 members and 130 enrolled in the Sunday School.

Bantist Church

The Baptist Church was organized in 1872. The church building was erected in 1879, rather like the Congregational and Christian, but a little smaller. It stood facing north on the place where the Farmer Mortuary is now located. In later years a parsonage was built just east of the church, mostly by the labor of members. The Baptist Church was fortunate to have an outstanding quartet that was well known for their renditions of anthems at Sunday morning The first Communion set of plates and goblets were made of pewter. Later Mr. and Mrs. L. Gilbert presented the church with a beautiful silver Communion set. The silver set is at present in the museum at Nebraska City.

When the congregation became quite small, because of deaths and families moving to other communities, it was decided to disband. Those who wished joined with the Congregational Church in a federation of the Congregational and the Baptist in January, 1918.

It was necessary to use the Baptist Church for classrooms for school at the time when the first school grew too small and the new school had not been completed.

The church and parsonage buildings were sold about 1923. The church was torn down and the parsonage was used in the rebuilding of the Farmer Mortuary.



Photo from Edith Kranda Exeter Baptist Church in 1905

CIVIC ACTIVITIES

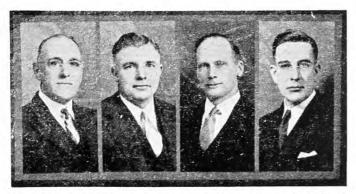
Farmer Male Quartet

The original Farmer male quartet, organized in the late 1920's, was composed of P. R. Farmer, 1st tenor; T. D. Clarke, 2nd tenor; A. E. Bashford, 1st bass; and L. T. Blouch, 2nd bass. Mrs. W. P. Wallace was the accompanist. They immediately selected suitable numbers and started meeting regularly for rehearsals. As soon as it became known that they were ready for public appearances, they were much in demand. They sang at many different functions and entertained in Exeter and community and in other Nebraska towns and communities.

Frank Farmer, of Denver, a brother of P. R. Farmer, became interested in the quartet, and gave much of his time and talents to their rehearsals. When in Exeter, he often accompanied them on singing engagements, where he would lead in community singing and also sing solos.

The quartet also furnished the music for many funerals. This was a part of the service Mr. Farmer offered to the public without extra charge. In January, 1934, the quartet had several recordings made of both their sacred and secular numbers. They also had photos taken for use in their work.

The community was shocked and saddened when P. R. Farmer was critically injured in an auto accident; he passed away September



The Farmer Male Quartet in the late 1920's. Left to right: P. R. Farmer, T. D. Clarke, A. E. Bashford, L. T. Blouch.

22, 1935. P. R. Farmer was the father of Burton Farmer of Exeter and Paul Farmer of Geneva. Both the sons are morticians, as was their father.

Mr. Bashford passed away in April, 1946. The two remaining members of the quartet, Mr. Blouch and Mr. Clarke, continue to make their home in Exeter.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Clarke learned to sing as a boy when he lived on the Isle of Man, an island between England and Ireland.

Medical Center

The Medical Center began by a vote of the people at a special election in February, 1956. The town board accepted the architect's plans in July and asked for bids. The building, of brick-veneer construction, cost approximately \$25,000. Its 28' x 65' area provides 15 rooms, which include a waiting room, three examining rooms, two laboratories, and two private offices. It is completely air-conditioned, with tile floors and smooth plaster walls throughout. The first doctor to occupy the building was Dr. James E. Loukota. At present (1966) the building is being used by two dentists who come out part time from Lincoln—Drs. Harold Demaree and Clifton Hicks—and by an optometrist, Dr. Delwyn Anderson, who comes once a week from Geneva.

The people of Exeter have tried, so far unsuccessfully, to interest a doctor in locating here permanently; but they have not yet given up either hopes or efforts.



Photo from Burton Farmer The Medical Clinic in 1967

Memory Manor

A retirement home for many of our pioneers became a reality in 1965. Memory Manor is a result of community co-operation. Mr. Turner, president of Bethel Homes, Inc., agreed that if the local area would raise \$25,000, Bethel Homes would build a 45-bed modern nursing home. In the same spirit in which pioneer Nebraskans long worked together, the money was raised; and we now have, in a handsome building on the north side of U.S. 6 at the western edge of Exeter, a pleasant refuge for those who wish to rest, or who because of illness have laid down the plow, shovel, hoe, pot, or pan, and must relax in the well-earned, kind care of others.



Photo from Burton Farmer

Memory Manor in 1967



Photo from Burton Farmer

Exeter swimming pool, constructed in 1964.

Swimming Pool

The Exeter Woman's Club decided, in May, 1963, to promote the project of a city swimming pool. The club's Community Improvement Committee asked for, and obtained, a meeting with the state Department of Health. The village board co-operated, and a meeting of interested citizens evoked considerable enthusiasm. The board de-



Exeter Post Office in 1912. Left to right: Mort Rasmussen, William Hildreth, Postmaster; Ed Mitchel, Grace Hildreth (Agur), Joe Rogers. Notice the belt-drive motorcycles.

cided to place a bond issue before the public on November 12, 1963. The Woman's Club put on a publicity campaign, as a result of which the citizens approved the bond issue. As a result, Exeter is the proud possessor of a modern swimming pool. It was opened to the public in July, 1964, and a formal dedication was held on May 30, 1965.

City Park

Soon after the swimming pool was built in the City Park, in 1964, much work was done to improve the park. The park was completely reseeded, and the city installed a sprinkling system. Picnic tables were repaired and painted. Parking space was provided for the many people who use the park and the pool. There is also playground equipment for children. To the south of the park is a wellused baseball diamond. This general area is a busy place in the summertime.

Postal Service

The first post office in Exeter was located in the home of Warren Woodard in 1871, 1/2 mile E of town on the present Leo Becker farm. It was later moved to the home of Dr. H. G. Smith here in town. Through the years it had three different locations on Main Street before being moved to its present site in 1928. The Exeter post office started as a fourth-class office, and then remained a third-class office for many years before being rated as second class in 1950.

Postmasters have been the following persons: Warren Woodard, 1871; D. A. Wentworth, 1886-87; Dan Kochendarfer, 1887-89; A. T.
 Hager, 1890-93; James Kelley, 1893-97; C. N. Phillips, 1897-1906; William J. Hildreth, 1906-15; Dan Kochendarfer, 1915-19; Harry V. Ingram, 1919-30; Frank Ainsworth, 1930-47; Frank Leibee, 1947-65;

T. I. Larsen, 1965-



First Air Mail into Exeter in 1938. Left to right: Richard Ferguson, Ed Mitchel, Billy Mitchel, Clark Crane, Verne Johnson, Leo Koehn, Chester Taylor, J. D. Rogers, Pilot (unknown), Irene Murphy (hidden), Frank Leibee (hidden), Frank Ainsworth, postmaster.

Rural Route delivery started about the year 1880, with three routes. The first carriers were George Borland, Smithe Wallace, and Fred Phillips. Other carriers included William Mitchel, Ed Hall, Mort Rasmussen, Paul Farmer, Seron Manning, and Joe Rogers

We now have two routes out of Exeter. The carriers are (1966) Kenneth Taylor (Route 1) and John Drommond (Route 2)

This is but one story of many rural mail carriers. On April 27, 1911, a young man sorted up a pouch of mail at the local post office and started forth on his rounds as a rural letter carrier. Forty years and three days later he made his last official delivery to the patrons on Route 1, Exeter. He was J. D. Rogers, who made his first delivery as a temporary carrier. He received his permanent appointment in June, 1911. The first route was 24 miles long, when there were three routes out of Exeter. When the routes were consolidated, Mr. Rogers became carrier of Route 1, 431/2 miles long. Through all the years, however, he served the same area north of town and many of the same

For conveyance he used horses, motorcycles, various types of automobiles, the last that vehicle known as a Jeep. It was computed that Mr. Rogers traveled about 500,000 miles as a mail carrier.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Elevators

The first elevator in Exeter, built in the 1870's, was owned and operated by James Dolan. By 1878 there were two elevators; names of owners other than Mr. Dolan are not available.

In 1907, there were four elevators. One was the Ragen Co. Elevator, between the Burlington stockyard and the street. This is believed to be the elevator later owned by Joseph Coates. W. W. Kimberly and Co. was located by the Burlington depot. It is now (1966) the location of the Co-op elevator office. The Kimberly Elevator was sold to the William McNeil Grain Co. between 1910 and 1920. The Nye, Snyder & Jenks Elevator, located south of the Methodist Church, was operated by George Horton. There was also the Trans-Mississippi Elevator.

On April 8, 1911, farmers of the Exeter community met to organize a Farmers' Elevator. Permanent officers were Walter Howarth, president, and Levi Steyer, secretary. One month later, \$4,000 was pledged, to be divided into \$25 shares, with no one to have more than eight shares

In September, 1911, the board met and bought the Trans-Mississippi Elevator for \$3,000. With a few added expenses, the total cost was \$3,206.90. S. G. Manning was hired as manager. Business prospered and the year 1912 showed a good profit. In 1913, coal sheds were built. Total bushels of grain bought in 1912 were 207,040 (including corn, wheat, and oats). During the next 10 years, big business items were grain, coal, flour, cement, binder twine, and apples. At times, apples were bought by the carload. Profits continued annually. New board members were Walter Howarth, Levi Steyer, Will Jansen, Henry Kolar, Sam Gillan, Fred Underwood, and N. M. Becker.

The big addition of this decade was the purchase of the Joe Coates Elevator, on the Burlington, in May, 1919, for \$5,000. Assets



Map of Exeter in 1926.

at end of this period were \$24,677.87, with 221 stockholders and 405 shares. Levi Steyer resigned as secretary of the board.

The second decade (1920-30) saw important figures and changes take place. After 11 years, Walter Howarth resigned because of ill health. Before leaving, Mr. Howarth gave a full report, showing a large saving to patrons. In 1924, 372 cars of wheat, corn, and oats were shipped. In 1927, the petroleum business was added. Mr. Gillan's bid was accepted and then gasoline and fuel was sold to patrons. In October, 1929, George Thompson became the new manager. There were policy changes during this time. Interest on stock was frequently as high as 10 per cent. The board added William Morgan and E. J. Barbur to its list of directors.

The next decade (1930-1940) was a period of drouth and depression. Wages had to be cut, and the board offered to share undivided profits in grain, whatever was needed, to help the even more unfortunate farmers in northern Nebraska. Rough times continued. Wages again had to be cut; the secretary voluntarily reduced his pay. Public audit started, and it was necessary to borrow money with which to operate. The year 1936 brought the need for a garage business, with Hans Nelson in charge of this department. The board now included new members John Due, Herbert Howarth, John Miller, Charles Trauger, Jim Krejci, Godfrey Mueller, Axel Nelson, and Bob Doupnik. In December, 1939, there were 154 stockholders and

261 shares.

Between 1940 and 1950, some facilities became obsolete; the result was the purchase of the McNeil Elevator on the Burlington for \$10,000. Now the old Coates Elevator was torn down for the lumber. The '40's saw some wage increases for the manager and employees, with year-end bonuses. Many repairs were made on the elevator, with some grinder-moving problems. Also added were some small buildings. Business directly reflected the fruitfulness of the years. The new directors added were Frank Lovegrove, Roy Eberhardt, Bert Schwab, William Keil, Walt Guthrie, Willard Steyer, and Olaf Due. In 1947, Walt Barkmeier resigned and Bill Ruhl was hired as the new manager.

The decade 1950-60 was an unusual one. The first five years showed substantial additions. A larger scale, a new feed house, and a roller mill to process feeds were added. The commercial fertilizer business expanded considerably. The six-year period from 1955 to 1961 saw great expansion in storage facilities, increasing capacity to 605,000 bushels. A \$19,780 grain dryer, a liquid fertilizer plant, and a 5,000-gallon bulk oil tank were added. In 1964, an anhydrous plant and equipment were added, as well as a 4,000-gallon tank for the oil plant. In 1965, a molasses blender, with a 4,000-gallon molasses storage tank, was added.

Thirty-five names have appeared on the board of directors list.

The latest names added were Aaron Guthrie, Harve Johnson, John Leif, John Geiger, Jay W. Dyer, Eric Rasmussen, and Joe Hassler. The last total showed 540 stockholders and 5,650 shares, indicating

growth and progress.

The Farmers' Elevator, now known as Exeter Co-Operative Elevator Co., has been fortunate in having had only four different managers during its 55-year life. The board of directors were also dedicated men. One member, Fred Underwood, missed only one meeting in 37 years.



Photo from William Ruhl McNeil Elevator about 1915



Photo from William Ruhl Exeter Co-Op Elevator in 1967



Photo from John Bacon Smith Tag and Index Factory. The addition was built about 1910.

Charles C. Smith Index Tab Factory

The first successful factory in Exeter was that set up by Charles C. Smith for making index tabs. About 1895, while a clerk in his father's bank, he devised some adjustable tabs to flag frequently used accounts and save a good deal of time. Callers at the bank who saw these tabs in use took to asking him if he would make a few for them to use in their businesses. This was the very modest beginning of a business that, in later years, gave the name of Exeter more nearly world-wide fame than that of any other American town of its size.

By 1896, Charles Smith was receiving enough orders to justify opening a small factory and employing workers. His first factory was in the directors' room of his father's bank. The business prospered and quickly elbowed its way out of the directors' room. It might even be said that it elbowed the bank right out of the bank building and, in time, also absorbed an adjoining building. When even this grew inadequate, an addition was built onto the back of the plant.

During the early years of the business, Mr. Smith gave primary consideration to developing, improving, and expanding his line of products, first in the continental United States, and then in foreign countries. He also aimed at improving manufacturing procedures. He was instrumental in developing machinery to decrease the amount of hand work in making his products.

The tabs are used to index books and card systems, Some, made wholly of steel, are called Signals or Guides. The signals may be either plain or printed with months, numbers, or letters. The guides have insertable paper labels protected by a celluloid covering.

The leather tab (which has the distinction of being the first and oldest) is made of bronze clips with a projection of leather, this being stiffened by a filler of felt.

The gummed strips, made of paper, cloth, and leather, differ from the tabs and signals in that they are not removable, but are gummed to the paper or card in the place desired for indexing. The cloth and leather strips may also be celluloid covered, which provides a means for slipping a paper label under the celluloid, thus making an index which may be changed. These strips are sold by the foot but in actual use are cut up into as short lengths as desired.

At one time, almost all the signaling items used throughout the world were made in Exeter. Although competitors later arose, the Exeter factory long remained the acknowledged leader for quality signaling. As this is written (1968), the Exeter factory has been discontinued.

The business which Mr. Smith built up was incorporated after his death. The present owners are largely people who either worked for him or sold the products which he manufactured in Exeter.

The Lincoln Journal and Star reported, in June, 1953:
"An old Exeter business firm is under new ownership and has been incorporated. Following Mr. Smith's death in December of 1951, the firm came under trusteeship of the First Trust Company of Lincoln. Mr. Smith's daughters, the heirs, then converted the estate into cash, the purchaser being York businessman Willis E. Stover. According to the records in the office of County Judge Guy A. Hamilton, the amount involved in the liquidation transaction was \$23,500.

"The new corporation has bought the business from Stover. The corporation is capitalized at \$100,000. Incorporators were Charles Peabbles, Robert L. McCloskey, and Delores M. Link of Washington D. C.

"An expansion of domestic sales is planned but no change in manufacturing personnel or plant organization is contemplated, according to manufacturing manager Nesbit F. Whitmore of Exeter. Thirteen persons are now employed.

"William H. Cravens of Round Hill, Virginia, is president of the corporation. Glen F. Monnig of Exeter is vice-president and general manager and has been acting secretary and treasurer. Nina Chambers is office manager.

"The 'Government Schedule of Supplies' has listed the firm's products for more than 40 years. Most of the stockholders, a corporation officer reports, other than officers and employees, are persons in the stationery and office fields."

The Lincoln Star in 1957 said of a long-time member of the firm: "After 57 years with the local Charles C. Smith Index Tab Co., Nesbit F. Whitmore has retired. Mr. Whitmore joined the firm in

1900. His first salary, as a boy of 15, was \$1.50 for a 25-hour week.
"His first duties included scuffing the small steel tabs so that glue would stick to them more readily. Mr. Whitmore, in his long tenure with the company, saw the firm's output increase from one lone type of index tab to more than 50 various sizes, shapes, and colors.

"His title before he retired this month was vice-president in charge of production. His inventiveness and mechanical inclinations

have resulted in many improvements in the operations. "Mr. Whitmore's second job at the plant was a 'printer's devil." From 1908 until 1951, when Charles C. Smith died, he was in charge of production.

"Mr. Whitmore has seen the firm's personnel vary in number from six or eight to more than 70. Labor-saving machines, many of which Whitmore had a hand in inventing, have reduced the need for workers but have speeded production.

"Mr. Whitmore invented one machine himself and it is one of the most used in the plant. It takes rolls of cloth and pressboard and makes them into a gummed index stripping. One of his last jobs before he retired was the making of more than 800,000 tabs for an airline on this machine. Mr. Whitmore has now retired."

Thane D. Croston was manager of the Charles C. Smith Index Tab Co. from January, 1956, until October, 1959. After leaving the Smith plant, Mr. Croston started his own factory.

Debus Bakery

In 1912, the Debus Brothers, Sander (Sam) and Henry, started a bakery in the back room of their ice-cream parlor. After operating here for one year, they bought a lot on East Main St. and erected a building on it. (This building is now occupied by Bob's Body Shop.) Their only piece of machinery was an electric dough mixer. The rest of the work was done by hand. They installed a Peterson Pegan continuous fire-brick oven. As time went on and their business increased, they purchased more machinery. They hired T. D. Clarke as a helper in February, 1916. Their output at this time was an average of 800 loaves of bread per day. They also baked rolls and pastries.

In 1917, the brothers dissolved the partnership. Henry went to Fremont, and Sander became the sole owner and manager. T. D. Clarke remained as an assistant baker and Mrs. Nellie Taylor as clerk.

During World War I, many commodities were scarce and Sander was compelled to use substitutes in his bakery goods. He succeeded well with substitutes while many other bakers were not so successful. This news spread rapidly and in a short time he was averaging 3,500 loaves of bread per day, besides the rolls and pastries. The shop was shipping baked goods to many other towns, by express, on both Burlington and Northwestern trains. This expansion necessitated more help, and Sander secured the services of his half-brother, A, J, Maser of Lincoln. Other helpers included Faye and Donald Johns, Clyde Long, and Noel Smith. Mrs. T. D. Clarke assisted Mrs. Taylor as clerk.

In 1923, Sander decided to move his bakery to Hastings and formed a corporation. Frank Craven, one of the incorporators, became vice-president and continued in that capacity until 1956 when Sander Debus passed away. Mr. Craven then became president until another company bought out the corporation in 1964.

(Frank Craven built the first reinforced concrete silo in Nebraska in 1908. The silo is still in use today.)



Photo from Don Johns

Debus Bakery about 1918. Bread in boxes ready to be shipped out on the railroad.

Exeter Canning Factory

A two-story frame canning factory 24' x 80', with frame porch and attached stairway, was located in the east part of Exeter in the Smith addition, near the C.B. & Q. R.R. This plant, owned by A. J. and Cordelia Bird, canned tomatoes, corn, yellow string beans, and peaches.

On this land was an orchard which had peaches, plums, cherries, and apples. Some of the apple trees had been grafted with other trees and produced large crab apples.

The canning factory, first started in 1890, was sold to H. S. Bedford in 1893. Some time between 1893 and 1902, the building was destroyed by a fire.

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Hill bought the land in 1902. The building was gone but some of the foundation was still there, and later some of the labels were plowed up. While the factory was in operation, a large amount of canned corn had spoiled. These cans were dumped. and heavy rains, falling soon after, washed the cans onto some of the farmers' land, much to their disgust.

Exeter has also had a mattress factory several times, but they were never successful and of short duration.

Exeter Roller Mills

Founded as a co-operative in 1886, the Exeter Roller Mills was later purchased by H. S. Bedford. In 1893, the Fillmore County Democrat said:

"It is one of the boasts of the city and stands among the best mills in the State. The capacity of this mill is 100 barrels and among his favorite brands of flour we note 'Our Best,' 'Silver,' and 'Ladies Favorite.' Mr. Bedford ships his flour to all points in Nebraska and has also a wholesale house at Lincoln, and branch or exchange houses at Seward and Bee. In connection with his mill here, he has a large storehouse 244 x 80 feet, two stories high, in which now is stored 65,000 sacks of flour, a sight of behold."



Exeter Roller Mills in 1886

Newspapers

The Fillmore County News was operated for approximately 15 years by Richard Ferguson, 1938-1953, when Mr. and Mrs. Bill Sand purchased the paper. The Sands were here for six years, until 1959. At that time the News was sold to John Farley, who had the paper for six months.

The present publishers are Mr. and Mrs. Al Bonta. They purchased the paper in February, 1960. The Bontas commuted from Alexandria for six months before they could find adequate housing for themselves and their nine children.

The Bontas had operated the Alexandria Argus for eight years before coming to Exeter. After the Alexandria paper was sold, Mr. Bonta worked for 1½ years for a newspaper in Fairbury. The Fillmore County News has 750 subscribers.

Kittinger Mink Farm

The mink business started in 1944, more as a hobby than a business. The Burton Kittingers began with five young mink the first year, then traded the surplus males for more females. Some of the mink were raised on shares with other mink ranchers. Another rancher would furnish the breeding stock and the mink were raised by the Kittingers for half.

Mr. Kittinger had been in the blacksmith and welding business, but the mink business demanded more of his time and after a few years he sold the shop and devoted his time to mink raising. For the last several years the Kittingers have kept about 400 breeding females and pelt around 1,500 to 1,600 mink each year.

A 25-ton freezer-cooler, and a 1-ton feed mixer and grinder are used to handle about 1,700 lbs. of feed per day in summer and fall, mostly chicken and beef by-products.

The Kittinger mink farm raises three different colors of minkthe pastel, sapphire, and natural dark mink.

The Kittingers are members of the Great Lakes Mink Assn., the E.M.B. Assn., and the Nebraska Mink Growers Assn.

In November, there is a mink ranchers' show at Kearney. A few from other states also enter mink. Competition is keen; the best mink of each color wins a trophy and the next four best win ribbons. The Kittingers have won two trophies and numerous ribbons.

March is the month for mating the mink. Most of the young are

born in May. The average litter is from 31/2 to 4. Some females will have 1 or 2 young mink, while others may have from 8 to 10. The average weight of a new-born mink is 1/3 ounce. A full-grown female weighs 2 to 21/2 lbs.; males weigh up to 61/2 lbs. Plenty of feed and water are important to the growing mink. The mink are pelted in December and the furs are shipped to New York for auction.



Photo from Burton Farmer

Kittinger Mink Farm in 1967

Modern Products, Inc.

Modern Products was incorporated in 1959. The first product manufactured came several months later from an idea brought to the company by Ray T. Hall. The idea was for a machine to bore horizontal holes in the ground. Anyone operating a trenching machine needs an earth auger of this sort when he encounters something that cannot be trenched, such as a railroad track, highway, driveway, or street. Holes are drilled to carry water mains, sewers, telephone cables, electric cables, gas lines, etc.

A network of distributors was built up, covering the United States, Canada, Alaska, Japan, Thailand, and South America, enabling the firm to capture its share of the world's auger market. The products are advertised in national trade magazines and through

personal contact with distributors.

This product caught the interest of the Omaha Steel Co., who considered the auger line and a small trencher introduced by Modern Products. Inc., as ideal companions to their recently acquired Brown Trencher line and the Modern line was bought up by Omaha Steel.



Fire destroyed a portion of the Modern Products building in 1967. The building, now owned by Ray T. Hall, has been reconstructed and houses the offices of the Horizontal Boring Co.



Photo from Mrs. John Plettner John, John, Jr., and Joel Plettner in 1941

Plettner Hatchery

The Plettner Hatchery started in 1919 in a home basement. Here a capacity of 2,200 eggs were hatched in common lamp incubators. In 1927, the home business was discontinued but resumed, with a 30,000-egg capacity, in the old *Fillmore County News* building (later sold to the American Legion).

The hatchery was moved in 1931 to the Odd Fellows building, operating four 60,000-egg machines. It moved again in 1939 and ran 120,000-egg machines. The hatchery was a partnership between John and Elmer Plettner from 1927 till 1950, when the partnership dis-

solved. The hatchery has since been discontinued.



Photo from William Ruhl Aerial view of Exeter business district—July, 1957



Photo from John Terril John Terril in his creamery on the west side of Main Street (1924)

BUGS AND WEATHER

Grasshoppers

The early settlers were faced with many obstacles. The breaking of the prairie was backbreaking labor; then they had to wait, hope, and pray that the rains would come at the right times, plentiful enough but not too much, to permit a bountiful harvest. These were things that could at least be foreseen. But the grasshopper plague was something totally unexpected, and they could do nothing but watch their crops vanish in a matter of days—or hours. Many homesteaders gave up and returned to their native states. Others gave up farming and sought other occupations. E. S. Coates wrote, in a Nebraska Farmer article:

"They came for three years. The family had 40 acres in crops. One day about the middle of July, just a few days before their 20 acres of wheat was to be cut, the wind changed from the south, where it had been for a few days, around to the north. Soon came a roaring noise and a haze. Then came a rain of grasshoppers. In two days, the garden, potatoes, wheat, and the corn—everything was gone. The hoppers rose and sailed off to the south. In the spring, my family got seed to plant the 40 acres again, and broke up some more land, planting it to corn. They harvested a small grain crop that year, but the hoppers came again in August, took the corn, took the late garden and potatoes.

"The next spring, they planted all the plowed ground and broke more. They harvested a big wheat crop, the corn was in the roasting ear, the potatoes were immense, and it seemed the pioneers' cupboards would be full. They planned a mass meeting at the settlement to give thanks for the absence of the grasshoppers and for a full crop. The preacher had just offered a prayer of thanks, when wind came up from the north and the grasshoppers began to fall on the assembly. The worst grasshopper scourge of them all was on. The hoppers were so ravenous, they ate the corn and then crawled into the shocks and ate the heads off the grain.

"The hoppers had stayed that fall and laid eggs. When the crops were nicely up, millions of them hatched out and began to feed. Everyone despaired. The day my folks were packing up to go back to Iowa, a brisk wind came out of the north. The grasshoppers arose in a huge cloud and left forever." [This three-year siege occurred in northeastern Nebraska.]

In the locality around Exeter, they were bad only one year,

according to Miss Elula Smith:

"Some of the farmers were quite unfortunate. Mr. A. T. Hager had purchased a harvester and he and his son Orson and Mr. Farmer had cut the Hager wheat and finished that belonging to the Alexanders at noon, July 10, 1874. After enjoying one of Mrs. Alexander's bountiful dinners, Mr. Farmer was walking home. A cloud seemed to be passing over the sun, and soon there were grasshoppers everywhere, a smaller species than we are accustomed to see. They not only destroyed the crops and gardens but feasted on the mosquitobar covering the windows. They evinced a great fondness for onions, destroying them so completely that nothing was left to tell the tale but the ground holes where they had grown. The air was literally alive with hoppers, so much so that the youngsters went out with barrel staves and beat down the insects. They were so thick on the Burlington track, and the wheels slipped so badly, that the engineer was unable to stop the train at the depot, but when he got the train stopped, he backed to the station."

Grasshoppers were back again to plague the farmers in the 1930's. Although by now the farmers were better equipped to deal with them, they again consumed distressing amounts of the farm products. Many farmers put out poisoned bran, but this did not prove to be very effective. The grasshoppers not only ate grains and gardens, but were known to have chewed on fence posts and even on clothes that were hung out on lines to dry. The problem seemed to solve itself as the drouth of the 1930's passed. Since that time, many

insecticides have proved to be quite effective.

Blizzards

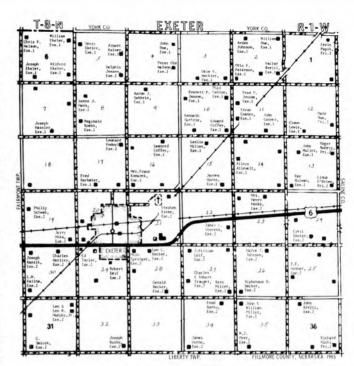
Of these storms, Miss Elula Smith wrote:

"One of these storms long to be remembered was the Easter storm which began on Sunday, April 13, 1873, and lasted three days. Something which seemed like solid snow commenced falling at daybreak. Snowdrifts covered everything and in some places nearly all the stock froze.

"During one blizzard, Mr. Chris Kobe [a few miles away in York County] had to feed corn to his cattle through a hole in the roof of the barn, and he shoveled in snow to quench their thirst. He had to keep this up for two weeks. [During the storm] he found his way from the barn back to the house only by following a lariat rope.

"Many of us recall the blizzard of January 12, 1888, and have read the story of Minnie Freeman, later Mrs. J. C. Penny, who kept her scholars in a sod house until the roof blew off and then tied them together with strings and took them safely to the home of a settler. She was called the 'Nebraska heroine.'

"In Exeter, it was one of those mild days that often come in January. Many of the children went to school without coats or hats.



Mattie Wallace (Crooker) was without a coat or hat; however, Del Van De Venter loaned her his coat. The storm broke right after recess and our parents began arriving to look after us. The older scholars helped to get the younger ones home, so none of the children in town had to remain at the schoolhouse overnight. Belle Alexander was attending school in the district 2 miles E of town. Miss Ada Robinson was the teacher. After the storm commenced, her brother came from town and carried in firewood. One of the older boys took the horses to a farmer's barn. A Scotch neighbor made some scones and another sent cookies. The teacher and scholars remained at the schoolhouse, and several walked home in the morning over the snowdrifts.

"To one person, at least, the storm was a welcome relief. Gertie Barbur (Rasmussen) was attending a country school taught by Nettie Manning. Gertie didn't like the teacher and was often compelled to stand on the floor because of some misdemeanor. Such was the case on this particular afternoon. When it commenced to storm, she was allowed to take her seat.

"One mother, southeast of here, perished in her effort to go to

the schoolhouse to get her children.

There have been many blizzards since that time, but none that claimed as many lives or caused as much loss of livestock. Nowadays, the hazards of a blizzard cannot compare with those of pioneer days. We have better ways of getting through the snow (though even these are not 100 per cent effective), and we have radio weather forecasts which enable us to anticipate storms and take precautions. Even so, Nebraska blizzards are not to be taken lightly.



Photo from R. D. Erdkamp

Main Street looking south (1937)

Drouth

One major hazard in farming country is drouth. The two worst in our history were those of 1893 and 1934; statistics are not infallible, but the 1934 drouth may have been the worst ever. That year very few farmers had any crops at all, and the next year was not much better. But conditions slowly improved, and the land was green once more. Many became discouraged and moved elsewhere; but the pioneer spirit was still present, and most stayed on and kept trying and survived.

Fairmont Township

The following account is based on one provided by A. L. Brown:

Fairmont township is a 36-square-mile area of gently rolling, fertile farmland in the northern tier of Fillmore County, the second township from the east. It is bounded on the north by York County, and on the east by Exeter, on the south by Madison, and on the west by West Blue townships. On survey maps it appears as T8N, R2W of the 6th Principal Meridian. It is named after the community of Fairmont, the largest population center within its borders, one of the many railroad-developed communities in Nebraska. The town itself was called Fairmont (according to Nebraska Place-Names) because of its "fine surroundings and somewhat elevated position."

The township is crossed from east to west, about one section below its middle line, by the Omaha-Denver line of the Burlington, and by U. S. Highway 6, which closely parallels the railroad. Its western boundary is formed by the north-south U. S. Highway 81. The 32-mile Fairmont-Helvey branch of the Burlington runs southeast out of the town of Fairmont, and its most southeasterly section (Sec. 36) is crossed from northeast to southwest by the Fremont-Superior line of the Northwestern R.R.

Watered only by Indian Creek, which winds from south to north through several sections east and northeast of Fairmont, the region was originally almost barren of trees. Only a few sections boast natural water the entire year; the number depends on the amount of annual rainfall. This lack of a reliable water supply and of timber for fuel and homes demanded settlers with deep faith and a strong back. Lumber and provisions were hauled overland by horse and wagon from Lincoln and Nebraska City until 1871, when the Burlington Railroad laid tracks into the town of Fairmont. This rail link to the eastern towns and cities of Nebraska closed the first chapter in the township's history and opened the area to a new wave of settlers.

To compensate the railroad for the cost of building, the government granted the Burlington R.R. alternate sections of land within a five-mile reach of both sides of the tracks. The railroad in turn offered inducements to settlers to purchase the newly-acquired land for farm and home sites. The township began to gain residents. Many Civil War veterans, encouraged by the Homestead Act, dreamed about plentiful harvests while turning the rich soil. Each homesteader planted 100 trees in an effort to block the soil-stealing winds which whipped over this expanse of prairie land.

Most of the settlers took advantage of the 80- and 160acre tracts that were offered. Some held one-half, threequarter, and one-section farm lands which they leased to tenants. Some of these holdings were known then as the Fisher and Mellen sections. Charles Dumond held land titles to more than 640 acres.

The industrious settlers were beginning to prosper when in the summer of 1874 a sea of grasshoppers swept over the land, devouring everything that had not been harvested. A tract of 40 to 60 acres of corn was stripped within a few hours. Garden vegetables disappeared in a matter of minutes. Even fork, shovel, and hoe handles were partially eaten by the insect marauders.

A second major tragedy occurred on January 12, 1888, when nature unleashed a blizzard that still today is the measuring stick for the severity of any Nebraska winter storm. A dry, fluffy snow fell steadily through the morning and afternoon, creating a blanket of white. Suddenly, about 2:30 P.M., wind raced out of the northwest, picking up the loose snow with suffocating force and obliterating the day.

The youngsters were in school, and the stock was on the range. There was no time for a general alert, no time to prepare for the storm. Some teachers realized the danger of dis-

missing school and kept pupils in the schoolhouses overnight, saving many lives. Livestock, not so fortunate, traveled with the storm and perished.

The storm played itself out during the night, leaving behind it drifts 8 to 10 feet high, packed hard enough to withstand a man's weight. The temperature stood at 30 degrees below zero.

This frigid, never-to-be-forgotten night left behind it at least one heart-warming story, the story of a boy and his dog. The pair started home in the midst of the storm. They didn't make it. A searching party the next morning was attracted by a tiny spout of steam rising from one of the drifts just north of the John Hall corner east along the railroad right-of-way. Digging through the hard-packed snow, they found the boy and his dog unharmed by the blizzard. The warm breath of the dog had kept open a passage in the snow sufficient to provide air, and his body heat had helped keep them both from freezing.

Despite nature's cruel tormenting, the population of the area increased. A census taken in 1888 showed that Fairmont township had approximately 400 and the village of Fairmont had 1,800 residents. Every 80- or 160-acre farm was occupied by the owner or a tenant, and some of the occupants were prosperous enough to afford help in the home and in the fields.

When courage began to wilt along with the crops under a relentless summer sun, many of the settlers in the northern and eastern portions of the township turned to Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Horton for counsel and comfort. The Hortons, who were among the early settlers, had journeyed from Illinois in a covered wagon. They lived in a sod house on their homestead (the SE 1/4 of Sec. 2, T8, R2W) for their first 11 years before moving into a solid frame residence. It was to the sod house that their far-flung neighbors came seeking answers to their problems. The Hortons would read from the Scriptures, offer a prayer, and extend their hospitality. Mr. Horton held church and Sunday School services on the homestead for many years, following the service of the Church of God. A prayer session with the Hortons became a welcome Sundaymorning custom for men and women attempting to build a life in a country that constantly tested their courage and their faith.

When the first death occurred in this pioneer neighborhood, the Hortons gave a piece of their land for a cemetery. This pioneer cemetery is located on the NE corner of the SE ¼ of Sec. 2, T8, R2W, about 7½ miles NE of Fairmont. Many pioneers were buried there; by 1923, the Horton Cemetery contained 39 grave markers—14 for infants and small children, 25 for adults. Seven infants and 15 adults rested in unmarked graves. It is still used as a burial place for some of the pioneers' descendants.

A schoolhouse erected in this section later replaced the Horton home as the gathering place for Sunday church services. The Horton homestead is now owned by Bert Schwab, a grandson of James Whitaker, who filed on his homestead in 1866.

The railroad had continued its journey westward to span the nation while maintaining passenger and freight schedules in those communities which it had joined. One passenger train regularly spent the night in Fairmont. This overnight stop meant providing water and coal for the engines. To provide the water, wells were dug on a site 3 miles E of Fairmont, just north of John Hall's corner. (John Hall owned the NW ¼ of Sec. 26.) An elevated tank was built there, and power to operate the pumps was furnished by windmill (when the wind cooperated), or by horse power. Somewhat later, wells and coaling facilities were provided in Fairmont as the town sought to improve its desirability as a stopover point.

Population growth created a need for better school facilities. Fairmont township, like the others, had districts designated for schools. Bonds for a schoolhouse in District 19 were voted on September 11, 1872, and Fairmont established a grade school and a high school. The site selected was the block between Main and Jefferson streets (east and west) and between Violet and Myrtle avenues (north and south). This is still the basic site for the Fairmont school system. School opened, according to the Bulletin for November 19, 1872, "last week with Miss Elva Lewis, teacher." A second grade school was established in 1885; by this time the school population included 340 students in the town district and 120 in the rural districts.

The first mail route in Fairmont township was established in 1901, running to the north and west of the town. The second route embraced the southern and western sections of the township. By 1920, four rural mail routes were in

operation.

Crop failures and skidding farm prices twice threatened the survival of the area. The first series of "bad years" occurred in the 1890's. Corn and wheat went for 8 to 10 cents per bushel, and eggs sold for less than one cent apiece. Hogs

dropped from \$2 per hundredweight to 25 cents.

The second such period occurred during the 1930's when Nebraska was caught in the deadly twin pincers of drought and national depression. Bank closings ruined many. Federal aid programs such as the Works Progress Administration provided sorely needed work for men who could no longer make a living from their farms. Surplus food and clothing were made available to the needy. The start of World War II and a sharply increased demand for food for our allies sent farm prices upward. At the same time, nature contributed muchneeded moisture.

The young men of the area went off to war, and machines, in ever-increasing numbers, came into common use. Farms had more mechanical compickers, elevators to crib the corn, hay balers to care for the alfalfa, and self-propelled

combines which could be operated by one man.

More acres were placed under cultivation. Increased production was encouraged by increased attention to conservation of the land. Contours, terraces, and proper drainage facilities replaced older, more haphazard methods on most farms. A new era of farming had commenced.

Thanks largely to the efforts of Nebraska's Senator George W. Norris, electricity came at last to the farm home. Modern plumbing, refrigeration, and lighting were among the

benefits that came with public power lines.

About the same time as the electric lines came muchimproved highways, this time as the result of state rather than Federal action. Gasoline-tax revenues led to the development of an all-weather road program in Nebraska. The statute provided that the first mile and the last mile of each mail route from the post office were to be graveled as soon as money became available, then the second nearest and farthest miles, and so on until all postal roads were fully graveled. By the simple process of adding one mile of graveling each year, by 1967 only six miles of Fairmont township roads remained ungraveled. The township was further helped by the construction by Fillmore County of all-weather farm-to-market roads in areas not covered by the mail routes.

The first Rural Free Delivery route, Route No. 1, out of Fairmont was the second rural route established in Nebraska. The first postal carrier appointed was Frank R. Robinson, who assumed his duties in June, 1901. He drove a team of horses, and sometimes rode a bicycle. It was necessary to stop at noon to feed the horses and let them rest. He was succeeded by J. Lewis Davis, a Fillmore County homesteader. He drove the first automobile used on the route, a Brush roadster. Upon Mr. Davis's retirement after about 14 years of faithful service, Ernest Souba carried the mail for

a short time.

In June, 1916, a young man, Preston P. Ogden, became the carrier. He was soon claimed by the Navy in World War I. Desiring to do his bit toward winning the war, a Methodist minister from Exeter, the Rev. F. C. McVay, drove every

day to Fairmont and carried the mail on R.F.D. No. 1 until Mr. Ogden returned from the Navy. Mr. Ogden remained a most efficient and faithful carrier until his retirement on March 26, 1962. At that time, Willis Biegert of Geneva took the route and is still the carrier.

Other carriers working out of Fairmont over the years have included Floyd Abbott, George Rudisell, George Curtiss, H. Carson, S. E. Beckman, M. E. Mellen, O. A. Izer, W. Crandall, and E. Bender.

FAMILIES

A. M. Black, a Civil War veteran, settled in the township in the early 1870's. He homesteaded the SW ¼ of Sec. 22, which still remains the property of his descendants. His farm was one of the finest in the township. Much of the lumber he needed was transported in wagons from Lincoln. He helped organize the Presbyterian Church and was a faithful member until his death on November 15, 1919.

Another pioneer farmer was **Jacob Witter**, who arrived in 1870 by wagon from Illinois. He settled on the NE ½ of Sec. 12, where he built a sod house for his family, later adding a fine set of farm buildings. He took great pride in maintain-

ing one of the best homesteads in the area.

Other settlers who should be remembered were: A. B. Compher, C. B. Thompson and his brother John, J. Kemper, E. Milner, J. Lefler, and J. Hall. This list is necessarily incomplete.



An early sod house, built in 1878. (The people in the picture are Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Brown.)

Fairmont

Written by A. L. Brown (in 1954)

In the spring of 1871, the South Platte Land Company, following usual practices, sent four ex-soldiers into this locality to pre-empt four quarters of land not deeded to the railroad. This section was to become Fairmont, Nebraska.

The site chosen for the town was in the west portion of the section, about one block south and two blocks west of where the Methodist Church now stands. Four board shacks were built on the four inner corners of the area, each shack located on a different quarter-section. Here offices were established while the South Platte Land Company completed transactions for title to the tract. The land company then surveyed the town site and offered lots for sale. Several buildings were put up in the fall of 1871, and by May, 1872, the town boasted 40 structures.

The town's fortunes improved with the arrival of the first Burlington train. The opportunity to live in a "railroad town" attracted new settlers. In addition, one train laid over each night in Fairmont, giving citizens a chance to see new faces and to hear the latest news from eastern parts. It made

home seem a little closer for the early settlers.

Stores started to spring up even while ground was still being broken for the town site. J. E. Porter's general store, located on the corner now occupied by the Cubbison Block, was among the first. In the spring of 1872, William Spade, a pioneer carpenter, built a store just north of Porter's for his brother, Dan Spade, who sold general merchandise.

The post office, called Hesperia before it had a town to be identified with, was moved from its first location on the northeast corner of the section into the Spade store. The postmaster was W. H. Brown. As the business district expanded, the post office was moved to the Talmage corner, one block west of the present Farmers State Bank building. The new postmaster was Roy Finney. Pictures of this new post office appeared in the *Fillmore Chronicle* on April 14,

1927, and again on April 4, 1939.

By the fall of 1872, the name of Fairmont had been tested and accepted by residents of the new town. A school building, hotels, more stores, lumber yards, and coal and feed yards were under construction. Three brickyards were started to supply materials. One of the brickyards was west of the branch railroad line leading toward Geneva. The other two located east of what is now the railroad track leading toward Helvey. Evidence of their efforts may still be seen in Fairmont today. Some of the buildings made from bricks supplied by these companies which still remain are the Farmers State Bank, the hotel, the library, and the old Opera House.

Fairmont has had three different "main streets" during its first century. The first main street (Fillmore Avenue) ran from the west side of the present depot south to the Cubbison Block corner, a distance of two blocks. The second main street (Jefferson Street) ran from the Cubbison corner east; and the third, Fairmont Avenue (often called, erroneously, "Main Street"), became and remained the main business street. The citizens were not fickle, and the changes of main street were not the result of any political tug-of-war. Fire and water, or the lack of water, determined the changes.

A disastrous fire that in 1886 burned the Cubbison Block and other business houses on Fillmore Avenue was responsible for the first change. At that time Fairmont had a water-pressure system for fire protection which consisted of two reinforced wooden water tanks, one of which was 50 feet high and was to be used only for emergency purposes. When the higher tank was put into use for its first emergency, the extra pressure burst the wooden water mains, and

the town was helpless to combat the flames.

Rather than rebuild on the destroyed site, the businessmen started a new main street running east from the Cubbison corner. Once again business houses opened up on both sides of the street. Burned out once, the town turned largely to brick for its new stores. The old wooden water mains were replaced with iron pipes. But Mother Nature still had a trick up her sleeve for the citizens of Fairmont. In the early summer of 1899, she hurled tremendous gusts of wind and rain at the elevated water tower and toppled it. Then, on April 19, 1901, fire destroyed the R. G. Hall hardware store, the O. E. Miller drugstore, and the offices of Dr. S. F. Ashby, M.D., and Dr. Horner, the dentist. This fire was enough to change the history of Jefferson Street and turn it into a side street.

In 1901, Bert Aldrich began construction of a modern steel standpipe, which is still in use. The town sank two new wells to guarantee an adequate water supply, extended the mains throughout the town to give homes greater protection, and acquired a large steam plant to operate the pump.

The first mayor of Fairmont was E. L. Martin. Sitting with him on the council were John Cubbison, F. G. Usher,

William Gaylord, and Fred Page.

Mayor Martin was both prominent and colorful. He was about the same height as "Uncle Sam" and had chin whiskers and longish hair. For patriotic occasions, he dressed himself in high-waisted trousers, a swallowtail coat with red and white stripes, and a tall stovepipe hat with stars in the band. During those early years, no Memorial Day or Fourth of July parade was complete unless Mayor Martin, thus patriotically attired, was at the head of the marching forces, which consisted largely of uniformed Civil War veterans.

In 1876, Fairmont merchants decided to show their appreciation to their patrons throughout the area by providing all with a day of rest and relaxation. Bunting and Chinese lanterns gave the city streets a festive air. A superb noon dinner was served; games and sports were arranged, and time was allowed for visiting and the exchange of both tall and short tales. A public speaker made the customary re-

marks, and a band concert climaxed the program. The event proved so popular that it became an annual affair. In honor of the early merchants and their patrons, the occasion is called the "Old Settlers' Picnic Day." It is still held annually in July or August. The date varies slightly from year to year, depending on the dates when a carnival is available.



Picture from Lewis M. Whitehead View of Fairmont (July 4, 1876).

By the year 1888, Fairmont's population was pushing 1,800; it was the metropolis of the area. Business firms began to fan out more widely. The growth resulted largely from the start of new business and industry which, in turn, created new job opportunities. The railroad, for instance, gave employment to more than 50 men who worked in the depots, the freight yards, the roundhouse, and on maintenance and coal and water crews.

Real-estate offices opened up to aid the families searching for a home or a farm site. These were followed by insurance agencies, two weekly newspapers, and the beginning of the town's professional class: lawyers, doctors, dentists. Fairmont Avenue was lined with men's and women's clothing stores, shoe shops, wagon and blacksmith shops,

and an implements dealer.

One of the larger businesses was the Fairmont Creamery, which used the town as headquarters for its widely scattered services. It gave employment to butter makers, cream gatherers, packers and freight handlers, office and clerical help, and so made up the town's largest single pay roll. Production capacity at one time was 100,000 pounds of butter per year.

Other enterprises which helped give Fairmont the right to call itself a metropolis of sorts were four hotels or inns, four livery and feed stables, and two lumber yards.

Fairmont was not without manufacturing in those early days. One of the major industries was the Chase & Clark Hardware, Tin, and Cornice Works. It had a contract to produce 1,000 20-gallon cans for the creamery. The company's ornamental cornices were used to decorate the fronts of most of the town's brick buildings.

Another early industry was a monument works established by R. Conroy. White marble and granite were shipped here by the flatcar-load from Vermont. Fairmonters shaped and polished the stone. Fairmont also had a flour mill with a daily capacity of 80 barrels, and two cheese factories. Other products manufactured in Fairmont were incubators, sanitary mite and louse-proof chicken roosts, and post-hole

diggers

Before an annual county fair was set up at Geneva, Fairmont boasted an exhibit center where livestock, grains, vegetables, and handicrafts could be displayed. The 40-acre site was at the extreme northwest corner of the city area and was encircled by a race track. No fair was complete without horseback races and trick and fancy riding. After visiting the exhibits, Fairmonters and their visitors would gather around the track to eat dust and cheer their favorite drivers, who rode on buckboards or light conveyances drawn by two horses. Bicycle racing also made a place for itself on the Fairmont track. It was here that Robert Bennet, later to

gain national fame as a bicycle racer, first raced his bicycle against other riders and fast horses. The fairgrounds included a horticulture building, some permanent horse and livestock barns, and a judges' stand. The first fair of the Fillmore County Agricultural Association, organized in May, 1872, was held in Fairmont in 1875. This fair prospered, and continued for several years after the establishment of the Fillmore County Fair in Geneva.

The town acquired its first weekly newspaper, the Fairmont *Bulletin*, in 1872. It was not an immediate financial success and passed through the hands of numerous unsuccessful publishers during its first 15 years. It was purchased in 1886 by Joseph Frazier and renamed the *Fillmore Chronicle*. Frazier and his son, L. W. Frazier, operated the paper; it remained in the family until the death of the son on November 19, 1954. After that date, it was published by John Edgecombe of Geneva, until it was merged (May 1, 1957) with the *Nebraska Signal*, of Geneva.

In the early days, Fairmont boasted a second paper,

the Nebraska Signal, edited and published by Will R. Gaylord and Dr. J. B. Brazelton on the first floor of the old Opera House. This newspaper was founded in 1881 and was moved to Geneva by Frank Edgecombe in 1896.

The town's waterworks system was acquired from B. E. Aldrich by T. J. Bender in 1908. He added an electric plant which provided for street lights and home electricity. At first electricity was available only from early evening until midnight; later, service was provided on Monday and Tuesday when the housewives did their washing and ironing.

Man is by nature gregarious, and five fraternal organizations appear in the town's history. The Masons were granted a charter in 1874, perhaps a step or two ahead of the Odd Fellows. Other lodges active in the town's early years were the Woodmen, the Workmen, and the Knights of Pythias. The Masons and Odd Fellows remain active in Fairmont today; each group is housed in a building equipped with lounge and recreation facilities, and meeting and dining rooms.

Fairmont Township Homestead Map

William H. Tidyman	Charles D. Brower			Ella M. Gaylord	Charles Peterson	Wilson Dart M	James orehead			Louis		Henry and V	Muller		1	
Napoleon B. Roe										S. H. Kingory		David I Bivins	2.			
Thomas Roe	James M. Lowder			James Bratt		Jerome Halsey				Samuel Bair	Ezekiel Horton	Jonaths Horts	an A	******		
		Milton Oliver Bailey Crowder	Philip Winand					Edward David B Dawson Hoover	George Helms					Aaron B. Stonerook	Jacob Witter	
			Wm. M. Armstrong						Theodore Winters	1						
	7	Arthur P. Gray	B. H. Turner				*****	Joseph Watson	Christopher Emigh	10000				Jacob Pflug	David Kelley	
Charles Peter Fosdick Rose	Richard H. Wirts									Cyrus Thomp	B.	George Winan	W.			
Joseph Michael	Virgil A. Stewart		7		s == Schoo	6 Land			15	Noah Thamp	M. son	Rice Kelly	Samuel J. Atkinson	•••••	13	
		Elvira Cramer	Fred M. Chapin					Abraham M. Black	Delazon M. Black					Mary F. Phillips	James Campbell	Phillip Schwa
		Isabeli Cramer														
	i	M. H. Brown	Clarence C. Chapin		2			D. H. Freeman	Sarah J. Ballard Ferdina Torge	nd		1		Charles N. Phillips	Reason Burge	Α.
George Enderly	James Seely			Joseph F Coffin	٦.	Luther T. Gaylord				William		J. Lew Davis	ia .			
												William Hunt, J	r f		1	
S. A. Crawford	Obediah Scott			John Crum		Sylvanus Gaylord	т		27	John Stgrret		Freder G. Cla	ick irk		15	
												John G. Morris				
1		H. G. Bliss	James Jones					Andrew A. Frey	James M. Hill							
	31	William L. Stewart	Philadelphia G. Carey	ļ		3	*****	Philehis P. Dawson	Thomas H. Davis			is		Sc	hool Land	
								Hiram Lee	4							

While people built their homes and developed their farms and businesses, they also took time to build churches. Fairmont in its fledgling years had five churches: Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Catholic.

In 1923, at the urging of the Rev. David Honsaker of the Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian and Congregational churches merged, to solve a membership problem. The following year, the Rev. William Perry was named minister for the Presbyterian-Congregationalists, and plans were drawn for a church building. The money was raised by subscription. Cornerstone ceremonies were held on October 11, 1924, and dedication services for the new church—of red brick trimmed with white stone — were held in April, 1926. This Federated Church and the Methodist Church are the surviving churches that today minister to the religious needs of Fairmont citizens.

Methodist Church, Fairmont 1960.

Photo from W.E. Fleischauer





Federated Church (Presbyterian and Congregational), Fairmont (1960).

Photo from A. L. Brown



Photo from A. L. Brown Methodist Church, Fairmont (before 1914).



Photo from A. L. Brown Congregational Church, Fairmont, about 1900.



Presbyterian Church, Fairmont, about 1912.

Photo from A. L. Brown





One result of a growing town is overcrowded schoolrooms. Such was the case in 1885 in Fairmont. Two ward
grade schools, one on the north side and one on the south
side, were built to relieve the crowded conditions. When they
were built, the two schools were considered among the finest
of their time. By 1908, further changes were in order, and
the town approved a bond issue for the construction of a
new school building, centrally located, to accommodate all
grades. An auditorium, a gymnasium, and more classrooms
were added later to absorb a steadily increasing number of
youngsters.



Photo from Ora Robbins Fairmont High School (about 1887).

Special mention should be made of several educators who devoted a major portion of their lives to educating Fairmont's young. High on the list would be Miss Alice Jackson, who taught the fourth and fifth grades in the Fairmont schools for 37 consecutive years. Miss Jackson taught reading, writing, and arithmetic as expected, but she also interested her students in wildlife, flowers, and nature in general. Her contributions to the Fairmont school were to be long remembered by her former pupils. At a meeting of Fairmont alumni in May, 1951, a motion was made and carried that the association should provide a memorial gift to the schools in her name. Miss Margaret Aldrich, Mrs. Helen Malsbary Brown, and A. L. Brown were appointed as a committee to choose a project. In view of Miss Jackson's unending interest in the welfare of her children, the committee decided in favor of playground equipment for the grades as well as for the high school.

Mimeographed letters stating the cause and the purpose of the project were sent to all members of the alumni association and produced about \$900 in donations. School parents turned out in force to install the equipment. Land



High School Playground Equipment, donated by Alumni. (Alva Brown in front of slide.)

adjacent to the school grounds was obtained to permit the development of a football field and sports area. Bleachers were erected and sod was planted, and floodlights were installed for night games.

Lewis Goodrich, superintendent of the Fairmont schools in 1896, was the father of Willard E. Goodrich, a county board member representing Fairmont and West Blue townships from 1948 to 1960. Miss Carrie Dewey was another early teacher who taught both in country schools and in Fairmont.

Street paving came in 1919, when the city council voted pavement for certain districts, with the costs to be paid by landowners whose property faced the areas to be paved. Because a major highway (U.S. 81) entered the town from the north section line, the council voted to have city pavement run from the street connection with this section south to within one block of the Methodist Church, then west for three blocks. Before this was completed, another paving district was voted, this one embracing the main business area. A hard brick paving was used for the surfacing.

In recent years, highways have reshaped the geographical outline of Fairmont. Specifically, U.S. Highways 6 and 81 cross in Fairmont, and are flanked by motels, cafes, filling stations, and garages. Those service units not located on the highways became casualties of the auto age.

One of the more recent developments in Fairmont was the construction in 1956 of a grain-storage elevator with a capacity of some 200,000 bushels. This greatly helped to meet the storage needs of Fairmont and its surrounding territory.

Fairmont, besides being located at the crossroads of U.S. 6 and U.S. 81, is on the main line of the Burlington R.R., with two branch lines, one going south to Hebron, the other going southeast to Helvey. Its location, coupled with its markets, its consolidated school, its churches, and the hospitality of its citizens, offer ample evidence that Fairmont will have a good future as well as a proud past.

The following account of early Fairmont appeared in the *Bulletin* on June 19, 1873:

Fairmont was laid out in November, 1871, by the B. & M. Railroad Company and contains at this writing somewhere between one and two hundred inhabitants. It is building rapidly and bids fair to be one of the best towns along the road. It has an intelligent, thrifty, wide-awake population, who believe in churches and schools and have no use for ginmills. There is no liquor sold in the town and not a licensed saloon in Fillmore County. Fairmont has a Methodist Church and is building a \$5,000 schoolhouse. Preaching is kept up by several denominations in the town and vicinity.

The town has two hotels, the Fairmont House and Gaylord House. The proprietor of the latter, Mr. S. G. Gaylord, is an old hotel keeper formerly of the American House, South Bend, Indiana. His house is one of the neatest and best kept hotels in Nebraska. Though it is a small place it is Multum in parvo, and we have yet to hear of a man grumbling at the fare of the Gaylord House. Mr. G. is building a large hotel and railroad eating house near the depot at an expense of about \$5,000, which he expects to occupy in a few weeks. When this is completed Fairmont will be better supplied with hotels than most towns of its size in Nebraska. Mr. Gaylord was the first settler of the town site, and is one of the leading spirits in every public enterprise that promises to be of any advantage to the town. Fairmont contains one newspaper, four general stores, one drugstore, one hardware store, two lumber yards, one blacksmith shop, one milliner shop, one harness shop, one shoe shop, two hotels, two livery stables, and one butcher shop.

S. J. Richard keeps the Fairmont House. This is a snug hotel, centrally located and doing a good business. On account of failing health Mr. Richard wishes to sell out and leave the country, and this is an excellent chance for some man wishing to engage in the hotel business in a live and growing town, where the business is not overdone.

Pinney Brothers keep a large store and deal in every article usually sold in a general store except dry goods. Their store of fancy and staple groceries is very large, and we saw something less than an acre of agricultural implements in their yard that they had not yet got housed. They are old

settlers here and keep the post office in their store. They are first-class business men and hold a very large trade of country produce of all kinds, as well as store goods. D. A. Phillips keeps one of the handsomest drugstores in this section of the country. He deals in everything usually kept in drugstores, including paints, oils, etc. Mr. Phillips graduated in pharmacy at Ann Arbor Michigan University, and thoroughly understands his business. He is a shrewd, bright young fellow, still a bachelor and will be a splendid catch for some Nebraska belle. His good looks won't save him.

At Phillips' we made the acquaintance of Frank H. Newton, a dentist by profession and a splendid good fellow by practice. He offered his services gratis to pull all our teeth but we declined the generous offer and shall convince him that we were in the right of it the next time we visit the City Hotel at White Cloud, where he has recently been installed as landlord. The City Hotel is bound to maintain its popularity with such a genuine fellow for a landlord.

P. P. Dawson has a very large hardware store and tin shop. His building is 25 x 85 feet and crammed full of tinware, stoves, shelf, builders' and general hardware and cutlery. He also keeps a large assortment of agricultural implements, including Reed breaking plows, Schutler wagons, Brown's corn planter and Garden City and John Deere Moline plows of all designations. Mr. D. is one of the solid men

of Fillmore County, and does a heavy business.

J. E. Porter & Son have the largest general store in the city. Just everything in the goods line, is the shortest way to tell what they keep, or, rather what they sell, for their goods were going out like hot cakes when we were there. They had five hands in the store, all busy, and Mr. Porter informs us that they still had another man engaged outside selling agricultural implements, of which they keep a very large stock, as well as shelf and general hardware. Mr. Porter came from Minnesota, and is the oldest merchant in Fillmore County. He began on a small scale and is now one of the solid men of the county. The son is a chip off the old block and is business all over.

W. C. Ziegler is a young merchant from Iowa. He has a very handsome general stock of goods and the handsomest lady clerk we have met in Nebraska. He is a splendid business man and his wife is a helpmeet that any man might be proud of. He was the busiest man in town and will soon get

rich if his present run of trade holds out.

The Gaylord brothers, Will R. and L. T., are sons of the hotel keeper and have a handsome store filled with dry goods, clothing, notions, boots and shoes, hats, caps, groceries, etc. They are live young men and full of business; they trade largely in produce, also, and are bound to keep things

moving. Their trade is large and increasing.

Dorrance & Shepherd are among the first settlers, if not the first in the county. They have a very large general store in Fairmont and another at Geneva, the present county seat of Fillmore County, where they keep everything, including hardware and agricultural implements. They are a live firm of shrewd, far-seeing merchants, and are undoubtedly among the best business men on the line of the B. & M. road. They have a very large trade.

The Fillmore County Bulletin is the name of a neat sixcolumn paper published in Fairmont, by Strother & Gerrard. It is a handsome, readable sheet, well filled with the local news of the vicinity, and the proprietors are gentlemen who

understand their business.

Joseph Michael runs a blacksmith shop with two forges, and seemed to have all the work he could get away with. He is a reading man, an excellent mechanic, and as a matter of

course must be a good citizen.

C. J. Cushman is a young, active, wide-awake chap that we met in Fairmont. He has the only meat market in the city, but runs it up to the handle, and keeps his place neat and tidy, and prides himself on always having the best meats

to be got in the country.

Chapin Brothers are a firm of contractors and builders, who have a handsome shop in Fairmont. They furnish plans for buildings, being practical architects, and are putting up the best jobs in Fairmont and vicinity. They are live men, and are the proprietors of a saw that beats our buzz saw more than a double discount.

We like the people of Fairmont, and hope it may grow to be a big city. They showed their appreciation of good newspapers by subscribing largely for the Daily and Weekly Gazette, for which they have [our thanks].

This "Business Directory" is from the Bulletin for March 22, 1877:

Attorneys-J. O. Chase; Eller & Fifield; Conner & Maule; R. B.

Likes; Will R. Gaylord; M. F. Bock. Agricultural Implements—Geo. H. Pinney; C. H. Maxfield; Palmer, Stuart & Co.; M. H. Brown & Co.

Bankers-E. B. Branch & Co.

Bakery-L. Steiger.

Blacksmith Shops-G. Gepfert; S. Gibson

Barber—Frank Grover.

Carpenters—Turner & McCall; W. C. Massey; W. H. Chapin. Confectionery—J. W. Bliss; John Barsby. Dry Goods—L. F. Whitehead; W. C. Ziegler; Erwin & McKinney; J. E. Porter.

Druggists—D. A. Phillips; E. W. Wetherby. Groceries—B. F. Ruffner; S. H. Oldham; J. E. Porter & Son.

Elevators-Joe Price; Palmer, Stuart & Co. Furniture—J. D. Noble

Lumber-Freeman & Chapin.

Hardware—P. P. Dawson; Edward Brophy.
Hotels—Henry House (W. C. Henry); Gaylord Hotel (L. Gaylord).
Insurance—H. G. Bliss; J. W. Logan; Eller & Fifield; Conner & Maule.

Jewelry-Robert Locke. Monuments-Frank Conroy. Painting-John Vondra.

Land-H. G. Bliss; Eller & Fifield.

Livery—George Rudisil.

Millinery-Mrs. A. Christian; Miss Locke; Mrs. W. Stewart.

Meat Markets-F. C. Bennett; Robinson & Pinney

Notaries Public-Will R. Gaylord; Eller & Fifield; H. G. Bliss; W. P. Conner; J. O. Chase.

Physicians-Hart & Cotton; Brazelton & Johnston. Restaurants-J. W. Bliss; L. Steiger; P. Palmer.

Saloon—Ferdinand Schear.

Saddlery and Harness-I. H. Williams.

Shoes and Boots—P. Behnke. Wagon Maker—C. Beecher.

The next year, the Weekly Nebraska State Journal offered this summary of Fairmont's business enterprises (in the issue of October 25, 1878):

The merchants and business men generally of this town are prosperous and well pleased with their location and business prospects...

The artizans of this thriving city are alive to every interest of their place, and neglect nothing that will add to

its importance...

The Fairmont "Bulletin" is the name of the only paper published here, and Mr. L. T. Calkins, recently from Burlington, Iowa, is the editor. The Bulletin is one of the very best local papers in the state, and Mr. C. is a gentleman of many years' experience. This paper has always been a good representative of Fillmore County and has done a great deal towards developing it.

E. B. Branch & Co. do a general banking business, and are regarded as one of the solid institutions of the West. They make collections, pay taxes, negotiate loans, and buy and sell foreign and domestic exchange. The business of the bank is ably conducted by Mr. E. B. Branch, a young gentleman of considerable ability and experience, having been in the banking business for about 13 years, and is assisted by Mr. J. R. Van Buskirk, who is in every way a reliable and thorough accountant. This is one of the pioneer banks of western Nebraska, and the oldest in Fairmont.

The Fillmore County Bank is one of the solid institutions of this county, and is in a flourishing condition. Hon. J. O. Chase, the proprietor, is one of the pioneer settlers, is a gentleman of several years' experience, and is considered a good financier. Mr. Chase has been a member of the Legislature, and is also a practicing attorney at law, having practiced his chosen profession for the past seven years. The bank enjoys the confidence of the entire community, and as a consequence does an extensive business. Mr. I. B. Chase, a brother of J. O., is the gentlemanly cashier, and is a young man of considerable business ability and experience.

Messrs. Bliss & Shelley are the wide-awake agents for the sale of Burlington & Mo. River Railroad lands for this land district, and also comprise law, collection, and land agency. They are agents, too, for the sale of lots in this growing town, which they offer at reasonable prices. Special attention given to making collections, paying taxes, buying and selling real estate, examining titles, furnishing abstracts, and making conveyances. They rent and lease dwellings and

farms, negotiate loans, buy and sell mortgages, sell tickets to any point in the world, and in fact do a business that would astonish your eastern readers. Mr. Bliss came here in '71, from Missouri, Mr. Shelley is from Illinois, and has been

here about one year.

Conner & Maule, attorneys and counsellors, are men of recognized legal ability, and, having the fullest confidence of the people of this section of the state, thereby enjoy a very large practice in the county, state, and federal courts. They are one of the oldest law firms in Fillmore County, and have made for themselves very enviable records, and are thoroughly identified with the interest of Fairmont and Fillmore County. Mr. Maule has occupied for the past two years the position of district attorney of the first judicial district of Nebraska, and as an evidence that he has given complete and general satisfaction we mention the fact that he has been renominated on the Republican ticket for the same position for another term. Both these gentlemen are young in years, but being constant and applied law students, their opinions upon all matters pertaining to law are regarded as reliable. They have a very large and complete library. We might mention the fact, also, that their collection depart-ment is well and systematically arranged and carefully looked after by Mr. Harry Finigan, a young gentleman who has been reading law with them for the past year and who is regarded by all as one of the most efficient accountants and bookkeepers in the state.

George W. Fifield, attorney at law, is a young man of recognized ability, and enjoys liberal practice in the county, state and federal courts. Mr. F. has the fullest confidence of the people of this county, and carefully and promptly attends to all business entrusted to him. He pays particular attention to collections, and has one of the largest businesses in this branch of any attorney in this portion of the state.

Copeland & Fifield are loan agents, and report within the past two or three weeks a very fair business. Their plan is to loan on short time at reasonable per cent, thus giving their customers the opportunity of receiving benefits without bankrupting them. Messrs. Copeland & Fifield are both gentlemen of large business experience and their success is simply a question of time. Mr. C. is from Rockford, Illinois, and came here a short time since.

Richard Witz is a justice of the peace, attorney at law, real-estate agent, a great admirer of Shakespeare, a jolly good fellow, and a regular Nilsson of the male persuasion. "Dick" is one of the old settlers of Fillmore County, and is

a Badger born [i.e., Wisconsin] boy.

Brazelton & Farnsworth are physicians and surgeons, and they enjoy a lucrative practice. These gentlemen are experienced physicians, Dr. B. having had 25 years' practice. He was surgeon in the 134th Indiana Regiment, and has lived in Fairmont five years. Dr. F. has resided here about 18 months, and likes Nebraska better than his old home, Illinois

Messrs. Ruffner & Anderson are extensive dealers in dry goods, groceries, clothing, boots and shoes, hats and caps, and everything, in fact, pertaining to a first-class stock of general merchandise, and inform the people of Fillmore County that they buy all their goods exclusively for cash and are thereby enabled to sell at bottom prices. In fact, they do not propose to be undersold; and by fair and liberal dealing, and selling exclusively for cash, they have gained the confidence of the people of this section and are consequently enjoying a very large trade. Mr. Ruffner conducts the affairs of the firm at this point, and Mr. Anderson resides in Glenwood, Mills County, Iowa.

J. W. Price is the name of the proprietor of one of the largest elevators in Fairmont, and in fact one of the largest along the line of the road. Mr. Price is handling a very large amount of grain, having shipped this season 130 cars from this point, and will, before the season is over, ship about 300 cars more. His elevator at this point has a storage capacity of 12,000 bushels. He also has another large elevator in Grafton from which he ships considerable grain. Mr. Price enjoys the reputation of paying the very highest price for all kinds of grain, and consequently handles a liberal share of the grain from this point.

from this point.

C. N. Paine & Co. have a large stock of lumber which is offered at prices, in some instances, below those of any Lincoln firm. The yard is directly under the management of Mr. H. S. Gordon, and this fact alone is a sufficient guarantee that the business is transacted to a dot, and that Paine & Co. will

not be undersold by any firm. Their stock is kept up sufficient to supply the demand, and it is no unusual matter for several carloads of lumber to arrive daily direct from the mills, which are located at Oshkosh and Merrillan, Wisconsin. Paine & Co. have one other very extensive lumber yard at Hastings. Mr. Gordon was formerly with Mr. Tuttle at Lincoln, and thoroughly understands his business.

Tidball & Fuller are proprietors of one of the largest lumber yards at this point, which is directly under the charge of Mr. C. H. Kitredge, a gentleman who thoroughly understands every part of the lumber business. This firm has yards also at Crete and Friendville, and carry very large stocks at each place. They sell their lumber on very small margins, and consequently enjoy a very large trade in this county.

Stuart Brothers are extensive grain dealers and have one of the largest elevators in the city. They probably handle as much grain and stock as any shippers along the road. Have been in business about six years, and came from Manchester,

Illinois.

Mr. P. P. Dawson is an extensive dealer in hardware, stoves, and tinware, and carries a very large stock of everything in his line. Mr. Dawson is a young man who thoroughly understands his business, and by fair and liberal dealing has built up a very large trade in the county. Mr. Dawson has been in business in this city since 1871, and is one of the pioneers. He is also the proprietor of Dawson's Hall.

Martin & Noble are extensive dealers in wagons and farm machinery. They handle the McCormick harvester and self-binder, Hapgood sulky and gang plows, Geo. Esterly & Son's seeder, Moline Plow Co.'s plows, Dickey's fanning mill, Eclipse windmill, Prize mower, Whitewater wagons, Van Brunt & Barber seeder, Elwood Manf. Co.'s goods, Champion corn planters, Buckeye drills and cultivators, iron and wood pumps, standard horse rakes and cultivators, carriages, buggies, and wagons. They are also agents for the celebrated Nichols, Shepard & Co. "Vibrator," and they sell a great many of them. Both gentlemen are pioneer settlers and are from Wisconsin.

S. W. Lockwood has the only exclusive boot and shoe store in town. He has just opened out a full line of boots and shoes of all kinds which he is selling cheap as the cheapest. He makes a specialty of custom work, and pays particular atten-

tion to repairing. He came from Ohio last January.

A. S. Shepard is the polite and efficient postmaster at this place, and has two assistants. Mr. S. has had charge of the government business here for the past five years. He is gentlemanly, always pleasant, and in fact has all the qualifications of a good postmaster. This gentleman came here when there was no Fairmont, and has witnessed the unalloyed prosperity and progress of his favorite town with no small degree of satisfaction. Mr. Shepard kindly furnished us with the following report of business transacted at this office. Amount of stamps sold during the year ending Sept. 30, 1878, \$2,000; number of money orders issued in the past year ending Sept 30, 1,239. The mails are at least one-half heavier for the present year than in '77.

George H. Pinney is a wholesale and retail dealer in farm machinery, hardware, carriages, buggies, spring wagons, etc., and carries a very large and general stock of everything in his line. Prominent among the machinery he handles we might mention the Studebaker, Mitchell, and Kansas wagons, the Buckeye mower and reaper, Wood's harvester and self-binder, and makes a specialty of fine buggies and carriages of every make and pattern. Mr. Pinney has resided in Fairmont about six years and is recognized as one of the leading and most

reliable citizens.

Gorham, Treadwell & Co. are extensive dealers in agricultural implements and farm machinery, and positively proclaim that they will handle no machinery that is not as good as any in the market. They handle among other machinery all of the celebrated Marsh goods, the Harrison wagons, the Glidden steel barb wire for fencing, and all the Gorham goods. This is one of the prominent firms of Fairmont, and by fair and liberal dealing with the farmers, have their entire confidence, and are consequently enjoying a very large trade.

J. A. Aikins manufactures and deals in all kinds of harness and saddlery and keeps a very large stock of everything in his line constantly in store. Mr. Aikins in a thorough mechanic and turns out none but first-class work. He has resided in Fairmont about one year, and came from Pawnee City, Nebraska.

Lewis F. Whitehead carries a fine stock of dry goods,

boots and shoes, hats and caps, and a general stock of notions. He has without doubt one of the neatest stores in Fillmore County, and does his share of the business. Mr. Whitehead has been here about five years, and came from New York. Mr. Whitehead also has branch houses in Harvard and Friendville.

W. C. Ziegler carries an extensive stock of dry goods, ready-made clothing, boots and shoes, hats and caps, notions, and everything usually kept in a first-class establishment. Mr. Ziegler is at present suffering with an attack of typhoid fever, and during his illness Mr. M. H. Brown, well known in Fillmore County as a clever gentleman, has charge of the store.

Mellen & McNeal are extensive dealers in hardware stoves, and tinware, and carry a very large stock of everything in their line. These gentlemen have been in business here but a short time, having purchased the stock lately owned by Mr. N. H. Pinney, but are by fair and liberal dealing building up

a very large trade in this county.

I. H. Williams is a manufacturer of and dealer in harness, saddles, collars, bridles, whips, halters, combs, brushes, etc. He pays particular attention to repairing, and warrants all work. Mr. Williams is an old experienced saddle and harness manufacturer, and formerly carried on extensive business in

England. He came here in 1871.

Atherton, Willson & Son are the leading druggists of Fairmont, and carry a fine large stock of drugs, medicines, patent medicines, oils, paints, varnish, toilet articles, stationery, books, notions, etc. They also have an extensive jewelry establishment, this branch of business being carried on by Will S. Willson. This firm sells a great many groceries, also, and their trade comes from all portions of the county.

Blakesley House—A. Blakesley, proprietor—is the only first-class hotel in the city, and Mr. Blakesley thoroughly understands his business as a landlord, never overlooking anything that will add to the comfort of his guests.

C. Beecher, blacksmith and wagon maker, has rather extensive shops and is prepared to do all kinds of repairing of farm machinery. Mr. Beecher keeps none but the best mechanics and turns out only first-class work. He has resided in the county about four years.

Blakesley, Carson & Co. are the proprietors of one of the largest livery, feed, and sale stables in the city, and they keep their stables well stocked with fine horses and carriages. Parties wishing a team can get on short notice as nobby a turn-out at this stable as can be found anywhere in the West.

Mrs. A. Christian has one of the neatest millinery establishments in the West, which she keeps well stocked with a fine line of millinery, notions, and fancy goods. Mrs. Christian is thoroughly conversant with every branch of her business and is well informed in all the very latest styles and fashions. She enjoys a very large trade. Has been in business about two years, and came from Plano, Illinois.

Prescott & Chapin are contractors and builders, and are recognized as gentlemen who are thoroughly conversant with every branch of their business, to which fact the excellence of their work will bear witness.

Levi Jones handles groceries, provisions, queensware, glassware, canned fruits, etc.

O. H. Martin & Co. have a stock of drugs, medicines, paints, oils, perfumeries, and toilet goods.



Photo from A. L. Brown

"Bird's Eye View" of Fairmont in 1879.

The following passages are extracts from a historical article in the Fairmont *Bulletin*, January 3, 1884:

The town, as originally surveyed in October, 1871, comprised the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ and 460 feet of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 30, T8,

R3W, in all comprising 188.67 acres . .

The first sermon was preached in the fall of 1871, at the new railroad depot, by Rev. G. W. Gue. Late the same year the building of the Methodist Episcopal Church was commenced. This was the first church edifice in the county. J. W. Stewart was pastor.

The first newspaper, called the Fairmont Bulletin, was

established early in May, 1872, by Will R. Gaylord.

The first death occurred in the summer of 1872, and it was that of a young child of Mr. and Mrs. William Chapin.

The first school was taught in the summer of 1872, by Miss Elvie Lewis, now Mrs. Dan Phillips, in a small frame building rented for that purpose.

The first marriage took place in the fall of 1872, and was

that of Clarence C. Chapin and Miss Morgan.

The early history of Fairmont is marked by no remarkable events other than its wonderful progress. In the spring of 1873 the town had attained such size that it was determined to become incorporated as a village, which was accomplished May 26, 1873, and A. S. Shepard, H. L. Edwards, W. C. Ziegler, J. E. Porter, and B. F. Parliman were appointed trustees.

Among the first acts of the new village board was to secure the laying out of a park adjoining the town site. The town company donated the land, and a fine park, comprising a little over seven acres, was laid out, and, in due time, was planted to trees. This park has ever since been the pride of the village, and has received careful attention. The result is that at this date the trees have attained sufficient size to afford good shade, and the ground having been sown to orchard grass, the park presents a very attractive appearance.

In 1873, the schoolhouse was built, and was 24' x 48' in dimensions, with two wings, each 10' x 24', and the entire building two stories high. The schoolhouse grounds comprise an entire block, which was donated by the town company.

This was planted to trees.

Fairmont continued to improve very fast until the summer of 1874, when the grasshoppers ruined the crop throughout the country tributary to it, when a dull period followed for about two years.

Churches and Schools

The church societies of Fairmont are the Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Catholic, and Episcopal. The first four named have church buildings. The Methodist Episcopal church was built in the fall of 1871; the Presbyterian in 1873; the Congregational in 1881, and the Catholic in 1882.

The schools are in a prosperous condition. To the large schoolhouse erected in 1873, an addition has been built, 24' x 32', and two stories high. The school is well graded and is divided into four departments. Great care is taken to secure good instructors, and the pupils in attendance make rapid progress.

Societies

Fairmont Lodge, No. 48, A.F. & A.M., was organized in 1874. It is now in a prosperous condition and has a membership of 45 in good standing.

Hesperian Lodge, No. 42, I.O. of O.F., was organized in 1874. It is in a prosperous condition, and has a membership of 55

Stacy Encampment, No. 11, I.O. of O.F., numbers 45 members. J. T. Dennis, C.P.; H. G. Bliss, C.W.; J. S. Walters, Treas.; Dr. S. L. Moore, Scribe.

Fillmore Lodge, No. 1463, Knights of Honor, was organized March 10, 1879, with 13 members. It now has 38, and is in a flourishing condition.

E.A.U. Lodge, No. 218, is an insurance association organized in 1881.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union has a working organization here. The society was organized in 1881.

Business Interests

There are two banking institutions in Fairmont. Chas. S. Miller & Co. began business early in 1882, as successors to the banking house of E. B. Branch & Co., which was established in 1875.

The Fillmore County Bank was organized January 1, 1878, by J. O. Chase. On the 1st of April, 1880, it was incorporated with a paid-up capital of \$20,000. J. O. Chase is

president, and Irwin B. Chase, cashier.

The Fairmont Steam Flouring Mill was built in 1878 by Welch & Wiley, at a cost of \$6,000. Mr. Wiley retired from the firm in 1879, and the firm then changed to J. H. Welch & Co., who added improvements to the value of \$2,500, and continued the business until the 22nd day of November, 1883, when they retired, being succeeded by the present proprietor, Mr. E. B. Welch, who contemplates making extensive improvements in the spring, substituting crushing rolls for the present system of burrs, and increasing the output to 100 barrels per day. The present proprietor is a thoroughly competent miller, and the flour made at the Fairmont mill is second to none in the State.

The Fairmont Dairy Association was organized and began operations in the manufacture of cheese on February 1, 1882. About 80,000 pounds of cheese are made in each month, most of which finds a market in Omaha, Lincoln,

Denver, and Atchison.

The Fairmont Wagon shops, Beecher & Buckmaster, proprietors, besides the manufacture of wagons and carriages, make corn planters and cultivators.

Fairmont has two grain elevators. The one controlled by Geo. H. Warren & Co. has a capacity of 30,000 bushels, and has handled during the last year 205 carloads of grain.

The one controlled by A. Salisbury has a capacity of 25,000 bushels, and has handled 290,000 bushels of grain during the past year, paying out for the same \$104,000.

The Press

The Fairmont *Bulletin* was established May 1, 1872, by Will R. Gaylord. The *Bulletin* is a seven-column paper, folio, and Republican in politics. Chas. Turner is the editor and manager.

The Nebraska Signal is a weekly newspaper published by Brazelton & Putney. It was established October 27, 1881.

It is a six-column paper, anti-monopoly in politics.

Telephone Exchange

The telephone exchange owned by the Nebraska Telephone Company, established September, 1882, Will R. Gaylord manager, has at the present time 30 instruments in use in Fairmont, and the number is being constantly added to. The central office attends to 300 calls per day, on an average. They also have connections with Geneva.

Post Office

There were issued from the office at Fairmont during the year:

1,350 postal orders, amounting to	\$25,000
650 postal orders, paid, amounting to	13,000
Stamps and stamped envelopes sold	2,850
Postal notes, since September 3	
Sales this quarter stamps and envelopes	
	640.000

The sales of stamps and stamped envelopes, last quarter, with a reduction of one-third in the price of stamps, amounting to \$650, shows that the business of the office is increasing.

Livestock

E. L. Martin, dealer in livestock, reports the number of hogs shipped for the year 1883, at 6,565; number of pounds, 1,717,000; amount paid out during the year, \$80,800.

Lumber

The Badger lumber yard; Tidball & Fuller, lumber and coal; W. N. Stewart, dealer in coal; and other coal dealers make annual sales amounting to \$85,000.

The Professions

Are well and ably represented. The lawyers engaged in the practice of their profession number seven, as follows: John Barsby, J. W. Eller, Will R. Gaylord, John P. Maule, Rushton & Mathewson, W. A. Sloan, and B. C. Whitman.

The Justices of the peace are R. G. Pinney and B. C.

Whitman.

The real estate and loan agents number six, as follows: F. Curtiss & Son, Will R. Gaylord, Geo. Maxfield, Geo. D. Noble, N. H. Pinney, and B. M. Turner.

There are three practicing physicians, as follows: D. B.

Farnsworth, G. W. Johnston, and R. Willson.

Three hotels cater to the wants of the public. They are the City Hotel, L. Steiger, proprietor; the Pacific Hotel, J. E. Clark, proprietor; and the Henry House, Mrs. Shepherd,

Dr. L. S. Moore, in connection with his drugstore, is a practicing dentist, though he does not practice as a physician.

Business Houses-alphabetically arranged. Amount of stock carried:

Reecher & Buckmaster, wagon shop	\$
Bergstrand, A., tailor.	
Badger, lumber yard	
Chapin & Co., groceries	
Christian, Mrs. A., dry goods and millinery	
Conroy, F. & J., marble yard	
Cubbison, J. & Co., dry goods.	
Curtis, H., agricultural implements.	
Dumont, C. W., confectionery, etc	
Howard & Dve, livery	
Hohn, J. H., boots and shoes.	
Heaton, T. J., restaurant	
McClung, blacksmith	
Mellen & McNeil, hardware	
Morris, Richard, organ and musical instruments	
Martin & Co., hogs and coal	
Moore, L. S. & Co., bankers—responsibility	
Martin, E. L., livestock	
Noble, Agnes, furniture	
Oldham & Calkins, general merchandise	
Oldnam & Calkins, general merchandise	2.500
Patterson, W. F., furniture	3,500
Peck, Wm., blacksmith	
Phillips, D. J., confectionery and fruit	
Peth, Geo., harness and saddlery	
Pollard, J. N., groceries	
Porter & Son, general merchandise	
Prescott & Bennett, contractors and builders	
Rullison, Geo., groceries	
Ruffner & Anderson, general merchandise	
Sawyer, E. C., drugs and stationery	
Sargeant, M., drugs	. 2,000
Solomon & Nathan, dry goods, etc	20,000
Stiles & Graves, hardware	
Stewart, W. N., coal dealer	
Steiger, L., groceries	. 1,000
Talmage, J. W., agricultural implements	. 8,000
Thompson, H., livery	4,000
Thompson, H., confectionery	. 500
Tidball & Fuller, lumber	
Williams, I. H., harness	
Willson, W., jeweler.	. 2,500
Total	
Lumber and coal (sums not included in the above table)	.\$85,000
Other stock carried (but not listed in the table), estimated to be	
Total	\$298,800

FAIRMONT CITY LIBRARY

This account of the library was written in 1953 by Miss Zola R. Shoemaker, the librarian:

When the Fairmont Woman's Club was organized in January, 1916, they chose for their civic betterment project

"A Library at Some Future Date."

The first money raised for the library was \$3 from the sale of a collie pup given to the club by L. A. Whitten. In the summer of 1919, the Red Cross gave a dinner for the returned soldiers and sailors. The sum of \$128.15 was left over, and it was voted to use this for a memorial to our soldiers and sailors. This fund was held until 1934, by which time it amounted to \$202.58 and was given to the book committee, which purchased 250 books for the library. They placed in the front of each book a bookplate "In Honor of our World War Veterans.'

In 1922, the Woman's Club began looking for a room for a library. The city council consented to their using the City Hall each Wednesday and Saturday of each month. On April 7. 1922, the Fairmont Library Association was organized. The first officers were Myron Gibson, president; Verdelia Brown, vice-president; Mary Badger, secretary; Alice Jackson, treasurer; and Mrs. C. W. Woods, Dr. M. W. Deffenbaugh, and M. E. Boren, board members. Membership dues were \$1 a year. Mrs. W. A. Whitcomb was hired as librarian at a salary of 75 cents a day; she served in the position for 91/2 years.

The formal opening of the library occurred on October 14, 1922, at which time punch and wafers were served. In January, 1923, the library was insured for \$300. The first Library Association must have died, as no more records can

be found.



Photo from Willard Goodrich

Henry Thompson's Feed and Livery Stable (the site is now the city

In June, 1931, Miss Jackson talked to the Woman's Club about moving the library to the Wyatt house. Rent for the summer would be free, but the club would have to clean and repair the building. The club did this with the help of the Boy Scouts, and the library was moved the last of June.

In January, 1932, the Library Association was reorganized. The new officers were Alice Jackson, president; W. R. Dorrance, vice-president; Mrs. M. M. Akin, secretary; Mrs. B. E. Aldrich, secretary; and Mrs. M. E. Boren, Mrs. William Winsor, and R. V. Starks, board members. On March 15, 1932, bids were read for the job of librarian. Miss Shoemaker's bid being the lowest, she was elected and began work on March 23, 1932. On February 12, 1934, Miss Cubbison offered the southeast room of the Cubbison Building for a library, at a rental of \$2.50 a month. We moved on March 29, and on April 7, 1934, had our opening. Punch and wafers were served to 183 callers.

On June 28, 1934, the Library Association closed its books and we became a City Library. A new board was appointed by the mayor, consisting of R. V. Starks, president; W. R. Dorrance, secretary; and Miss Alice Jackson, Mrs. Mamie Kemp, and Mrs. M. E. Boren, board members. A quarter-mill levy was set, out of which the librarian received a salary of \$100 a year. At this time we had 4,500 books and 550 borrowers. Many gifts of money and books have been received over the years from friends and organizations: the D.A.R., Campfire, P.E.O., Legion Auxiliary, City of Fairmont, Library Benefits, Royal Highlanders, and Fairmont Women's Club.

Once again we moved, on March 16, 1945, to a cityowned building, on the corner of Fairmont Avenue and Jefferson Street. The building is called the "Library," although it has an apartment upstairs, a basement room, and a rest room. A gas heater was installed, and venetian blinds added much to the comfort of our new home.

I have seen our library grow from 2,000 books to 6,800. I have helped move it three times. May it always remain in its present location! There have been many changes in the more

than 22 years I have been librarian.

[Miss Zola Shoemaker ended her service as librarian on April 9, 1955, and was succeeded by Mrs. Russell Snodgrass, who still held the position in 1967.]

FAMILIES

Samuel Smith Shivers was born May 28, 1848, at Gnadenhutten, Tuscarawas County, Ohio. At the age of 14 he moved with his parents to Sullivan County, Indiana, where later he became a schoolteacher. In 1871, he was united in marriage to Marcia A. Gillman and in 1873 they came to Clay County, Kansas, where they were early settlers. They lived there until 1897, when they traded their Kansas land for a home in the north edge of Fairmont. This was their home until 1909, when they purchased a home across the street from the Methodist parsonage.

They brought four of their children to Nebraska with them—Emmett, Maude, Inez, and Blanche—leaving two married daughters in Kansas—Lillie May (Mrs. Wesley Dever) and Samantha (Mrs. Jerome Clark). About two years later Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Clark also came to Fairmont to make their home. A few years later, Emmett married a Kansas girl and returned there to live. Maude became Mrs. Edson Sharp; Inez, Mrs. Nesbit Whitmore; and Blanche,

Mrs. Wayne Winchell.

Mr. Shivers busied himself with carpenter work, moving, building, and remodeling houses. A few years later he added to his work the building of cement sidewalks. Much of his work is still in evidence around Fairmont.

Mr. and Mrs. Shivers were devout Christians, being faithful attendants at the Methodist Church, where Mr. Shivers was a class leader and a Sunday School teacher as long as his health permitted. He passed away on January 10, 1918, and Mrs. Shivers on February 15, 1923.

— Blanche Shivers Winchell

Wallace Wheeler was born in Brandon, Vermont, March 4, 1840. His father was a carpenter and a wheelwright by trade, and for some time operated a sash, door, and blind factory and also a sawmill in Vermont. He moved to Illinois in 1852 and engaged in farming, an occupation which Wallace also followed until 1886, when he became a farm-machinery salesman. In 1869, he came to Nebraska City, where he organized the firm of Wheeler & Tucker, which lasted for three years. He then moved to Lincoln as the western agent of the Marsh Harvester Company, and remained with them until their failure in 1884, He then, in the same year, came to Fairmont, where he organized the Fairmont Creamery Company and served as its president until his death in 1897.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

The first major business enterprise after the establishment of the steam flouring mill was the **Fairmont Dairy Association**, founded in 1882, as described in the *Bulletin* article quoted earlier.

The Fairmont Creamery Company was organized as a stock company by Wallace Wheeler and J. H. Rushton in Fairmont in 1884. Mr. Wheeler, its first president, held that post until his death in 1897. The other officers were J. H. Rushton, secretary-treasurer; V. C. Stuart, vice-president; and J. O. Chase and I. V. Chase, board of directors.

The original plant was operated alone in Fairmont until 1888, when the company purchased the Crete Creamery. The Tobias plant was added in 1890, the Friend and Geneva plants in 1891, the Fairbury, Dewitt, and Milford plants in 1892, and the Hebron plant in 1898.

After the death of Wallace Wheeler, J. H. Rushton was made president, a position he held from 1898 until 1921, at which time he was made chairman of the board of directors. (He died in Omaha, January 2, 1922; Mrs. Rushton died, also in Omaha, May 2, 1934.) Under Mr. Rushton's management the Fairmont Creamery grew to be the largest in the world, with offices not only in New York and other large cities in America but also in Europe.

The Fairmont plant was moved to Crete, but the head office, through the influence of Mr. Rushton, was retained in Fairmont for several years. The company grew to such proportions that larger quarters were required; at this point, Mr. Rushton was "outvoted" by other stockholders, and in 1907

the main office was moved to Omaha. Their Fairmont office building was bought by Dr. S. F. Ashby, and it has been used by Drs. Ashby ever since.

Within recent years, the company changed its name to Fairmont Foods Company, Inc., and does a world-wide business. Though spawned in the lush agricultural region of Fillmore County, no part of the company now remains there. During its existence in the county, it furnished many local jobs and a large volume of postal business. The company distributes dairy products, chips and snack foods, soft drinks, cookies, crackers, and nuts. Its net sales in 1966 were reported as \$199,771,696—a substantial sum to have had its ultimate origin in one Nebraska town!

BLIZZARD

Some of the impact of the Blizzard of 1888 on the Fairmont vicinity is revealed in a letter to Mrs. Hart from Miss Minnie Carver (then teaching in Altoona, Pennsylvania), dated April 18, 1929:

. . . I always think of it when January 12 comes along. I was teaching four miles north of Fairmont where the Browers, Kempers, Fines, Coxes, Darts, Petersens, and so on lived. I kept 20 or more boys and girls in the schoolhouse all night.

The coalhouse was built over the door which faced a bare prairie towards the north. That saved us some. There were lamps in the room for a lyceum held there, so we were not in the dark. The older boys and girls, Oscar and Frank Petersen and their sisters, Belle Kemper and others helped me to play games, tell stories, etc., so that we could keep awake and keep the fires up.

The smaller children we wrapped in our coats and they went to sleep near the stove. At 10 o'clock the next morning Mr. Kemper, Mr. Dart, and others came for us with a big wagon bed of straw and warm covers and took us to Mr. Dart's home, where we had a good hot breakfast, and later on

to Kemper's, where I boarded.

I got to Fairmont and to mother later in the day. She was terribly worried of course. I did not realize then, nor admit now, that it was a great thing I had done. At the time it was the only thing to do and I merely did it. Certainly it was my duty to care for those dear boys and girls I had been entrusted with . . .

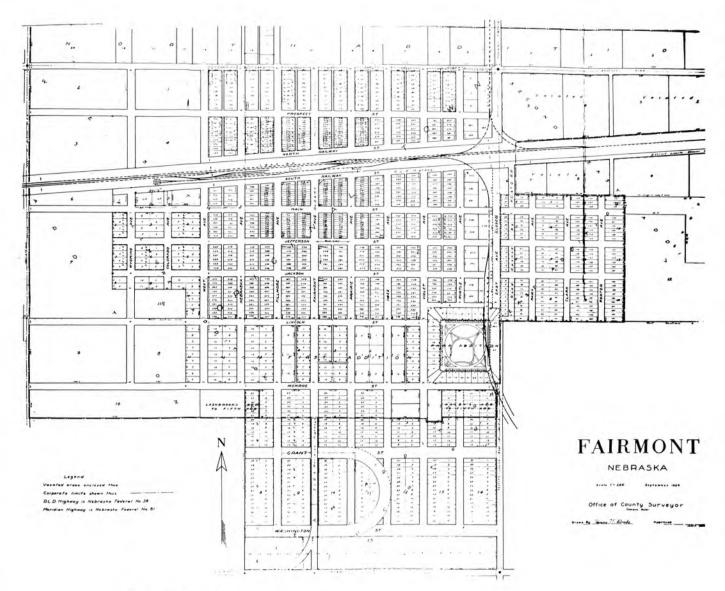
Mrs. Minnie Kemper Graham, now 89 years old and still living (1967) in Fairmont, was one of Miss Carver's pupils during that winter of 1888. She herself, she recalls, did not go

to school on that particular day.

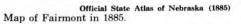
[Mr. Brown, in a note on his original manuscript, gives credit to "early newspaper items and the memory of our oldest citizens," one of whom was Mr. W. E. Black—Editor.]



Photo from Clarence Palmer George Heaton's Bowling Alley in 1904. From left to right—Clarence Palmer, Charlie Narigon, Elmer Ellington.

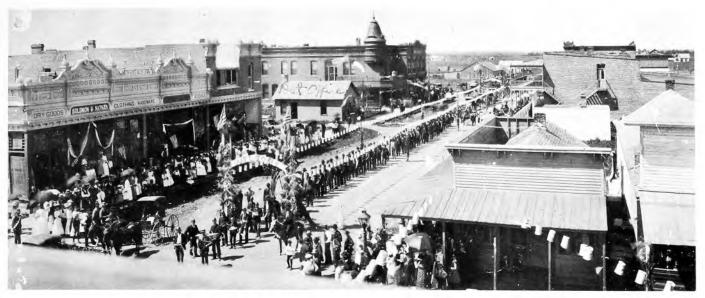






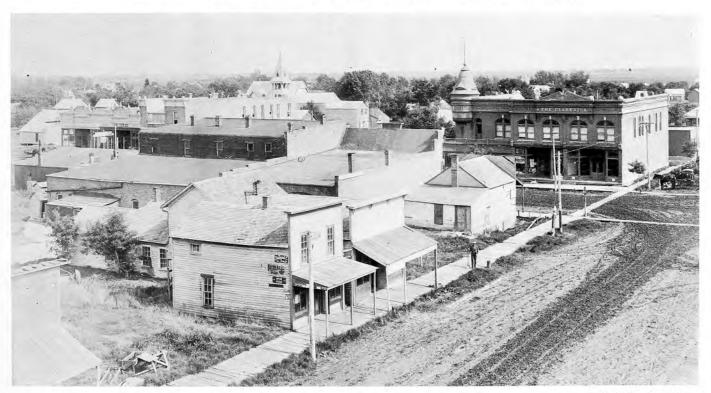


North Ward School House, Fairmont, Nebr. Built in 1885. North of Railroad tracks.



Geneva Band at A.O.U.W. Convention in Fairmont, before 1893. Looking west on Jefferson St.

Photo from Paul Bender



Looking Southeast from Fillmore Avenue. Fairmont early 1890's.

Photo from Mary Halsey



Photo from A. L. Brown Fairmont Avenue ("Main Street"), looking south (1910). Bank building in foreground; Methodist Church in upper center; Congregational Church at left. (This picture taken from the Fairmont standpipe.)



Picture from Nebraska Signal
Main Street, looking north on pavement (1920).



Photo from A. L. Brown Fairmont Avenue ("Main Street"), looking south (July 25, 1940).



William S. Brown's Garage (1912)—the first in Fairmont.



Photo from Clarence Palmer Livery Barn, Fairmont, Nebr. about 1907. Rigs hitched ready for a funeral. Mel Millen and his coach dog.



Photo from Mary Halsey Fairmont lumber yard. Late 1880's.



Photo from Mrs. Alta Roper Building built before 1900. Elmer Spahr in front of coal and feed office. Fairmont South Railway St. and Fairmont Avenue. Lot No 371.



Photo from Clarence Palmer Men who built the Fairmont telephone line about 1880.

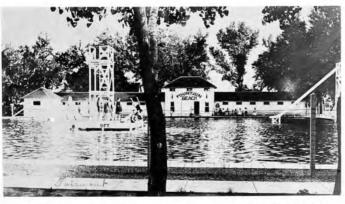


Photo from Ora Robbins Fountain Beach, Fairront. Located on lots 645, 646 and 647; bordered on the west by West Avenue, and by Jackson Street on the north. The pool was built about 1900 by Ed Hall.



Photo by Harold Hurst Original Fairmont Creamery Plant. Present day office of Dr's. Ashby & Ashby.

Franklin Township

Franklin township, in the far southeastern corner of Fillmore County, is bounded on the north by Glengary and on the west by Belle Prairie townships, on the east by Saline County, and on the south by Thayer County. It is crossed from north to south, near its middle line, by Little Sandy Creek, and most of its eastern sections are traversed in the same general direction, just inside its Saline County boundary, by Walnut Creek. State Highway 74 runs across it along the first section line south of Glengary township. It is also crossed from east to west by the Beatrice-Hildreth line of the Burlington, which serves the thriving little town of Ohiowa. By 1966, the township had some 14 irrigation wells.

The finishing of the Burlington's main line in the autumn of 1871 brought the first large influx of settlers into the "South Platte" area. Many of the first settlers of Fillmore County homesteaded in the northern part of the county because the West Blue River gave them a supply of fuel and water. However, Franklin township in the southeast also had

a large number of early homesteaders.



Photo from Dorothy Runge Austin Adams in 1900.

One of the first was Austin Adams. Mrs. Josie Adams Stowell, who now lives in Hebron, tells the following about

her family and the early days:

Austin Adams homesteaded just south of Ohiowa on the NE ¼ of Sec. 17 in 1867. Austin Adams, A. F. Clemons, and Ed Stone came from Ohio. Their women and children came later, after plans had been made for them. Mrs. Stowell was born on this homestead in 1879. The older children in the family were Bertha, Vesta, and E. C. Adams. Mrs. Stowell remembers that when she was seven or eight years old, a young man who came from Chicago brought a revolver and shells because he thought that when he got off the train he would have to protect himself against cowboys and Indians. He felt very foolish; and when he returned to Chicago, he gave the revolver to her brother E. C., or Erk, as he was called.

Mrs. Stowell's father was the second postmaster and held that post for several years when the mail came by horseback from Fairmont. The Adamses also handled medicines; something called the "Golden Medical Discovery" was a kind of ointment and pain reliever. This family moved to Geneva when Mrs. Stowell was four years old. Her father was county treasurer.

The Adams family were active workers in the Baptist church, where they didn't always have a preacher but did have an active Sunday School and Christian Endeavor. The young people loved music and would prepare fine Christmas programs, which they practiced upon for weeks. They had a fine quartet, composed of Bertha and Josie Adams, E. C. Adams, and either Professor Huntington, Will Fulton, or Dr. J. D. Patterson.

Tempa Enslow Adams came from Alexandria to Ohiowa soon after the town was started. Mr. Enslow had a grocery store between the Hasterlick saloon and O'Boyle's Hotel. Mrs. Adams recalls that the young people had picnics and parties. They loved roller skating, and the ice skating in the winter on Hopken's pond.

In the Gay Nineties they wore the lovely, picturesque dresses of the period, made of pretty prints, with leg-o'-mutton sleeves, very long, sweeping skirts over many petticoats, and lovely hats. Mrs. Adams's graduation dress was sent to her from Kansas City for the event in 1893.

Graduation exercises, held in the Opera House, were as big events then as they are now. But the Fourth of July celebrations were really the events looked forward to: booths in the streets, barrels of lemonade, speeches, and fireworks. Farm families came from miles around in wagons for these events. The young people had many good times, but would have been shocked at the behavior of young people today, especially at the girls' wearing of slacks and shorts.

The pioneer farmer tilled his farm with walking plows, planters, and cultivators. He threshed his grain with the help of his neighbors. He milked his cows, shelled his corn, and scooped his grain without the help of gasoline or electric motors. Until the railroad came through, he hauled his grain a long distance to sell it. He bought necessities he couldn't produce himself at Crete, Nebraska City, or Beatrice.

The grasshoppers came in clouds so thick and heavy in 1874 as to blot out the sun. They ate the turnips, potatoes, and onions—leaves, stem, and root—leaving only holes in the ground. Hailstorms and drouths brought want, hunger, and depression. The years 1893 and 1894 were hard for everyone. There were drouth, general scarcity, and bank failures.

But these rural people had stamina; they stuck it out, started again, and made progress. They built homes, better churches, better schools, better business places. They didn't always agree, and they argued over politics. They planted trees—many trees—built better roads, and put in telephones and electric lights.

What would grandfather or great-grandfather say today if they could see thousands of bushels of corn stored, feed lots full of fat cattle, big, powerful tractors, and cornpickershellers? They would probably ask, "Why don't you sell that corn? What are you going to do with it?" No doubt he would stew and talk about the weather, as farmers from Austin Adams's day have done. He would argue politics and maybe denounce the farm plan, with the rest of the farmers. But I am sure that he would be shrewd enough to realize that we haven't found all the answers yet.

Grandmother would appreciate the hot-water heaters and automatic furnaces, washers, and dryers; but maybe she would smile to herself and think, "You can't bake better pumpkin pie or ginger cookies than I did 60 years ago."

SCHOOLS

Before Ohiowa was incorporated as a village, schools were organized in Franklin township. Today we see many abandoned one-room schools, some idle, some converted to other uses, that years ago were the pride and joy of their community. Many of these were also used for church and Sunday School meetings, social functions, and voting places. School was free and open to all, but attendance was not then compulsory. On family farms where everything had to be done by human labor and a team of oven or horses, every child was a "hand." Even without any payment for tuition, it was still something of a family sacrifice to spare a child—but the children flocked in.

The free public school, open to all, was born in America; it was built into the earliest foundation of this nation. Never before in the world had such a notion been entertained. This more than anything else, it seems to me, marked the birth of American democracy.1



Photo from Emma Renker

District No. 9 in 1902. Back row, left to right: Pearle Schafer Cradduck, Lewis Morgan, Ella Cradduck, Oley Baldwin, Nellie Schroll Sigman, Earl Baldwin, Lena Bahe, Carrie Rohler Cummings, Miss Dove Moore (teacher), Lloyd Mumford. Middle row: Alta Baldwin Wiswell, Sadie Schroll, Fern Schroll, Rosie Rohler Stribey, Bessie McCurdy, Eva McCurdy Petteys, Elsie Baldwin Schroll. Front row: Charley Baker, Ross Schafer, Howard Thomas, Leslie Moore, Roy Baldwin, Freddie Bahe, Willie Bahe, Neil Baker.

District No. 9 was organized under the direction of G. R. Wolfe, superintendent. At a meeting at the home of Louis Smith on September 27, 1871, David Hadley was elected moderator, N. W. Tracy, director, and William Case, treasurer. There were only three districts in the county that sustained 60 days of school by qualified teachers within the year 1871, and so the first term was begun in that year to qualify for a fair-sized share of the state apportionment.

The following letter is from the county superintendent's records:

I take great pleasure in submitting to you the following special

report of the educational condition of Fillmore County.

The first school was taught ir school district No. 9, commencing Dec. 15, 1871, by John A. Williams—the number of pupils enrolled 17, average attendance 9½—length of term 3 months (65 days) wages paid to teacher \$25 per month—John A. Dempster, County Supt.

The school was taught in a board granary 12' x 14' square, with a dirt floor and the pupils seated on homemade pine benches. There were no other furnishing except a stove. Only about half the scholars had books, the other half borrowing. A frame schoolhouse was put up in May, 1872. It was 16' x 20' and seated with Richmond patent desks. The building and all its furnishings cost about \$500. This was the first frame schoolhouse in the county. Superintendent Dempster reported:

Friday P.M., June 21, 1872 I visited in District No. 9 taught by Samuel B. Heaps-nine pupils present-frame schoolhouse. Scholars doing very well-system good.

School opened in 1873 with 30 pupils, taught by Samuel Heaps and Nute Hansen, each for a three-month term. The largest number of pupils appeared in 1884, when 72 enrolled. From 1873 to 1918, enrollment averaged from 45 to 50 pupils; after 1918, the numbers started to drop. The first continuous full nine-month term came in 1913. The school had 15 pupils in 1955.

Two men served long terms as director in this district: John Hickey, 1876-1892, a total of 17 years, and F. W. Sieckmann, 1925-1945, a total of 21.

The teachers and directors who served District 9 were as follows:

ab lollows.	
Year Teacher	Salary and term No. Pupils Director
1873 Samuel Heaps	\$20 mo. — 3 months 30 G. E. Barnett
Nute Hanson	\$25 mo. — 3 months
1874 Bella Terry	\$28 mo. — 3 months 33 G. E. Barnett
Luella Hoag	\$25 mo. — 5 months
1875 Ida Barnett	\$20 mo. — 3 months 33 William Case
Etta Dorrance	\$25 mo. — 3 months
1876 J. H. Sager	\$32.50 mo. — 5 months 29 John Hickey
Lennie Elrod	\$25 mo. — 2 months

¹ Dorothy Thompson, "The Ragged Beggar Stands Again," Ladies' Home Journal, April 1959.

3	Year	Teacher S	Salary and term No.	Pupils Director
5	1877	J. D. McKelvey	\$30 mo. — 2½ months	41 John Hickey
	1878	Mary Hammond Mary Hammond	\$35 mo. — 4 months \$35 mo. — 3 months	43 John Hickey
	1879	Frank Peense J. D. McKelvey	\$30 mo. — 3 months \$33.33 mo. — 7 months	
		Emma Thomas	\$25 mo. — 2 months	49 John Hickey
		Eva Thomas Chester Metcalfe	\$22 mo. -4 months \$30 mo. $-4\frac{1}{2}$ months	68 John Hickey
	1882	Walter White Tideman Hale	\$30 mo. — 3 months \$30 mo. — 4 months	51 John Hickey
	1883	Eursa Thomas	\$30 mo. — 3 months	57 John Hickey
	1884	C. Barrett Flora Angstead	\$30 mo. — 4 months \$30 mo. — 7 months	72 John Hickey
	1885	Flora Angstead A. K. Wright	\$30 mo. — 7 months \$30 mo. — 3 months	66 John Hickey
	1886	C. J. Barnett	\$37 mo. — 8 months	65 John Hickey
		Ida Sharp Laura Angstead	\$40 mo. — — — — — — — — — — 6 months	49 John Hickey
	1888	J. W. Fries J. W. Fries	\$35 mo. — 6 months \$40 mo. — 3 months	45 John Hickey
n		Ida Sharp	\$35 mo. — 2 months	40 John Thekey
1		Leona Angstead No record	\$31 mo. — 3 months No record	25 John Hickey
8		No record	No record	45 John Hickey
1	1891	No record No record	No record No record	34 John Hickey 56 John Hickey
9	1893	No record	No record	51 George Mumford
1	1894	No record	No record	47 J. W. Mumford
		No record No record	No record No record	41 Olie Eide 49 Olie Eide
		No record	No record	41 Olie Eide
S		Mrs. Maude Moser	8 months	40 Olie Eide
1		Ruth Angstead	9 months 9 months	42 Olie Eide
-	1900	Ruth Angstead No record	No record	43 Olie Eide 43 Olie Eide
t		No record	No record	50 John Angstead
9		No record	No record	46 John Angstead
)		Bessie Nottingham Ellen Coane	\$35 mo. — 8 months \$34 mo. — 8 months	48 John Angstead 43 John Angstead
		Percy Skyrme	\$40 mo. — 8 months	43 John Angstead 44 John Angstead
S		Eunice Tooker	\$46.87 mo. — 8 months	
	1908	Gertrude Pump	\$40 mo. — 31/4 months	43 Wm. McCurdy
1	1000	Laura Schinzel Laura Schinzel	\$45 mo. — 4 months	33 L. C. Shafer
	1909	Gertrude Pump	\$45 mo. — 4 months \$40 mo. — 31/4 months	55 L. C. Shaler
g	1910	Ameda Lindbloom	\$50 mo — 8 months	38 L. C. Shafer
1	1911	Bess Mahannah	\$55 mo. — 8 months \$55 mo. — 8 months	42 W. L. Baker
	1912	Laura Schinzel Edna Brown	\$55 mo. — 8 months	49 D. H. Sweeney
	1012	Laura Schinzel Thomas Ashton	\$55 mo. — 8 months \$55 mo. — 9 months	46 D. H. Sweeney
е		Adah Ward	\$50 mo. — 9 months	45 D. H. Sweeney
	1915	Adah Ward	\$55 mo. — 9 months	34 D. H. Sweeney
-		Adah Ward	\$55 mo. — 9 months	35 L. C. Shafer
t	1917	Adah Ward Vera L. Moore	\$55 mo. — 9 months \$65 mo. — 9 months	31 L. C. Shafer 40 Jess J. Cradduck
9		Vera L. Moore	\$75 mo. — 9 months	33 Jess J. Cradduck
е	1920	Mrs. Ada W. Coane	\$115 mo. — 9 months	33 Jess J. Cradduck
-		Bess Pflug	\$90 mo. — 9 months	17 Jess J. Cradduck
2		Gladys Schaper Gladys Schaper	\$90 mo. — 9 months \$90 mo. — 9 months	31 Jess J. Cradduck 14 Jess J. Cradduck
S		Grace F. Smith	\$75 mo. — 9 months	
	1925	Hazel A. Black	\$75 mo. — 9 months	14 F. W. Sieckmann
1	1926	Mildred E. Warnke	\$80 mo. — 9 months \$80 mo. — 9 months	11 F. W. Sieckmann 8 F. W. Sieckmann
9		Ethel M. Cook	\$85 mo. — 9 months	21 F. W. Sieckmann
-		Ethel M. Cook	\$85 mo. — 9 months	12 F. W. Sieckmann
)		Ethel M. Cook	\$80 mo. — 9 months	7 F. W. Sieckmann
t		Loretta Cocheran Loretta Cocheran	\$70 mo. — 9 months No record	9 F. W. Sieckmann 9 F. W. Sieckmann
1		Ruth Long	No record	13 F. W. Sieckmann
		Ruth Long	\$50 mo - 9 months	30 F. W. Sieckmann
		Ruth Long	\$42.50 mo. — 9 months	28 F. W. Sieckmann 25 F. W. Sieckmann
•		Vivian Hafer Vivian Hafer	\$45 mo. — 9 months \$55 mo. — 9 months	- F. W. Sieckmann
9		Ruth Philippi	\$50 mo. — 9 months	- F. W. Sieckmann
-	1939	Ruth Philippi		- F. W. Sieckmann
	1940	Ruth Philippi	\$450 per year	13 F. W. Sieckmann
t	1941	Ruth Philippi Charlotte Garrison	\$637.50 per year \$450 per year	11 F. W. Sieckmann 12 F. W. Sieckmann
		Adelaide Novak	\$627.50 total 51/2 mo.	11 F. W. Sieckmann
t	1944	Mrs. M. Elward Dorothy Wood	\$759 60 per year	11 F. W. Sieckmann
9		Mrs. Dorothy Meyer		11 F. W. Sieckmann
	1946	Caroline Hever	\$900 per year	10 Milo Buzek 11 Milo Buzek
7		Caroline Hever Ruth Ann Bahe		11 Milo Buzek 15 Milo Buzek
		Ruth Ann Bahe	\$1,215 per year	15 Milo Buzek
,	1950	Arlene Nun	\$1,350 per year	12 Milo Buzek 10 Milo Buzek
	1951	Marjorie Langhorst	\$1,350 per year	10 Milo Buzek

Year	Teacher	Salary and term	No. Pupil	s Director
1952	Marjorie Langhorst	\$1,800 per year	12	Milo Buzek
	Marjorie Langhorst		10	Milo Buzel
1954		\$2,025 per year	11	Milo Buzek
1955	Peggy Schulte	\$2,025 per year	15	Milo Buzek
1956	Lucille Thomas	\$265 per month	- 1	Leslie Matthies



Photo from A. O. Wood

District No. 10 in 1896. 1-Clara Nedler (teacher), 2-Tidy Goodman, 3-Florence Hines, 4-Gus Goodman, 5-Mary Goodman, 6-Herman Mead, 7-Minnie Waterman, 8-Ben Terry, 9-Jennie Garrison, 10-Mamie Terry, 11-Jess Kettley, 12-unknown, 13-George Garrison, 14-Frank Callison, 15-Pearl Hines, 16-Will Franz, 17-John Goodman, 18-—— Terry, 19-Henry Franz, 20-Eva Terry, 21-Myrtle Wood, 22-Harriet Wood, 23-Nettie Goodman, 24-Alta Wood, 25-Conrad Wedeking, 26-Christine Franz, 27- — Kettley, 28-Rosa Ratzwell, 29-Reka Waterman, 30-Louisa Wedeking, 31-Ethel Wood Blauvelt, 32-Emily Bailey, 33-Judson Wood, 34-Florence Garrison, 35-Minnie Franz, 36-Pearl Theobald, 37-Ben Terry, 38-- Ratswell, 39-Charlie Waterman, 40-Otha Wood, 41-Frank Terry, 42-Frank Garrison.

District No. 10 was organized under the supervision of G. R. Wolfe, county superintendent. Mr. McLaughlin was directed to notify every qualified voter in the district that the organizational meeting would be held on Wednesday, September 20, 1871, at one o'clock at the home of John Shuster. The first director was Mr. A. Lee.

From the records of the superintendent's office:

Friday, June 21, 1872 Visited school in District No. 10 taught by Susan Mott in a dug-

out. Ten pupils present. School in state of fair progress. Good system of teaching.-John A. Dempster.

July 7, 1951 By action of petition of Districts 9, 10, and 34, District No. 10 has been eliminated and the territory added to Districts No. 9 and 34.

School opened in 1873 with 35 pupils attending for a three-month term, with two teachers instructing. Susan Mott received \$18 per month and William Garrison \$30 per month. This school's enrollment remained fairly constant, not showing the big fluctuations that many schools experienced. A record enrollment of 59 pupils attended in 1899. The first full nine-month term came in 1914, when the teacher was paid \$55 a month. In 1912, the number of pupils dropped to nine, rose to 15, and then, in 1915, dropped to five. The school closed after the 1951 term.



Photo from Clarence Rippe School picnic at District No. 34 about 1954.

District No. 34 was established after a petition of voters in the district by County Superintendent John A. Dempster. This district was laid out to comprise Secs. 19, 20, 30, 31, N ½ of 29, W ½ of 21, S ½ of 18, NW ¼ of 28, all in T5, R1W. Mr. Dempster notified Cecil Flowers that the meeting for the election of officers was to be held at the nearest central place at 2 P.M. on August 12, 1872. The NE 1/4 of Sec. 24, T5, R2W, was then added to the district. Another change in district boundaries was made later: to detach from District 34 and attach to District 83 of Thayer County the SE 1/4 of Sec. 31, T5, R1W.

December 21, 1885 The boundary lines of District 34, 83, and 76 of Thayer County have been changed by granting of request which reads as follows: As basis for this request we hereby represent that the location of our dwelling house is such that on account of streams of water or certain seasons of the year, it is impracticable and almost impossible to have our children attend school in said District 34 for a period of from 2 to 3 weeks each year. (Signed) E. F. Medlar Martha J. Medlar

This request was granted.

Mrs. Clyde Gewacke of Ohiowa wrote of District 34:

My grandfather, James W. Burt, was director of this school for several years and my mother, Maye Quinlan, taught this school during the year of 1900. I attended this school from 1911-1916 inclusive. I have many vivid memories of the walks to and from school and the rides in a wagon on stormy days. School lunches under the willow trees, skating on the thin ice, baseball games, and drowning out gophers in Henry Molthan's pasture were exciting. The reading contests, the school programs, and box socials will always be highlights in my memories. I could never forget the games of pull-away and "old cat," especially when "German School" was in session during the winter months and all of the big kids were attending and adding to the fun at noon. If the pupils were on good behavior we were always invited to, and allowed to, attend the numerous weddings at the Lutheran church across the road. I remember that I missed the little rural school the next fall when I started to High School in Ohiowa.

School opened in 1873 with nine pupils. J. H. Bremer was the first director, and the first teacher was John A. Williams, who was paid \$33.33 per month for the three-month term. Enrollment soared to 43 pupils in 1876, and fluctuated during the following years until 1895, when the record number of 69 pupils were enrolled. The first full nine-month term was held in 1914, when the teacher's salary was \$45 a month. In 1955, there were 33 pupils, and the teacher's salary had risen to \$2,250 per year.

District No. 40 is included under Ohiowa.

District No. 41 was founded when a meeting to elect school officers was held on March 29, 1872. School opened in 1873, with R. L. Clemons as director and with 21 pupils enrolled. In 1874, 32 pupils were taught for a three-month term by J. A. Buthnell for \$25 per month. Conrad Most was elected director. The first full nine-month term was held in 1914. By 1924, the number of pupils started to decrease; in 1956 only 11 students were enrolled. It is interesting to note that Fred Sieckmann served as director of this district for 26 years, from 1907 to 1932.



District No. 41 in 1914. Back row, left to right: Ruth Schafer (teacher), Helen Tischer, Lillie Most, Marie Tischer, Clara Most, Andy Kronhoffman, Harry Most, Edward Sieckmann, Ervin Most. Middle row: Dora Most, Lydia Most, Grace Sieckmann, Roy Most, Amalia Most, Howard Sieckmann, John Kronhoffman, Jess Most. Front row: Elsie Mussman, Lillie Mussman, Stella Mussman, Freda Most, Will Most, Elsie Most, Jess Sieckmann, Clarence Most.



District No. 73 in 1911. Back row, left to right: Anna Pivmiska, teacher; Ella Matthies (Mrs. John Bornschlegl), Lou Bornschlegl. Second row: Margaret Fries (Mrs. Joe Bors), Bertha Woltje (Dietrich), Gust Schropfer, George Bornschlegl, Will Matthies. Front row: Margaret Bornschlegl (Mrs. Seth Heston), Esther Woltje (deceased), Ida Fries (Mrs. Jess Most), Mary Bornschlegl (Mrs. Ben Matthies), Herman Woltje, and Ed Matthies (deceased).

District No. 73 was organized in 1874, with Francis Story as director, and school began in the same year with four pupils. No school was held from 1878 through 1881. The school reopened in 1882, with George P. Fries as director and with Sam Kruse teaching 25 pupils for a three-month term at \$25 per month. The highest enrollment recorded was in 1909, when 45 pupils attended. Full nine-month terms were not held until 1921. Two men served long terms as director: George P. Fries, 17 years (1882-1898), and Herman Bartels, 15 years (1922-1936). This school closed after the 1936 term, when 25 pupils were enrolled.

The teachers and directors who served District 73 were

as follows:	ancetore who serve	4 1	istrict to were
	Salary and term No.	Pur	oils Director
1874 No record		4	Francis Story
1875 No record		9	Francis Story
1876 No record		11	Francis Story
1877 No record		12	G. P. Fritz
1878 Through 1881 — N	acabaal	14	G. I. PIIIZ
1882 Sam Kruse		25	Coorse D Fries
	\$25 mo. — 3 months		George P. Fries
1883 Flora Angstead	\$30 mo. — 3 months	25	George P. Fries
1884 Ella Thomas	\$30 mo. — 3 months	23	George P. Fries
1885 Emma Thomas	\$40 mo. — 3 months	35	George P. Fries
John A. Story	\$30 mo. — 2 months		G D.F.
1886 Jonas Kissel	\$30 mo. — 3 months	42	George P. Fries
Ida Hickey	\$30 mo. — 3 months		
1887 Ella Thomas	\$33.33 mo. — 2 months		George P. Fries
Ida Hickey	\$33.33 mo. — 4 months		
1888 Ella Thomas	\$33.33 mo. — 6 months		George P. Fries
1889 No record	No record	30	George P. Fries
1890 No record	No record	39	George P. Fries
1891 No record	No record	42	George P. Fries
1892 No record	No record	42	George P. Fries
1893 No record	No record	40	George P. Fries
1894 No record	No record	44	George P. Fries
1895 No record	No record	36	George P. Fries
1896 No record	No record	30	George P. Fries
1897 No record	No record	26	George P. Fries
1898 Anna Casper	8 months	27	George P. Fries
1899 Anna Casper	No record	25	August Maynen
1900 F. A. Stech	5 months	29	August Maynen
Anna Casper	4 months	20	
1901 No record	No record	25	August Maynen
1902 No record	No record	27	August Maynen
1903 No record	No record	23	Henry Claussen
1904 Daisy McWilliams	\$30 mo. — 6 months	30	Henry Claussen
1905 Daisy McWilliams	\$30 mo. — 6 months	30	Lewis Matthies
1906 Olive Folger	\$30 mo. — 6 months	26	Lewis Matthies
1907 Bessie Nottingham	\$35 mo. — 1 month	23	Lewis Matthies
Happy Johnson	\$35 mo. — 5 months	20	Lewis Matthes
1908 Happy Johnson	\$40 mo — 13/4 months	_	Charles Bennett
Nellie Murphy	\$40 mo. — 5 months		Charles Zennerr
1909 Happy Johnson	\$40 mo. — 7 months	45	Henry Fries
Nellie Murphy	\$40 mo. — 5 months		
1910 Lillian Hollmoz	\$45 mo. — 6 months	26	Henry Fries
1911 Hazel Sherbondy	\$50 mo. — 3 months	21	Henry Fries
Lola Fussell	\$50 mo. — 4 months		
1912 Anna Pivinska	\$50 mo. — 7 months	34	Henry Fries
1913 Anna Pivinska	\$50 mo. — 8 months	32	Henry Fries
1914 Ruth Shafer	\$52.50 mo. — 9 month	s 32	Henry Fries
11 7	AFA 0 11		

\$50 mo. - 8 months

Year Teacher	Salary and term No.	Pupils	Director
1915 Josephine Domeier	\$50 mo. — 8 months	36	Henry Fries
1916 Josephine Domeier	\$55 mo. — 8 months	26	Henry Fries
1917 Josephine Domeier	\$55 mo. — 8 months	26	Henry Fries
1918 Josephine Domeier	\$65 mo. — 8 months	29	Henry Fries
1919 Josephine Domeier	\$85 mo. — 8 months	28	Henry Fries
1920 Josephine Domeier	\$100 mo. — 8 months	30	Henry Fries
1921 Amalia Most	\$85 mo. — 9 months	16	Henry Fries
1922 Amalia Most	\$85 mo. — 9 months	22	H. W. Bartels
1923 Amalia Most	\$80 mo — 9 months	15	H. W. Bartels
1924 Helen Schilke	\$80 mo — 9 months	9	H. W. Bartels
1925 Ethel Plantz	\$80 mo — 9 months	11	H. W. Bartels
1926 Mrs. Willa Most	\$80 mo — 9 months	7	H. W. Bartels
1927 Mrs. Willa Most	\$80 mo — 9 months	9	H. W. Bartels
1928 Mrs. Willa Most	\$80 mo — 9 months	29	H. W. Bartels
1929 Mrs. Willa Most	\$80 mo — 9 months	14	H. W. Bartels
1930 Mrs. Willa Most	\$80 mo — 9 months	14	H. W. Bartels
1931 Sadie Nadza	\$70 mo. — 9 months	11	H. W. Bartels
1932 Sadie Nadza	No record	10	H. W. Bartels
1933 Emma Krisl	No record	10	H. W. Bartels
1934 Emma Krisl	\$45 mo. — 9 months	19	H. W. Bartels
1935 Alice Krisl	\$40 mo. — 9 months	19	H. W. Bartels
1936 Alice Krisl	\$40 mo. — 9 months School closed	25	H. W. Bartels

FAMILIES

John Samuel Cradduck and his wife, Viola Moore Cradduck, came to Nebraska in 1878, and settled on a farm in Franklin township (Sec. 26), 9 miles north of Alexandria, the nearest railroad town. Their first home was a crude shack, so they dug a basement, lined it with rock which they hauled 10 or 12 miles from a quarry near Alexandria, and later built a house over it. During the blizzard of 1888, their cattle strayed, and their faithful dog, who had become in the process a veritable snowball, rounded them up and presented them to Mr. Cradduck. The Cradduck farm is now owned by William Pribyl.

—Mrs. Mabel Cradduck



Photo from Wesley Cradduck

The John Samuel Cradduck home after a snow.

John and Christina Moore came to Franklin township (Sec. 24) in 1877 from Lee County, Illinois, via covered wagon, with their eight children and grandfather Ephraim Moore. John Moore was a Civil War veteran and a member of Hunter Post 122, G.A.R., by transfer from J. W. Morehouse Post 188. Their farm had a maple grove which was used for picnics in the 1890's. Both Mr. and Mrs. Moore are buried in Pleasant Ridge Cemetery, which is on the site of their farm.

—Mrs. Mabel Cradduck

Conrad and Minnie Most, with four of their children, came to Nebraska from Beecher, Illinois, in 1874, in a covered wagon. They settled on a farm 5 miles SE of Ohiowa. Their first home was a dugout in which they lived several years. Later they built a log house, which in time was succeeded by a frame one. Their family consisted of 10 children: Lena, John, Minnie, Sophia, Henry, Mollie, Alvina, Anton, Emma, and Conrad. The only survivor of this family is Emma (Mrs. Will Mussman), who resides in Ohiowa.

Henry Mussman, born in Germany, came to America at the age of 22 in 1866, and settled near Chicago. In 1868, he married Dorothea Dittmer. They moved to Indiana in 1875 and eight years later came to Nebraska and settled on a farm 4 miles east of Ohiowa. Mr. Mussman spent many active

Mary Barta



Photo from Wesley Cradduck John and Christina Moore (about 1885)



Photo from Willard Mussman Mr. and Mrs. Henry Mussman, Sr., and family. Back row, left to right: August, William, Howard, Henry, Jr., Harry. Second row: Emma, Alvina, Rose, Viola (Anna is not in the picture).



Photo from Wesley Cradduck Lewis Charles Schafer in 1951

days in the fields so that his family might be comfortably provided for. He retired in 1935 and moved into Ohiowa.

Their family consisted of 10 children: Anna, Emma, Alvina, Rose, August, Will, Viola, Howard, Henry, and Harry. Mrs. Mussman passed away in 1936, and Mr. Mussman in 1942, having reached the age of 98 years.

In 1898, Lewis Charles Schafer and Martha Adaline Schafer came to Nebraska from Illinois and settled in Franklin township (Sec. 26). They arrived in sub-zero weather and had to live in an old house. They raised a family of seven children, and are buried in the Ohiowa cemetery.

—Mrs. Mabel Cradduck Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Thole came from Holt County, Illinois, in 1881 with a family of 10 children, including twin daughters, Johanna and Wilhelmina. They homesteaded 1½ miles east of Ohiowa on the SW ¼ of Sec. 10 (now known as the Walter Fries farm). In 1900, the twin sisters were married to brothers: Johanna to Henry Fries, and Wilhelmina to Gust Fries. (See Fries.)



The Frederick Thole family in 1918. Front row: Mr. Thole, Rose Mrs. Thole. Back row: William, Fred, Henry.

Ohiowa

The village of Ohiowa occupies much of the central portion of Sec. 8. The following early history of the village, written in February, 1891, by W. R. Fulton, then editor of the *Ohiowan*, was read at a meeting of businessmen. It was reprinted in the *Nebraska Signal* for October 31, 1929.

Perhaps no portion of the inhabited globe has witnessed as sudden and remarkable changes as have characterized the growth of the American states. The wonderful development of the natural resources of the country, the immense accretions to the population by immigration, find no parallel in the world's history. The changes of a decade exceed those of a century on the continents of the Old World.

Truly the history of our country is stranger than fiction. Today the tangled forest, the impenetrable swamp, and arid desert, affords a home only for the wild beast and the savage red man. Tomorrow the forest is felled, the swamp drained, the desert irrigated, and the wilderness is transformed into fertile fields, into populous cities and beautiful villages, giving homes and employment to industrious millions gathered from every quarter of the civilized world.

The possibilities of this marvelous development none can foresee. Ten years ago no one had dreamed that a village would one day exist where Ohiowa now stands. The name of Ohiowa is much older than the town. It is the result of a compromise. When the first country post office was established in 1870 at the house of A. F. Clemons near the present site of the town, some of the pioneers who hailed from the Buckeye State wished to call it Ohio post office. This faction was opposed by another composed of Iowa men who desired to give it the name of their native state. The feud waxed warm and would doubtless have resulted in the complete extermination of the settlement had not a compromise been effected by which the two names were blended together into one, giving the euphonious name of Ohiowa. A very desirable settlement of the dispute, considering the sparseness of the population at that time.

Many interesting stories might be told to illustrate the strange customs of the early pioneers, among whom existed an utter disregard for those conventional forms, a violation of which in the older states of the East would have been considered an unpardonable offense. Men were then judged according to their merits rather than by external appearance.

No time was wasted upon the frivolities of dress and personal adornment. Coats were used only for protection, while boots and shoes were not deemed a necessity except during the winter season. Indeed, I am creditably informed that the total expense for shoe leather of one of these pioneers, now a prominent banker of Ohiowa, did not exceed \$2 for the first five years of his residence in Nebraska.

Not infrequently the entire congregation at church was barefooted. The man was considered very fortunate who possessed more than one pair of pantaloons. These were of the coarsest material, worn inside out during the week in order to appear new on Sunday when they were

turned the right way.

The preliminary survey of the Burlington Railroad which runs through Ohiowa was made during the months of April and May, 1886. The place selected as a site for the town was a portion of the farms of William Sieckmann, J. H. Luke, E. D. Babcock, and R. L. Clemons. The first trains were run in October of the same year, the railroad company being represented in the town by William Riddell, a man peculiarly fitted for the position he occupies on account of his great size and strength which not only enables him to successfully protect the property of the company but to accomplish a greater destruction of the baggage than would be possible with a man of less muscular ability.

The foundation of the first building in Ohiowa was laid in May, 1886. This building was erected by the Clemons brothers, who have since occupied it in the banking business. During the summer and autumn of 1886 a number of business blocks were erected and the following businessmen located in town: I. J. Hasterlick, who had been for many years engaged in business in the village of Chicago. Mr. Hasterlick thought Chicago was not as prosperous a town as it should be and [so] resolved to try his luck in a town with brighter prospects.

Chicago is too slow, like Strang.

C. C. Enslow, who came here from Alexandria, Nebraska, for the purpose of educating his children in a better moral atmosphere and to assist in superintending the affairs of the Ohiowa baseball association. Mr. Enslow is not himself a baseball player although he has in him the material for a first-class shortstop, if he didn't try to dodge the balls

[Mr. Enslow ran a large general store].

B. F. Bothwell opened the first store. David Conner engaged in the real estate and loan business. H. E. Larimer established the *Ohiowan*, the first newspaper of the place. Mr. Larimer is a native of Iowa. He was educated for the ministry, but finding the newspaper business better suited to his tastes, entered upon the perilous duties of an editor on July 19, 1886.

John O'Boyle and Mrs. Nancy Storie became rivals in the hotel business. Ed Metcalf was assistant cashier of the Bank of Ohiowa for two years. Mr. Metcalf afterward engaged in the hardware business but recently has devoted all his time to politics. W. C. Fitzer engaged in the furniture business. During the same summer, Babcock & Burruss started in the hardware business.

The first drugstore was established by Carpenter & Crowl. The lumber business was first represented by J. G. Burruss, also of Alexandria. Ohiowa's first physician was Dr. H. W. Strader, a native of Parisburg, Virginia, and a graduate of the college of physicians and surgeons at Baltimore, Maryland. The doctor has been uniformly successful in his practice.

The first attorney of Ohiowa was C. A. Fowler, a brother of the celebrated O. C. Fowler, the great phrenologist. Mr. Fowler was engaged in the banking business at Alexandria for several years before coming here and never made any attempt to escape to Canada. Never having been convicted of any offense against the law, Mr. Fowler is not a criminal lawyer.

In the fall of 1886, J. W. Quinlan erected the opera house block and entered into the agricultural implement business, which he conducted until the winter of 1890 when he sold out to J. M. Curran. Another early resident of Ohiowa is W. F. Buchmeier, also engaged in the implement business.

P. J. Quinlan became a resident of Ohiowa in May, 1887, at first assisting his brother, J. W. Quinlan, in the implement business and afterwards forming a partnership with his brother-in-law, S. E. Matthews, and engaging in the musical instrument and jewelry business.

The Farmers Bank was established in January, 1887, with D. P. Abbott as president and L. J. Dunn vice-president, C. C. Conner becoming cashier in August, 1887. There is no danger of Mr. Conner going to Canada. He knows all about the new extradition law. R. A. Harvey became assistant cashier in April, 1889. Mr. Harvey is a native of Missouri but is now fully naturalized and is rapidly learning the language and adopting the customs of this country.

Ohiowa has a fine school building and excellent schools now superintended by Professor J. C. Clegg of Ohio. Great pains have been taken to employ skillful teachers and the schools are in a flourishing condition.

The Baptist and Methodist societies erected church buildings

shortly after the town was started. The Evangelical Lutherans also have an organization and building here.

Of the more recent business enterprises of the town, lack of time forbids a complete account at present. Chenoweth Brothers & Mc-Farland, Bothwell & Dufur, and Conner & Clawson are dealers in general merchandise. The clothing business is represented by I. J. Hasterlick, the millinery business by Mrs. Hayes and Mrs. C. A. Reed, the drug business by C. C. Conner, hardware by D. Pumphrey and Patterson & Hollaway. The two butcher shops are kept by C. S. Stover and William Corp. Blacksmithing is represented by D. L. Clark, D. B. Gillespie, and Frank Krisl, lumber by P. Jenkins and C. H. Ketridge, and the barbershop by William Bunce. Of the two livery barns, William Matson is the proprietor of the Red Front and David Conner of the other.

Post Office

The first post office called Ohiowa was established at the Al Clemons homestead ½ mile east of the present town in 1870. On October 3, 1872, Austin Adams was commissioned postmaster and the office was moved to the Adams homestead ¾ mile south. Mr. Adams's commission was signed by J. W. Marshall, first assistant postmaster general. Mr. Adams served as postmaster until the fall of 1883, when he was elected county treasurer. He was succeeded by Ryland Clemons. When the railroad got as far as Tobias it was planned to locate the town a short distance southeast of the present location and B. F. Bothwell started a small store. The post office was moved to this store and Mr. Bothwell acted as assistant postmaster.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Ohiowa Post Office about 1900. The man in the center is James Bart; the others are unidentified.

At this time the mail came by carrier from Alexandria. The route served included the Gazelle post office, Ohiowa, and Belle Prairie, where E. G. Beers was postmaster. Then the route ran from Alexandria to Exeter, through Ohiowa and Glengary. The Gazelle post office was discontinued January 19, 1884, at which time Emma Garrison was postmistress.

When the town site was finally fixed at the present location, John Hollister was named postmaster. For the first quarter of 1887 his salary was \$135.87. Hollister was succeeded by Hugh McLaughlin.

The two rural routes were established in 1904. Herb Cooper and A. L. Averill were the first carriers. In 1908, E. C. Adams carried the mail on Route 1. In 1924, George Hurley became carrier for Route 2 and is still (1967) carrying the mail.

Village Board

The incorporation of the village of Ohiowa was authorized by the Fillmore County Commissioners on March 25, 1887. Appointed to serve as the village board until an election could be held were: Dr. T. J. McGee, J. W. Quinlan, Phil Jenkins, William F. Buchmeier, and D. Hesse.

The election was held April 5, 1887, at J. W. Quinlan's office and the following board was chosen: Dr. T. J. McGee,



Standard Atlas of Fillmore County (1905) Map of Ohiowa in 1905

William F. Buchmeier, S. Radford, J. W. Quinlan, and Charles Summers. The board organized by making Mr. Buchmeier chairman. H. E. Larimer and C. A. Fowler were candidates for village clerk, Fowler being elected. R. L. Clemons was made treasurer; C. A. Fowler, attorney; Frank Badger, marshal; and Hartford Wood, street commissioner.

The first ordinances passed by the board related to streets and crossings and sidewalks. On June 7, 1887, a committee was appointed on a calaboose and the board authorized the building of a corral 50' square. In July the same year Ohiowa celebrated the Fourth in an appropriate manner and the board appropriated \$25 to help defray the expense.

In 1888, the following board was chosen: J. W. Quinlan, S. D. Radford, C. E. Summers, W. C. Fitzer; and W. H. Wychoff. Edwin Metcalf was appointed clerk, Morris Thomas overseer of streets; R. L. Clemons, treasurer; and B. F. Durkin, marshal.

In the spring of 1889, on petition of Dave Conner and others, the board passed an ordinance regulating the planting and protection of trees. At the election of this year L. H. Corbine, S. D. Radford, Joseph M. Walker, C. E. Summers, and J. W. Stevenson were made members of the board, and Mr. Summers was chosen chairman.

In 1891, Ed Metcalf, S. E. Matthews, M. H. Cott, C. S. Stover, and J. A. Fulton were elected board members. W. R. Fulton was made clerk, a position he held until 1899, when Sam Spelde took up the work.

Space does not permit the listing of all the board's activites or personnel year by year, and so we detail instead a few years chosen at random, which may be taken as typical.

In July, 1902, a combined town hall and jail was built. G. W. Phelps became clerk in 1904, serving two years. He was succeeded by F. J. Sieber, who held the office until 1911.

Sam Spelde became clerk again and served seven years.

The village board in the year 1929 was composed of F. J. Seiber, E. J. Lynn, and L. Kaderabek, with Mr. Sieber as chairman. J. P. Moor served as clerk for a number of years in an efficient manner.

In 1962, the board members were Henry Molthan, serving his ninth year with two years as mayor, Dale Sieckmann, Ray Dittmer, Joe Bors, and Mrs. Claude Hall, clerk.

Businesses and Professions

The records give us some ideas of the efforts of those who lived in Ohiowa 75 years ago—and later.

C. E. Babcock was a real-estate dealer in the early days. The Clemons brothers, A. F. and R. L., were in the banking business. J. W. Quinlan built the Opera House building which stood for more than 40 years. The first floor was used for an implement business, a drugstore, and the Farmers Bank. After the hard years of 1893 and 1894 the bank went out of business.



Photo from Mrs. Helen Langhorst Ohiowa street scene (about 1900)—man in apron is Cal Stover.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Ohiowa street scene in 1908

The auditorium upstairs was used for public gatherings until the high-school auditorium became available in 1923. Here the William Lewis and Chick Boyes players played to good crowds. Commencement exercises, dances, Epworth League meetings, and high-school plays were held. The old landmark burned to the ground in the fall of 1929. A few years later a new auditorium was built on the same site.

Paul J. Gundermann, one of Ohiowa's pioneer businessmen, came about the time the town was started. In the late 1890's Mr. Gundermann started his own drugstore and continued in business until shortly before his death on January 7, 1941

J. C. Pflug came to Ohiowa from Mound City, Missouri, in 1897 and had a hardware and implement business for 36 years. The Pflug children all grew up in Ohiowa but live in many places now.

Fred Wolter came to Fillmore County in 1888. He worked as a blacksmith, then as manager for the Lincoln Grain Company. He was appointed postmaster in 1916 and

served in that capacity for many years. From 1938 until near the end of his life, he was in the gasoline, oil, and tire business. He also served for several years as village clerk, light and water commissioner, and Fillmore County supervisor for Franklin and Belle Prairie townships. One of Ohiowa's oldest citizens, he died on April 15, 1963.

The Averills and Phelpses were early settlers. For many years, Alphonso Averill carried mail. T. E. Averill kept a hardware store. I. C. Steele had a furniture store, and Conrad Arneke was a faithful shoemaker. Alice and Mabel Arneke have been and still are active in church and community work in Ohiowa.

As recollected by Claude M. Chenoweth, the following firms and people were active in Ohiowa in the years following 1890:

General Merchandise: Chenoweth & McFarland; C. C. Enslow; Ben F. Bothwell; John G. Wollam; George F. Jenkins; Mr. Donahue; A. L. Averill; Frank Spelde; J. P. Moor; Steele Brothers.

Drugs: Harris & Davis; Paul Gundermann. (Mr. Gundermann was

also the undertaker and photographer.)

Doctors: J. D. Patterson; M. S. Bias; J. L. Brown.

Banks: Farmers Bank of Fillmore County (C. C. Conner, Clayton Babcock); Bank of Ohiowa (R. A. Harvey, F. J. Sieber, H. C. Rowland, R. R. Chenoweth, R. H. Marks, A. F. Clemons). Clothing: I. J. Hasterlick.

Feed Stores: Fulton & Whitman; E. F. Medler.

School Superintendents: J. C. Clegg; V. D. Timmerman; C. W. Taylor.

Farm Implements: William Buchmeier; John Curran; Bennett Hayes; Ben F. Dunkin; J. C. Pflug.

Postmasters; H. McLaughlin; J. A. Hollister; W. R. Fulton; C. M. Chenoweth.

Blacksmiths: Olaf Forselle; Boyd Gillispie; Henry Parker.

Grain Buyers: R. L. Clemons; J. A. Hollister; Mate Cannon; W. C. Moore; W. S. Pool; R. R. Chenoweth; Herb Cooper.

Harness Shops: Ed Metcalf; Lorin Heston; J. W. Crawford.

Lumber Yards: C. E. Summers; R. A. Harvey. Restaurants: Jerry W. Forbes; Ernest Wisroth; Clyde Rakestraw.

Barbers: W. G. Davidson; L. B. Frankforter; Ben Grant. Editors: H. E. Larimer; W. R. Fulton.

Attorneys: Charles A. Fowler; W. R. Fulton.

Saloons: Sieckmann & Brown; Meyer & Wertz; I. J. Hasterlick Tom Peterson; Hy Unger.

Painter: Joseph M. Walker.

Livery: Fulton & Whitman; David Conner; William F. Young. Railroad Agents: A. Riddle; Charles F. Hollenberger; Fred Holtz; Mert Allen.

Hotels: J. O'Boyle; Ben Bothwell; W. H. Walker; Mrs. S. P. Sharp

Auctioneer: James T. Walker.

Draymen: John Bell; J. A. Robinson; Jim Moore; Charles Williamson: Henry Domeier.

Cobblers: Adam Brunner; Conrad Arneke.

Hardware: Byron L. Tripp.

Farmers Union Co-operative Association

In 1912, a group of farmers in the Ohiowa community desired to form a co-operative in order to get better prices for their livestock and grain. They secured information from the Extension Department of the University of Nebraska, and after a number of meetings in various schoolhouses, they formed an organization which they named the Farmers Equity. At first they loaded their grain directly into box cars on the siding by scooping it from their wagons. This was one of the first co-operatives in Fillmore County and among the first in Nebraska. It was incorporated in 1916. A grain elevator, stockyards, and even a grocery store and cream station became part of the organization. Some of the original organizers of this co-operative who are still members are Cyril Bernasek, Henry Schelbitzki, Mrs. Frank Schelbitzki, Omer Schroll, Frank Sieckmann, Mrs. Dave Sweney, Robert Weber, Mrs. Corb Williamson and A. O. Wood.

There have been a lot of changes, but the original grain elevator was still in operation until 1958 when it burned. The organization is now known as the Farmers Union Co-operative Association. Present facilities include a modern elevator, office building, 240,000-bushel grain storage, a new feed mill, fertilizer plant, bulk petroleum plant, and a 50-ton, 60-foot scale. The present board members are Joe Schelbitzki, Lloyd Schelbitzki, Herman Nun, Roy Most, Melvin Thomas, and Arthur Wulf. The present employees are Ross Munn,

who has been the manager for 15 years, Lester Bahe, Verlin Most, Earl Peppie, LaVerne Deke, and Willard Meyer.

CHURCHES

The Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, commonly called the South Lutheran Church, began its career on September 25, 1887. For several years it was served by itinerant pastors. Only 15 members were on the roll when the church was organized: William Nierstheimer, Christ Gewecke, William Molthan, Ernest Molthan, Henry Gewecke, Henry Dearking, Christ Schweer, Henry Schweer, William Schweer, Henry Rippe, Barnhart (Bernard) Krug, William Schroder, Henry Kappmeier, Louis Rippe, and William Gewecke. In 1888 the first church building was completed.

The pioneer pastor in 1887-1888 was the Rev. J. Ramser. He was succeeded by the following pastors: Rev. R. Gardew, 1888-1890; Rev. Rhinehart Bauer, 1890-1891; Rev. Max Henning, 1891-1894; Rev. H. Fricke, 1894-1901; Rev. W. Kronsbein, 1901-1903; Rev. Otto Klatt, 1903-1907; Rev. P. C. Martin, 1907-1908; Rev. Rudolf Lentz, 1908-1910; Rev. A. Theodore Mikkelsen, 1910-1912; Rev. Walter Fieg, 1912-1913; Rev. G. Klatt, 1913-1927; Rev. William Harder, 1928-1937; Rev. V. R. Pietzko, 1938-1942; Rev. Fred Loeffler, 1943-1944.

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Ohiowa (1962)

This church became one parish with the St. John's congregation in 1944 and was served by Pastor H. J. Diekhoff from 1944 to 1950, at which time the congregations were again separated until 1953. In 1953, through a final vote, the congregation decided to become a separate church, and the former South St. John's became the Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The Rev. Henning Pearson was the first pastor to serve the newly reorganized church. During his four years as pastor, a new electric organ was purchased, a garage was built, and other changes were made, all through donations and the willing work of members.

Various improvements have been made from time to time. During the pastorate of the Rev. Otto Klatt, the high steeple was built and the bell (weighing about one ton) was installed. In 1911, during the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. Mikkelsen, the convenient parsonage was built. In 1917, a new church was erected. Other improvements included a new cave, new sidewalks, a garage, numerous tree plantings, a new lawn sowed and beautifully kept, a cemetery fence and a gateway arch erected.

The five-acre plot on which the church, parsonage, and cemetery are located was donated for that purpose by William Molthan when the church was organized. The many improvements testify to the loving care of members who have valued and cherished the influence of this church over many years.

The first confirmation class of this church was composed of Adolpf Gewecke, Joseph Gewecke, Minna Gewecke, Emma Dearking, Martha Molthan, and Anna Krug. The first baptism to take place in the congregation was that of Minnie Meyer, who later became Mrs. Herman Schroder.

"Pastor Heinrich Wilhelm Fricke was born in Hanover, Germany, and was trained in the Hermansburg Missionary Institute. He came to America in 1871 and served as a schoolmaster for a few years in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Corning, Missouri. In 1878 he entered Carthage College and studied theology, was licensed by the Nebraska Synod in 1880, and ordained at Waverly, Nebraska, in 1881. He had a kindly disposition coupled with a voice with the penetrating powers of a buzz-saw.

"Other pastors answered the call to go to America and by 1890 there were just as many from the Old Country as there were American-born pastors in the Nebraska Synod." (From Lorin J. Wolff, Story of the Midwest Synod, as quoted by Nebraska Signal.)

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church published a booklet in 1955 issued to celebrate the church's 75th anniversary. (Most of this account is drawn from that booklet.)



Courtesy of Mrs. Clyde Gewacke St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Ohiowa (1955)

St. John's Lutheran Church was the first organized Lutheran church in Ohiowa. Before its formation in 1880, preaching services and religious instruction were given in farm homes. Later, services and the administration of the Holy Sacrament were held at the District 40 schoolhouse and at the home of Mr. J. H. Bremer.

The homes of Claus Claussen, Frederick Matthies, Sr., and Frederick Vogt, Sr., were opened for church services and religious instruction. The first Lutheran service was conducted by a Mr. Williams, a teacher by profession, who came from Switzerland. Mr. Williams came from Chicago to Beatrice to take up a homestead. There he met George Fries. Taking a homestead claim, Mr. Williams settled where Jim Schropfer now resides. Mr. Williams was in poor health and soon died of consumption and was buried on his claim.

The Rev. Simon Meeske was the first ordained Lutheran pastor. The Lutheran people from this community and from Swan Creek (near Tobias) were served together. A meeting for the organization of a Lutheran congregation was held at the home of Mr. Hothan at Tobias, but because of disagreements, plans failed to mature.

On January 1, 1880, Lutherans of this community organized the St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church. The charter members were: Henry Claussen, Sr., Frederick Mat-

thies, Sr., Henry Langhorst, Sr., Christian Claussen, Frederick Musman, Sr., Hans Claussen, Gerhard Hopken, Anton Domeier, John F. Goebel, William Schielke, John H. Thole, and Cattfried Schielke

and Gottfried Schielke.

The first pastor of the new congregation was the Rev. William Thole, a brother of John H. Thole. Although he was badly crippled, he was a true servant of God and served about eight years, bearing all the hardships, troubles, and hindrances of pioneer days. Right at the beginning, a little frame church was built, and also a two-room parsonage. The first buildings were located two miles east of Ohiowa on Sec. 9, land now owned by Gust Nun, Sr.

On April 24, 1881, the new congregation voted to join the English Lutheran Synod of Nebraska, a district of the General Synod. When the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Nebraska was organized in 1890, with all-German congregations, 16 in number of the English district withdrew, among

them St. John's Church.

On April 8, 1883, a permanent and regular Sunday School was organized. After the residence of the Rev. Mr. Thole, the Rev. J. Bond served from 1887 to 1889 and the Rev. O. L. Luschei from 1889 to 1890. The Rev. Herman Schumann became pastor on August 24, 1890. He served 4½ years, preaching also for Lutherans at Turkey Creek. As the church building became outgrown, the members voted, on April 3, 1893, to build a larger church. The new church, a fine building, was continuously used for worship from that time until 1955.

The Rev. C. Thomsen served in 1895-1896; he was followed by the Rev. F. Schwarz, who served from 1896 until he was appointed superintendent of the Synod in 1899.

In the spring of 1899, one week after the departure of the Rev. Mr. Schwarz, the Rev. M. Kossick became pastor and served for eight years. During his ministry, a new parsonage was built in 1904. His successor was the Rev. L. H. Traubel, who served 4½ years. During his ministry, the interior of the church was remodeled and new pews, altar,

pulpit, and baptismal font were installed.

The Rev. J. A. Bahnsen preached his first sermon and was called as pastor on December 8, 1912. During his pastorate the church and parsonage were moved to the present site in Ohiowa, in December, 1921. The first services held in town after the church was moved were on January 15, 1922. This was an important move, for the congregation experienced wonderful progress and growth in every way. The membership of the Sunday School and church increased 100 per cent. It was during the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. Bahnsen that the *Frauenverein* was organized (October 4, 1922) and the Tabitha Missionary Society (March 27, 1927). Pastor Bahnsen served faithfully until 1932, nearly 20 years, the longest pastorate in the history of St. John's Church.

In the beginning of the trying 1930's, the Rev. E. C. Hansen was called as pastor in 1933 and served until 1936.

He was followed by the Rev. W. F. V. Churchill (1936-1939). Both these men are remembered with gratitude for their

service during these economically difficult years.

The second longest pastorate in St. John's was held by the Rev. H. J. Diekhoff, who was called in 1939 and served until July, 1953. These were "war years" and required even greater consecration on the part of the pastor. During his pastorate, all church debts remaining from previous years were abolished. He served the congregation faithfully, serving also the Lutheran congregation south of Ohiowa for nearly five years.

On October 15, 1953, the Rev. Burnell W. Hartman was called as pastor of St. John's together with South St. John's congregation. The two congregations had tentatively voted to merge. Much work was accomplished, resolutions of merger were drawn up by elected members of both congregations, and a vote was called for on February 22, 1954. At that time, the congregation in the country felt that they wished to withdraw from the planned merger, and the Rev. Mr. Hartman was released and called to St. John's Church in Ohiowa, as their

full-time pastor.

It had long been realized that the church building required attention. A committee appointd to study the situation recommended the initiation of a program to build a new church and parsonage. The congregation adopted this recommendation at a special meeting on June 6, 1954. The building committee consisted of W. A. Philippi, Clarence Higel, Leslie Matthies, Leonard Bornschlegl, Theodore Schilke, and Kermit Mussman. On October 10, 1954, the congregation contracted with Richard and William Reinke of Byron, Nebraska, who designed and constructed the beautiful new church.

The last services were held in the old church on October 13, 1954, at 9:30 a.m., and the work of razing the building began immediately following. Ground-breaking services were held October 24, 1954, with the Rev. Karl Koenig, Jr., of Sutton, as the speaker. For the next 11 months, services were held in the village auditorium; funerals and Lenten services were held in the Methodist Church; and the meetings of all organizations were held at the parsonage.

At last, on September 4, 1954, the new church was dedicated, and the congregation settled into its new home; by the time of the 75th anniversary celebration in 1955, the building was debt-free. A new parsonage was completed in 1958.

Pastor Hartman resigned his charge and left St. John's on Easter Sunday, April 1, 1956. Pastor Karl Koenig, Jr., left his pastorate in Sutton to come to St. John's on April 7, 1956, and served until 1963. In that year he was succeeded by Pastor Robert L. Hoeft, who still serves (1967) in that capacity.

Methodism in Ohiowa and Vicinity

The history of Methodism in this vicinity goes back farther than most of us might suppose. The Annual Conference minutes and records left by the Rev. W. D. Gage, the Rev. George H. Wehn, and the Rev. O. W. Fifer, show that this community was included in the Meridian Circuit in 1871. In 1872, this area was included in the Virginia Mission. The first quarterly meeting of the Virginia Mission, Beatrice District, Nebraska Conference, with J. B. Maxfield as presiding elder, was held at Little Sandy, and W. T. Hill was again employed. Present as members were H. C. Rhodes, local deacon, J. E. McClellan, class leader, and J. W. Easley, steward.

At the third quarterly meeting held at Pioneer, September 28, 1872, W. T. Hill had left the charge and H. C. Rhodes was employed as preacher in charge. The minutes give four members present, viz.: J. E. McClellan, H. C. Rhodes, T. E. Allen, W. H. Garrison. The minutes of the last quarterly meeting held at Little Sandy said that there were four members present: H. C. Rhodes, J. W. Easley, W. H. Garrison, and J. E. McClellan. There were elected George Selleck, James R. Jackson, B. F. Ryman, P. Garrison as stewards, with a membership of 106 and nine appointments. J. Grey was licensed to exhort, and thus closed the year of 1872.²

W. P. Grantham, a supernumerary preacher of the conference supplied for a short time after W. T. Hill and pre-

ceding H. C. Rhodes.



Ohiowa Methodist Church (1964)

The Nebraska Conference met at Plattsmouth on April 10, 1873. Bishop Anderson presided . . . J. B. Maxfield was appointed to the Beatrice District and Wm. D. Gage to the Little Sandy Circuit. We had about 60 members on the circuit and will have 160; 26 on probation; five Sabbath schools, 155 scholars, 39 officers and teachers, 350 books in library, 70 Advocates and Good News. Schools paid this year \$29.10 for books. They have paid me this year \$211.20. The conference coming on in September, the harvest was not sold, and it made a sorry time for them; but we hope and trust in God.—W. D. Gage.³

Now let the Rev. George H. Wehn tell us about the year

of 1874 and 1875.

"From the Conference Session of 1874, Bishop Bowman presiding: W. D. Gage was again appointed to this work, but owing to his wife's illness failed the appointment. At the conference of 1874, Hebron Circuit was formed by a division of the old Little Sandy Circuit or Mission. I was appointed to the Hebron Mission; in March 1875, the two were joined together-being then styled Hebron and Little Sandy Mission-embracing a little more than the south half of Fillmore County, all of Thayer County, and a part in the SE corner of Clay County, also a part in NW corner of Jefferson County. We also supplied Nuckolls County with preaching a part of the year and organized the class known as Elton Class, 2 miles E of Elkton. During the year we organized a class at Hebron, one at Howard's S. H. [schoolhouse] Fillmore County, one at Martin's S. H. in same county. We had precious seasons of waiting upon the Lord. We reported in full membership 106 at conference with 35 probationers. Out of the entire number of probationers know but one backslider who we doubted at the time of uniting. During this year we built a parsonage at Geneva which we think when plastered will be worth \$400 and call it good considering that the people are just emerging from the terrible plague of the Grasshopper of last year the consequences of which are still felt severely. Temporally the year will be remembered because of its trail of our faith (in God to provide) by the threatening millions of grasshoppers that passed us daily for weeks in the early part of the season, followed by threatening of drouth, then the storms, hail and rain in torrents-threatening to and in many cases even destroying crops. The floods of water swelling and flooding to overflowing the streams taking before them bridges and these things were appalling; these with growing of wheat in shock and stack were truly causes of discouragement to farmers and in fact all, as all were dependent upon the agriculture. Our Spiritual interest was not so great as could have been desired but a steady growth has through the entire year been manifest. At our fourth quarterly meeting it was recommended that a division be again made of the mission as follows viz. Geneva, Martin, Howard, Chelsea, Franklin, and Walnut to be called Geneva Mission; then as follows viz. Hebron, Belvidere, Carlton, Alexandria, Elkton and Kiowa to be known as Hebron Circuit. With pleasure we add that Bro. W. H. Blaine Local preacher did good and effective service preaching regularly every sabbath and thus kept up 5 appointments. All the summer of 1875 we count him a good help, a laborer in the Lord's vineyard, also Bro. Peter Vanhosen an Exhorter did good and acceptable service in holding meetings. The year in the whole has been a pleasant one not a jar nor discord but harmony entire seems to have prevailed. We close in prayer for still greater and greater and greater blessing to rest upon the people that the years to come may be more and more abundant in labor for Christ and his Kingdom. We might have noticed many others whom we shall remember for their zeal and earnestness in labor for Christ and His cause. Respectfully submitted, George H. Wehn."4

2 Ibid. 3 Ibid. 4 Ibid.

¹ Record Book of Little Sandy Circuit and Later of the Geneva Mission.

In his history dated September 23, 1876, the Rev. George H. Wehn says, "Franklin Class, the oldest of the circuit, has had less pastoral attention than any and yet a good revival influence did pervade and does still. The membership are so scattered, 6 miles E or W of the S. H. their influence cannot be so concentrated. Their Sunday School has been a success." 5

There are no details for the years 1877 to 1880. The Rev. J. A. Chapin (October 1876-October 1879) and Rev. R. C. Johnson (October 1879-October 1880) were the pastors of the Geneva Mission at this time.

In 1880, the conference appointed Lewis D. Willard to supply the Franklin Circuit and reappointed him in 1881. In the following year, 1882, the conference minutes show 60 members for Franklin but make no mention of a pastor.

The Annual Conference minutes of 1883 report Franklin and Chelsea to be supplied and list 40 members. But a "Brief History of Ohiowa M. E. Church," compiled by the Rev. A. T. McFarland and assisted by the Rev. G. M. Jones, tells us that the Rev. Samuel Jones, of one of the Pennsylvania conferences (a located Elder), was pastor of Franklin and Chelsea in 1883. The Rev. G. M. Jones held quarterly conference for him on March 4, 1883, in a schoolhouse south of where Ohiowa now stands.

In 1884, the Franklin Circuit was supplied by the Rev. J. D. Smith and a "church was finished and ready for dedication at Chelsea on Franklin Circuit and a parsonage was built on the same circuit. Church value \$1,400.00 Parsonage value \$500.00."⁷

In 1885, "Ohiowa is a large country circuit and has within its limits the possibilities of a number of strong charges. The Rev. J. D. Smith has supplied the work for two years with a good degree of success. A church and parsonage have been built and paid for to within \$400." The church building was "Chelsea" church that later became the property of the United Brethren. The parsonage was built ½ mile W of the Franklin schoolhouse (District 10), on the old Garrison farm where a small cemetery is still located. At this time Ohiowa charge included Chelsea, Harmony, Prairie Grove, Franklin, Walnut Creek, and possibly others.

In 1886, the Rev. M. C. Smith was the pastor of Ohiowa with Marshall, Chelsea, Harmony, Prairie Grove, Franklin, and Walnut Creek as a part of the charge.¹⁰

In 1887, Strang was a new circuit. Having been formerly a part of the Ohiowa charge, it now included Chelsea, Prairie Grove, and Strang. Ohiowa, with the Rev. M. C. Smith as pastor, still included Franklin, Walnut Creek, Marshall, and Harmony.¹¹

During 1888, the Rev. C. S. Kathan was the pastor and two new churches—in Antioch and Ohiowa—were built and paid for during that year.¹²

In 1889, Ohiowa was joined with Tobias, Daykin, and Antioch with the Rev. John F. Lewis as pastor. "He continued on through 1890 and was used of God in bringing 200 people into the kingdom." In the following year (1891), Ohiowa was separated from Tobias and Daykin. The Rev. John F. Lewis continued as pastor of Ohiowa and Antioch until the fall of 1893. During this year a new parsonage valued at \$1,200 was built.

The Rev. George M. Jones was appointed to Ohiowa in the fall of 1893 and served Ohiowa and Antioch until the fall of 1896. "During the Rev. George M. Jones's ministry the church property was much improved, and there were several gracious revivals which did much to strengthen the church." 14

In the fall of 1896, the Rev. M. C. Smith was again appointed to this charge. The Sunday School report for Ohiowa at this time shows an average attendance of 64 for the quarter preceding May 10, 1897.

5 Ibid.

14 "Brief History."

After the fall of 1897, there are no records available for many years; and so we list the names of the pastors as compiled by the Rev. A. T. McFarland. (In earlier days, Methodist ministers were allowed to stay only two years at one church.)

The Reverend P. C. Johnson, 1897-99; W. N. Simpson, 1899-1901; F. W. Bean, 1901-03; C. E. Givits, 1903-04; W. L. Austin, 1904-05; O. T. Moore, 1905-06; E. F. Hutchins, 1906-09; Charles Burns, 1909-11; C. E. Austin, 1911-13; F. C. McVey, 1913-17; B. N. Kunkel, 1917-19; A. W. Steele, 1919-21; A. L. Stearns, 1921-22; E. A. Knight, 1922-24; N. A. Martin, 1925-26; and A. T. McFarland, 1926-27.

In 1910, an excavation was made for a basement. The church was moved over this and an addition was built onto the east side. The alcove for the choir and pulpit was added on the west. This same year the parsonage was moved from the west side of the church to a location 1½ blocks east (now known as the Wood property).

During the pastorate of the Rev. F. C. McVey, the Sunday School records show an average attendance of about 100. The Epworth League records also show an interested group taking active part in the Young People's Department.

During the pastorate of the Rev. B. N. Kunkel in 1917-19, the old parsonage was sold to Frank Wood for \$1,500 and the present parsonage purchased from Frank Theobald for \$3,350. The money from the sale of the old parsonage was applied on the purchase of the new one. Nineteen hundred dollars was borrowed in order to complete the transaction. The church was incorporated at this time.

The minutes of an adjourned session of the quarterly conference of December 21, 1919, contain a motion to sell the Antioch church and the amount received to be applied to the debt on the new parsonage. During 1924, the second year of the Rev. E. A. Knight's ministry, the money was raised to repay the parsonage loan. A gift from the late May A. Garrison made possible the installation in 1939 of a set of accordion doors; these added much to the convenience and privacy of the Sunday School hour.

The following ministers complete the list of pastors:
The Reverend G. W. Wagner, 1927-29; A. M. Dixon, 1929-32; R. R. Kreps, 1932-35; C. M. Shaub, 1936-37; S. G. Rasmussen, 1937-40; A. W. Ahrendts, 1940-43; W. B. Zimmerman, 1943-45; Max McCamley, 1945-48; B. M. Lansing, 1948-50; Jestine Jensen, 1950-55; J. C. Moorman, 1955-56; Carl Spencer, 1956-60; Paul Walker, 1960-66; and Larry Westerbuhr, 1966-67.

School-District No. 40

Before the incorporation of the village of Ohiowa, a country schoolhouse was situated on the corner $\frac{1}{2}$ mile E and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile S of the present town site, and the children of the early settlers attended there. A meeting for election of officers was held at the home of A. F. Clemons on Wednesday, March 20, 1872.

Clara Ann Mussman gives us a picture of school in those

days:

"Water had to be carried from farm homes to the south until a well was dug on the grounds in 1879. Coal and all other supplies were brought from Alexandria. If you could read the first treasurers' books kept by District 40 you would be amazed or amused. One item Dec. 2, 1887 read: 'Rawhide for teacher, 25 cents.' Tall lanky lads came to school for a few winter months when they did not have to help on the farms."

"One of the earlier teachers was Mrs. Parthenia (Matson) Kelly who taught District 40 in 1880. Eighty-odd years can make a difference. Picture yourself climbing wooden fences, almost stepping on blue racers in the tall prairie grass, or carrying a pail of water on the worn path to District 40."

After incorporation, it was thought advisable to provide a town school that would answer more fully the educational requirements of the growing community. In 1888, a frame schoolhouse was erected on the site of the present building. This two-story building had four large rooms and front and back halls. Later, it was found necessary to erect a two-room addition at the rear. The upper room was used in connection with the high school and the lower room served as a gymnasium

Miss Ida Sharp, who was teaching in the country school at the time of the erection of the new building, came to Ohiowa as the first primary teacher. John C. Clegg, the first superintendent, was noted for his interest in croquet.

^{6 &}quot;Brief History of Ohiowa M. E. Church"—written in the Church Record Book.

Annual Conference Minutes, 1884.
 Ibid., 1885.
 Ibid., 1885.
 Ibid., 1886.
 Ibid., 1887.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1885. ⁹ *Ibid.*, 1885. ¹² "Brief History." ¹³ *Ibid.*

Franklin Township Homestead Map

Claus R. Claussen 160 A	William Baldwin 160 A				Lewis T	rauger A	Sylvanus 160	Dietrick				Francie Storie 160 A	[ra].	Roberts 60 A	St Joe and D. C. R. R. Co	Heinrich Langhorst 160A
Hans J. Claussen 160 A	John M. Claussen 160 A	St.	Joe and D.	C. R. R. Co.	William :	Summers 0 A	Franz C	Clausses		Joe and	3 D. C. R. R. Co 40 A	Caroline Williams 160 A	Charl	es Spencer 160 A	St. Joe and D. C. R. R. Co. 160 A.	St. Joe and D. C. R. R. Co.
St Joe & D.		Wilhel Sieckn 160	nann	Ryland L. Clemons 160 A	s	St Joe & D	CRR	Co.	Ludwig H	. Kuker	Friedrich W Buchmeier 160 A	St. Joe & I	D. C. R. R.	Co.	Reint Jansen Ulferts 150 A	Andreas Schropfe 80 A Cyrus McPherson 80 A
St. Joe & D.	C. R. R. Co	Henry 16	y Most 0 A	Eugene D. Babcock 160 A		40		Clemons	Josiah It	Luke Jr.	Henry Matthies 160 A	Hiram A. Martin 160 A	80 A		James W. McPherson 80 A	Cyrus Augustu McPherson H Kanz 80 A 80 A
Harrison Averill 160 A	Ephraim Stevens 160 A			Austin Adams 160 A					St	Joe and D.	C. R. R. Co.	George Fries 160 A	Frede	rich Vogt 60 A		Henry K. Schmid 160 A
William Frederick Gewecke Gewecke 80 A 80 A	8:August Gewecke 160 A	St Joe : R. R. 320	Co !	Edmund J. Stone 160 A			16 I Land				George Thomas 160 A	Peter Thomas 160 A	Anna 7	Thomas 60 A	St. Joe and	D. C. R. R. Co 80 A
St Joe 2nd D	9	John H. C 80 Ernst M	A folthan	John Warnke 80 A Hugh Berkley 160 A	Lewis N 160	f. Clapp	Railros 24	ad Land	William 160	Case A	George W. Lowery 160 A	Thomas E. Barnett 160 A	Wm.	R. Terry 60 A	Nelson Tracy 120 A Martin Walker	George W Morkey
St Joe and D	A A	Carl F Molthan 80 A	Frederick Molthan 80 A	Heirs of	Railroad Land 80 A	Elwood Bales 160 A	i i		William 1	Baker A	John A. Dempster 160 A	Ellie Barnett 160 A	David 160	Hadley D.A.	John Moore	Jesse F Snow
Cecil A Flower	William Eppler 80 A			80 A	John Shuster. Jr	John Shuster 80 A	James E McClellar 160 A		Joseph M. Taylor 160 A	R. R. Land 80:A	William F Angstead 160 A	Lewis Smith 160 A	Josep 80	h Terry		Jesse F. Snow 80 A
	Fritz Warnke 80 A			C. R. R. Co.	80 A								William	J Moore 80 A	Railroa 241	d Land
80 A Ernest Schleuty	Christian Buchmeie 80 A	50		G. R. R. Co.	William H	Garrison 0 A		John T McPhei son 80 A	Hugh Mc 160	Laughlin A	Amy M. Taylor, Widow 160 A	William F Minshall 160 A	Church I Rinard 80 A	Levi Baldwin 80 A	John W. Curch 160 A	Luther B. Thoma Rct. Rec 160 A
80 A		Andrew S	Stevenson A	James F. Reed 80 A		-		John T. McPher- son 40 A	John T. McPher- son 40 A		John L. Taylor 80 A			1		
St. Joe and	D, C. R. R. Go. 10 A	John G. S	lingerland	Lee Anderson 160 A	s	t Joe & D	3 , C. R. R. (Peter Gi	A Lee	Oliver W. Patton 160 A	St Joe & D	65 C. R. R. 1	Co	Schoo	36 1 Land
		16	0 A	George W. Hinthorn					160	A	Stephen M. Rowland 80 A					

The first commencement of the Ohiowa school was held on June 2, 1891. The graduating students were Clayton Babcock, Eva Bothwell, Irene Hollister, Charles Matson, Ray Kingsbury, George Matson, Fred Burns, and Ira M. Andrew. The teachers were John C. Clegg, principal; Etta Morgan, grammar room; Isaac B. Conner, intermediate; and Olive Hollister, primary.

In 1892, the graduates were Floy Clark (later Mrs. Charles Roper of Lincoln), Lydia Babcock King, Clara Medlar Bigelow, and Bertha Adams Klatt.

The first class to graduate after the school had 12 grades in 1900 was composed of three members: Maye Quinlan Burt, Alice Walker Dunnigan, and Mae Stowell Grant.

Charles W. Taylor was superintendent from 1899 to 1900; E. F. Monroe held the same position from 1907 to 1909.

Of superintendents between 1901 and 1907 there is no record. Those since 1907 have been:

Ernest F. Monroe, 1907-09; R. O. Severin, 1909-10; P. W. Evans, 1910-12; Gustave O. Fuchs, 1912-14; Mabel C. Metcalf, 1914-16; John

E. Lanz, 1916-18; Gladys Freeman Pavey, 1918-19; Wiliam H. Kotas, 1919-22; J. A. Blackhurst, 1922-23; E. D. Clasen, 1923-28; H. C. Rude, 1928-31; Orrin A. Bell, 1931-36; D. L. Jimerson, 1936-38; H. E. Walkow, 1938-41; G. D. Morrison, 1941-42; Perry Jorn, 1942-46; J. W. Peterson, 1946-47; Otto Kucera, 1947-49; Floyd Tillotson, 1949-51; Paul R. Dalton, 1951-52; Howard Zook, 1952-56; Max R. May, 1956-57; Virgil Poore, 1957-59; Orville Schmidt, 1959-61; and Charles L. Phillips, 1961-67.

School opened in 1873 with 21 pupils enrolled and R. L. Clemons serving as director. The first teacher recorded was Nellie C. Carver, who taught 16 children for a three-month term in 1874 for a salary of \$25 per month. Enrollment rose steadily, until in 1882 the number of pupils reached 71. One teacher, Anna Gorden, taught the entire school for a three-month term for \$25 a month.

In 1884, District 40 began holding school for a full ninemonth term. By 1900, the school had six full-time teachers. In 1912, enrollment reached its all-time high of 205. After that peak year, enrollment began to decline until, by 1936, there were only 100 pupils registered for the school term.



Photo from Otha Wood
District No. 40 schoolhouse, built in 1888. The exact date of this
picture is not known.



Photo from Mrs. Verlin Most District No. 40 (Ohiowa) in February, 1946

(An interesting sidelight on local history is that the school census in 1895 showed 208 pupils of school age in the district; in 1902, 180; in 1910, 195; in 1912, 205; in 1920, 145; and in 1929, 160 pupils.)

Soon after World War I, the frame building was condemned and bonds were voted for a new schoolhouse. Clara Mussman gives us a good explanation for the condemning of the old school:

"School was dismissed more than once when the old schoolhouse started to rock in a strong wind. The basement of the new school was dug by people of the community with farmers bringing their teams of horses and slip scrapers. It took a great deal longer than it would today with all the big machinery. After classes started in the new building, the old school was taken down. Farmers who got the lumber were Robert Weber, who used it to build onto his house; Henry Wulf, who used it in his house on the farm where Arthur Wulf now resides; some of the windows that Henry Wulf got were used later on by Henry Fries to build a porch onto his house, where Joe Bors lives now; Will Wulf, who used his lumber in a hog house; and Miles Hurley, who built the barn on the farm where Dallas Mussman now lives with the lumber that he got."

The new brick building was erected just south of the old schoolhouse in 1921-1922. It is fireproof and completely modern, has a large auditorium which serves also a a gymnasium, and is surrounded by beautiful and well-kept grounds. Teachers and pupils moved into the new building in the winter of 1922-1923. Enrollment increased considerably after the erection of the new building.

The Ohiowa athletes worked hard during the school year of 1938-1939, capturing two state championships. One



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Ohiowa High School Basketball Team (1904). Back row, left to right: Clarence Bigelow, Supt. Huntington. Middle row: Ward Nippert, Dan Warneke, Bert Lynn. Front row: Frank Garrison, Ed J. Lynn, Phillip Rose

was the Class C Tournament in basketball, and the other was the Nebraska State Track Meet Class D Championship. Nine trophies were added to the collection that year. By winning two state championships in that year, Ohiowa ranked with Lincoln High School, which won the Football and Class A Track Championships, and Omaha Central, which won the Nebraska wrestling and baseball championships. In other years, the boys went to the state tournaments, but didn't get to be the state champions. The large collection of trophies displayed in the hall of the Ohiowa school speaks well for all the pupils during the years in all kinds of activities.

In 1955, six full-time teachers were employed in District 40; by 1967, the number had risen to 10.

FAMILIES

Anton Domeier, his wife Louisa, and their family, after spending some years in Illinois and Iowa, came to Franklin township in 1879, where they purchased a half-section of wild prairie land. The family worked hard to improve their homestead. Many grandchildren and great-grandchildren of this family still live in this community.



Photo from Bertha Schneider Anton Domeier and daughters, Anna and Louise (taken before 1900).



George Fries and four daughters. Front row: Mr. Fries, Ida. Back row: Minnie, Mary, Anna.

Henry Fries, a Franklin township native, was born on the place his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Peter Fries, homesteaded in 1870, 3 miles E of Ohiowa—the NW ¼ of Sec. 14, now known as the Ed Matejka farm. The parents had emigrated from Germany to Wisconsin, then on to Nebraska. Henry was born in a dugout in 1874. Later the family built a sod house, and then a frame house. Henry was third oldest of a family of 10 children. His father worked at Nebraska City to help provide for his family. Coming home, he would carry a 50-pound bag of flour on his back, walking all the way. Henry's father donated a corner of ground for a school, District 73, until 1960 when it was moved.

The Fries family once watched a group of Indians bury a small baby just west of their farmyard, tamping the ground so hard that the mound of dirt always showed. Henry and his schoolmates spent the night of the 1888 blizzard in the schoolhouse.

In 1900, Henry married Johanna Thole, who had come to Franklin township in 1874, when four years old, with her parents, her twin sister Wilhelmina, seven other sisters, and a brother. Wilhelmina married Gust Fries. The Thole twins lived to celebrate their 82nd birthdays together in Ohiowa, where they lived most of their lives.

Henry and Johanna Fries had two daughters, Margaret (Mrs. Joe Bors), now living in her parents' home, and Ida (Mrs. Jess Most), living 4 miles E of town. The Frieses celebrated their golden wedding in 1950.

Henry Fries passed away in May, 1959, at the age of 85 years; Mrs. Fries in December, 1959, at the age of 84. They had lived in Ohiowa since 1927. Mr. Fries lived in Franklin township all his life.

M. F. Garrison farmed near Dixon, Illinois, until 1878, when he came to Franklin township and bought 160 acres of fine prairie land. He farmed until 1890, when he moved into Ohiowa to live with his daughter Mrs. James (Mary A.) Quinlan.

William H. Garrison and his wife Emmogene came here from Illinois in 1871. In September, 1864, at the age of 17, he had enlisted in Co. F, First Illinois Light Artillery, and went through several battles. As a veteran, he homesteaded on Sec. 28. Their first home was a dugout, and for two years they lived in a sod house. He was the first person to



Photo from Clyde Gewacke Mathias Garrison

raise a crop of grain west of Little Sandy Creek, so thinly settled was the region at this time. He was, in 1872, the first teacher in Franklin township; his wife also taught in 1875. Mr. Garrison wanted the township named Franklin. There was opposition, and so he got out the voters and the name Franklin carried. In 1893, he was elected county supervisor for three years; he also served two terms as assessor. His son, John G. Garrison, died July 15, 1965; but one daughter, Florence Garrison Wood, still lives in Ohiowa, as do a number of Garrison grandchildren.

Mrs. Pauline Lapcheska Jenkins, who was born in Germany in 1871, was brought to Illinois by her parents at the age of two years. When she was 12, she came to Belvidere with her grandparents. Mrs. Jenkins vividly remembered life in the early 1880's. The pioneers' first concern was shelter, food, fuel, and clothing. She remembered the hayburners — a round type of stove which was stuffed full of prairie hay. Later (in bad years) many people burned corn for fuel. There were many sod houses around the country; many pioneer families' first shelters were dugouts. But as soon as each family was able, they built small frame houses. The pioneer families worked hard, throve, and progressed rapidly, in spite of hardships when drouth and grasshoppers took their crops.



Photo from Mrs. Agnes Burt

Pauline Jenkins and family in 1897. Left to right: Blanche, Mr. George Jenkins, George, Minnie, Mrs. Pauline Jenkins, Agnes. Inset: Daisy (not yet born; date of her picture not known).

Mrs. Jenkins recalled the dry years of 1893 and 1894 when they had to kill young animals as they were born because there was nothing to feed the mothers. Potatoes raised during those years were like marbles but had to be used anyway. Mrs. Jenkins and her brother would shell a load of corn with a hand sheller, and the next day her father would take it to Alexandria, where it was sold for 9 cents a bushel. Mrs. Jenkins, like many others, mentioned the fact that before the town of Ohiowa started, that particular section was very low—in fact, a duck pond, where Mrs. Jenkins and her brother Fred Lapcheska used to go to shoot snipe and plover for meat.

Mrs. Jenkins was married to George Jenkins in 1889 and moved to Ohiowa in 1896. Here she raised her family: Agnes, Minnie, Blanche, George, and Daisy. Mrs. Jenkins, long a fine example of the old pioneer spirit that nothing could discourage, died at the age of 89, on May 19, 1960.

Ben Bothwell, the first storekeeper, had his store ½ mile E of town. The first school was also held there. Later, when the town site was changed to the center of the section,

Mr. Bothwell moved his store building.

Mrs. Jenkins also recalled the business places that lined the street just west of Main Street. In the late 1890's, the town had two banks, two butcher shops, and two hotels, besides many other shops.

Henry (Heinrich) Langhorst came to Franklin (Sec. 1) as a homesteader in 1870. His first home was a sod house, and he cultivated his land with a team of oxen. He worked in the railroad shops at Nebraska City to help provide for his family. In early days, Beatrice was their trading post, and Lincoln was the nearest railroad station. Gradually, pioneerfashion, he replaced his dugout by a sod house, and then, later, hauled lumber from Fairmont for their first frame house. Indians frequently stopped to beg for food; if given food, they would leave and not bother. In 1878, the Indians were moved to the Black Hills.

Henry Langhorst was a member of the Nebraska Legislature for the 37th District in 1895 and 1896. In 1897, C. A. Fowler was elected to the legislature, but resigned at the end of one year; Mr. Langhorst served in 1898 to finish the term. He was also assessor for Franklin township for eight years. The Langhorsts had seven children, all of whom worked hard, and the name of Langhorst is still familiar in and around. Objects

and around Ohiowa.

John Langhorst was born on the Henry Langhorst homestead in 1872. He remembered the blizzard of 1888. John married Ann Thomas, who was born and raised in Franklin township on the farm where Will Schropfer now lives. He farmed south of Ohiowa in Thayer County for more than 40 years. He moved into Ohiowa in January, 1947, and lived there until his death.



Photo from Henry Langhorst Henry (Heinrich) Langhorst

Fred H. Matthies was brought to Franklin township at the age of $1\frac{1}{2}$ years by his parents, who homesteaded $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles E of Ohiowa. He grew to manhood on this farm (the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 10) with his brothers Henry and Louis. His father departed this life at an early age.

Sophia Most had been brought to Franklin township in 1874, at the age of three weeks, by her parents, Mr. and Mrs.



Photo from Grace Matthies Mr. and Mrs. Fred Matthies in 1943.

Conrad Most, who homesteaded 3 miles E of Ohiowa. She was married to Fred Matthies in 1891. They lived on the farm south of the Matthies homestead, where they reared three sons and three daughters: Sophia, Fred, Malinda, Ella, Will, and Ed. He was an excellent farmer and managed everything well. In 1944, they retired from the farm and moved into Ohiowa. Fred Matthies departed this life on June 10, 1950.

Mrs. Matthies recalled the blizzard of 1888 and various other pioneer experiences. On occasion, the Most family shared food with some very hungry Indians, giving them boiled potatoes with jackets. The Indians would pray and then eat all. In early days, potatoes were boiled in their jackets because they would keep better.

Sophia Matthies, still spirited and active, passed away

November 20, 1963, at the age of 89.

William McCurdy came from Iowa in 1880, at the age of nine, to his new home in Franklin township. His father, Lewis C. McCurdy, purchased 160 acres of unimproved land for \$1,300. They later bought additional land and built an attractive home. William McCurdy passed away May 16, 1960. His son Guy now lives on the home place.



Photo from Guy McCurdy William McCurdy in 1951.

James W. Quinlan came from Exeter to Ohiowa about 1884. He built the Opera House building and engaged in the implement business until 1890. The Quinlan children—Jennie Mae, Rosalind, and LeRoy—grew up in Ohiowa. Jennie Mae married Charles N. Burt and lived on her grandfather



Photo from Clyde Gewacke Jennie Maye Quinlan (Burt)— Graduation picture (1901).

Garrison's farm until her death in 1929. Mrs. Clyde Gewacke, oldest daughter of the Burt family, still lives in this community.

Frederick Saatmann came from Illinois in 1883 and bought land from Gerhard Hopken, who had homesteaded it. He brought with him three sons—Fred, Herman, and Ernest—who became industrious and prosperous members of the community. Herman Saatmann passed away in 1918. Ernest Saatmann died on May 20, 1951, and his wife on December 28, 1966. Fred Saatmann died November 26, 1944. Mrs. Fred Saatmann still lives here, along with sons and daughters of these families: Frederick, Frieda, Ella, and Chris Saatmann, and Mrs. John Jacobs and Mrs. Rudy Sadlo. The Saatmann holdings have been large through these many years.



Photo from Frederick Saatmann

Frederick Saatmann family. Standing, left to right: Herman, Laura, Ernest, Fred. Sitting: Henry, Frederick's brother; Frederick, Mrs. Frederick (Sophia) Saatmann; Ernest's wife, Louisa. Children: Eleanor, Christ, and Frieda, youngsters of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Saatmann.

William Sieckmann, with his wife Wilhelmina and four children, came to America in 1870 from Hesse, Germany. Coming to Nebraska, they homesteaded on the NW ¼ of Sec. 8, Franklin township, the same section in which Ohiowa now stands. At that time there was no town. The family first lived in a dugout on the SE corner of that quarter. Later, they built a house in the NW corner, where the buildings still remain. The father and the older sons frequently worked in Nebraska City. He also ran one of Ohiowa's early saloons. They went to Nebraska City, Beatrice, and Tobias for supplies.

The William Sieckmanns had seven children: Minnie, William, Henry, Fred, Charles, Sophia, and Mollie. The only survivor of this family is now Mollie (Mrs. Will McGraw), who resides in Lincoln.

Fred Sieckmann was long Ohiowa's oldest citizen, a resident of Franklin township for all of his 95 years. Born in



Photo from Grace Matthies Mr. and Mrs. William Sieckmann

Germany on September 29, 1869, he was only six months old when his parents brought him to America. Fred grew to manhood on the family farm. As a boy, he spent much of his time herding cattle, as there were no fences, in all kinds of weather, at times getting lost in blizzards. He saw herds of antelope passing through, and the Texas cattle drives. Also, as a boy, he worked in the Ben Stockfeld dry goods and grocery store. He remembered Indians coming by and begging for food. He saw the railroad put down and the village of Ohiowa built up. Before the railroad came, he and his father made many trips to Tobias with teams and wagons to haul lumber for building purposes in Ohiowa. At one time his mother, sister, and he were snowed in for three days in their dugout. His father and older brothers had gone to Nebraska City to work. After three days, Ernest Molthan, father of our long-time mayor, Henry Molthan, with help, dug them out.

In 1891 he was married to Alvina Mussman, who had come from Illinois to Franklin township with her parents, when a girl of 12 years. Mr. and Mrs. Sieckmann farmed near Ohiowa for many years, retiring to Ohiowa in 1936. Their greatest pride was working close to nature. When working in Ohiowa, Mr. Sieckmann worked in filling stations of Brown, Lucht, and Judy. He was township assessor for eight years.

Fred and Alvina Sieckmann had seven children, six sons and one daughter: Fred, Charles, Ed, Grace, Howard, Jess, and Dallas. They were privileged to observe their 69th wedding anniversary in April, 1960. Mrs. Sieckman passed away the following June at the age of 87. Mr. Sieckmann then made his home with his daughter Grace (Mrs. Fred) Matthies in Ohiowa until his death on May 23, 1965.

Calvin S. Stover came to Franklin township from Iowa in 1883. He worked for Ralph Stowell for three years and then went into the draying business in Ohiowa. In 1888, he married Anna Einhause, a native of Germany. In 1891, he changed his business to that of stock buyer and butcher. He was said to be a young man of remarkable business ability, and he prospered.

Dan Theobald came from Illinois with his family and lived in the Harmony community before he bought the farm in Sec. 20 of Franklin township in 1896. From then until very recent times there were always Theobalds in this community; but the last—Harry and Dan Theobald, and Myrtle Theobald Silvey—are now gone. Mrs. Dan Theobald's maiden name was the same as that of her husband: she was Margaret Theobald, a sister of George Theobald, but the two families were not related in any way. Mrs. Silvey remembered her parents saying that they came across the prairie in a wagon from the end of the railroad and came as fas ar the Frank Hurley place before going on to their Harmony home.

Frank Hurley came here and bought land in 1883, before Ohiowa was a town. George Hurley still lives in Ohiowa, although the other Hurley families have all moved elsewhere.

George Theobald came to Ohiowa soon after his marriage to Dora Wolter in 1887. His home, consisting of 240



Photo from Mrs. Henry Langhorst Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Stover and daughter Hazel (Theimer)

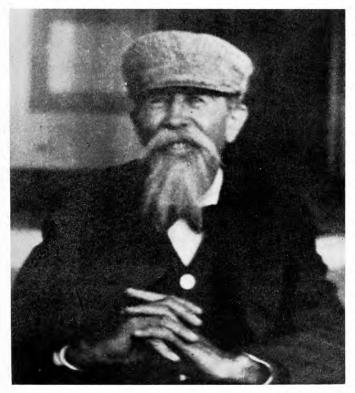
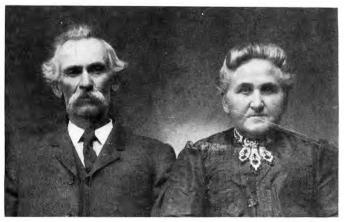


Photo from Jess Theobald Dan Theobald (about 1913)

acres, was on Sec. 32. He and his wife worked hard and had a beautiful farm home. They had two daughters: Goldie (Mrs. Earl Hill) and Laura, who married Dr. S. G. Panter, once an Ohiowa physician. He had several brothers who settled elsewhere in Fillmore County, and his sister Margaret married Dan Theobald.



George Augustus Wright family in 1899: George, daughter Lucy, son Norman, wife Virginia.



Mr. and Mrs. William L. Baker about 1915. William Baker homesteaded the SW ¼ of Sec. 22, Franklin, early in the 1870's.

George Augustus Wright came from Mendota, Illinois, in 1871, homesteading on the E ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 34, Belle Prairie. (He is included here because of his connection with Ohiowa.) Among the pains and pleasures of pioneer life, he told of walking to Alexandria for a sack of flour, carrying it home on his back, and of walking barefoot to Sunday School with Ralph Stowell. His son, Norman Wright, Sr., who lives in Ohiowa, spent some 18 years as a county supervisor and is now (1967) mayor of Ohiowa.

Other early residents were William Baker and others who came in 1870. Mr. Baker filed homestead entry right in 1869 and moved his family from Ohio in the spring of 1870. The Baker, Lowry, Dempster, and Case families came together, arriving at Beatrice, and built dugouts so that they could live close together. They chose their homesites in Sec. 22 on the creek so that they had water and timber. Later on, the grout house, constructed of lime and rock, was built. According to her daughter, Mrs. Dave Sweney, when Mrs. Baker moved in, no queen was ever prouder. The family was raised on this farm and Mrs. Sweney lived there until very recent years, when she moved to Milligan.

Albert F. Clemons homesteaded ¼ mile E of Ohiowa in 1870 and had the first post office; his brother, R. L. Clemons, another early settler, was postmaster in 1883.

We pay tribute, if only by naming them here for memory's sake, to these early families:

Schropfer, Strauss, Krause, Saatmann, Wulf, Claussen, Sieckmann, and Most. Still familiar names in the community are those of Thomas, Fries, Matthies, Pfingston, Hurley, Hopken, Schielke, Vogt, Hill, Schafer, Garland, Theobald, Watermann, Dunse, Chalupka, Molthan, Schroeder, Moore, McCurdy, Warnke, Eppler, Sharp, Franz, Brown, Cradduck, Baldwin, Brunner, Sigman, Sieber, Garrison, Quinlan, Buchmeier, Dearking, Schweer, Blanke, Wright, Medlar, Rippe, Wood, Wedeking, Metcalfe, Babcock, Clemons, Demaree, Peppie, and Heston.



John and Laura Angstead farewell day, 1907. Front row, left to right: Mrs. Harrold, William Angstead, Ruthie Johns, Mrs. A. Johns, Naomi Johns, Sarah Baldwin, Grace Schafer, Gail Schafer, Helen Schafer, Ruth Quinlan, Mrs. Gillans, Mrs. P. Wright (child on ground unidentified). Second row: John Angstead, Laura Angstead, Jess Moore, Flora Moore, Mrs. Sam Cradduck, Christina Moore, Mrs. Art Cradduck, Mrs. Schafer, Mrs. Baker, Beatrice Schafer, and Smithy Gillans. Third row: Effic Moore, Ellen Coane Scholl, William Baker, Mrs. William McCurdy and baby Ruby, William McCurdy, Mrs. William ("Estey") Baldwin, Emma Schafer, William Baldwin, Samuel Cradduck, L. C. Schafer, and Lewis Morgan. Ladies in back: Sarah Baldwin's niece Sarah, and Ellen ("Kit") Wright.

Norbert Deke,	Richard D Dittmer, Obj.1		Earl Strauss,	Gus Schropfer,	Albert S
Ohi.i Orristian Sastman, Ohi.i Ceorge Hillgren, Ohi.i	dillard Sieckmann, Ohi, 1 "Megic I Lou Sadio, Sornichiegl, Chi.1 Ohi, 1	f Sophia Jacobs, Obi.1	they E. 3 Jirkovsky-Lauis Ohi.i Matthies, Filliam (hi.) George, (hi.)	Schopfer, Mil.1 Schopfer, Mil.1 Jim Schropfer, Rohr, Schropfer, Tob.2 Tob.2	Joseph Anton Kroshoffra Kotas, Tob.2
7 Edwin Georgice, Georgice,	Levis F. Duare Gariard, Name, Ohi. OhioWA	Sahr, Gustov J. Van, Ohi.1	/O'Natthies, O'Natthies, Onld.1 Capperman,	Wayne Nassman, Tob.2	Lawrence A. Trupicka, Tob.2/Z
Robert Nober, Chi.1	bells Louis lassum, Schropfer, Chi., Ohi, 7 Ernest Schulte, Chi.,1	Œ ^c	Leonard Fearking, Chi.,1 Jess Schropter, Tob.,1	William Schropfer, /† Tob.2 Clarence Nest, Tob.2	Rayword Jest Strope, Tob.,2
Ferman Man, Oni.1 / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /	Ves Herman Craddick, Bunte, Chi. 1 20 Chi. 1	Mrs. Frances Lindshupel, 2/ Chi.1	2.2 bisard Souling, Ok.1.1	Weldom Carrison Bornschegel, Tob.2 Tob.2 L.3	
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Photo from A. O. Wood

Ohiowa Auto Club in 1909



Photo from A. O. Wood

Stacking wheat bundles in summer of 1913: Otha Wood on load of bundles, Bryson Walker on stack, and Ed. Sigman on empty rack.

Geneva Township

Geneva township is T7N, R3W, in Fillmore County.¹ The township takes its name from the county-seat town of Geneva, most of which is included at its southeast corner in Sec. 36, in the geographical center of the county. The town of Geneva is the voting point as well as the principal shopping center for most of the township's inhabitants.

The land in this area is gently rolling, with one stream, Turkey Creek, flowing from west to east across its southern part, mostly through Secs. 30 to 25. This stream is small, slow, lazy, and sometimes dry; it becomes swift and swollen

only after melting snows or heavy rains.

Geneva township is bounded on the north by West Blue, on the east by Madison, on the south by Stanton, and on the west by Bennett townships. Its entire southern boundary is marked by Nebraska Highway 41 and its eastern boundary by U. S. 81. The Fairmont-Hebron branch of the Burlington runs from north to south down the middle of Secs. 1 to 36; the Fremont-Superior line of the Northwestern slants in southwesterly in the northern quarter of Sec. 36 and then parallels the Burlington through the town.

That Geneva township has been a progressive one is evidenced by its having connected its rural residents by telephone as early as 1907; and the Geneva Township Club, founded in 1921, became the first organized extension club in the county. All its farm homes are now on year-round roads, and all now have access to electricity. As of 1966, the

township contained 66 irrigation wells.

Manleyville

During 1871, when negotiations were pending for the purchase of a portion of the school land in the center of the county for county purposes, A. J. Manley conceived the idea of laying out a town site and getting the county seat located there. He built a large hall, 20' x 60', and offered to donate this to the county should they locate there. This offer was refused, with the result that this hall and a blacksmith shop were the only buildings ever actually erected in Manleyville. A shoe shop and a grocery store were opened up in the hall.

In 1874, the plat of the town site was filed in the office of the county clerk, the location being the SW ¼ of Sec. 27. A total of 233 lots were staked out, and a number were sold but never occupied. Trees were planted and streets were laid out. One lone tree now stands as a landmark of the "hoped

for" town of Manleyville.



Photo from Mrs. Darrel Hughes The only evidence of Manleyville, and a landmark used as a guide by pioneers. This tree was destroyed in 1966, making way for R.E.A. power lines.

The hall at Manleyville was once used for a term of court in Fillmore County, and the first homicide case in the county was tried here.

The first homicide occurred in August, 1872, when Orlando Porter shot and killed George A. Day. Porter lived on a farm east of Geneva, and Day, who had a homestead near by but had not yet brought his family West, was boarding with him. Day frequently complained of being too unwell to work and remained at the house.

One day, while Porter was working in the hay field, a neighbor told him that Day had been guilty of criminal intimacy with his

¹ Most of the Geneva township material was compiled by Mrs. Vera Lovegrove and Mrs. Darrel Hughes.

wife. Porter went to the house and, taking his wife on his knee, made her confess the truth of the report. He arose, exclaiming, "He shall die!"

Just at that moment, he saw Day riding up on one of the horses he had loaned him. In anger, he caught up his loaded musket, thrust the muzzle out the window, and fired. Day rolled from the horse, dead.

An inquest was held, and Porter was held for trial on a charge of murder. At the regular term of court in November, held at the Manleyville hall, Porter was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced. He was soon paroled, however, and returned back East.

Mordecai Pangle purchased the ground after the town was disbanded. His son Charles remembered and told about breaking up the ground and plowing into the stakes which had been driven to

mark off town lots.

The first term of District Court in Fillmore County was held, earlier in the same year, at the near-by Pangle homestead. In the fall of 1871, William Smith had been arrested for larceny and was confined, awaiting trial, in the Pawnee County jail at great expense. Therefore, upon a request from the county commissioners, Judge O. P. Mason ordered a special term of the District Court to be held on February 28, 1872. The first jury in the county was drawn on February 7, and the first term of court was held at the Pangle homestead. Smith was convicted and sentenced to 60 days in the Otoe County jail.

SCHOOLS

Early in 1872, the first four school districts in Geneva township were organized; a fifth district was added in 1883.

District No. 7 was organized on January 7, 1872. County Superintendent John A. Dempster ordered an organizational meeting at the home of E. R. Spear on the NW ¼ of Sec. 28, T7N, R3W. The meeting, attended by Girard R. Hart, Ebineezer Milner, E. R. Spear, J. E. Spear, R. B. Spear, and M. S. Spear, elected a board consisting of E. Milner, moderator; G. R. Hart, director; and E. R. Spear, treasurer.

A temporary board-shanty schoolhouse was located on the south side of the E ½ of the SW ¼ of Sec. 20. A report of Superintendent Dempster's appeared in the Nebraska Bulletin, July 6, 1872.

"June 25, 1872.—Visited the school in District No. 7, taught by Miss Lottie Williams. There were 13 pupils present, of 16 on the list. Good order maintained, and the school in prospect of fair advancement, considering the disadvantage of so small a room, and a poor building. This is Miss Williams' first term, and she succeeds well."



Photo from John Tobiassen

District No. 7 (1908). Front row, left to right: Anna Coleman. Thelma Nachbor, Esther Bordner, Edgar Chesnut, Edwin Wild, Roscoe Coleman, Harry Stoldorf, Wallace Chesnut, George Bordner, Harry Bordner, Harry Coleman. Back row: Ramona Davis, Estella Bordner, Enid Jones, John Tobiassen, Mable Madison, Susie Larson Ogg (teacher), Emma Tobiassen, Mary Davis, Bert Stoldorf, Helen Davis.

At a special meeting of legal voters on April 7, 1873, it was voted to change the schoolhouse site from Sec. 20 to the NW corner of the NW 1/4 of Sec. 29, and to build a sod house to be used for a summer school. William Spear, William Bell, and A. J. Long were elected to serve as a building committee for a permanent new schoolhouse. After advertising, the contract was awarded to the lowest bidder, Edward Webb, Jr., who agreed to build and furnish the schoolhouse for \$750 and to have it completed by August 15, 1873—which he did. The temporary schoolhouse, and the rest of the assets—including a pail, a broom, and a window—were sold at auction for \$4.90. Mr. Webb also made up a firebreak around the schoolhouse and banked the building with sod for \$5.75.

At the regular meeting in April, 1879, the following resolution was adopted: "Resolved that action of the school district board of this District No. 7 of Fillmore County, State of Nebraska, in purchasing the five acres of land on which the schoolhouse stands as described in a certain deed from B. & M. Railroad Co. to said district

is hereby approved."

The schoolhouse was moved to its final location, the NW corner of Sec. 32, in 1888, to make its location more central in the district. In the school year 1894-1895, there were 47 pupils enrolled. School was discontinued here in 1950, and the building was sold.

It is interesting to note that the following former pupils of District 7 all became the parents of twins: Lloyd Russell, Donn Wagner, George Stoldorf, Edwin Jacobson, and Berniece Biester (Mrs. Robert Kubovec), and Roscoe Burke. Among the earliest residents of the district still residing in it are the Lindes, the Wilds, and the Tobiassens. Also, Mrs. Tom Wagner has the distinction of being the only former teacher still living within the district.

Following is a complete list of the teachers in District 7:

Teacher	Year	Teacher
Lottie Williams	1900-01	Martha Oberkotter
Lura Webb	1901-02	Lora Harrold
Carrie E. Harvey	1902-03	Lydia I. Miles
Elva J. Lewis	1903-04	Mary Stanard (Shoff)
J. H. Sager	1904-05	C. H. Merryman
J. B. Lewis	1905-06	Mrs. M. S. Pate
James McElvey	1906-07	Verna Mowry
Kate E. Spear	1907-08	Susie Larson
John Chase	1908-09	Susie Larson (Ogg)
J. E. Harris	1909-10	John Curtis
Aaron Davis	1910-11	Earl Hill
Sarah Martin	1911-13	Maude Sherrard
Mary Hart	1913-15	Mabel Everett
E. M. Davis	1915-16	Leta M. Peterson
J. D. McElvey	1916-17	Emma Renken
Mabel Mahan	1917-18	Velma Lauber
Eva M. Davis	1918-19	Marcella Sullivan
Flora Armstrong		(Marson)
Eva M. Davis	1919-20	Lorine Griffin
Mrs. L. W. Moore	1920-21	Ethel Love
Amy Stephenson	1921-22	Edith Halsey
E. H. Stephenson	1922-24	Marguerite Hourigan
		(Swails)
G. H. Stephens		Norma Scott
Maud E. Cauffer	1926-27	Hazel A. Black
Erma Stephenson	1927-29	Pearl E. Tysell
Hattie Hoobler		Audrey B. Henry
Edna Murdock		Mrs. Audrey Henry
		Darlene Morris Nichols
		Dorothy Dumpert
		Irene Gruenhage
		Alverda Goesch
		Margaret Bobbitt
		Evelyn Lechtenberger
	1944-45	Ruth Emal
		Mrs. Herbert Nichols
	1945-49	Mrs. Susie Ogg
Silas Thompson		
	Lura Webb Carrie E. Harvey Elva J. Lewis J. H. Sager J. B. Lewis James McElvey Kate E. Spear John Chase J. E. Harris Aaron Davis Sarah Martin Mary Hart E. M. Davis J. D. McElvey Mabel Mahan Eva M. Davis Flora Armstrong Eva M. Davis Mrs. L. W. Moore Amy Stephenson E. H. Stephenson May H. Henderson G. H. Stephenson Hattie Hoobler Edna Murdock Lulu Arrowsmith Alice Bassett Mamie Renz Katie Herrfeldt Mrs. Katie McDougal A. P. Garrison Rosa Mozee Emma Hoobler May Stewart Lulu Arrowsmith	Lottie Williams 1900-01 Lura Webb 1901-02 Carrie E. Harvey 1902-03 Elva J. Lewis 1903-04 J. H. Sager 1904-05 J. B. Lewis 1905-06 James McElvey 1906-07 Kate E. Spear 1907-08 John Chase 1908-09 J. E. Harris 1909-10 Aaron Davis 1910-11 Sarah Martin 1911-13 Mary Hart 1913-15 E. M. Davis 1915-16 J. D. McElvey 1916-17 Mabel Mahan 1917-18 Eva M. Davis 1918-19 Flora Armstrong 1920-21 Eva M. Davis 1919-20 Mrs. L. W. Moore 1920-21 Amy Stephenson 1921-22 May H. Henderson 1922-24 Maud E. Cauffer 1926-27 Erma Stephenson 1927-29 Hattie Hoobler 1929-30 Edna Murdock 1930-31 Lulu Arrowsmith 1931-32 Kat

District No. 12 was organized at the request of a majority of the voters within this district on Monday, January 29, 1872, at the home of James Loghry. The schoolhouse is located on the northwest corner of the NE ¼ of Sec. 26; the land was originally given by Ben F. Wolfe.

School closed

A description of the schoolhouse in 1872 appears in the records of

the county superintendent:

1899-00 M. P. Ames

"October 1, P.M., 1872.—Visited school in District No. 12 taught by Mrs. Sada A. Long; 12 pupils present—15 on the list; school progressing well; system of teaching good. This district has erected a fine frame school house 22' x 28' seated with iron seats. Mrs. L's teaching her 27th term."

The Nebraska Bulletin (October 19, 1872) elaborated a bit upon

this report

"October 1, Tuesday P.M.—Visited school in District No. 12, taught by Mrs. Sadie A. Long; 12 pupils present—15 on the list; school apparently in a good state of progress. Mrs. L. is veteran teacher of 26 terms, and has not failed to acquire a good system. We are happy to state that this district has erected a fine frame school house

of good size, seated with patent iron seats and furnished with a spacious blackboard. We hope other districts will take pattern."

The present school building is the original one built in 1872. At one time church was held here, and there was a burial ground west of the building. Of the 31 bodies in this burial ground, 30 were removed to various cemeteries when church services were discontinued here. The school has been in continuous operation since its organization.

Mrs. A. J. Brown, an old settler, told of attending Sunday School and church in District 12 schoolhouse, walking three miles every Sunday morning to do so. H. P. Wilson was teaching in District 12 when the blizzard of 1888 came. Only two girls were in school that day, and the night of the blizzard they stayed at the Wolfe home, east of the schoolhouse. During the night the house caught fire and burned to the ground. The two girls and elderly Mr. and Mrs. Wolfe spent the remainder of the night at the home of George Pittard, just across the road north from the Wolfe house. George Pittard was an uncle of Charles Pittard, a long-time resident of the district.

The first teacher in the district was Mrs. Sarah Long, who taught a three-month term for \$18 a month. In 1874, there were in the district 28 children between the ages of 5 and 21, and 19 of these attended school. In 1956, there were only 14 children between these ages, which

shows how the population of the district has decreased.



Photo from Cecil Richards

District No. 12 (1913). First row, front to back: Fred Fisher, Alice Vavra, Ray Buehrer. Second row: Alva Ward, Lloyd Knox, Faye Cole, Jess Richards. Third row: Deo Fisher, Bernice Pangle (Burke), Edward James, Cecil Richards. Fourth row: Nellie Cole, Glen Richards, Vivan Jewell, Kathy Cole, Mrs. Ben Pangle (teacher).

The teachers who taught in District 12 were the following.

The teachers who taught in District 12 were the following. Year Teacher Year Teacher 1872-73 Sarah Long 1897-99 Clara Wickizer 1874-75 Mary E. Webb 1899-1900 Bertha Thomas Martha Oberkotter 1875-76 Elva J. Lewis Martha Oberkotter 1900-01 Jennie Plants 1901-02 Clara Wickizer 1876-77 A. D. Stevens 1902-03 Lucinda Warthen J. F. Coulter 1902-03 Lucinda Warthen J. F. Coulter 1904-05 Frances Elliott 1877-78 Emma Bingham J. F. Coulter 1904-05 Frances Elliott 1879-80 Frank Salisbury 1907-08 Lola Fussell 1879-80 Frank Salisbury 1907-08 Lola Fussell 1879-80 Frank Salisbury 1908-09 Maude Sherrard 1908-09	
1872-73 Sarah Long 1897-99 Clara Wickizer 1874-75 Mary E. Webb 1899-1900 Bertha Thomas J. B. Lewis Martha Oberkotter 1875-76 Elva J. Lewis 1900-01 G. W. Plants 1901-02 Clara Wickizer 1876-77 A. D. Stevens 1902-03 Lucinda Warthen O. W. Crow Jessie Clark 1877-78 Emma Bingham 1903-04 Lena Oberkotter J. F. Coulter 1904-05 Frances Elliott 1878-79 Dora Kellogg 1905-07 May Deming Frank Salisbury 1907-08 Lola Fussell 1879-80 Frank Salisbury 1908-09 Maude Sherrard 1880-81 J. B. Sexton 1910-11 Len Davis J. H. Sager 1911-12 Anna Renken 1881-82 M. J. Goodrich 1912-13 Elsie Peterson	
1874-75 Mary E. Webb 1899-1900 Bertha Thomas J. B. Lewis Martha Oberkotter 1875-76 Elva J. Lewis 1900-01 G. W. Plants 1901-02 Clara Wickizer 1876-77 A. D. Stevens 1902-03 Lucinda Warthen O. W. Crow Jessie Clark 1877-78 Emma Bingham 1903-04 Lena Oberkotter J. F. Coulter 1904-05 Frances Elliott 1878-79 Dora Kellogg 1905-07 May Deming Frank Salisbury 1908-09 Maude Sherrard 1880-81 J. B. Sexton 1910-11 Len Davis J. H. Sager 1911-12 Anna Renken 1881-82 M. J. Goodrich 1912-13 Elsie Peterson	
J. B. Lewis 1875-76 Elva J. Lewis G. W. Plants 1876-77 A. D. Stevens O. W. Crow 1877-78 Emma Bingham J. F. Coulter 1878-79 Dora Kellogg Frank Salisbury 1879-80 Frank Salisbury Amelia Partridge 1880-81 J. B. Sexton J. H. Sager 1881-82 M. J. Goodrich 1900-01 Jennie Plants 1901-02 Clara Wickizer 1902-03 Lucinda Warthen Jessie Clark 1903-04 Lena Oberkotter Jessie Clark 1904-05 Frances Elliott 1905-07 May Deming 1907-08 Lola Fussell 1908-09 Maude Sherrard Wissie Burke 1910-11 Len Davis J. H. Sager 1911-12 Anna Renken 1881-82 M. J. Goodrich	
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G. W. Plants 1901-02 Clara Wickizer 1876-77 A. D. Stevens 0. W. Crow 1877-78 Emma Bingham J. F. Coulter 1904-05 Frances Elliott 1878-79 Dora Kellogg 1905-07 May Deming Frank Salisbury 1907-08 Lola Fussell 1879-80 Frank Salisbury 1908-09 Maude Sherrard Amelia Partridge 1909-10 Wissie Burke 1880-81 J. B. Sexton 1910-11 Len Davis J. H. Sager 1911-12 Anna Renken 1881-82 M. J. Goodrich 1912-13 Elsie Peterson	
1876-77 A. D. Stevens 1902-03 Lucinda Warthen Jessie Clark 1877-78 Emma Bingham J. F. Coulter 1903-04 Lena Oberkotter 1878-79 Dora Kellogg Frank Salisbury 1905-07 May Deming May Deming Prank Salisbury 1879-80 Frank Salisbury Amelia Partridge 1908-09 Maude Sherrard Wissie Burke 1880-81 J. B. Sexton J. H. Sager 1910-11 Len Davis Anna Renken 1881-82 M. J. Goodrich 1912-13 Elsie Peterson	
O. W. Crow 1877-78 Emma Bingham J. F. Coulter 1878-79 Dora Kellogg Frank Salisbury 1879-80 Frank Salisbury 1880-81 J. B. Sexton 1911-12 Anna Renken 1881-82 M. J. Goodrich 1903-04 Lena Oberkotter 1904-05 Frances Elliott 1905-07 May Deming 1907-08 Lola Fussell 1908-09 Maude Sherrard 1909-10 Wissie Burke 1910-11 Len Davis 1911-12 Anna Renken 1912-13 Elsie Peterson	
1877-78 Emma Bingham 1903-04 Lena Oberkotter J. F. Coulter 1904-05 Frances Elliott 1878-79 Dora Kellogg 1905-07 May Deming Frank Salisbury 1907-08 Lola Fussell 1879-80 Frank Salisbury 1908-09 Maude Sherrard Amelia Partridge 1909-10 Wissie Burke 1880-81 J. B. Sexton 1910-11 Len Davis J. H. Sager 1911-12 Anna Renken 1881-82 M. J. Goodrich 1912-13 Elsie Peterson	
J. F. Coulter 1904-05 Frances Elliott 1878-79 Dora Kellogg 1905-07 May Deming Frank Salisbury 1907-08 Lola Fussell 1879-80 Frank Salisbury 1908-09 Maude Sherrard Amelia Partridge 1909-10 Wissie Burke 1880-81 J. B. Sexton 1910-11 Len Davis J. H. Sager 1911-12 Anna Renken 1881-82 M. J. Goodrich 1912-13 Elsie Peterson	
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1879-80 Frank Salisbury Amelia Partridge 1908-09 Maude Sherrard Wissie Burke 1880-81 J. B. Sexton J. H. Sager 1910-11 Len Davis Anna Renken 1881-82 M. J. Goodrich 1912-13 Elsie Peterson	
Amelia Partridge 1909-10 Wissie Burke 1880-81 J. B. Sexton 1910-11 Len Davis J. H. Sager 1911-12 Anna Renken 1881-82 M. J. Goodrich 1912-13 Elsie Peterson	
1880-81 J. B. Sexton 1910-11 Len Davis J. H. Sager 1911-12 Anna Renken 1881-82 M. J. Goodrich 1912-13 Elsie Peterson	
J. H. Sager 1911-12 Anna Renken 1881-82 M. J. Goodrich 1912-13 Elsie Peterson	
1881-82 M. J. Goodrich 1912-13 Elsie Peterson	
Tillia Mason 1913-15 Mrs. Ben Pangle	
1882-83 Lon Shunway 1915-16 Roscoe H. Mohrman	
R M Logan 1916-17 Harold Heath	
1883-84 Ida B. Lee 1917-19 Helen Heath	
P M Logan 1919-20 Helen Pittard	
1884-85 Mrs Emma Harrington 1920-21 Ruby Sole	
J B Lewis 1921-23 Elsie M. Sole	
1923-25 Lillie Lentfer	
Nettie Richardson 1925-26 Marjory G. Glenn	
1996 97 Addie Billings 1926-28 Walter Isley	
H P Wilson 1928-30 Bernice Ashton	
1888 89 Emma Nichols 1930-33 Hazel Robbins	
Ida B Lee 1933-38 Ruth Lauber	
1990 01 Pobort Baldwin 1938-39 LaVelle Lundstedt	
1891-99 Rose Loafburrow 1939-41 Frances Smith	
O. D. Conwell 1941-42 Jean Stephenson	
1802-03 Jess M Boyd 1942-43 Evelyn Lechtenberger	
Lura A. Stockton 1943-44 Elaine Janda	
1902 04 C W Phillips 1944-50 Doris Riel	
M P Ames 1950-54 Mrs. Giles Hanson	
1904 05 M P Ames 1954-55 Darlene Schropter	
Ora Ogg Wilma Jean Dumpert	
1955-56 Joan Merryman	
John Witter 1956-60 Mrs. Raymond Hoarty	7
1896-97 Clara Wickizer School closed	
S. D. Purviance	

District No. 14 was organized on Tuesday, January 23, 1872, at the residence of Chester Ward. The schoolhouse, which was a board granary, was located on the NE corner of Sec. 8. To give it a more central location, it was later moved to the NE corner of Sec. 18, on ground donated by Ben Mc-Cashland.

The first schoolhouse was described in the "Records on Condition

Schools" in the county superintendent's files:

"Tuesday, June 25, 1872 — Visited school in District No. 14 taught by Miss Addie Miles in a board granary. Eight pupils present. Very good system of teaching."

An expanded version of this report, signed by County Superintendent Dempster, was printed in the Nebraska Bulletin on July 6,

1872:
"June 25, P.M. — Visited the School in District No. 14 taught by Miss Addie Miles. Eight pupils present, 11 on the list. She has a bright school of small scholars, keeps good order, and has a good method of teaching small children. Her form of asking general questions I consider commendable. School kept in a grainery, small but neat and clean. This is Miss Miles' first term, and she bids fair to attain a good standard of teaching."

By 1873, the granary had been replaced by a more formal building. "January 8, 1873 - Visited school in District No. 14 taught by Mr. Cooley. Six pupils present, 12 on list. System and order rather slack. School taught in new frame house, seated with iron seats.



Photo from Mrs. Amanda Bohlen District No. 14 (1902). Front row, left to right: Emma Gerken, Hattie McKelvey, Jim McCashland (on horse), Lottie Miller, Ernest Gerken, Zita Hoarty, Marie Griffin, Mervin Griffin, Belle Hall, Attie Wagner (teacher), Mattie Burt, Ethel McCashland, John Burt (on white horse), Frances Elliott, Walter McCashland. Back row: Clarence Elliott, Pete McCashland, Leo Hoarty, Harvey McKelvey, Roy Miller (on white horse), Lee Elliott. Hay stack in background is a pony shed.

Later, the Bulletin had another report:

"June 18, 1873 - Visited school in District No. 14 - John Eckley, director; Miss Connie Wright, teacher. Three pupils present; 18 on the list, sorry to see such poor attendance; number studying orthography 15; reading 12; arithmetic 4; geography 2; grammar 2; penmanship 4; recitations poor and order fair. Grade of certificate, 3rd, wages \$17.50 per month. Frame house 19' x 24', 10 feet posted; seated with Eureka; one door for entrance; blackboard 3' x 12'; out buildings needed.'

The original schoolhouse was destroyed in the spring of 1943 by fire resulting from an overheated stove. The next school building was made from a house purchased from Henry Lentfer and moved to the schoolhouse plot from the Lentfer farm. Early patrons of this district had many fond memories of spelldowns and literary societies in the long life of the school, which was finally discontinued in 1944.

Miss Addie Miles was the first person to teach in District No. 14. She taught a three-month term for a salary of \$15 a month. In 1874, there were 26 children between the ages of 5 and 21; of these, 24 attended school. It is interesting to note that in 1945 there were just 12 children in this age range, and by 1956 the number had decreased

The teachers in District 14 (as far as the records show) were the

C. A. Smith

teachers in District 14	(as far as t	ne records show) w
7:		
Teacher	Year	Teacher
Addie Miles	1881-82	Mary Hammersly
R. S. Croley		Emma Shafford
R. S. Crolev	1882-83	Ruth Scovell
Belle Fisher		Susan M. Davis
Belle Fisher	1883-84	Mary Hammersly
John T. Coulter		Ruth Scoville
John T. Coulter	1884-85	Ruth Scoville
Sarah Coulter		Shadrack Doty
E. L. Eckley	1885-86	No record
G. W. Plants	1886-87	J. R. Boardman
Annie S. Gillespie		Anna Jackson
Elmer Cochran	1887-88	Ida Edwards
Annie S. Gillespie		E. E. Klingsman
J. A. Engelman		Eva Miles
Ada M. Bullock	1888-98	No record
W. B. Richards	1898-190	0 Ora Ogg
Ada M. Bullock	1900-01	Sarah Egan
Emma Shafford		Atty Wagner
	Teacher Addie Miles R. S. Croley R. S. Croley Belle Fisher Belle Fisher John T. Coulter John T. Coulter Sarah Coulter E. L. Eckley G. W. Plants Annie S. Gillespie Elmer Cochran Annie S. Gillespie J. A. Engelman Ada M. Bullock W. B. Richards Ada M. Bullock	Teacher Year Addie Miles 1881-82 R. S. Croley 1882-83 Belle Fisher 1883-84 John T. Coulter 1884-85 John T. Coulter 1884-85 Sarah Coulter 1885-86 G. W. Plants 1886-87 Annie S. Gillespie 1887-88 Annie S. Gillespie J. A. Engelman Ada M. Bullock 1888-98 W. B. Richards 1898-190 Ada M. Bullock 1900-01

Year	Teacher	Year	Teacher
1901-04	No record		Hazel Burns
1904-06	Lena Oberkotter	1927-28	Florence Stolzenberg
1906-07	Susie Larson Ogg	1928-29	Ethel Franklin
	Hattie Kreachbaum	1929-30	Mary Fitzgerald
1908-10	Pearl Swails	1930-31	Margaret Burke
1910-11	Lester Westbrook	1931-34	
	Lena Swett		Lillie Lentfer
1912-13		1935-37	
1913-14	Merl Schaf	1937-38	
1914-16	Zita Hoarty	1938-40	Mamie Loukota
1916-17			Anita Everts
1917-18	Clara Hawkins		Wilma Stevens
1918-25	Zita Hoarty	School c	

District No. 18 was founded when, on the request of a majority of voters in the district, the county superintendent notified James Shepherd that a meeting to organize and to elect officers would be held at the residence of Mr. Syas on February 10, 1872. The officers elected were A. D. Fisher, moderator; James Shepherd, director; and W. H. Neal, treasurer.

The ground on which the school was located, the NW corner of Sec. 12, was donated by W. T. Carson. The first schoolhouse was described in the "Records of Condition of Schools" filed in the county superintendent's office:

"October 2, A.M., 1872 - Visited school in District No. 18 taught by Miss Helen Scruby in sod house, small and inconvenient. Ten pupils present; a full attendance. Order, good; system, medium. Miss S's first term.

The Nebraska Bulletin had a more extended comment (October

19, 1872):

1925-26 Mabel G. Case

"Wednesday, October 2, A.M. - Visited school in District No. 18; Miss Helen Scruby, teacher. School taught in sod house, with no benches; not being built for a school house, it is small and inconvenient. Ten pupils present - ten on the list: we were glad to see full attendance. She is not a professional teacher, but is doing very well, this being her first term.

By the following autumn, the schoolhouse situation had been

improved. The Bulletin printed another report (1873):

"August 29. District No. 18 - James Shepherd, director; Miss Lottie Boch, teacher. New frame school house 16' x 24', ten feet posted, seated with the Eurekas. Good blackboard."

Incidentally, 12 Nichols children, the families of Clarence and Edgar Nichols (brothers), and 13 Brower children graduated from the eighth grade in District 18 (commonly known as the "Charter Oak" school). The children of the Clarence Nichols family are Herbert, Francis, Gordon, Wilbur, Donald, and Marian. The children of Edgar Nichols are Robert, Howard, Elvin, Jess, Helen (Mrs. Kenneth Hofferber), and Maurice. All of the children of the John A. Brower family (except two who died in infancy) received eight years of education at this school: Effie (Lovejoy), Bessie (Miller), Bonnie (Berger), Henry, Harry, Bertha (Larson), Tom, Florence (Chesnut), Russell, Edna (Garrett), Frank, Mildred (Fisher), and Howard.

Miss Helen Scruby, the first teacher in District 18, taught a threemonth term for a monthly salary of \$15. In 1874, there were 25 children between the ages of 5 and 21; of these, 20 attended school. In

1956, there were only 7 children in this age group.



Photo from Zola Fogle

School District No. 18 (about 1906), Standing, left to right: Teacher with white apron, Matilda Heagney; Ethel Brown, Bertha Brower, Stella McDermitt, Fern Terry, Wallace Farrar, Gabriella McCabe, Wayne Ayres, Myrtle Gibbs, Roselle Matteson, Larry Ayres, Jasper Gibbs, Leo Ayres, Tom Brower, Lewis Souba, Emmett McCabe, Guy Gibbs (with pony). Front row: Russell Brower, Frank Souba, Roy Gibbs, Florence Brower, Elva Fogle, Floy Ayres, Marie Ayres, Irene Brown, Edna McCabe.

Year	teachers in District 18 v	vere the f	
	Teacher	Year	Teacher
1872-73	Helen Scruby	1898-99	Hattie Bridgeman
1873-75	Sherwood Burr	1899-190	0 Maude Mosier
	Lottie E. Bock	1900-01	Grace Fitzgerald
1875-76	Emma Bingham	1901-02	Agnes Keegan
	James Shepherd	1902-03	Agnes Keegan
1876-77	S. E. Leonard		McNamara
	J. A. Engleman	1903-04	Effie Brower (Lovejoy
1877-78	B. S. Burr	1904-05	Clara Rose Stines
	J. A. Engleman		Mary B. Stanard
1878-79	Lizzie Curtis	1905-06	Blanche Heald
	Bradley Burr	1906-07	Matilda Heagney
1879-80	Lizzie Curtis	1907-10	Wissie Burke
Acres Asia	Amelia Partridge	1910-11	Vinetta Miller (Eaton)
1880-81	Amelia Partridge	1911-13	Wilber Sherrard
	Susie Fisher	1913-14	Maggie Kelch
	Fannie Sheibley	1914-15	Emma Davis
	George K. Bingham	1915-16	Ada Sheiblev
1881-82	Anna Jackson	1916-18	Gabriella McCabe
	F. M. Fisher	1918-19	Bessie Kelch
1882-83	Lucia Wellman		Mrs. Gayle Jones
	C. L. Buck		Lauenstein
1883-84	Mrs. A. L. Richards	1919-20	Tena Renken Ogden
	W. L. Buck	1920-21	Emma Rotter
1884-85	Grace Porter	1921-22	Mrs. H. Gilmore
	C. L. Buck	1922-23	Helen Real
1885-86	Ida B. Lee	1923-25	Walter Hoarty
1886-87	Hattie Dewey	1925-26	Ruth Kendall
	Ella Jackson	1926-27	Rose L. Peterson
1887-88	Anna Ballard	1927-28	Helen M. Peterson
	Mabel Strother	1928-30	Sarah Elliott Frazier
1888-89	May Bennett	1930-33	Leona Cromwell
1889-90	Mamie Heald (Combs)	1933-34	Doris Helvey
1890-91	No record	1934-38	Jeanette McNamara
1891-92	Ray Banta	1938-40	Eleanor Goodrich
1892-93	Ida Chase	1000 10	Songster
1893-94	No record	1940-41	Evelyn Lechtenberger
1894-95	Ida Walton (Stevens)	1941-43	
	Lottie Bennett		Helen Broman
	(Thompson)	1944-45	Rita Cantrell
1895-96	Cora Owens Jones	1945-47	
1896-98	Charlie Bosserman	School o	

District No. 81 was founded, on written petition of qualified voters, from lands set aside from Districts 7, 12, 14 and 18. This new district, numbered 81, was organized on December 17, 1883, at the home of J. W. Hart. B. B. Ogg was elected the first director, to serve the term 1883-1884. John Pittard was elected director the following year. He was the grandfather of John Pittard, now residing in the district.

The original building was a little red schoolhouse, 26' long by 18' wide. One winter, 40 pupils were enrolled. Because of its inadequacy, this schoolhouse was sold in 1898, and a church building across the road to the east was purchased and moved onto the school ground. The little red schoolhouse was purchased by Jess McMahon and moved to his farm ½ mile N of the school ground, where it is still in use as a granary (the farm is now owned by Mrs. Lila Heath). Looking inside the granary, one can still see the slate composition blackboards with names and initials of former pupils scratched upon them.

The present school building served the dual purpose of school and church for a number of years, as well as being the center of many community activities. Since the founding of the district, school has been in operation here continuously with the exception of four years (1949-1953).

Four generations of the Charles Pittard family attended school here: Charles Pittard; his daughter, Vera Pittard Lovegrove; his granddaughter, Jean Lovegrove Hughes; and his great-grandsons, Douglas and Richard Hughes.



Photo from Mrs. Darrel Hughes Four generations of the Charles Pittard family attended school at District No. 81. Left to right: Vera (Pittard) Lovegrove, Douglas Hughes, Charles Pittard, Jean (Lovegrove) Hughes, Richard Hughes. (Taken at school picnic in the school's last year, 1960.)

The first teacher in District 81 was Euna Rhinehart, who taught a fall term for a salary of \$28 a month. At the time there were 25 children between the ages of 5 and 21, of whom 15 were boys and 10 were girls. In 1956, there were only 7 in this age group; 6 were boys.



Photo from Vera Lovegrove Reunion of early students of District No. 81, June, 1960. Seated, left to right: Vallia (Stinton) Ewart, Mrs. Faye (Hosack) Bare, Mabelle (Bradley) Coleman, Cecil (Ogg) Dunn. Standing: James Ogg (a first pupil), LeRoy Miles, Thomas Coleman, Chloe Ogg, Charles Pittard.

The teachers in District 81 over the years were the following:

The	teachers in District 81 ove	er the year	ars were the following:
Year	Teacher	Year	Teacher
1884-85	Euna Rhinehart	1912-13	Wayne Sherrard
	Ida B. Lee	1913-15	Clara Diederich
1885-86	No record		Heiderstadt
1886-87	Edwina Arrowsmith	1915-16	Ada Bass
	(Chesnut)	1916-17	Dazel Peterson Camp
1887-88	Lulu Stultz	1917-18	Lois Ainsworth Otis
1888-89	Lulu Arrowsmith	1918-19	Faye Davis Curtiss
1889-90	(?) Gussie Huston	1919-21	Vera Pittard Lovegrove
	Willman	1921-22	E. Marie Clemons
1890-91	(?) Elna Stewart	1922-23	Ethel Love
1891-92	(?) Minnie Burt	1923-25	Arvilla Prefert
1892-93	(?) Anna West	1925-28	Florence Robbins
1893-94	No record		Nichols
1894-95	W. Bumgarner	1928-29	Dorothy Christiancy
1895-96	Fannie Goodrich		Nichols
1896-97	Addie Allen		Helen (Mrs. Rex) Lewis
1897-98	John Geosh	1929-31	Eileen Murray
1898-190	0 Sopha Snodgrass	1931-34	Vivian Hafer Knotts
	(Ertel)	1934-37	Neva Bishop Walters
1900-01	Myrtle Hagenbush	1937-43	Eileen Bordner DuBois
	Nellie Thompson	1943-46	Lila Lovegrove Bettger
1901-03	Jennie Timmons	1946-47	Romona Hlina Watmor
1903-04	Ed Lane	1947-48	John Fishel
1904-05	Martha Oberkotter	1948-49	Florence (Mrs. Gleye)
1905-06	S. D. Purviance		McCaulley
	Harry Perry	1949-53	Closed
1906-07	Frank Adams	1953-55	Virginia Moore Otis
1907-08	Lena Oberkotter	1955-57	Mrs. Margaret Plock
1908-09	Amelia Oberkotter	1957-58	Joanne Rouch
	Lena Oberkotter		Mrs. Shirley Trauger
1909-10	Elsie Peterson Pangle	1958-60	Susan Rouch Perkins
1910-11	Fannie Ogg McCashland		losed
1911-12	Lorena Lamb		
42.55			

INDUSTRY

Lauber Seed Company

A private industry located in rural Geneva township is the Lauber Seed Company, established in the fall of 1931 by Herbert E. Lauber, a longtime resident of Fillmore County. The initial business was originating car and truck lot alfalfa and sweet clover seed, which was sold throughout Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Nebraska. The first truckload of alfalfa seed was purchased in 1933. The company was one of the pioneers in the sale of alfalfa seed in bushel bags. The Lauber Seed Company first produced hybrid seed corn in Fillmore County in 1938. A processing and drying plant was built near Geneva in 1940. The company shipped a number of carloads of hybrid seed corn to Europe for rehabilitation after World War II. The processing plantboth the building and much stored corn-was destroyed by fire in 1947. Rebuilt, it is now one of the most modern plants in the seed business. The company supplies hybrid seed corn to approximately one hundred dealers in Nebraska and Kansas. The Lauber Seed Company is now operated and managed by Claiton and Wendell Lauber, sons of Herbert.





Shown at left: The original Lauber Seed Farms processing plant (1944; burned in 1947). This was the old Ohiowa flour mill, moved to the Lauber farms in 1939. At right: Herbert Lauber, originator of the seed plant.



Courtesy Lauber Seed Farms Lauber Seed Farms as it appeared in 1965.

MISCELLANEOUS

Roads

All farm homes in the township now have access to graveled roads. The first graveled (county) road through the township was started about 1933 and completed in 1937. The first section to be graveled started at the Fair Ground entrance, then went west for a distance of about ½ mile, then north for 1½ miles to the NW corner of Sec. 25, then west for 2 miles to the corner of Sec. 22, and then north to the District 81 schoolhouse. After 1935 the construction of the graveled road was continued north for 4 miles between Secs. 15 and 16, 9 and 10, 3 and 4, and Secs. 33 and 34 of West Blue township, to U. S. Highway 6. This road was so located that it placed all the farm homes in the township within 1½ miles of a main road. Since then the rural mail routes have all been graveled, and also fractions of miles, so as to put every home on a graveled road.

Electricity

The first electricity in the township was brought in by the Iowa-Nebraska Light & Power Co. (later bought out by Consumers Public Power District) in the fall of 1937. The line followed the first county graveled road. The R.E.A. started building electric lines here in 1950, furnishing electricity to many more eager rural residents.

Irrigation

Irrigation in this township was pioneered by Herbert Lauber; his deep well on Sec. 1, T7, R3W was dug in the spring of 1938. By 1966, a total of 66 wells had been put down. Forty-five of these irrigation systems were installed in the drouth years of 1955 and 1956, and the early spring of 1957.

Telephone

The Citizens Mutual Telephone Co. was organized on November 16, 1907. Its first officers were R. A. Matteson, president; J. C. Bradley, secretary; W. B. Pangle, treasurer. The committee appointed to form by-laws for the organization consisted of J. M. Ware, J. C. Bradley, and W. B. Pangle.

At the second meeting, November 23, 1907, it was voted that the company be called the Big Four Telephone Co., since four lines—the 30, 45, 28, and 29—were to be constructed. Shares in the company were to be sold at \$25 each. The cost of building lines was \$898.38. It was decided to hire labor to build the lines and charge the cost to the company.

The first stockholders were John Oberkotter, A. C. Fogle, L. Chesnut, G. R. Ward, B. Fisher, R. A. Matteson, William Corners, F. Vavra, G. W. Lauber, D. B. Ayres, L. Coleman, H. Q. Seavers, N. McMahon, J. C. Bradley, and W. B. Pangle. The records show that the meeting place of the organization was the District 12 schoolhouse. Over the years, the lines were extended and new shareholders added. The linemen for the company were J. C. Bradley, W. B. Pangle, R. E. Geoury, George Bordner, and Herbert Nichols (who was the last lineman). The company dissolved in 1963.

Geneva Township Club

A group of women, assisted by Mr. J. L. Thomas, then county agent, met at the county courthouse on May 25, 1921, to organize the Geneva Township Club, the first extension club in the county. Charter members were Mrs. W. M. Mc-Mahon, Mrs. Link Chesnut, Mrs. Clyde Ewart, Mrs. Harry Ward, Mrs. Charles Pittard, Miss Helen Pittard, Mrs. Henry Fisher, and Miss Mary Oberkotter. Mrs. Harry Ward was elected the first president.



Photo from Mrs. Arthur Larson Geneva Township Club—taken in 1926 at the home of Mrs. Harry Ward. Back row, left to right: Miss Velma Lauber, Mrs. Robert Fox, Mrs. Mae Bordner, Mrs. Perry Christiancy, Mrs. Oscar Peterson, Mrs. Harry Chesnut, Mrs. Raymond Schultz, Mrs. Will Real, Mrs. Jesse Walters, Mrs. Clarence Nichols, Mrs. Homer Acker, Mrs. Cyrus Walker, Mrs. Henry Fisher, Mrs. Herbert Lauber and Claiton. Next row: Mrs. Clyde Ewart, Miss Grace Fox, Mrs. Arthur Larson and Bette, Mrs. Hugh Heath and Dean, Mrs. Thomas Coleman, Mrs. Will Knox, Mrs. Roy Carson, Mrs. Lou Fiedler, Mrs. George Lauber, Mrs. Albert Gergen, Mrs. Link Chesnut, Mrs. Frank Bradley, Mrs. John Burt, Mrs. Curt Ogg. Seated on ground: Mrs. George Ward, Mrs. Charles Pangle and Bethene, Mrs. Tom Wagner and Donn, Mrs. Dave Garrett, baby Jean Burt and Laverne Ogg, Mrs. Harry Ward. Three little boys, center left: Harlan Heath, Charles Miles, and Russell Chesnut. (Person behind Mrs. Pangle not identified.)

The objects of the club are to promote culture in the home, to assist in any movement that will help to improve the community, and to aid any benevolent measures that may be considered desirable. The Project Lessons supplied by the Extension Division of the University of Nebraska are used for study.

The officers in 1967-68 were Mrs. Earl Hennessey, president; Mrs. John Reinsch, vice-president; Mrs. Roy Carson, secretary; and Mrs. Arthur Larson, treasurer. At the present time the club has 25 members.

In 1948, the club organized a Geneva Township Junior Club which now has a membership of 18 young women. This club's first president was Mrs. Raymond Peterson. The present officers are Mrs. Harlan Domeier, president; Mrs. Russell Leaming, vice-president; and Mrs. Everett Renken, secretary and treasurer.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

This church was located in the extreme SW corner of Sec. 18 on ground donated by Henry Bohlen with the understanding that it would revert to him if the church were ever dissolved. The cornerstone of the church was laid in late 1903, and the building was completed in 1904.

Mrs. Amanda Bohlen St. Paul's Lutheran Church and parsonage.





Photo from Mrs. Amanda Bohlen Interior of St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

The church closed in 1956, and the building, purchased by Martin Griess, was dismantled in 1959. The parsonage was purchased by the Geneva Golf Club and was moved to the fairgrounds, where it was remodeled for use as a clubhouse. The pews were bought by the Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Geneva and are still in use there.

GIRLS' TRAINING SCHOOL

The Nebraska State Industrial School at Kearney at one time cared for both delinquent girls and delinquent boys. In 1892, a separate institution for girls was provided at Geneva, and the 20 girls then at Kearney were moved to the new institution. Mrs. Henry Muhlenberg cooked the first meal for them.

The following paragraph is from the Semi-Centennial History of Nebraska, a historical sketch compiled in 1904 by A. E. Sheldon, director of field work for the Nebraska State Historical Society:

"The Nebraska Girls' Industrial School. — This school is located at Geneva. Originally the boys and girls were in the same institution at Kearney, but the work was not satisfactory, and a division was made in March, 1892. The law governing this institution was amended in 1902 so as to provide for the commitment of any girl, who is vagrant or vicious, under the age of 18 years. The present buildings were erected in 1891, at a cost of \$30,000. They are ample for the accommodation of 100 inmates. The institution is not a house of detention, but a school and home for incorrigible girls, where they receive intellectual, industrial, and moral training. About 450 girls (in 1904) have already been trained at this school. The cost of maintaining the school is about \$10,000 per year (in 1904)."



Photos from Ora Robbins

Girls' Training School. Left: "Old Main," built in 1891. Right: Main building as later remodeled.

The "Old Main" building was built in 1891 and dedicated by the Grand Lodge, A. F. & A. M., Brad D. Slaughter, Grand Master. In June, 1915, another building, the auditorium, was opened for the first time to the public. This building, 48' x 120', is a fireproof structure of reinforced concrete, erected at a cost of \$45,000. The "Old Main" building was replaced by a new school and administration building constructed in 1957, at a cost of \$323,000, and dedicated on February 2, 1958.

In 1918, a new cottage, to house 32 girls and called Fanny Crosby Cottage, was completed. In 1929, a cottage was built for the 29 colored girls then resident, at a cost of \$30,000. This cottage was later used as a receiving cottage. It is now the Boys' Cottage, which houses 12 young boys plus 7 older girls who serve as "big sisters."

Two new cottages, one a receiving cottage for all new girls, with one wing reserved for a hospital unit, were completed by May, 1959. Each of these cottages, which houses about 22 girls apiece, cost about \$120,000. The newest addition to the 50-acre state-owned tract consists of three triplex apartments for employees, completed in the fall of 1964.

Formerly the girls stayed until they had completed high school; some stayed as long as 3 or 4 years. Now, however, the official plan is to get them back to their homes, or placed in foster homes, as rapidly as possible. Some girls are paroled at the end of 6 months, although the average length of stay is from 10 to 14 months.

A biennial report for the period from December 1, 1914, to December, 1916, stated that at the time the girls were divided into three "family groups" as follows: "A"—receiving ward, and girls who needed to be segregated; "B"—the bright, intelligent, normal, and progressive girls; and "C"—children from 3½ to 14 years of age.

The institution has a fully accredited "Class A" school called North High School In June 1915, the first graduation evergies were

The institution has a fully accredited "Class A" school called North High School. In June, 1915, the first graduation exercises were held as 11 girls completed the course of study prescribed for eighth-grade work. In May, 1967, four girls were graduated from the 12th grade and 14 from the eighth grade.

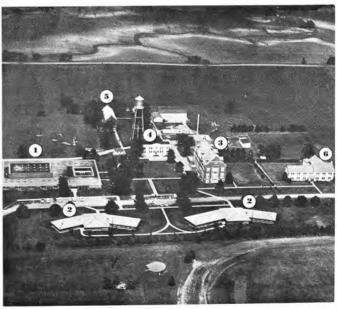
The number of girls enrolled at the Girls' Training School — the name was changed in 1923 — has ranged from 196 in 1928 to 83 in 1955. As of the middle of May, 1967, enrollment numbered 106 (94 girls and 12 boys). With the closing of the school year, a number of girls and boys were paroled, leaving 87 enrolled as of May 26, 1967.

The enrollees are committed by the courts as juvenile delinquents; they must be under the age of 18 at the original time of commitment, and must be released on or before their 21st birthday. The Girls' Training School is designed for and directed toward the retention, education, industrial training, and reformation of female juvenile delinquents. The enrollees can receive vocational training in several fields — Cosmetology, Nurse Aid, Warehouse Clerk, and Food Service. All the girls are taught to clean, cook, bake, wash, iron, and sew. Girls who qualify may accept employment by the day in the Geneva area. The girls committed to the school are to be instructed in morality, self-government, and domestic duties.

At the present time (early 1968), the youngest girl is 11 years old and the youngest boy is 9. The school had been exclusively for girls until January, 1967, when 12 young boys under the age of 14 were transferred here from the Boys' School at Kearney.

Superintendents who have served at the school since 1938 are the following:

July 1, 1938-July 1, 1951 — Mrs. Blanche Clouse July 1, 1951-July 1, 1955 — Mrs. Maude Disbrow July 1, 1955-February, 1958 — Mrs. Blanche Clouse February, 1958-January 8, 1963 — Mrs. Gladys Hart January 8, 1963-present — Mr. Donald Best



Courtesy Girls' Training School

Girls' Training School (prior to 1964).

1-School and administration building;

2-Cottages built 1959;

3—Auditorium (now C-House);

4—Laundry Unit (now Farm House);

5—H. U. building (formerly Hospital Unit);6—Fanny Crosby Cottage.

Chas. C. Miles	Margaret Toby			Chester Ward	J. G. McFadden			Abraham Samuel Fisher Bubb	Chas. C. Scruby		
	Wm. W. Witter										
Eli T. Hagenbuck	Wm. W. Witter		5	Irvin Gutchess	James H. Dorrance			Richard Aldridge	Gea, W. Scruby	-	1
									William Johnson		
		John C. Thomas Eckle S.Russel	John Heald			Joseph McFadden	Wm. H. Reel			Washington J. Carson	Sally E. Leonard
		Robert S. Cooley	Christopher C. Wright		9	H. B. Heiner	George Rodisel		1	Lurenzo P, Van Slyke	Absalom Heirs CRichards Wm. 1 Reel
Fancena John Kerns Goleman	Benj. C. McCashland							J. M. Louisa N Fisher Syav	A. S. Shepherd		
obert M. James H. Carson Lewis	Milo C. Grower		7		6		5	J. M. Thomas Fisher Aldridge	Alexander James Fisher Shepherd		
-1		Ebenezar Milner	Andrew J. Long			James W. Burt	Samuel M. White	<u> </u>		M. L. Van Slyke	Daniel Van Slyke John
	9	Orson M. M. S. Webb Spear	M. S. J. E. Spear Spear		221	John N. Vodra	Mordecas Pangle		23	David H. Daniel Goodrich Van Slyk	Chambers James Loghrey
dson T. Charles Yillsey Wild	Edward Geo. F. Webb Webb	1		Wm. P. Erastus R Spear Spear	M. D. Williams			Ludelbert A. Lewis	Benj F. Geo. R. Wolfe Wolfe		
			29	ļ			1	Josiah Ecclestorz	ļl		25
Robert McKelvey	Girard R. Hart			William Bell	Alpheius Turner			Geo. M. Vodra	Warren F. Truell	-	
		Clinton S. Richard Spear W. Tothil				Heinerich Isaac N. Frewert Trask	George W. Gottfried Mesarvey Beis- winger		Jesse B. Thompson		
	1								35		36
			Frank Lutz	1	1	Gilman D. Thomas Willey N.Bortner			!		

Geneva Township Homestead Map

FAMILIES

The Camp family came from Jasper County, Iowa, in 1874 and settled in Geneva. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Camp, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Camp and son Earl, Mr. and Mrs. Silas Camp and daughter May, and Mr. and Mrs. C. D. (Stote) Camp and son Burt.

There were only five buildings in Geneva besides the jail, and since all houses were occupied, the only place to stay overnight was in the jail. This lasted only a few days until lumber could be hauled from Fairmont. Each family busied itself putting up small houses temporarily until better accommodations could be arranged. Each newcomer took his first shelter in the jail until completing their homes.

The three Camp brothers built a general-merchandise and grocery store as soon as possible and operated it for several years. J. H. Camp built a livery stable where the Northwestern depot now stands.



Mr. and Mrs. Fred Camp (right) in their grocery store (about 1910).

Fred H. Camp, son of C. D. Camp, was born in Geneva on August 22, 1874, and was the only Camp who remained in Geneva. He saw the town develop from its tiny beginning and he was one of the few who remembered the erection of every building in town. As a boy he helped make the brick that went into the construction of the first brick business building in town. He watched the railroad tracks laid into town and saw the first train come in.

Soon a Fairgrounds was built and the famous "Sile Camp's Band" was organized. This band was soon known all over the country. Fred was a bugler in Company G of Geneva at the time of the Spanish-American War, but was not allowed to accompany the boys to war because by that time he was a married man. For many years the Camp Band was a feature of every celebration in Geneva. Eleven Camp relatives played in the band. Old-timers well remember the gaudy uniforms and plumed helmets worn by this band. Fred led a band of his own at one time.

Geneva began to grow faster and there was much building being done. J. H. Camp also built an eight-room hotel beside the photograph gallery. Fred Camp hauled the first load of lumber to start the town of Strang, just south of

Geneva.

In 1904 some of the Camps went farther west. The Sile Camp family located in Twin Falls, Idaho. The Jim Camp family went to California. C. D. (Stote) Camp and wife and Otis H. Camp and wife went to Salida, Colorado, while Burt Camp and family went to Boise, Idaho. Ross Camp and family went to California. Lena Camp Wheeler and family located in Lincoln, Nebraska. Otis Camp is the only living one of those early-day Camps.

In 1894, Fred married Hattie Elmore of Geneva, daughter of Ed and Mrs. Elmore. Ed was for many years the Northwestern depot agent. To this union were born two children, Mrs. Maybelle E. Booker of Denver, Colorado, and Dr. C. Cass Camp, now deceased. Cass was a dentist, and practiced

for 42 years in Davenport, Nebraska.

Fred learned the barber trade early in life in the shop of Beals & Wilkins, under the Citizens Bank building. On February 22, 1895, he opened his own barber shop in a room in the old Geneva State Bank Building. In 1898, he sold his barber shop to Al Severns. Following the sale of his shop. he went into the photographic business with his father, who was Geneva's pioneer photographer. His studio was located at the corner of 8th and G. He later sold the studio to Dewald & Ralston and started in the mercantile business.

Mr. Camp was a member of the city council when the city removed the hitch racks from in front of the courthouse and the farmers threatened to boycott the town. He was also a member when the city removed the old board walks and ordered the laying of brick walks, granted the first electric-light francise, and granted the second telephone franchise (to the Fillmore County Company). He was a member of the school board (1916-1919) and was for many years a director of the county fair, and secretary of concessions.

Fred often talked about visiting with the Indians who camped on the banks of Turkey Creek in the early days.

There was never anyone more proud of his home town than Fred Camp. During the last few years of his life, he served as night clerk at the Geneva Hotel, where he made his home. He enjoyed visiting with all who stopped at the hotel, always praising Geneva, the place of his birth. He passed away on January 14, 1955. Hattie passed away March 26, 1935.

Fred Camp was one of our few people to have been born in and lived in Geneva all his life.

At the present time, his granddaughter, Mrs. Mary Portwood, and her husband, Dr. David Portwood, and his great-grandchildren are carrying on the good works of Fred and Hattie Camp.

James F. Loghry was born in Steuben County, New York, February 1, 1827, a son of John and Electa (Foster) Loghry. His father was of Irish and his mother of English descent. He farmed with his father until he was 20 years old.



Photo from Deo Fisher Alexander Fisher, early settler, who came to Nebraska in April, 1876, from Rushville, New York. He homesteaded the W 1/2 of the SE 1/4 of Sec. 14 and later bought from the railroad the NE 1/4 of Sec. 23 (still in the family).



Photo from Miss Delia Fisher

Levi R. Fisher, architect and builder, who put up many of the early brick buildings in Geneva (among them the Union Block, 1887, and the Auditorium, 1915). Note Camp Photographer credit.



Mr. and Mrs. James F. Loghry, about 1880.

Then his father found him a place to learn the blacksmith trade, at which he worked as a journeyman for two years.

He became acquainted with Lucy A. Cutler, who was teaching a district school in the neighborhood, and they were married January 10, 1850. Lucy was born in Rutland, Vermont, October 6, 1829, to Mr. and Mrs. John H. Cutler, but when less than a year old was taken by her parents to Worcester, Massachusetts, and when she was seven the family moved to Orland, Indiana.

After his marriage, Mr. Loghry opened a blacksmith shop of his own in Branch County, Michigan, where he carried on business for three years. He later moved to the village of Orland, Indiana, where he ran a smithy in partnership with a Mr. Carpenter.

In 1865, during his residence in Orland, he responded to the government's call for more troops to help in putting down the Rebellion and enlisted for one year of the war in Company K, 152nd Indiana Volunteer Infantry, and was mustered in on February 15, 1865. As the war soon closed, he was discharged at Charleston, West Virginia, August 30, 1865, with the rank of corporal. He returned to Indiana and five days later secured another shop and resumed business. Four years later he disposed of his property and started westward, landing in Fillmore County on March 12, 1871.

He filed on a homestead on the SE ¼ of Sec. 24 in Geneva township. He proved up on the homestead November 10, 1875. As soon as he settled on the farm, James built a sod forge, covered his bellows with a canvas, and resumed work in the open air, pounding out drill plowshares for those far and near needing to have work done. He shod their horses and also shod many a horse for the Indians. Here the honest blacksmith with his hammer, sledge, and strong arm, coupled with farming operations, succeeded in making for himself and family a confortable home, almost within sight of the place where he first unloaded his household goods on coming to the state.

Mr. Loghry was active in community affairs. According to records, the meeting of the Agricultural Society to organize a County Fair was held at his home August 1, 1872. On January 21, 1872, the First Presbyterian Church of Fairmont was organized at the home

of James Loghry and was so recorded on July 6, 1872.

He cast his first presidential vote for John C. Fremont, and was an ardent supporter of the Republican party. He came of a very patriotic and loyal family, in which four of the six sons were among the boys in blue during the Civil War and all of whom lived to return to their homes. He was reared in the Methodist Church, but did not join any church. His wife became a member of the Congregational Church in Geneva.

The Loghrys sold their farm to Vitura A. Bartlett on November 22, 1888, for \$5,000 and moved to a home in Geneva. James again opened up a blacksmith shop, located near where Emery's Cafe is now located. In his later years he moved his shop to his home and carried

on his business from there.

To Mr. and Mrs. Loghry were born five children. (1) Helen M. became the wife of Adam Huston, who lived 1½ miles N of the old honestead; they had seven children: James, who married Lou McCombs; Hugh, who married Viola Roles; Ella (Mrs. Charles Pittard); A. D., who married Nettie Talkington; Hattie (Mrs. Sam Lash); Pearl (Mrs. Prentice Murr); and Frank, who married Dorothy Sole. (2) Leroy P. married Ida Platt and they lived on a farm 2 miles from the old home. (3) Louisa married William H. Garrett, who owned and operated a farm in Madison township; they had eight children: Julia, Dora, Harry, Ada, Nellie, Amy, Hazel, and Pete. (4) Jay married Anna McPherson, and they had two sons, Frank and Clarence. (5) The other child died in infancy.

James Loghry died in Geneva on September 10, 1906, and his wife Lucy passed away in March, 1917, at the age of 87 years.



Photo from Mrs. Reno Weiss

B. C. McCashland family (1893). Mr. McCashland homesteaded the NE 1/4 of Sec. 18. Front row, left to right: James (on father's lap), Benjamin C., Ethel, Mrs. McCashland (Sophia). Back row: Walter, Belle, Frank, Charles, and Clyde.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Miles came from Kewanee, Illinois, in May, 1871, and homesteaded the NW ¼ of Sec. 6. The first presidential election in Fillmore County was held at this homestead (changed from an earlier-announced location at Mr. Long's). At this election, 48 votes were cast, all for Ulysses S. Grant.

Mr. Miles was justice of the peace for three years and a county commissioner from 1881 to 1884. A son, Robert Roy Miles, recalled that many times the doctor came to get his mother to go with him, day or night, to aid the sick, and that she dressed many a baby for the first time Mr. and Mrs. Miles were the parents of eight children: Charles A., Adelbert, Eva E. (Mrs. George Wills), Drusilla (Mrs. J. M. Combs), Frank F., Grace E. (Mrs. Charles W. Steen), John B., and Robert Roy Miles.



Photo from Nellie Miles Casad Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Miles at Golden Wedding celebration (1911). Seated on ground: Harold Miles, Ruth Chesnut, Charles Combs, Edith Miles, Gordon Miles, Edgar Chesnut, Nellie Miles, Velda Combs, Wallace Chesnut. Seated, left to right: Lena (Linnert) Miles holding son Floyd; LeRoy Miles; Adelbert Miles; Charles A. Miles; Eva (Miles) Spear; Charles C. Miles; Eva Williams Miles; Birge Miles; Drusilla Miles Combs; Roy Miles. Back row: Juno Chesnut; "Kit" Arrowsmith Chesnut (Mrs. Charles); Harry Chesnut; Dan Spade; Bertha Miles (Mrs. Adelbert); Freil Combs; Lydia Green Miles (Mrs. Charles A.); Mamie Davis; Lydia Longman; Miles Longman; Myra Miles (Mrs. Frank); Mr. and Mrs. George Miles; Eunice Camp Miles (Mrs. Birge); Link Chesnut and wife, "Puss" Arrowsmith Chesnut; last two unidentified.

Courtesy Nebraska Signal Sons of Ebenezar Milner, who homesteaded the NW ½ of Sec. 20. Seated, left to right: Edward, Nathaniel, Albert. Back row: Clarence, Eugene.



David Creola Mowry was another early pioneer of Fillmore County. He traced his paternal ancestry back to England. The first Mowrys came to America in 1631, in company with Roger Williams, and were associated with him in his religion and the settling of Providence, Rhode Island. Some Mowrys are to be found there yet, but many found their way westward. David was the ninth descendant. He was born on a farm near Wynette, Bureau County, Illinois. After a public-school education, he attended an academy for two years.

He started west on his 21st birthday (March 1, 1878), and came to Fillmore County, where he had three uncles living near Carleton, and decided to stay. He bought land in Bryant township in 1878. The farm bordered on the Thayer County line. He made several improvements including a pond.

In 1882, he married Lucy M. Brown, daughter of a pioneer family. Two daughters were born to Mr. and Mrs. Mowry while they lived on this farm: Genevieve (Mrs. John Erikson of Nampa, Idaho) and Verna (Mrs. Tom Wagner of Geneva).

In 1886, Mr. Mowry sold his farm and moved to the new town of Geneva, and started what was called a "screen-door factory" but did all kinds of wood-turning work. He first built a big shop (painted red) just south of the park. While he lived in this shop, his son Cleo was born there. David then built the house where Mrs. Lydia Laun lives now, and one son (James) was born there. Cleo grew to manhood and attended the state university. After graduation he went to Schenectady, New York, as an electrician. There he died two years later. James was an aviator during World War I. James will be remembered as a good athlete in Geneva High School. He passed away in 1959 in Peoria, Illinois.



Photo from Mrs. Tom Wagner The David C. Mowry screen door and window factory in 1888—just south of Courthouse. The house, still standing, was the home of the late Mr. and Mrs. Louis Laun. Left to right: Mrs. D. C. Mowry, Genevieve, Vernie (Mrs. Tom Wagner), Cleo, Mr. D. C. Mowry.

Early-day neighbors of the Mowrys in Geneva were Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Camp; the A. J. Beals; Frank Wight; Will Weed, the Burlington depot agent; Bryant, a lumberman and coal dealer; and the Wards, who had a furniture store and the Ward Opera House, a popular place for all entertainment. Blind Boone, and Blind Tom, Negro pianist, came there. There were hypnotism shows, minstrel shows, and many others. In 1893, Mr. Mowry gave a show called "Fantasticle Fantasima," a sleight-of-hand work.

The "big red shop" was sold in 1890, and the family moved to the north part of Geneva. Five children were born here: Martha, Herbert, Clinton, Thora, and Alice, all now deceased. Martha and Thora were married when they passed away, leaving three children. The Mowry home was then remodeled to accompand to a large family.

modeled to accommodate a large family.

Dave Mowry was the first plumber in Geneva. He put in most of the water system for the town and for the Girls' Training School and tarred and painted the standpipe. He later sold his plumbing business to Frank Bentley. He then bought the brick building on the southwest corner of the west business block and did all kinds of tent and awning work,

with the help of his son Clinton.

Clinton was the first radio repairman in Geneva. Part of the front of the first floor was a museum where relics of the past were brought. Most of the things were given to Mr. Mowry. The collection grew fast and soon more space was needed. Later, more space was needed for the repair shop and people were told to come and take their relics if they wished, but the museum was to be taken to Hastings and placed in the "House of Yesterday." The building that had housed the museum was burned in 1936.

David Mowry passed away in 1938, and Mrs. Mowry in 1925.



Courtesy Geneva State Bank View of Mowry Museum on Sept. 27, 1927.

John Brown, father of Mrs. D. C. Mowry, came to Fillmore County in 1873, and bought land joining his brother-inlaw, I. E. Allen, in Hamilton township. He brought his daughter Lucy, a girl of 12, with him. Two other children were left in Clinton, Iowa, with relatives.

In the big blizzard of 1873, Mr. Brown's two oxen were smothered to death. Mr. Brown was killed in 1875, struck by lightning while riding a mule. His daughter Lucy then lived mostly with her aunt, Mrs. I. E. Allen.

In a letter written to his parents in the East, Mr. Brown described Fairmont as he saw it in 1873 as having 20 houses, all new since 1871.

—Mrs. Tom Wagner

Bright B. Ogg was born in Sangamon County, Illinois, on January 10, 1850, and was a son of Bright B. and Frances (Thomas) Ogg, who were natives of Kentucky, whence they emigrated to Sangamon county. His father was a carpenter by trade, and in addition to that pursuit carried on farming. Both he and his wife spent their last days in Macoupin County, Illinois.

Upon the home farm in the county of his nativity, Bright B. Ogg spent the days of his boyhood and youth and early became familiar with the duties that fell to the lot of the agriculturist. He was indebted to the public school system for the educational privileges which he enjoyed. From Sangamon he removed to Macoupin County, and after a few years left Illinois for Nebraska; this was in the year 1880. He located in Fillmore County and purchased land in Geneva township, where he bought and sold several farms. For many years Mr. Ogg was extensively engaged in stock dealing—buying, feeding, and shipping—and found this a very profitable source of income.

Mr. Ogg was married in Macoupin County, February 10, 1876, to Ellen Redfern, a native of Kansas, and a daughter of John and Polly (Pritchett) Redfern. They reared a family of seven children, namely: Ora L., James W., C. Claude, Cecil, Chloe, Josie, and Hazel.





Photo from Miss Chloe Ogg Mr. and Mrs. Bright B. Ogg (1900).

In the fall of 1895, Mr. Ogg became the Populist candidate for the office of county sheriff and was elected by a majority of 173. After serving for two years he was renominated and elected by a majority of 249, a fact indicating his faithful and fearless service and his personal popularity among the law-abiding citizens. He was a Democrat in his early political affiliations, but became a staunch advocate of the Populist party. Socially he was connected with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and the Ancient Order of United Workmen.

Mr. Ogg had a great civic interest and pride, and served many years on the city council. He was also county assessor, county land appraiser, 20 years vice-president or president of the Fillmore County Fair Board, and lastly served as mayor of Geneva. At 75 he retired from public service.

Mr. and Mrs. Ogg celebrated both their 50th and 60th wedding anniversaries. He lived to be 88 years old, and she to 101 years.

—Miss Cleo Ogg

Mordecai Pangle, son of Isaac Glass Pangle, was born in Lima, Ohio, in 1838. He enlisted in the Union Army (6th Ohio Light Artillery) and was mustered out in 1865. He married Rebecca Carpenter in 1869, and they became the parents of 11 children.

In 1871, he came West looking for land. He came from Delphos, Ohio, to Lincoln by train, and then walked to the present farm location (SE ½ of Sec. 22) and staked a claim. Then he walked to Nebraska City to tile his claim, paid \$1 per acre to squatters to relinquish the land, and went back to Ohio. He had to return within six months and live on this land for five years to hold his claim.

In September, 1871, Mr. Pangle drove a team and wagon from Delphos to Chicago. There he purchased a cookstove for \$30, and some lumber. These and their other goods he loaded on a railroad car and came to the end of the line (at Crete), and from Crete he drove to the homestead. While in Chicago, he wrote to his wife and told her to address her letters to Empire, Fillmore County, Nebraska.

Mr. Pangle built a dugout and a barn. When he had lived on the homestead 18 months, his wife and three children came West. By this time the roadroad was built to Fairmont. No one was at the depot to meet her. (Mord had not received her letter telling when she was arriving, as the mail sometimes was not delivered for two weeks.) The railroad agent, who knew the general location of the farm, offered to take her to her new home in his wagon. When she reached the place which she thought might be her husband's farm, she entered the dugout and, recognizing some of the furniture as her own, knew she had arrived. She was so disappointed in the home, and so overwhelmed by the desolation and loneliness of the prairie, that she threw herself down on the bed and cried.

The family lived in the dugtout for about a year, until a frame house could be built, which became a permanent home. Mr. Pangle died in 1913, but his widow lived there until her death in February, 1920. A son, Ross, lived there and farmed the place the remainder of the year. Another son, Charles, purchased the farm from the estate and has owned and lived on the place since that time. One interesting fact about the Pangle place is that it has never had an encumbrance of any kind against it: Charles Pangle thought that in this respect it might be unique in Fillmore County history.



Photo from Mrs. Roscoe Pangle

The Mordecai Pangle family in 1892 or 1893 at farm home. Back row, left to right: Mrs. Pangle, Benjamin, Susan Pangle Johnston, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Pangle, Josephine, and Bliss J. Two children in front (twins): Dorlissa and Roscoe.

John Pittard was born March 14, 1845, at Barrington in Somersetshire, England, to John and Elizabeth Harris Pittard. He came to America in the spring of 1865, landing about the middle of April. His ship came in via the St. Lawrence River and a pilot boat was needed to bring them to shore. The men on the pilot boat told them that Abraham Lincoln had been assassinated.

An uncle, Joe Pittard and wife Sophia, had preceded him to America and settled near Sussex, Wisconsin, so John settled in Waukesha County, Wisconsin. He was married to Helen Bates on November 17, 1877, and they moved to Ludington, Michigan, where he worked as chore boy, caring for the horses of the teamsters in a lumber camp. His wife worked as cook in the camp.

Mr. Pittard came to Nebraska in May, 1879, and settled in the vicinity of Geneva. His wife and infant son, Charles, followed in September, with the Abraham Calkins family, who settled near Friend. At one time the Pittards lived in a sod house 2 miles N of Geneva on the NE 1/4 of Sec. 24.

On November 21, 1882, he purchased the S $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 27, T7, R3W from the Burlington Railroad. In 1884, he learned that the N $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 27 was to be sold October 6. In order to be the first in line to buy the 80, he arose very early on that





Photo from Mrs. Vera Lovegrove

Mr. and Mrs. John Pittard (photos taken in 1918 and 1890, respectively).

morning, walked the 8 miles to Fairmont, and sat on the steps of the railroad agent's home until the agent awakened. He was successful in buying the land.

John built his home on the land in the fall and winter of 1884-85 and moved into it in the spring. Only 20 acres of the farm was ready for tillage when he bought it, so he had much sod to break.

He helped to organize District 81 and his son, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-grandchild, attended school there. One granddaughter taught school there for two years.

One granddaughter taught school there for two years.

John was a staunch Democrat and was always interested in politics and government and kept posted on the happenings of the day.

He and his family lived on the happenings of the day.

He and his family lived on the farm until 1900, when he moved to an acreage south of Friend. His son Charles and bride moved onto the farm in February, 1900, and lived there until 1920, with the exception of years 1911 to 1914. During this time Emmet Kinkade rented the farm. During the years 1920-1928, Charles tilled the farm and the hired men and their families lived in the house.

In 1928, the house was remodeled, and Charles's son John A. Pittard and his wife moved onto the farm. John and wife still reside there and are the third generation of Pittards to own this farmstead.

Grandpa John's wife passed away October 16, 1929, but he continued to live at Friend until he became blind. For two years he was cared for by his son, Charles, and wife. He died August 4, 1934, at the age of 89 years.

Samuel Rhinehart was the former owner of the Wagner farm in Sec. 33. Before buying that farm, he had lived at Manleyville, where a town site had been laid out, 1 mile N and 1½ miles W of the present Geneva. The Rhineharts farmed and kept a small hotel, which later burned, at Manleyville. Later, they bought the E ½ of Sec. 33 and moved there. They sold the S ¼ but retained five acres because the hog house was across the half-section line. They planted berry bushes and a large fruit orchard.

The Rhinehart family was quite prominent in the vicinity and later in the Geneva Methodist Church. When one of their daughters was married, Mrs. George Smith, the banker's wife, said of the wedding dinner that she had never seen "so much food at one dinner in all her life."

In 1892, the Rhineharts sold their farm to Henry Wagner and moved to Kansas.

Charles Henry Sloan, son of James W. Sloan and Elizabeth (Magee) Sloan, was born in a log cabin near Monticello, Iowa, May 2, 1863. He spent his early boyhood on a farm in Jones County, Iowa, was educated in rural district schools, and graduated from high school at Monticello. He taught in a rural school until March 1, 1881, when he entered the State Agricultural College at Ames. He completed the four-year course in $3\frac{1}{2}$ years and graduated at 21 with a Bachelor of Science degree.

In the fall of 1884, he was elected superintendent of the Fairmont, Nebraska, High School and taught there for three years. During this time he devoted his evenings to the study of law, and in 1887 was admitted to the bar. From 1887 to 1891, he practiced law in Fairmont, where he was city attorney. He was elected county attorney of Fillmore County in 1891 and moved to Geneva.

On October 1, 1889, he was united in marriage to Emma Margaret Porter of Woodbine, Iowa.

In 1894, he was elected to the State Senate from the district then comprising York and Fillmore counties. While serving in the Senate he introduced the resolution naming Nebraska "The Tree Planters State." He was chairman of the committee which submitted several amendments to the State Constitution, most of which were adopted.



Photo from Porter Sloan Charles H. Sloan, brothers and sister. Left to right: Robert, William J., Charles H. Standing: Frank W. Inset: Mamie.

He championed constitutional amendments adopted a few years later, which created the state railway commission and led to the reorganization and enlargement of the supreme court. He served in Congress from the old Fourth District from 1911 to 1919, and from 1929 to 1931. He held a seat on the Ways and Means Committee and also served on the Agricultural Committee and was author of legislation for the eradication of tuberculosis in livestock and cholera in hogs.

He was the senior member of the law firm of Sloans, Keenan, & Corbitt, formerly Sloan, Sloan & Burke. He was a member of the District, State and American Bar Associations, and took a deep interest in their meetings.

He was for years associated with his brother, Frank W. Sloan, both in the practice of law and in banking, and was a director of the Geneva State Bank.

In 1935 he was awarded a Master of Science degree in agriculture by Iowa State College at Ames.

Mr. Sloan was a member of the Geneva Masonic and Eastern Star lodges for more than 50 years. He served as Grand Orator in 1898 and as Past Master from to 1903 to 1905. He was a member of York Rite and Scottish Rite bodies, and of Sesostris Shrine at Lincoln.

Interested in the welfare and advancement of Geneva and Fillmore County, he took an active part in Community Club projects. He was a member of the Methodist Church and served on its official board. A student of the Bible, he liked to act as a teacher in the Sunday School of the church.

Mr. Sloan loved Nebraska and was convinced that her destined place was among the first. He was a cheerful optimist, a hard worker, a gifted public speaker. During his long public life he delivered many addresses in Nebraska and in many other states. He passed away in

Geneva on June 2, 1946.

His wife, Emma P. Sloan, departed this life on October 19, 1946. His son, Frank Blaine Sloan, died in World War I. His other children are Ethel (Mrs. Grady Corbitt) and Charles Porter Sloan, who reside in Geneva, and William McKinley Sloan of Eugene, Oregon. He has six grandchildren, Frank Blaine Sloan of New York; Kathryn Margaret (Mrs. Sherman Ashby) of Geneva; William Marshall Sloan of Grants Pass, Oregon; Sarah Nancy (Mrs. Roger Hannum) of Eugene, Oregon; Charles Windsor Corbitt of San Francisco; and Margaret Anne (Mrs. Harold Higley) of Grand Rapids, Michigan; and 17 great-grandchildren.

—Grady Corbitt

Charles A. Thorpe, widely known in America and Europe by his nickname of "The Honest Jockey," was one of Geneva's most noted sons. Born in 1862, he came as a youth to live with the Ab Tucker family on their horse-breeding farm near Geneva. His riding career was a fabulous one, taking him from county tracks in Geneva and Lincoln to St. Louis and New Orleans, and then to the famed ovals of Austria, France, and England.

He began to ride professionally in 1881 by riding Harry Edwards (owned at Fairmont), for a while Nebraska's most famous race horse. Later he rode Belle K., foaled on the Ab Tucker farm, who, with Charlie in the saddle, defeated the speedy patriarch Harry Edwards. His reputation for honesty, together with his skill, combined to earn him what was, for those days, a substantial fortune. In the year 1892, his services earned him more \$20,000. Between 1901 and 1903 (when he finally retired at 40, a full 10 years later than the normal retirement time of a jockey), he was riding winners for royalty and titled European owners, with 80 to his credit in 1903.

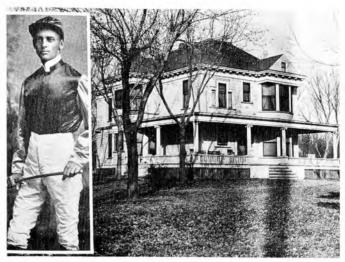


Photo from "Frank W. Sloan," by C. H. Sloan Courtesy Geneva State Bank Charles A. Thorpe residence. *Inset*: Charles Thorpe, world-famous jockey.

Thorpe had early married the lovely, kind, and thrifty Alice Bassett of Geneva, recorder in the office of the Fillmore County clerk. While she lived, his earnings were well invested. In 1901, he built in Geneva a two-story, 13-room house, which for some years was the scene of much entertaining of visitors from far and near. After the death of his wife in 1907, his convivial tastes (we may guess, but do not know) apparently contributed to his financial decline. He died in 1916 in Omaha, where he earned a scanty living by tending bars and working as a cleaning man in the buffet of the Omaha Livestock Exchange. He is buried in the Geneva Cemetery.

His mansion later became the hospital of the Geneva Hospital Association, for some time managed by Mr. and Mrs. Joe Bender. Auctioned in 1958, to make way for the new Fillmore County Memorial Hospital, it was bought by local farmer Vern Domeier, who used the lumber of the old landmark in the construction of an overhead elevator on his farm.

Berend (Barney) Tobiassen was accompanied to Nebraska by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jurgen Tobiassen and family, who came here from Chapin, Illinois, where they had settled after migrating from Germany to the United States. Barney bought the NE ¼ of Sec. 31 from the Burlington in 1879, when the only tree on the place was a lone cottonwood.

Since there was no shelter, on their arrival they spent the first night on their land under their overturned wagon box, with their horses and mules tied to the running gear. During the night a windstorm struck and the horses and mules broke loose, but, luckily, did not get very far away.

They started construction of a farm home immediately. The new home was soon the scene of a double wedding, as Mr. and Mrs. Barney



Photo from Ben and Emma Tobiassen The Tobiassen home in 1888. Left to right: Ben, Mrs. Anna Tobiassen, Lizzie, Mrs. Hilka Tobiassen (grandmother), Anna Tobiassen.

¹ This account of Charlie Thorpe is drawn from Charles H. Sloan's Frank W. Sloan, Nebraskan (copyright 1937) and from the Nebraska Signal's account of the sale of the house.

Tobiassen and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Linde were married there. Mrs. Tobiassen was a sister of Mr. Linde and Mrs. Linde was a sister of Mr. Tobiassen.

The Tobiassens had seven children: Anna, Margaret, Benn, Lydia, Carl, Emma, and John W. John farmed the home place for

many years

Mr. and Mrs. Will Lauenstein were also married in this house, Mrs. Lauenstein being a sister of Barney Tobiassen. Also, the two eldest daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Tobiassen were married in the same room in which their parents were married. Anna married John Riel and Margaret married Jacob Schaldecker.

On April 4, 1954, the golden wedding anniversary dinner of Mr. and Mrs. John Riel was served in the family home; and on August 16, 1956, Mr. and Mrs. John Tobiassen celebrated their silver wedding

anniversary there.



Photo from John Tobiassen

Early-day threshing rig, with John Tobiassen walking alongside engine.

Henry Wagner was born in Baden, Germany. As a small boy, he was brought to Ohio by his parents, and lived in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. During the Civil War, he and others went ahead of the army building temporary bridges, but he did not serve in the army.

In 1873, Mr. Wagner came to Gage County and bought railroad land, paying \$7 an acre. In 1874, he married Margaret Lowry of Waverly, Ohio; she was born in Ohio, but her parents had come from Dublin, Ireland. Mr. and Mrs. Wagner, who had five sons, all born in Gage County, experienced the usual early-day hardships. In 1892, the family moved to Fillmore County, where they had bought the Samuel Rhinehart farm in Sec. 33.





Photo from Mrs. Tom Wagner

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Wagner

Their early neighbors were Newton Frank, George Bobbitt, and Jim Bortner on the east, Cash Bumgarner on the south, and Henry

Biester on the west. Many others also came and went.

There was a little-used road on the north of the Wagner farm that had three bridges on the half-mile as it crossed and re-crossed Turkey Creek. Finding the bridges expensive to keep up, the county bought a slice of land from the Wagners, thus doing away with two bridges and leaving only one to keep up. The jog in the road is still there

Henry Wagner passed away in 1919, and Mrs. Wagner in 1931. Thomas Wagner inherited the farm when his father passed away. Tom and his brother, William, farmed together until William moved to town, after which Tom farmed the place himself. In 1914, Thomas Wagner married Verna Mowry of Geneva, who had been a schoolteacher in Tom's home district (No. 7). To this union were born three sons, Jack, Donn, and Richard.

Mrs. Wagner and her three sons are all graduates of Geneva High School. All three boys were inducted in World War II. Jack was placed in NASA (the space agency) after graduating from the University of Nebraska. Donn was in the artillery, and became a paratrooper, later a parachute rigger. Dick was a bombardier engineer on a plane called "Life." Jack is still in NASA. Donn was in France when the war ended. Richard, who had been in Italy, had completed his 50 missions and was stationed in Florida when the war ended. Donn married Lily Priest of Canton, Texas; Richard married Norma Kohler of Sutton, Nebraska.

Tom Wagner always did general farming. Although retired from active farming, he lived on the home place, farmed by his son Richard, until his death on May 13, 1965. Mrs. Verna Wagner still lives there.

Peter Youngers was born in Pike County, Pennsylvania. on December 25, 1852. When he was seven years old, his parents moved to New York City. He became a street newsboy, selling the New York Times, and in his teens drove a coal truck for Barry & Co.



Photo from Mrs. Lionel Henkle Peter Youngers (about 1900).

In May, 1871, the family came overland in a covered wagon. Peter and his father, Peter Youngers, Sr., took adjoining homesteads in Liberty township 8 miles S of Exeter and planted an orchard of apples, cherries, peaches, and grapes. Prices were high, with flour \$10 a barrel, bacon 30 cents a pound, and poor-grade kerosene 50 cents a gallon. Peter Youngers, Sr., sent to England for clover seed, and in this way clover was introduced in the West.

One of Peter's first jobs when he came West was with a nursery at Crete. He soon became foreman and had charge of setting out trees along the Burlington right-of-way. People used to call this section of the prairie an alkali desert because there was nothing to break the wind and dust. Mr. Youngers persuaded farmers to plant rows of osage orange along the outlines of fields to form windbreaks. Later, most farmers wanted to use all available space and so cut out the

trees to enlarge their fields.

Along with farming, Peter, Jr., found it necessary to work with a team on the railroad to obtain provisions for his family. Most of the crew were boys from the East who knew nothing about the West. Mr. Youngers often laughed about one man who admired his "cady" hat [slouch hat] and wanted to swap with him, and so Mr. Youngers was delighted to take the man's cap. A few months later, he could pull the cap over his ears to keep warm while the other man's ears were freezing.

One winter, Peter, Jr., worked at Kearney with a railroad tracklaying gang for wages of 25 cents a day. One of the last buffalo hunts took place there at this time, but Peter decided that he needed the 25 cents worse than he needed to go buffalo hunting. There was an army camp at Kearney, and one winter Peter delivered the mail there, and in so doing had to cross the Platte River on horseback.

After making final proof on the homestead, Mr. Youngers went into the nursery business, growing the stock and traveling over the country as a salesman, with books of colored plates showing varieties of fruit. He also carried specimens in bottles. In 1883, he bought a farm 2 miles E of Geneva and put in 20 acres of apples.

Peter Youngers was a highly practical horticulturist. He was a lifelong student of farming problems and did pioneering work in many

ways which have now become universal.

"Pete," as he was known to his friends, was a member of the National Nurserymen's Association for about 25 years and never missed a convention; on his retirement, he was made an honorary member. He was elected a member of the Nebraska State Board of Agriculture in 1898 and served on its Board of Managers from 1899 to 1906, when he became its president and served two terms. He was also president of the Citizens State Bank in Geneva.

His studies of scientific agriculture made his business a success. While on the state board of managers, he contributed much to its financial stability. He was treasurer of the State Horticultural Society

for many years, and was superintendent of the Horticulture Building at the Omaha Exposition.

He was most widely known for his work with his nursery company. Thousands of orchards were produced from trees propagated and grown there. Probably there is no section of Nebraska which did not feel, directly or indirectly, his influence as a horticulturist. He was a man who loved life — his home, his family, his friends;

and his real business in living was the joy of beautifying his country

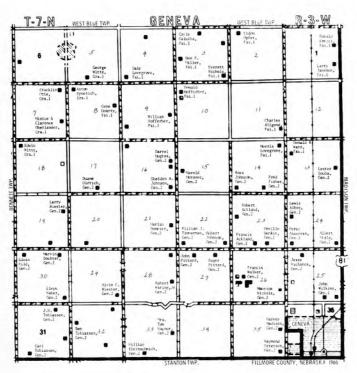
and, at the same time, making it more prosperous.

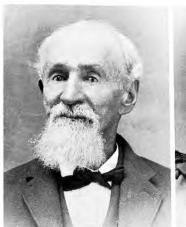
Mr. Youngers passed away at his summer camp in Mercer, Wisconsin, on August 15, 1921. In 1929, he was honored as an outstanding nurseryman and a portrait of him was unveiled in the "Hall of Agricultural Achievement" at the university's Agricultural College in Lincoln.

-Nellie Youngers (Mrs. Lionel) Henkle, Westbrook, Connecticut



Photo from John Tobiassen Filling a trench silo in 1934-1935 on the John Tobiassen farm.







Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Wild came from Zelienople, Pennsylvania, in 1871 and homesteaded on the E 1/2 of the NW 1/4 of Sec. 30.



Photo from Mrs. Vera Lovegrove Daniel Van Slyke family. Front row, left to right: Elsie (Billings), Elizabeth, Daniel, Stella (Jewell). Back row: Lydia (Rogers), Guy, Martha (Goodrich). Daniel homesteaded the E ½ of the SW ¼ of



Photo from Mrs. Dorothy Nichols

A tornado cloud as seen in Geneva township in the summer of 1947.

Geneva

The history of Geneva begins with the organic election

of the county on April 19, 1871.

The group that originally established the town suggested a number of nationalities. Names like Dixon, Whitaker, Martin, Porter, Shields, Merryman, Badger, Camp, and Bigelow indicate Anglo-Saxon extraction; Katheiser, German; and a Russian settlement located on the west side of Geneva. This group scattered after the assassination of President McKinley in 1901. (Learning of the assassination upon returning from the Peter Youngers beet field, where they had been working all day, they expressed great joy. This angered the other citizens, so they were told they would be tarred and feathered if they did not leave town by morning. They left—many moving toward Sutton.)

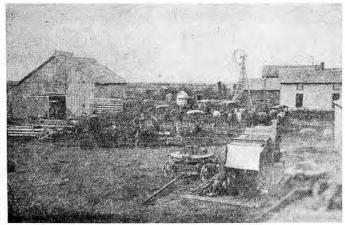
Soon after the county buildings-jail and courthouse, first located on the north side of Court Street (G) between 9th and 10th, then later moved across the street to the courthouse block-were completed in 1873 (as described elsewhere), James H. Bigelow erected on the northwest corner of the square a small, one-story building in which George Bigelow opened a store with a small stock of goods. A post office had been established in the first residence. The next building to be erected was a small store by A. S. Shepherd & Co. on a lot where the Putnam House was later built. The store was kept but for a short time, the foods were soon moved, and the building sold to W. P. Friend, who occupied it as a hotel.

In June, 1874, the courthouse, the jail, a small frame building east of the courthouse, a residence, and a store room west of the square were the only buildings in the county seat. Later in the year, A. G. Camp & Sons-S. B., J. H., and C. D.-moved their grocery and dry-goods store from Fairmont to the G. E. Bigelow building west of the square and opened the first general-merchandise store in Geneva.

In the spring of 1875, J. H. Camp started building a residence and hotel and barn northwest of the square. In the fall of 1875, several business and professional men located

here and improvements at once commenced.

gallery.



James H. Camp's livery stable (1882), located at west end of Geneva business district. The stable was behind C. D. Camp's photograph

Geneva's first paper, the Fillmore County Republican, was published at Rockford, Ill. About 200 copies were expressed to W. T. Burnett, one of the county commissioners. The editor came in a few days; but, there being no place for a plant but the courthouse and no place for his family, he "threw up the sponge."

In November, 1875, Mark M. Neeves came. His press and other material were taken up the stairway into the courthouse. There he commenced to publish Geneva's first regular

paper, the Fillmore County Review. He continued to publish the paper in this location until February, 1876. He then moved to the west of the square into a building erected for

This concern is the oldest continuous business in the city-now known as the Nebraska Signal.

During 1876, the village began to improve rapidly, and several families located here. By January, 1876, the village had a total of 140 inhabitants.

According to Judge William H. Blain, by July 4, 1876, Geneva boasted two dry-goods stores, one drugstore, one millinery, one hardware, and one grocery store, three hotels, a fine schoolhouse, a parsonage, four lawyers, four ministers, and three physicians. Geneva also had a publishing house, which issued the Fillmore County Review, a weekly devoted to the interests of the county.

In the fall of 1877, Pliny M. Putnam began the erection of a hotel, which cost nearly \$5,000. Encouraged by this, others came to Geneva. The following report, taken from the May 29, 1878, issue of the Review, describes Geneva's

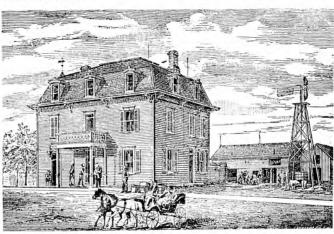
"metropolitan" hotel built by Putnam:

Something of which a city might be proud is the Putnam House, now nearly completed. In dimensions the main part is 32' x 40' and three stories high with a Mansard roof which will soon be crowned with an observatory where a view of the surrounding country can be taken, as far as the eye can reach. The whole is placed upon a stone foundation enclosing a large basement story. Through the center of the lower story extends a spacious hall, on the one side being an office and a large dining hall and on the other ladies' and gentlemen's parlors. These are being nicely furnished and are most delightful apartments. The second story is also divided on either side by a hall into suites of rooms and single rooms, in pleasant and convenient style. The third story is not yet divided into apartments, but will be before long. To the main part is connected a wing 18' x 32', two stories high. The lower story is occupied as a culinary department and the upper story is divided into sleeping apartments. The whole has received the first coat of paint and the finishing touch will soon follow."

We can truthfully boast the finest and largest hotel west of the

capital of our state.

This hotel also had a large livery barn attached, "30' x 50' and 28' x 34', erected at a cost of \$1,000, can keep 40 horses." Mr. Putnam traded his hotel to Horace Kellogg in September, 1882, for a 240-acre farm in Franklin township; the hotel then became known as the "Kellogg House" and in 1885 it was called the "Fillmore," with C. Banta as proprietor. In 1890, J. M. Noyes purchased the ground occupied by the Fillmore House and erected a \$15,000 brick hotel which retained the name of Fillmore. This hotel burned in 1908. (This building was located on G Street between 9th and 10th on Lots 84 and 85 east of the Opera House that was built in 1883.)



Fillmore County Handbook (1884 The Kellogg House, Geneva.

By 1882, E. Stowell was operating a hotel located west of the square next to the Platt store, which he operated until it was closed about 1890.

In 1885, the old Platt store building at the southwest corner of the square was rebuilt as a hotel and was advertised to accommodate as many if not more than any other hotel in the county. E. Stowell managed this hotel after the Stowell House closed.



The Platt House (about 1889). Notice two sections to the building—the south part erected in 1875 and the north section added in 1887. Mr. Knowler in buggy at left; A. B. Miller on right; others unidentified.



Jameson Hotel, built in 1890-Harry Porter's hack alongside.

The Jameson Hotel was erected by W. H. Jameson in 1890 at a cost of about \$20,000. It was a three-story brick structure 48' x 109'. This building is now the only hotel in Geneva. It was managed for many years by Les Poole, and since his death has been run by his widow, Irma Poole, and his son, Keith Poole.

The Jayne Hotel, owned by Ebb Jayne, began operations about 1900. In later years it became an apartment house, managed by Miss Hannah Gilmore. It was demolished in 1966 and replaced by the new Fillmore County Bank.

Geneva, which had a population of scarcely 50 inhabitants in 1875, had grown to a population of 250 people by 1880 and was a thriving little community. A business directory of that year is listed below.

Carpenter and builder—A. E. Boynton

Loan agents-S. B. Camp, - Burr

General Merchandise—Camp, A. G. & Sons; Platt, J. T. & Co. (SW corner of courthouse square); John A. Dempster—drugs also (Court Street)

Livery stable-J. H. Camp

Harness, boots, shoes—C. H. Carlow (N side of square) Blacksmith—W. J. Carrier; A. E. Coon; W. Keeney

Attorney and real estate—D. H. Conant (3 doors W of courthouse);

Walter V. Fifield; Hedges & Scott Attorney—R. A. McKee; Northrup & Likes

Physician—R. T. Dailey (office at drugstore); G. R. Hart; H. L. Smith Dentist—R. M. Hazlett (office at drugstore)

Hardware, furniture, and restaurant—W. Purdy (W end of square) Hardware, stoves, and tinware—Dawson, O. P. & Co.

Millinery—Mrs. M. H. Kessler Meat Market—G. T. Lemmon

Wagon Maker—H. H. Martin (NE corner of courthouse square) Brick Manufacturer—Merrill Brothers (kiln 3 miles N of town) Hotel—Putnam House

Justice of Peace-M. L. Spear

They also had four churches—Baptist, Christian, Methodist Episcopal, and Presbyterian; and two societies—Geneva Lodge, I.O.O.F. and Geneva Lodge, I.O.G.T.

The Geneva Exchange Bank, incorporated June 4, 1880, by Smith, Fisher & Fifield, with a capital of \$20,000, was the first bank in Geneva. This bank was the outgrowth of a collection and exchange business, started about two years before by W. V. Fifield.

In 1889, the Geneva Exchange Bank became the First National Bank, with capital stock being raised to \$50,000. Officers of the bank were G. W. Smith, president; Frank J. Miller, cashier; Dr. A. G. McGrew, vice-president; Walter V. Fifield, attorney. In 1891, the city had three banks to care for its financial business—the First National Bank, Citizens Bank, and Geneva National Bank.

ORGANIZATION

On July 1, 1879, at a regular meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of Fillmore County held at the courthouse at Geneva, a petition was received from D. H. Conant and 55 other citizens of Geneva asking the board to incorporate the town of Geneva. A week later on July 8, 1879, the board proceeded to hear parties interested in incorporation of the town of Geneva. After hearing all parties and being fully satisfied that a majority of the male taxable inhabitants had signed the petition for incorporation, it ordered that the proposed town be incorporated as the town of Geneva, to include the following described territory: The SE ½, the E½ of the SW ¼ of Sec. 36, T7N, R3W, also the N½ of the NE ¼ and the NE ¼ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 1, T6N, R3W.

Five persons were appointed to serve as trustees until their successors were elected and qualified. They were M. M. Neeves, John B. Brazelton, Sherwood Burr, George P. Wintersteen, and D. H. Conant.

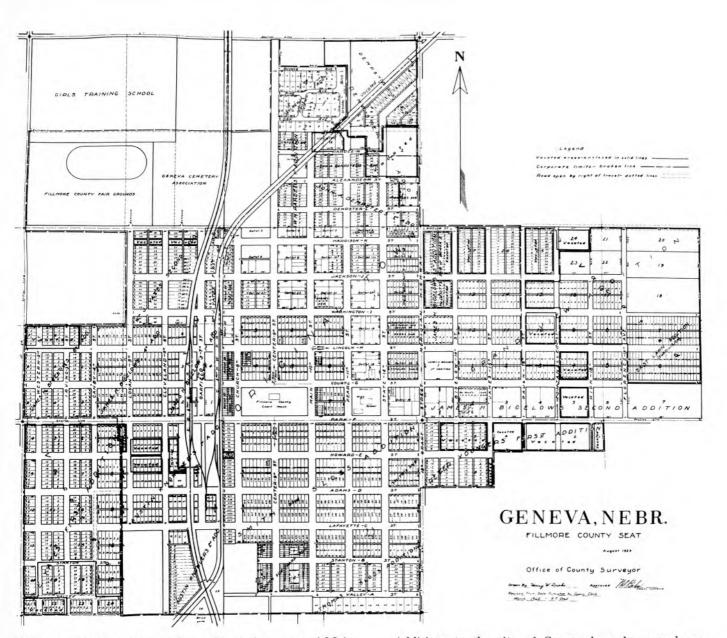
The first meeting of the village board was held at the courthouse on Friday, July 25, 1879; present were M. M. Neeves, Sherwood Burr, George Wintersteen, and D. H. Conant. M. M. Neeves was elected chairman and W. V. Fifield, clerk. An ordinance provided that all regular meetings of the board would be held in the office of W. V. Fifield at Geneva on the first Thursday of each month.

At a meeting on July 28, 1879, John A. Dempster was elected town treasurer. Also M. D. Williams was appointed town marshal, which office he held a very short time. At a meeting on September 20, 1879, Mr. Williams resigned and J. E. Lemmon was elected to fill the vacancy.

On November 6, 1879, it was decided that a town attorney should be appointed and a report of attorney fees be brought to the next meeting. The fees asked were: J. Jensen—\$150, R. A. McKee—\$200, and Gray & Hedges would accept whatever the board saw proper to allow. Gray & Hedges were elected to the office of town attorney.

The next change, from the status of a village to that of a city, second class, was made on March 9, 1889, under provisions of Chapter 14 of the Compiled Statutes of State of Nebraska. At that time the village had grown to a population of more than 1,000 (W. H. Stewart, who took the census, reported that there were 1,360 inhabitants), and it therefore became the duty of the board to incorporate under the new designation, and to adopt such rules and procedure for government as were prescribed by state law.

The city was divided into three wards. Commencing at a point in the center of Court and Church Sts., and running



thence east in the center of Court St. to the center of Main St., thence north to the center of Lincoln St., thence east to the east line of said village, and all territory lying east to the east line of said village, and all territory lying north of said line and east of Church St. to be the first ward. And all territory lying south of said line and east of Church St. to be the second ward, and all territory lying west of Church St. to be the third ward. (Court St. is now G, Lincoln is H, Church is now 8th, and Main is now 10th.)

The affairs of the city were to be conducted by a mayor and two councilmen elected from each ward. Each councilman served for a period of two years. The mayor and other officers were elected every year until 1922 when the term was increased to two years.

Results of the election of Geneva as a city held on April 2, 1889, were as follows: Mayor, H. L. Smith; clerk, J. D. Hamilton; treasurer, A. J. Beals; police judge, A. G. Camp; city engineer, V. A. Jones; councilmen of first ward, F. H. Briggs for two-year term and John A. Dempster for one year; councilmen of second ward, M. V. King for two years and J. H. Ward for one year; councilmen of third ward, F. B. Donisthorpe for two years and J. M. Noyes for one year.

The original town of Geneva consisted of all that part lying between the Chicago & Northwestern R. R. tracks on the west and Highway 81 on the east, and between Highway 41 on the south and a line between K and L Sts. (should this line extend on west, it would join the road south of the cemetery).

Additions to the city of Geneva have been made as follows:

Tollows.	
No. 1 original filed April 8, 1878—J. Jensen County	
1st and 2nd addition—Smith & Sloss—filed Dec. 4,	1882
E. R. Spear's & D. Lee's Subdivision of out-lots 26 &	27No date
Northrup & Burr's Subdivision of out-lot 14	Nov. 17, 1877
E. R. Spear's Subdivision of lots 103 & 104	April 1, 1878
W. J. Yates's First Addition	Dec. 14, 1883
Subdivision of out-lot No. 7	April 4, 1884
S. E. Johnson's Subdivision of out-lot 23	April 4, 1884
Subdivision of out-lot 11	Sept. 20, 1884
F. Heiderstadt's Subdivision of out-lots 12 & 13	Dec. 31, 1885
Austin Knowler's First Addition	April 5, 1886
Smith & Fifield's Subdivision of out-lot 15	Mar. 19, 1884
Thomas B Sloss's First Addition	April 26, 1886
James H. Rigelow's First Addition	July 1, 1884
James H Bigelow's Second Addition	Oct. 8, 1884
James H Bigelow's Third Addition	Aug. 10, 1885
Peter R. Vates's Subdivision of out-lot 24	Aug. 8, 1882
John A. Dempster's First Addition	Dec. 9, 1885
Geneva Cemetery	Dec. 15, 1884
W. J. Vates's Second Addition	June 14, 1886
John A Dempster's Second Addition	Nov. 11, 1886
James H Rigelow's Fourth Addition	May 26, 1887
Corporate Extension of Geneva	Dec. 8, 1886
F Heiderstadt's Subdivision of out-lot 11	Mar. 7, 1887
James H Rigelow's Fifth Addition	Aug. 12, 1886
Walter V Fifield's Subdivision of out-lot 1	May 25, 1887
John A. Dempster's Third Addition	June 22, 1887
James H. Bigelow's Sixth Addition	Sept. 20, 1887
C. F. McGrew's Subdivision of out-lot 1 of Dempste	rs
Third Addition	Sept. 30, 1887
W H Pardee's First Addition	Oct. 21, 1887
Austin Knowler's Second Addition	Aug. 27, 1888

George W. Smith's Subdivision of lots 89 to 96 inclusive 169 to 176 inclusive of Smith & Sloss's First Addition	and	3	1887
Jemima Stobbe's Subdivision of lots 70, 71, and 72	E-L	05	1000
John B. Lewis's Subdivision of out-lot 2 of original plo	t		
of Geneva	July	25,	1888
George McDevitt's Subdivision of block 2 of Bigelow's			
Fifth Addition	Jan.	26	1889
John A. Dempster's Subdivision of blocks 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,			
& 8 of Dempster's Third Addition	Feb.	20.	1890
& 8 of Dempster's Third Addition E. E. Yates's First Addition	Feb	. 5.	1890
Grand View Addition	June	26.	1889
Dempster and others Subdivision of lots 55 & 56 of		20,	1000
original plot of Geneva	Sept	. 7.	1889
J. E. Spear's Subdivision of SW 1/4 of out-lot 21, original	d		
plot of Geneva	Feb.	26,	1889
George W. Dewolf's Subdivision of N 1/2 of block 2 of			
Bigelow's Second Addition		No	date
Subdivision of original lots 105, 106, and W 1/2 of 107	April	21,	1890
South Side Park Addition	June	18.	1919
Peter Youngers' First Addition	June	8.	1905
Extension of city limits in Grandview and Bigelow's			
	Sept.	29,	1949

Churchill's Subdivision of SW 1/4 of Block 2, James H

Geneva Cemetery Plot

Bigelow's Second Addition.

Skylark Addition

In 1883, John Jensen and F. H. Briggs built the first Opera House, at a cost of \$4,000, on the north side of G St. between 9th and 10th Sts. This theater opened in 1883 with a home-talent play, "Fruits of the Wine Cup." According to the Nebraska Signal, in July, 1898, the old Opera House passed into history when "C. W. Hrubesky, owner of the building, closed the outside stairway and made one inside and used the room for his stock." From that time until the construction of the new Auditorium in 1915, the Fraternity temple room in the National Bank building served as the community gathering place.



Courtesy Geneva State Bank

April 14, 1958

April 15, 1959

Mar. 2, 1960

Geneva's Opera House, constructed in 1883 by John Jensen and F. H. Briggs—frame building from left. The Opera House was on the second floor; Briggs moved his business into the first floor. The large brick building is the Fillmore House.

The Auditorium was built in 1915 at 160 No. 9th St. Early in 1900 an architect named Deuel drew up plans for a new city hall and fire station, but it was not until 1915 that these plans materialized. Contracts were then let to F. B. Bentley, plumber, and L. L. Fisher, contractor. In December, 1915, the new \$20,000 city auditorium was opened to the public by presenting a play, "The Dutch Detective," given by local talent under the direction of A. E. Holt. Proceeds were applied on the purchase of a piano for the auditorium. That same month, the city clerk's office was moved to the council chamber in the city hall, the west room to be used exclusively by the fire company.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal City Auditorium, City Clerk's office, and fire station, erected in 1915.

It was not until 1881 that the first sidewalks were built; the first were constructed along 8th and 9th Sts. This comment concerning the wooden walks appeared in the Review. April 22, 1885: "Our street crossings are pretty narrow for two persons to pass on. One more plank of 12" would greatly add to their convenience for the pedestrian. We are aware that all people do not need wide walks and crossings as badly as those in a license town; but we do not like to stand out in the mud to let others pass, or vice versa." In time these wooden walks began to deteriorate and several accidents occurred. Following one accident, a lady, who fell and broke her arm as she tripped on a loosened board, filed a suit against the city for \$300. This prompted the city officials into action. In 1905, they ruled that no more wooden sidewalks be built: all walks were to be built of sidewalk brick, cement concrete, or stone. In 1901 and 1902 the first brick sidewalks were constructed, the first built between 8th and 9th on G St.

The years 1884 and 1885 proved to be years of rapid development. Besides the John Dempster elevator, two banks and a large number of private residences were built; churches were rebuilt and other improvements effected. A "fine" new schoolhouse valued at \$5,000 was constructed.

Building and maintenance materials for Geneva had to be hauled from Fairmont by teams for years, as there was no railroad. This need was met by the formation of the "Fairmont-Geneva Transportation Company," which purchased several heavy wagons and did a good business for some years. This firm did not, of course, survive long after the coming of the railroad line.

After the coming of the railroad in 1886, the village of Geneva grew by leaps and bounds. The population increased from 650 in 1885 to 1,580 by 1890. On May 21, 1886, following the completion of the Burlington track, the construction train "iron horse" was run into Geneva. A tremendous crowd, plus S. B. Camp's band, saluted its coming. The first train to enter Geneva came on the newly completed Burlington line from Fairmont on June 7, 1886. This event was one of great importance to Geneva and the citizens flocked to see the arrival. Later in the day, when the train went back to Fairmont, among the passengers were Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Brown and their older children who were on their way to



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

The first train to enter Geneva on the newly completed Burlington line from Fairmont (June 7, 1886).

Kansas to visit Mrs. Brown's parents. Mr. Brown was the partner of Peter Youngers in the Youngers & Co. Nursery, one of the largest in the state in those early days.

The telegraph also made its appearance at this same

time, following the Burlington route.

In March the following year, word came that the Northwestern would be built. Immediately the flag was run up on the courthouse to let people know the goods news and that evening a big crowd gathered to celebrate—the band played, guns were fired, and bonfires burned. The Chicago & Northwestern line between Fremont and Geneva was built in 1887 by the Fremont, Elkhorn, & Missouri Valley R.R. Company, under the guiding hand of John I. Blair of Blairstown, New Jersey. It was extended from Geneva to Superior, its present terminus, in 1888.



Photo from Delia Fisher Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley locomotive with snow plow attached (about 1890).

The first grain elevator in this city was the John A. Dempster elevator constructed by Warner & Co. of Chicago in 1885. This building was 60' x 70' and 65' high (outside measurements, includes the office). It had a capacity of 3,500 bushels of grain per hour and cost \$15,000 to build. The November 18, 1885, issue of the *Republican* reported that the new elevator was ready for business, with W. H. McCullough in charge of handling the grain and the general supervision of the elevator.

In 1887, A. Koehler Company built a small grain elevator on the Northwestern right of way which this company still uses.

The first roller mill was erected in 1887, filling a great need. The Geneva Milling Company is one the first businesses that is still in operation at the present time. It was then known as the Geneva Roller Milling Company. Until then the grain was processed by the stone burr mill which ground grain between two large stone burrs such as Sam Yates operated. He ran one of the first tread mills in Geneva, in the early 1880's. It was powered by oxen to grind flour and feed. This mill was located across the street north of the present schoolhouse on G St.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Sam Yates treadmill (about 1896). Building on the left is the old Baptist church, located just east of the present Evangelical United Brethren Church. The building to the right of the church was the feed mill erected by Sam Yates in 1883. Notice treadmill at the side of mill. The house on the right was the Sam Yates home. Children in front of the house were May and Roy Yates, both deceased.

Probably one of the most progressive years in the city's history was 1887, when improvements in the way of new buildings alone reached nearly \$200,000. During that period the important brick buildings erected were the Union, Luke, Dempster, Jensen, and Dworak blocks. A larger roller mill (still in operation as the Geneva Milling Company), the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley R.R. buildings, the Congregational Church, and 75 new dwelling houses were also constructed. Over 1,000 cars of grain were shipped from Geneva that year. By this time the village had a board of trade and under its fostering care many industries had sprung into existence—a creamery, canning factory, foundry, machine shop, and others. (Quoted from the Nebraska Gazetteer.)

In May, 1888, 24 cars of cattle were shipped from Geneva to Chicago. This shipment went as a special train and the cars were profusely decorated with flags and banners illustrating Geneva's resources and describing her advantages.

Another year of much advancement was 1890, shown by this newspaper report on October 30, 1890:

"Following is a list of buildings erected or in course of building since January 1, 1890."

2, 2000.	
Citizens Bank and Masonic Hall	\$ 30,000.00
Jameson Hotel, brick	20,000.00
Fillmore House, brick	10,000.00
David Kessler brick business rooms	8,000.00
Windmill factory and foundry, brick	16,000.00
Four brick residences	11 400 00
Twenty-eight frame residences	
Episcopal Church Eleven barns	1,600.00
Eleven barns	2,700.00
Wight & Blott meat market	500.00
(immediately west of 1st Nat'l Bank)	
Nick Longly shop John Gustafson shop S. J. Henderson shop	400.00
John Gustafson shop.	100.00
S. J. Henderson shop.	300.00
Will Shickley greenhouse	400.00
Buildings at fairgrounds	
Small buildings and additions other than about	
Aggregating in round number	\$128,000.00

Geneva had a total of 31 dressmakers in town at this me.

The city was proud of its modern water system which finally became a reality early in 1890. This meant they could now take care of the increasing demands for water for homes, businesses, and fire control. Dave Mowry, the first plumber in Geneva, installed most of the water system at the Girls' Training School when it was constructed in 1891. Later he sold his business to Frank Bentley.

In 1891, other business blocks were erected: the threestory brick building on the northwest corner of 9th and G which housed the First National Bank, Knights of Pythias, and I.O.O.F., and a two-story brick building put up by Miss Jennie Brown, the second building west of the First National Bank

For approximately 10 years the city had made several unsuccessful attempts to acquire electrical power. Finally, in 1904, Gregory F. Skinkle secured a franchise to build and operate an electrical plant. In January, 1905, the four street lights were illuminated for the first time. The people were delighted! It was so light outdoors they thought surely the sun was coming up. Only night-lighting service was available at first. In the summer of 1907, day service was started for the purpose of running fans and furnishing any other motor power that could be sold.

Among the first bakeries in town was that of O. P. Lacy in 1878; at that time, his was the only bakery, which he operated in conjunction with a restaurant. A December, 1882, issue of the the *Review* announced that "C. J. Hall and Mr. Butt have installed an oven and will be operating a *first class bakery* and are prepared to furnish tickets to those wishing to buy bread." They would be keeping a full supply of the "staff of life" on hand at all times and advertised to have fresh bread every day.

One of Geneva's oldest citizens, William Manning, operated the Geneva bakery in the early 1900's. He purchased and installed the first cake mixer, dough moulder, and bun



Photo from Miss Delia Fisher D. B. Bentley, one of Geneva's pioneer blacksmiths.



Photo from Mrs. Mabel Wernimont Silas Bailor's blacksmith shop in 1897, in the first building north of Camp's photo shop on 8th St. Man in foreground is Silas Bailor, father of Mrs. Wernimont. The man with the white beard is Silas's father, Adam.

divider used here. He recalled selling bread at 4¢ a loaf and delivering hot bread twice daily—at noon, then again between 4 and 6 P.M.—transporting the goods by horse and buggy, wheelbarrow, bicycle, or sometimes walking. He proudly reported having baked 7,000 buns for the first day of the county fair, and having roasted 125 ducks plus three or four suckling pigs at one time.

The appearance of the first automobile caused much excitement and also a few problems, since the horses were unaccustomed to this new vehicle. Even in the early days speed seemed to be a major problem, bringing about the need for the ordinance passed in 1906 to prevent fast or immoderate riding or driving of any horse, mule, or other animal or any automobile or vehicle at greater speed than six miles per hour. Among the first automobile owners in Geneva were Daniel Geiselman, Dr. Joseph Bixby, Dr. J. W. Puckett, and Dr. I. W. McEachran. Some recall Daniel Geiselman with his brand-new auto hitched to a buggy and giving rides on the bicycle track around the courthouse for 25 cents apiece. By





Two of the first cars in Geneva. Left, Dr. Joseph Bixby in his 1907 12-horsepower Maxwell; right, Elmer Whittle in Dr. J. W. Puckett's auto.

1911, Geneva, population 1,741, claimed a total of 42 automobiles.

Obviously, the autos brought a need for a new business, that of auto sales and services. By 1909, William H. Lake had an Auto Garage located in the vicinity of 133 North 10th. By 1911, several garages were advertising in the local weekly paper their various models of cars plus their services. They were (as of November 11, 1910):

W. C. Peterson and Co.—Buick, Velie, and Jackson Automobiles
 — Home of "Wife Getter Buggies" —

W. L. Spear & Co.—Ford Model Wm. H. Lake—Overland, Regal and Buick

Wm. H. Lake—Overland, Regal and Buick
All kinds of supplies and oils,
Smooth and nobby tread Morgan & Wright tires
Brown Auto Co.—the E-M-F "30"—\$1,000; Rooster "30"—\$1,000;
Demi Tonneau "30"—\$1,000:

Five Passenger standard touring car—\$1,000 Coupe "30"—\$1,450. (Located on west side of square)

The first filling station was erected and operated by C. J. Warner on the southwest corner of 8th and G Sts., now Eddie's Service (owned by Eddie Reinsch). The day the station opened, March 17, 1922, a pipe broke off of one big tank and some 15,000 gallons, or \$2,500 worth, of gas leaked out.

Before this time two gas pumps located on G St. furnished fuel for the autos. One was located in front of Walt Spear's store at 854 G St. The second was operated by N. E. Thomas at 1014 G St. In 1909, gasoline sold for $12\frac{1}{4}$ cents a gallon.



Photo from Nebraska Signal

Baby week parade, May 19, 1917. Notice gasoline pump in front of Spear's store.

Through the years the city has progressed; changing times brought new industries, outmoding the old. New and improved facilities have met the needs of a progressive city, such as paving the business district in 1919, building a sewer system in 1921, graveling the residential streets in 1929, constructing a swimming pool and fine city park in 1935, paving the residential district in the 1950's, and building a new hospital in 1959.

Geneva has always been known for its music. In the early 1880's the town had three good bands—the Geneva Cornet Band, the Martial Band of Company G, and the Geneva Juvenile Band.

The early settlers of the county liked to get together at various times to observe certain occasions. The pioneers organized fairs and held picnics and Fourth of July celebrations. The Fillmore County Fair at Geneva and the district fair held for a number of years at Fairmont gave an opportunity to exhibit the products of the county and for the folks to visit together. Travel was sometimes difficult and some events occasionally had to be canceled completely because of rain and muddy roads.

A Fourth of July celebration in 1884 proved a great success. The program for the day consisted of speeches and



Woodmen Picnic in 1896. This picture, taken from the west end of Main Street, shows Sile Camp's band, a contingent of Company G (Nebraska National Guard of Geneva), and floats in the parade. The parade marshal, A. J. Beals, is in the right foreground on the white horse.

toasts in the morning before the races—boys' race, wheel-barrow race, greased-pole race, and sack race; two ball games were played that afternoon, which ended in defeat for Geneva; a grand ball was held all afternoon and evening at the Opera House and "there seemed to be no lack of dancers"; the skating rink was also crowded. To conclude the day's entertainment, there was a fireworks display in the evening.

For many years the annual Woodmen picnic in Geneva was a big affair. One of the most important events in the history of Fillmore County was the return of Company G from the Spanish-American War in 1899. The return of the veterans had been delayed several weeks. On that specific day several thousand people came to Geneva to attend the homecoming. Elaborate preparations were made. Special trains carried visitors from several points to Geneva; a grand reception was in the making. The train was due at 10 A.M., but did not arrive until 9 P.M. By this time many disappointed people had returned home. The program proceeded about

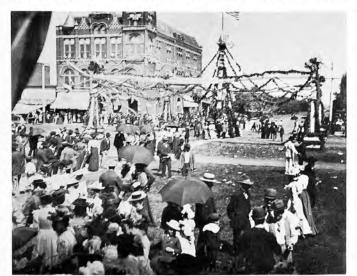


Photo from Delia Fisher Crowd in Geneva in fall, 1899, the day Company G returned from the Spanish-American War.

10 p.m., but relatives had taken possession of most of the boys and not many soldiers occupied their appointed seats on the stage. Five bands were present. The parade was in charge of Major T. L. Williams and seven aides mounted on white horses. The Rev. O. W. Fifer of York paid a tribute to the dead. Charles H. Sloan presented the company flag and emblems. Fireworks displays ended the program. Three merry-go-rounds and many refreshment stands did a big business that day.

PERMANENT COUNTY ORGANIZATION

On March 15, 1871, a large number of citizens of the unorganized Fillmore County petitioned for an election to choose county officers preliminary to organization of the county. On that day, Acting Governor William H. James, by proclamation, ordered that an election be held at the dwelling of Nathaniel McCalla on Sec. 30, T7, R2W, on Friday, April 21, 1871, to select county officers. The governor appointed James Horne, E. L. Martin, and D. W. Dillion as judges, and Warren Woodard and Jacob A. Werts as clerks to conduct this election. However, according to poll books, G. R. Wolfe served in place of D. W. Dillion and A. W. Chase substituted for Jacob A. Werts.

Results of the first election (April 21, 1871), when a total of 82 citizens cast votes, were as follows:

County Clerk	H. L. Badger	81 votes
County Treasurer	Wilbur Deuel	81 votes
County Sheriff	J. F. Snow	63 votes
	W. Walker	
Probate Judge	William H. Blain	80 votes
Supt. Public Instruction	G. R. Wolfe	81 votes
Surveyor	H. L. Badger	81 votes
Coroner	T. E. Burnett	81 Votes
County Commissioners	Elisha L. Martin	81 votes
esternia (- esternia dell'esternia dell'est	Charles H. Bassett	
	Jesse Lee	54 votes
	McLaughlin	21 votes
Judges of election	William Merrill	81 votes
	S. West	.81 votes
	S. Baldwin	81 votes
Clerks of election	A. J. Beals	81 votes
	A. W. Chase	81 votes

The citizens also voted to locate the county seat in the center of the county on the SE ¼ of Sec. 36, T7, R3W.

The first meeting of the county commissioners, called

by the county clerk, was held on May 27, 1871, at the residence of Nathaniel McCalla. Those present were county commissioners E. L. Martin, C. H. Bassett, and Jesse Lee; county clerk, H. L. Badger; and probate judge, William H. Blain. Jesse Lee was named chairman because he had the least number of votes. The temporary meeting place to conduct county business was fixed at the McCalla home on the NE ¼ of Sec. 30, T7, R2W. C. H. Bassett was selected by the board to confer with the proper officers of Saline County in regard to the assessment rolls of Fillmore County. (Prior to county organization, Fillmore County was duly and legally assessed by authorities of Saline County for revenue and judicial purposes. At the meeting on September 11, 1871, of the county commissioners it was reported that the officers of Saline County refused to deliver the assessment list until Fillmore County paid the expenses of the trial of a prisoner named Morris Harris who was held for a murder in Adams County. The Fillmore authorities believed they were entitled to the list without first paying the expenses of the trial and keeping of the prisoner. The county treasurer was directed to procure the list by legal action if it could not otherwise be obtained. On October 16, 1871, the board ordered an attorney, Mr. J. W. Eller, to commence suit. However, on November 8, 1871, Saline County surrendered and delivered to Fillmore County the assessment list with the certificate of the county clerk of Saline County, stating the amount of taxes levied by Saline County for Fillmore County for the year 1871.)

Also at this first meeting of the board, the county commissioners divided the county into three commissioners districts, which was done by two east and west lines through the county, making each district 8 miles wide north and south and 24 miles long east and west—the north district being No. 1; the middle district No. 2; and the south district No. 3.

The next subdivision of the county was made when, at a general election on November 8, 1887, a majority vote was cast in favor of "township organization." Each of the 16 townships elected a supervisor to represent them on the board of supervisors.

At a meeting of the board on August 27, 1895, the commissioners—to comply with the state law, Section 27, Chapter 28 of laws of 1895—voted to divide the county into seven supervisors districts, divided and numbered as follows:

Exeter and Liberty—No. 1; Fairmont and West Blue—No. 2; Grafton, Bennett, and Momence—No. 3; Geneva City and Township—No. 4; Madison, Chelsea, and Glengary—No. 5; Frankin and Belle Prairie—No. 6; Stanton, Hamilton, and Bryant—No. 7.



Photo from Mrs. Ella Bures Fillmore County Board of Supervisors (1903). Back row, left to right: Henry Kolar, Exeter, District 1; E. J. Barbur, Exeter, County Clerk; R. W. Stowell, Ohiowa, District 6; T. Jacobson, Shickley, District 7. Back row: Henry Schmidt, Fairmont, District 5; D. B. Ayres, Geneva, District 4; Ed Black, Fairmont, District 2; Claus Frenzen, Grafton, District 3.

Sixty-six years later, in 1961, it was brought to the attention of the county board that the supervisors districts should again be reorganized to give each district equal representation in the county government. On January 5, 1962, they were reorganized on a population basis:

Exeter and Liberty—No. 1; Fairmont, and North Madison—No. 2; West Blue, Grafton, Bennett, Momence—No. 3; Geneva Township and North Geneva—No. 4; South Geneva and South Madison—No. 5; Glengary, Franklin, and Belle Prairie—No. 6; Bryant, Hamilton, Stanton, and Chelsea—No. 7.

Voting Precincts

For voting purposes, the board of commissioners on July 6, 1871, divided the county into four voting precincts:

Precinct	Location	Voting Place
No. 1	NE 1/4 of the county	James Horne
No. 2	NW 1/4 of the county	D. Long
No. 3	SW 1/4 of the county	W. T. Burnett
No. 4	SE 1/4 of the county	William Baldwins

About a year and one-half later in November, 1872, "it was the opinion of the board" to reorganize the voting precincts—to divide the county into precincts six miles square with each township constituting one precinct. The legal voters of the various precincts met at appointed places in the precincts on January 7, 1873, for the purpose of reorganization. The townships were named and voting places selected as follows:

Ionows:	
	Schoolhouse, District 40
Belle Prairie	James Vasburgh, NW 1/4 of Sec. 28
Hamilton	John B. Hibbits, NE 1/4 of Sec. 22
Bryant	C. H. Bemenderfer, SE 1/4 of Sec. 32
Chelsea	Schoolhouse, Sec. 24
Momence	Mr. Morgan's
Glengary	
Stanton	William T. Burnett's, NW 1/4 of Sec. 10
	John S. Beardsley, SW 1/4 of Sec. 22
Madison	John Burnett's, NW ¼ of Sec. 22 Geneva
Geneva	Geneva
Bennett	Mr. Bosworth, NE 1/4 of Sec. 22
	Exeter
	Fairmont
	Jonathan Hall, NW of Sec. 22
Grafton	Arthur Murdock's, SW of Sec. 22

County Seat Located

When the organic election was held in 1871 the south-eastern part of the county had the majority of voters. Franklin precinct, in the southeast, not being covered by railroad land grant at that time, was settled more generally than any other early precinct. Judge William H. Blain wrote: "It was found to contain more voters at the time of the organic election than all the remainder of the county, yet, strange as it may appear, the citizens of that precinct unanimously voted the county seat at the center of the county. Such magnanimity is seldom seen in the location of county seats." Thus it was voted that the geographical center of the county (the SE ¼ of Sec. 36-7-3 W) would be the location of the county seat. As it was school land belonging to the state, nothing could be done until arrangements were made for its purchase.

However, the county seat was surveyed, platted, and recorded on July 7, 8, and 9, 1871, by Henry L. Badger, county surveyor and county clerk. The surveyor and his assistants camped on the town site, with a covered wagon to sleep in, and "cooked on the big prairie range." At that time only one building, about 4 miles S, owned by Robert Shields, was completed. James O. Merryman, about the same distance southwest, was busy erecting a fine-looking sod house for a dwelling.

While awaiting the state's approval to purchase the school land, two persons near the center of the county tried to secure the seat of government. At the meeting of the commissioners, on July 3, 1871, James Mar, owner of the N ½ of Sec. 25, T7, R3W, offered to donate, at the option of the county commissioners, either 40 acres of said land or to donate 10 acres and erect a courthouse at the cost of \$2,500, provided that the county seat be located on the above-described land. This offer was refused. About the same time, A. J. Manley tried to secure the location of the county seat on the SW ¼ of Sec. 27, T7, R3W. He built a large hall, 20' wide and 60' long, and offered to donate this to the county should they locate the county seat there. This village, called Manleyville, consisted of 233 lots, a number of which were sold but never occupied. This offer was also refused.



Courtesy Geneva State Bank

View of Geneva in 1883, looking northwest from schoolhouse block. Notice old courthouse (1) and Kellogg House (2)

In accordance with an act passed by the legislature, which provided for the sale of school lands, a public sale was held in June, 1872, and a number of lots were sold. Among these was the land purchased by the county, on which to erect public buildings. (An account of this sale appears in the "Early History" chapter.)

At the July 2, 1872, meeting of the county commissioners it was reported they purchased several blocks—Block 8 (Courthouse Block) for \$135.50, Outlots No. 17 for \$160, No. 18 for \$162 and No. 20 for \$100. Also land for a "Fillmore County Poor House Farm" was purchased for \$8

per acre (the SE ¼ of Sec. 16, T6, R3W).

The county seat was first named Henry but at the July 2, 1872, meeting of the commissioners at the residence of N. McCalla, it was decided to change the name. Colonel McCalla's daughter Emma, a young lady in her teens, suggested that the town be named after Geneva, Illinois, the McCallas' former home. The board ordered that hereafter the county seat be called "Geneva" instead of Henry as was first filed for record.

The First Courthouse

On September 11, 1871, at a meeting of the county commissioners, a petition signed by 30 people asked for a vote of the citizens on a proposition to issue bonds in the amount of \$50,000 to provide a courthouse and jail and other county buildings.

At an election on October 8, 1872, it was voted to levy a tax not to exceed five mills on the dollar valuation for the purpose of constructing county buildings. The tax was to be levied annually year to year until \$50,000 had been realized.

The votes cast were 264 "for" and 243 "against."

In November, 1872, the commissioners made plans for a "temporary courthouse and jail" to be constructed. The plans were referred to George P. Webster for detailed specifications. On November 16, 1872, bids were received as follows:

Duell & Brock for courthouse and jail	\$4,000.00
Williams & Webb for courthouse and jail	4,000.00
George P. Webster-courthouse (\$2,924) and	

jail (\$687) 3,611.00 Jesse P. Thompson—courthouse and jail 3,075.00

The following description of the first courthouse and jail is from records in the office of the clerk of District Court,

filed in 1874:

 Each frame building ceiled on inside with light pine boards and are neither lathed nor plastered.

2. Is 24' by 48' on the ground and two stories high.

- Lower story is divided into three rooms and a hall. Second story is all in one room.
- The three lower rooms are used by County Clerk, County Treasurer, and Probate Judge as offices.
- 5. The upper room is used for a court room.
- 6. The jail is 12' by 14' and one story high.

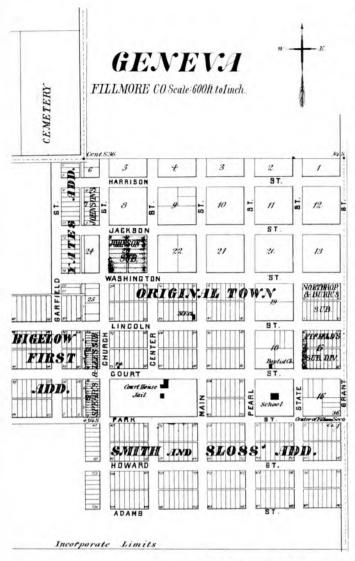
As soon as the temporary headquarters were constructed, the commissioners promptly began making plans for the permanent courthouse. In July, 1873, the board ordered that the clerk be authorized to advertise for sealed proposals not to exceed the amount of \$37,500 for a courthouse and county offices according to plans and specifications presented by Architect L. W. Foster. The building was to be built of brick on a stone foundation and to be completed within three years. The proposal was printed in the Fillmore County Bulletin and the Weekly State Journal of Lincoln.

The bids were opened and filed on October 11, 1873. However, an injunction had been filed by Samuel Butterbaugh against the county commissioners, thus enjoining them from letting the contract. The injunction stated that the five-mill levy exceeded the authority of the board. Mr. Butterbaugh contested that the county buildings just constructed were quite sufficient and as "large and commodious as those in the surrounding counties" and it would be wasting the citizens' money to build such an expensive building, especially when there were doubts that Geneva would even retain its status as the county seat, since only one dwelling and one store had been constructed on the town site as of October, 1873.

After almost a year and a half, on May 19, 1875, the court decided in favor of Mr. Butterbaugh. The "courthouse tax" was declared illegal by the District Court of the First Judicial District; thus the plans for the permanent courthouse were canceled.

The commissioners proceeded to make the existing building more presentable by lathing, plastering, and painting. In 1876, an addition was built onto the courthouse by C. C. Wright for a sum of \$625. Fireproof safes eventually were supplied for the offices for the safety of the records. The Fairmont Bulletin in June, 1882, said of one such safe: "The county safe, weight 7,000 pounds, was being brought from Fairmont to Geneva on wagons. Two miles south of town it slipped off the wagons. It took several days to get it loaded again and brought to Geneva." Later the people realized that a safer place was needed for important papers and records than the "old firetrap," and so, in 1885, a concrete vault—14′ x 16′ x 6½′ high, with walls 2′ thick—was constructed.

In the summer of 1880 the courthouse was moved across the street to the "Courthouse Block" from Lot 83, Block 5. A contractor from Lincoln, J. M. Cramer, was acquired to



Official State Atlas of Nebraska (1885) Map of Geneva in 1885. The Fillmore County Fair Grounds are off to the northwest, just west of the cemetery.

move the building "150 feet and turn around." The jail had been moved in the same year prior to April 1, by several local men.

It is interesting to note that in August, 1873, the board ordered that a firebreak be plowed around the county buildings for protection from prairie fires. At a board meeting on May 5, 1877, it was decided that the "Courthouse Block" be broken "during the proper breaking season," which was done by M. D. Williams and A. J. Beals at the *proper* time. In April the following year, J. M. Fisher planted trees on the square. More trees were planted in the spring of 1883 when Peter Youngers, Jr., agreed to plant 50 Austrian pines, 24" to 36" high, and 20 cedars, 2' high, on the "Courthouse Block" for a price of 40 cents per foot for pines and 30 cents per foot for cedars. He guaranteed the trees to live one year.

The New Courthouse

As time went on, the old courthouse, often referred to as a "rickety old rat trap," became inadequate for county requirements. The third story of the Citizens Bank building, belonging to the Masonic Temple Craft Association, had been rented in 1891 for county and district court meetings, thus allowing more room in the courthouse for the officers. These crowded conditions and the desire for a "fire proof" building for the safety of records prompted the county supervisors to call a special election to be held in April, 1889, to vote on issuing bonds in the amount of \$50,000 for building a new courthouse. This proposal was defeated—1,064 "for" and 1,434 "against." This amusing statement in the records of

the county supervisors following the defeat of the "poor house bond" voted on a little later, shows their discouragement: "This board would like to do something that would be approved by the people, therefore be it resolved that this board of supervisors is a set of blank fools." On November 8, 1892, at the general election, the courthouse bond issue was again voted upon. This time it was approved; the people of Fillmore County showed themselves not only willing, but anxious, that the old courthouse should be replaced by a new and handsome building, as the vote stood 1,693 for the bonds and only 986 against. At the same time a proposal to sell the east half of the "Courthouse Block" to raise funds for the new building failed to get the necessary two-thirds majority vote.

The board advertised for plans and specifications for the new building. The plans submitted by George E. Mc-Donald of Geneva were accepted. On January 11, 1893, the board awarded the courthouse contract to L. F. Pardue, ¹ his bid being \$46,176.55. Fireproof vaults, as well as gas lighting and steam heating systems, were to be installed. It was among the first Nebraska public buildings so designed as to place the vaults and files on the interior, leaving more

room for offices near the windows. 2

The Board appointed a building committee, consisting of W. S. Brown, W. S. Huston, Peter Keenan, Pius Reinsch, and C. W. Dumond. W. S. Brown, a prominent farmer, was named chairman of this committee and was to "remain upon work daily and constantly." The entire committee met at least once a week to examine all materials and workmanship.

In December, 1892, the board decided to locate the new courthouse at a point near the middle of the courthouse square, as had been originally planned when the park was laid out. The ground on which the courthouse was built was broken by Jesse Walker, using his oxen to pull the plow.

Preliminary work having been completed, contractor L. F. Pardue had begun to lay the foundation for the courthouse by April 20, 1893. Side-tracks were laid from the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley R.R. depot eastward to the center of the courthouse block to convey construction materials to the grounds, thus saving the expense and danger of unloading onto wagons. But the Fillmore County Republican said (April 26, 1893): "The track laying to the courthouse grounds is at a stand still. A small sized hitch seems to be troubling the contractor and railroad company."

The laying of the cornerstone on July 6, 1893, was observed with a fitting ceremony and county-wide celebration. It was estimated that from 4,000 to 5,000 persons swarmed through the gaily decorated streets of the city that day. The stone was cut in Omaha and laid in accordance with the rites

and usages of the Masonic fraternity.

This account of the program is from the Nebraska Signal for July 13, 1893:

"The following program, previously arranged, was carried out: At 3 p.m. the procession formed in front of the courthouse, led by Camp's band of 15 pieces (also known as the military band of Company G), and next came Company G, Nebraska National Guards, followed by 24 plumed Knights of Pythias, 160 A.O.U.W.'s, 75 Odd Fellows, 25 ladies of Eastern Star, 100 members of the Masonic fraternity and the following Grand Officers: J. P. A. Black, G.M., Bloomington; H. H. Wilson, G.W.W., Lincoln; Christian Hartman, G.T., Omaha; George W. Martin, G.C., Kearney; Monroe C. Steele, Grand Marshal, Beatrice; Lee P. Gillett, Grand Custodian, Beatrice; then came the Fairmont and Geneva Hose com-

1 L. F. Pardue, a resident of Geneva, also owner of several farms in the county.

²The Board of Supervisors in 1893, the year the building was constructed, consisted of: Paul Anton, Liberty township; W. S. Brown, Geneva city and township; Charles Charlton, Stanton; G. B. Clawson, Bennett; William H. Davis, Bryant; C. W. Dumond, Fairmont city; W. H. Garrison, Franklin; Walt S. Huston, Geneva city and township; Peter Keenan, Grafton; A. V. Kouba, Glengary; George Matson, Belle Prairie; J. M. Perkins, West Blue; Pius Reinsch, Momence; M. S. Schelkopf, Hamilton; G. R. Simmons, Chelsea; M. E. Trauger, Exeter: G. A. Walker, Madison; J. S. Foulon, Fairmont township.

panies and citizens—about 500 persons being in the procession.

"The line of march was east on Court St. to Main St. north to Lincoln, west to Church, south to Court, east to entrance to the park, across the park, and back to northeast corner of the courthouse, where the final ceremonies of laying the stone took place." The Hon. Charles H. Sloan delivered the oration of the day.

The following articles were deposited within the stone, sealed in a copper box about 6" square and 8" high:

History of Geneva Lodge, No. 79, A.F. & A.M., including names of charter members, date of dispensation, date of charter, list of officers, and number of members.

History of the Order of Eastern Star of Geneva. List of officers of the Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M.

History of Fillmore County from its organization to 1893, with population, assessed valuation, list of officers, and members of County Board.

Copies of all daily state papers.
Copies of all Fillmore County papers.
Copy of the Holy Scriptures.

History of Geneva with summary of business, institutions of all kinds, its population, assessed valuation, and names of members of city council on July 6, 1893.

Copy of the program of the day.

Columbian half-dollar medal and other current coins of the realm. Sundry social, business and professional cards.

History of Triune Chapter R. A. M., its officers and members. Picture of the new courthouse as it was to be when completed.

Y.P.S.C.E. badges and card of invitation to meetings of Congregational Church of Geneva.

A.O.U.W. badge.

Copy of the A.F. & A.M. manual.

Refreshments were furnished in the park by the Congregational Church people. At the west end of the park was a steam "merry-go-round" that attracted lots of attention plus many nickels.

Later in the afternoon the fire bell called the Geneva and Fairmont hose companies out to a contest. After each had made a run, Geneva Hose Company No. 1 was awarded the prize. A display of fireworks concluded the program for the day.

Most construction projects seem to have their setbacks, Mr. Pardue did not escape his share of tribulations. Early in the construction, as they were laying the brick walls, part of the west wall collapsed under the pressure of a strong cyclone-like windstorm. A second mishap occurred in September when Mr. Pardue was injured when thrown from the top of the new courthouse to the first floor, a distance of 20 feet. "A rope to a derrick came loose from some cause letting the derrick swing and strike him with sufficient force to knock him off the wall."

The county officers moved from the old courthouse into the new building on January 27, 1894—or "the rats left their holes and vacated their old stamping grounds", as the local newspaper remarked. One of the first criticisms of the new building after occupancy was "too much light," so venetian blinds were ordered for the sum of \$400, installed.

The old courthouse was purchased by George Kenyon on February 17, 1894, for \$261. Mr. Kenyon moved the building, which was used in more recent years as a dairy barn, to his farm 2 miles S of Geneva—now known as the Joe Bixby farm on the SE ¼ of Sec. 12, T6, R3W. On March 26, 1936, however, the building was destroyed by fire and the loss was set at \$1,800.

The new courthouse was dedicated on a "bright, sunny and frisky" February 22, 1894, with a day-long affair. As early as 9 o'clock that morning teams began to arrive in Geneva from the surrounding country, bringing hundreds of Fillmore County citizens to the county seat to assist in the dedication. By noon there were 3,000 people in Geneva. Citizens of Fairmont and the northern part of the county chartered a special railway car for transportation to the "blow-out." The Burlington officials held the car till night to carry its patrons back home. Every town in the county was largely represented and the reports say, "Never before in the history of the county did there exist such good feeling and sociability."



Courtesy Nebraska Signal Fillmore County Courthouse, erected in 1893.

The program began with a parade under the direction of the marshals of the day, A. J. Beals of Geneva and J. G. McFadden of Fairmont. The parade, headed by Grafton, West Blue, and Fairmont cornet bands, included the mayor of Geneva; the speakers of the day; the county officers; the different secret and civic societies, consisting of the Ancient Order of United Workmen, Odd Fellows, uniformed ranks of Knights of Pythias, Grand Army of the Republic, Woman's Relief Corps, and a Bohemian society from Milligan; citizens on foot and citizens in carriages; the military band and Company G, Nebraska National Guards, brought up the rear of the line. They all marched to the depot to welcome Governor Loreñzo Crounse, then back to the courthouse to listen to speeches and toasts.

The courthouse was entirely too small to accommodate the enormous crowd. Hence the overflow was entertained at Ward's Opera House by Captain W. C. Henry of Fairmont and at the Fraternity Temple building where different bands dispensed music. Meanwhile, at the courthouse, the dedication program was proceeding. Music was provided by the four brass bands and a double quartet. Speeches and toasts were given by the following: Address of Welcome, County Attorney Charles H. Sloan; Governor Crounse, who gave pleasant reminiscences of early history and the holding of court in schoolhouses and vacant buildings, showing the contrast between then and now; "Our New Courthouse," architect George W. McDonald; "Board of Supervisors," Hon. John Jensen, ex-representative of the Nebraska Legislature from the Geneva area, who came all the way from Enid, Oklahoma; "County Officials," Charles H. Miller; "Our Churches," Rev. A. A. Cressman; "Our Schools," County Superintendent J. C. Clegg; "Homely Men," Rev. Joel A. Barker; "Old Court House," Charles H. Sloan. The Toastmaster was J. J. Burke.

In the evening a rousing camp fire was held at the Opera House sponsored by the Grand Army of the Republic. Speakers in the evening were Captain Henry of Fairmont, who was especially entertaining, Comrade W. H. Pardee, and Charles H. Sloan. The day ended with a well-patronized ball given by the Sons of Veterans at the Fraternity Temple hall.

The Women's Relief Corps fed all who came to their tables in the Masonic banquet room at noon and in the evening for 25 cents a plate.

In 1909, a "large first-class" clock was installed in the courthouse tower by Geneva jeweler W. P. McCall. A place had been especially provided for it during the construction of the courthouse. The cost of the clock was \$1,000, half of which was paid by the business men of Geneva and the other half furnished by the county board.

Two cannons secured for the Grand Army of the Republic by Congressman Charles H. Sloan were placed, in

1912, on the north side of the courthouse block, one on the east side and one on the west side of the walks leading north from the courthouse. They were dismantled during World War II when the metal was needed for war machinery.

For many years the men in the Geneva community played croquet on a specially constructed croquet ground northeast of the courthouse. At the first the players were mostly Civil War veterans; often 20 or 30 men would be sitting on the benches around the court watching the game. The croquet ground went the way of the old trees and other landmarks, when the courtyard was rebuilt in the late thirties.



Fred Reeb, present Courthouse Custodian, shown with old wooden box in which he found the leather-tipped hickory croquet mallets and the croquet balls used by old-timers who played on the specially constructed croquet grounds in Courthouse Park. (Photo taken about 1958.)

In April, 1938, a resolution regarding the trees in the park stated that the park should thereafter be known as "Fillmore County's Pioneer Park"; and that the trees planted in the park should be dedicated as follows—46 American elms on the east side and 45 American elms on the west side to be dedicated to the school districts in Fillmore County; all trees not dedicated to school districts to be dedicated to pioneer citizens of the county or others; the county should purchase, care for, and replace all the trees dedicated; the school district or person dedicating a tree should pay \$5 for cost of the bronze dedication marker. In November, 1938, it was announced that any forest trees not already dedicated were open to anyone wishing to dedicate a tree.

On February 7, 1938, the city of Geneva leased the ground on the east and west ends of the "Courthouse Block"—until then, occupied by the bandstand and picnic tables—for a period of 99 years to be used for parking lots.

A fountain was placed north of the courthouse some time prior to 1918—but the date and the identity of the donor seem to be lost in the mists of unwritten history.

Postal Service

The original proposed location for the Geneva post office was designated on February 28, 1873, as follows: 6 miles W of Empire and 7 miles E of Turkey Creek. In late 1873 or early 1874, the post office was located in the first residence on the town site. It was moved when John Dempster in 1876 erected a building located on G St. between 9th and 10th Sts. Later it was moved into the Citizens Bank Building. In 1890, when the Citizens Bank Building was moved from its location on 9th and G to the south end of the lots on 11th and G Sts., the post office was moved to the brick building two doors north of the new bank building, now known as 135 North 9th St. In 1912, this building burned and the post office was moved to 139 North 9th St. Early in April, 1926, a lease was effected with the Geneva State Bank for quarters at 140 North 9th St. The post office remained here until September 1, 1940, when a new Federal building was completed on the northwest corner of 9th and H Sts. The post office has occupied this site from that time to the present.



Geneva Post Office, erected in 1940.

From 1873 to 1968, 21 men and one woman have served as postmaster. David Lee served as first postmaster, when the office was established on March 11, 1873. His successors were: James Shepherd, appointed June 17, 1873; Calvin H. Bane, November 3, 1873; Silas B. Camp, October 30, 1874; Samuel R. Bane, February 1, 1876; Silas B. Camp, January 23, 1877; George W. Lowry, March 19, 1877; John A. Dempster, January 8, 1878; Sherwood Burr, November 28, 1881; William H. Cooksey, January 30, 1885; William H. Stewart, July 9, 1889; Jere Donovan, May 12, 1893; Charles E. Summers, December 12, 1894; Martin V. King, November 5, 1897; Charles A. Warner, January 21, 1902; Hattie A. Little, December 11, 1907; Henry P. Wilson, February 3, 1916; Sanford E. Ralsten, August 6, 1923; George L. Koehler, August 31, 1933; Thomas J. Keenan, Acting, April 1, 1945; Charles E. Rock, April 1, 1947; Ben D. Fussell, from September 5, 1958, to the present time.

Post Office Department records indicate that David Lee was appointed at an annual salary of \$12. Early receipts of the post office are not available. The records also indicate that the Geneva office was established on Route No. 14,444, from Dewitt to Empire, but details of the service on this route are not available. Money order business was established at Geneva on July 1, 1878.

Rural delivery service was established at Geneva on October 1, 1901, with two carriers at a salary of \$500 per annum each, and city delivery service started April 12, 1929. Postal Savings was established here on April 1, 1912.

Gross receipts for the year 1895 were \$3,750.47. This figure gradually increased yearly until 1920, when gross receipts were \$12,219.42. A slight decline occurred in 1920, after the war; then receipts remained fairly constant through 1942, when the figure was \$15,495.19. In 1943, the presence of the Fairmont Army Airfield Branch caused receipts to jump to \$26,588, and to \$40,000 in 1944. In 1947, this figure dropped to \$17,000, but then climbed to \$27,808 in 1958. Receipts steadily increased, spurred by increases in postal rates, until the total in 1967 reached \$52,000.



Courtesy Geneva State Bank
Bert Bradley, one of the first rural mail carriers, and his delivery
wagon.

Later, rural carriers were paid \$600 per year until July 1, 1905, when the pay was raised to \$720. In 1907, it was again raised to \$900 and to \$1,000 in 1911. Since then salaries have been based on mileage traveled and are contemporarily favorable.

During earlier years, John Curtiss, Waldo Propst, Paul Curtiss, Minnie Carson, Adeline Allen, Mae Timmons, Harry Simmons, and George Harrington were among those who served in the post office. The present complement includes a postmaster, assistant to the postmaster, one regular clerk, a substitute clerk, two regular city letter carriers, a substitute city letter carrier, two rural carriers, with substitutes, and two custodial laborers. The office is served by three star routes and a mail messenger from Fairmont. Mail service by rail was discontinued about 1939.

Early Rural Free Delivery service was provided by the following persons:

Tollowing persons.		
	July 1, 1903	
Carrier	Where Born	Salary
Bert Bradley	Illinois	\$600
John Klink, Jr.	Where Born Illinois Illinois	600
Charlton B. Hyde	Iowa Ohio	600
Stanley F. Morrow	Ohio	600
William H. Forsythe	Indiana Nebraska New York	Substitute
William Klink	Nebraska	Substitute
Henry Sheldon	New York	Substitute
	July 1, 1905	
Bert Bradley	Illinois	720
Charlton B. Hyde	Iowa	720
John Klink, Jr.	Illinois	720
Stanley F. Morrow	Ohio	720
Henry Sheldon	New York	Substitute
William Klink	Nebraska	Substitute
	1907-1909-1911*	
Bert Bradley		900
Robert M. Carson		900
Roy D. Hampton		900

*Salary listed at \$1,000 in year 1911.

Other rural carriers included Pete Ertel, Clyde Propst, Henry Reinsch, Gleye McCaulley, Floyd Abbott, Linus Walter, and George Cruse.

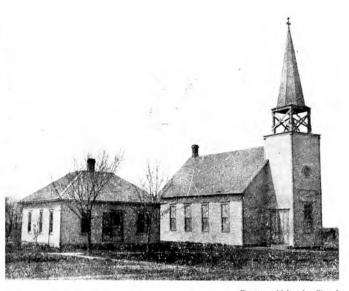


Courtesy Nebraska Signal First airmail out of Geneva, May 19, 1938. Left to right: Pilot, Dr. George Hansen; Shickley Postmaster Amos Frieden; Geneva Postmaster George Koehler; Assistant Postmaster Paul W. Curtiss; Legionnaire William Dana. The landing field was on the Gilbert McPeck farm, 4 miles S and 2 miles W of Geneva.

CHURCHES

The Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church was established and installed its first minister in 1925. The Wisconsin and Ohio Synods made several attempts to establish mission stations in Geneva. The Mission Board of the Nebraska District of the Wisconsin Synod finally decided to place a man in this city. After two candidates had returned the board's call, the Rev. Herman Kuckhahn accepted and was installed on October 4, 1925.

The installation and all services were held in the vacant West Ward schoolhouse until May, 1926. Starting that month, services were held in the vacant Free Will Baptist Church across the street.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church and parsonage (former Free Will Baptist properties).

Sunday School was organized October 18, 1925, with 23 children enrolled, divided into three groups. Meetings were held August 7 and 14, 1927, to organize a congregation. The five charter members were: George Everts, John Riel, John Wittmack, Thomas W. Boyes, and W. A. Domeier. Incorporation of the church was completed and signed December 6, 1928. In the spring of 1929, the congregation purchased the church and parsonage (the Free Will Baptist properties they had been renting).

Pastor Kuckhahn left Geneva March 29, 1929. Pastor Roy Vollmers accepted the call to Grace Church and preached his initial sermon on the first Sunday in Advent, 1929. He was succeeded by Pastor E. A. Breiling, who served from May 31, 1942, till October 6, 1946. During his pastorate in 1944 the interior of the church was redecorated and refurnished. This work was dedicated in a special dedicatory service on October 29, 1944.

The Rev. D. Grummert began his pastorate in Geneva on January 19, 1947. He served the congregation until July 11, 1954. In November, 1947, the congregation voted to establish a Christian day school. A building was acquired, renovated, and dedicated on August 28, 1948. The first teacher (not including the pastor, who did a good deal of teaching) was Miss Laverna Everts, who taught from 1947 to 1958. Later teachers were Sharon Becker and Judy Meyer (1958-63), Virginia Neidfelt and Phyllis Haas (1964), and Beverly Renike (1965 to the present). Enrollment over the years has averaged 28 pupils.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal Grace Evangelical Lutheran parochial school, dedicated in 1948.

Later pastors have been the Revs. Paul E. Eickmann (1955-58), James Rockhoff (1958-63), Paul Seiltz (vicar, 1964), and David Fisher (1965-present).

-Mrs. Harlan Domeier

The Christian Church of Geneva was organized early in 1890. On June 25, 1890, Mertie Rhinehart, formerly Mertie Mack, and her husband, John H. Rhinehart, of Arapahoe County, Colorado, deeded to B. B. Mozee, J. H. Ballard, and J. S. Small, the trustees of the Christian Church in Geneva, the W ½ of the NW ¼ of Outlot 16 in the city of Geneva.

No records are available as to when construction of the building was begun, but the church was dedicated on June 7, 1893. The first financial records are dated January, 1893, but no names are given for clerk or treasurer. The first minister was a Mr. Henry, followed by E. J. Syas. There is no record of those who organized the church, but early membership rolls include Mr. and Mrs. B. B. Mozee, George Mozee, Rachel Yates, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Yates, Mr. and Mrs. E. T. Yates, A. C. Wickizer, Mr. Selzor, Mrs. A. C. Tucker, Ike Ashton, J. H. Ballard, J. S. Small, W. E. Harrison, O. A. Merril, Mr. and Mrs. J. N. Spivey, Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Laing, A. G. Peck, Mrs. Humphreys, Walter Haskins, and Mrs. W. H. Cooksey. There was a Ladies' Aid Society and a Christian Endeavor. In 1904, 88 members were listed. The building was heated by coal stoves and there were kerosene lights. In January, 1905, electric lights were installed. A furnace was put in and sidewalks were laid the following year.



Photo from Dr. Edith Ridpath Christian Church on the day of dedication in June, 1893.

In 1904, E. M. Johnson, a student from Cotner College at Bethany, Nebraska, served the church as minister, and after his graduation was resident minister for several years. Later ministers were J. B. McDonald, J. A. Beattie, E. L. Pettus, D. G. Wagner, Carl E. PerLee, and P. B. Cope, who had been field man for the Child Saving Institute at Omaha for the past 25 years. Later ministers were Clerin Gunewalt, Glen McRae, George P. Clark, H. Darling, Oscar Grover, and H. S. Souder.

During the depression so many families moved away that during the war years and for some time after, the church was closed. About 1952, it was reopened under the leadership of H. B. Milliken, president of Nebraska Christian College at Norfolk, Nebraska. The last two ministers were Olive Atwood, who lived at Sutton, and also had charge of the Christian Church there, and Harold Fox, a student pastor from the Norfolk college. For the past 10 years the Church of Christ has been using the properties.

-Mrs. Edith Ridpath

The Geneva Congregational Church organization was started at a meeting in the home of F. H. Briggs, September







Congregational (United Church of Christ) Church buildings. Top (from Mrs. John Bixby): Original church building (1887). Middle (from Guy Brown, Jr.): Present church building—taken in 1966. Bottom (from Geneva Photo): Church school unit (1966).

10, 1886, and a notice of this organization was filed with the county clerk, October 13, 1886. In January, 1887, with pastors present from surrounding towns, the formal organization was completed and 27 charter members were received into the church. The Rev. Glen Taylor served as the first pastor, and services were held in the Town Hall. A gift of \$20 from a Sunday School in Connecticut, and another \$20 raised locally, were used to purchase a library of 90 books; this served as the first public library for Geneva. The first communion service was a gift from the First Congregational Church of Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

With help from the Church Building & Loan Society of the Congregational National Council, the first church edifice was dedicated October 23, 1887. The lots cost \$500, and the building about \$3,500. This low cost was made possible by a great deal of the labor being donated. The women had organized in 1886, and as their project they raised funds for an organ which cost \$150, and also purchased the chandeliers, carpet, and pulpit set. The parsonage was built in 1912 at a cost of \$3,931.25.

In June, 1925, the old church building was torn down. A gift of \$5,000 from Miss Nancy Beggs started the drive for a new building. Again with the help of the National Congregational Building Fund, the present church building was completed at a cost of \$56,000, including the \$7,500 pipe organ. The dedication services were held on November 26-28, 1926. At the Silver Anniversary service of the present building, November 25, 1951, the new stained-glass windows were formally dedicated.

During the 80 years since its organization the church has increased its membership to more than 400 with a Sunday School numbering from 125 to 130. Two robed choirs, the Pilgrim Fellowship, Laymen's Fellowship, and Women's Fellowship are active in support of and participation in the church program. All loans and grants have been paid, and additional improvements and equipment have been provided. including the upkeep and remodeling of the parsonage.

The Congregational fellowship is founded not on a creed but on the fundamental principle of a brotherhood of Christians, each one sincerely believing in God, following Christ with all sincerity, and striving to serve the interests of his fellows with all diligence. While maintaining their independance of action and their control of their own affairs, Congregational churches exercise great care that the essential spirit of fellowship with other congregations shall be maintained. Throughout the years the Geneva church has been a member of the Blue Valley Association, the Nebraska Congregational Conference, the General Council of Congregational Churches, and the National and Nebraska Councils of Churches.

Following is the list of pastors serving the Geneva

Congregational Church:

1886-1887, Glen Albert Taylor; 1887-1890, Henry Wannamaker; 1890-1893, Henry J. Zercher; 1893-1895, James Brereton; 1895-1897, P. H. Hines; 1897-1910, Thomas Griffiths; 1911-1913, Corwin Vincent; 1913-1915, Frank Babcock; 1915-1919, B. A. Warren; 1919-1923, James A. McKeeman; 1923-1934, David Tudor; 1934-1935, Clarence Parr; 1935-1937, Edward W. Day; 1938-1940, J. P. Hohenstein; 1940-1942, Phil B. Wahl; 1943-1948, Isaac Cassel; 1948-1952, William Bohi; 1952-1958, L. C. Werner; 1958-1966, Robert Kasper; 1966—, Delano Spitzer. -Mrs. Marieta Kerl

People of the United Brethren denomination began coming to Geneva around the turn of the century. Because there was no United Brethren church there, many of its members united with other churches, maintained an in-active membership in their former home churches, or dropped out of any church affiliation whatever. The Martland, Strang, and Bethel churches were in outlying territory. (Bethel later became known as "Chelsea" because of its location in Chelsea township.)

Several appeals were made to the Nebraska U.B. Conference to begin a church in Geneva, but it was not until the 40th session of the conference in September, 1911, that Presiding Elder W. O. Jones was instructed to investigate the matter again. Accordingly, on October 26, Dr. Jones visited the field with a view to establishing a church in Geneva. Mr. I. N. Beeson, formerly of the Martland community, was one of the first persons contacted. Elder Jones made another trip in January, 1912, and found other interested people. On February 25, Bishop Weekly, Rev. F. W. Brink (pastor of the Strang church), and Elder Jones called the people together for the first meeting, which was held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Nelson; "some 15" were present.

The next official visit of the elder was made April 13, 1912, in company with Rev. Charles Melville, pastor of the Beatrice church. Unfavorable comment upon the project by the city paper had a tendency to discourage some people and and only a few were present. However, the names of 24 persons were secured who agreed to unite with the church if and

when it should be organized.

Negotiations were begun with the Baptist people for the purchase of their unused property at what is now the corner of 11th and G Sts. The elder gave his report at the next conference, held in Lincoln in September, 1912, and a definite agreement was made for the purchase of the Baptist property for \$3,500. (\$500 of this amount was to be donated by the Baptist church.) The Rev. C. J. Melville was assigned to the Geneva mission and preached his first sermon to an audience of about 50 persons on Sunday night, September 29, 1912. Regular services were held each Sunday morning and evening throughout the conference year. The Sunday School was also organized at this time.

The Reverend C. Z. Mower became pastor in 1915. Other pastors of the church in chronological order of their services were J. J. Charleston, W. E. Wolfington, F. R. Baber, L. E. Strickler, E. H. Pontius, E. W. Thompson, H. E. Miller, H.

Photo from C. J. Moss The United Brethren Church congregation organized in this building in 1912. It had formerly been a Baptist church.





United Brethren church at NE corner of 11th and G Sts., remodeled into present brick structure in 1917.

J. Plymesser, H. A. Dierdorff, A. W. Swanson, Glenn Cain, E. D. Sell, Maude V. Mann, Milford Vance, Wayne L. Schreurs, Dr. Walter Bachman, Fred H. Stevens, and Clifford Bahr, who is now serving as pastor. E. H. Pontius, E. W. Thompson, H. J. Plymesser, and Maude V. Mann will be remembered as having served over the longer periods of time.

After the yellowish frame building was remodeled in 1917 into the present brick structure, its membership reached a peak of 282. For various reasons the number has since de-

clined to about 100 resident members.

In the early thirties it seemed advisable for the pastor to serve both the U.B. and Chelsea churches on alternate Sundays, although Sunday School was maintained in each church every Sunday. Not until the latter part of Miss Mann's ministry was a preaching service held each Sunday morning in both churches. The time was 10 o'clock at the country church and 11 o'clock in town. Miss Mann also conducted Monday afternoon services each week at Roselawn Home, and later E.U.B. pastors also continued those services, which seemed much appreciated by the residents. The pastors also take their turn every fourth Sunday conducting services at the Girls' Training School.

The merging of the Evangelical and United Brethren denominations became effective in the Nebraska conference in 1956 and our church became known as the Evangelical United Brethren or "E.U.B." By action of the local conference the Chelsea church was merged with the Geneva church in 1954, and the Geneva church became owner of the Chelsea church property. Several families of the Chelsea congregation retained their membership in the E.U.B. church. Others went elsewhere. -Mrs. Oscar Nelson

The Methodist Church was one of the major churches of the pioneers. When the first session of the Nebraska Conference adjourned April 8, 1861, there were 21 Methodist ministers in the entire state. There were only four Methodist church buildings, and no preacher could boast of serving a charge that provided him a parsonage.

The Rev. George W. Gue was the first resident Methodist preacher in this county. He arrived in the early summer of 1871 and preached the first sermon in Fairmont in the new Burlington station. In the spring of 1872 the Methodists built in Fairmont the first Methodist church in the county.

The Rev. Mr. Gue also made arrangements to build a church 7 miles S of Fairmont, probably on Turkey Creek, where he preached during the winter of 1871 and 1872. Although the church was never built, this "Class" was the nucleus that, a little later, became the Methodist Church of Geneva.

On Easter Sunday, 1873, a Sunday School was organized in the home of Henry Stanley, attended by the Walter Churchill family, the Sam Range family, and possibly others. This was the beginning of the organized Methodist work that was later called the "Chelsea Appointment" on the Geneva Circuit.

Some time in the early summer, possibly in May, 1875, the Rev. George H. Wehn was requested by his presiding elder, Dr. J. B. Maxfield, to take charge of the new work at Geneva. In Rev. Wehn's words: "After a few visits to Geneva, finding a few faithful ones who stood by to secure the material, we succeeded in building a small two-story parsonage into which we moved, moving up from Hebron in the midst of the Conference year." The records show that a bond for a deed for Lot 2, original city of Geneva, was filed June 25, 1875. The lot was purchased from David Lee for \$400.



Photo from Ruth Linnert Marions

Methodist Episcopal Church used from about 1880 to 1902. It was located on corner of 10th & H Sts.

Geneva appears first as a regular appointment in the minutes of the conference session held September 15 to 23, 1875, when Mr. Wehn was appointed pastor. At this early date all general religious meetings were held in the courthouse, which had been completed in May, 1873. Mr. Wehn conducted a revival meeting that winter and reported 175 converts. Most of these converts united with the newly organized Methodist church, though a good number joined the Presbyterian and Baptist denominations.

The Conference Minutes of October 10, 1878, remark: "Geneva is moving with their might in the erection of their much needed church. \$500 have been borrowed and \$800 raised by subscription." The deeds for Lots 39 and 40, original city of Geneva, were filed for record in September, 1878. Lot 39 was sold to the church by Julius E. Spear for \$40 and Lot 40 by Joseph E. Dean for \$45. On account of the unpledged indebtedness this church was not dedicated until

1885; but at this service pledges were taken to cover all outstanding obligations.

The Conference year 1885-86 was a great success. Seventy-three persons joined the church.

The very next year, added improvements were necessary, as shown by the Minutes of September, 1887: "As a result of a wonderful revival last year the building was found to be too small, was enlarged, improved and paid for. At the beginning of this year the trustees found the building still too small and enlarged it at an expense of \$2,000. Valuable improvements were made on the parsonage and all paid for so that now we have a fine church building, with tower and bell, and class rooms finely furnished." It is interesting to note that while the enlarged church was valued at \$5,000, the parsonage was valued at \$6,000. This year the membership more than doubled and the Sunday School nearly doubled.

While the Rev. Mr. Barker was pastor, the new parsonage was built on the north of the church lots at a cost of \$1,800. The old parsonage property was sold July 7, 1893, to Lulu Bruner. This is now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Pete Kelch at 1045 I St.

In 1902 the present brick edifice was built and dedicated by Dr. Claudius B. Spencer on December 28, 1902. The parsonage was modernized in 1909. Lot 38, adjoining 39 on the west, was presented to the church by M. Bolton on August 31, 1921.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1902 on corner of 10th and H Sts.

The church celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1926 with a five-day Semi-Centennial Jubilee. The celebration began Wednesday evening, April 21, and continued through Sunday, April 25.

In the autumn of 1936 work was completed on the excavation of the church basement. This project provided a beautiful and useful room.

In April, 1939, the unification of all Methodist churches occurred at the General Conference. As a result of this merger, the name of the local church was changed from "First Methodist Episcopal Church" to "First Methodist Church of Geneva."

Further conforming to the new organization, the former Ladies' Aid Society and Foreign Missionary Societies reorganized on September 4, 1940, as the Women's Society of Christian Service.

A new pipe organ, a memorial to Alfred H. Elder and Mrs. Lulu M. Barker, was dedicated on Mother's Day, 1943. Later, chimes were added through gifts by the A. H. Fulton family and the congregation. These chimes were in commemoration of the men and women of the church who had served the nation during World War II.

May 7, 1950, the church observed its 75th anniversary. Rev. Ben Wallace was the pastor. An echo organ was installed in the spring of 1950, the gift of the late Mrs. William Kilburn. In 1954, a new Baldwin No. 10 electric organ replaced the first electric organ.

A new parsonage was completed in April, 1956, and the cornerstone placed June 2, 1956. The basement of the parsonage was planned to be used for the nursery department of the Sunday School.

In the fall of 1965, a fund-raising campaign was held to

obtain money to build an educational unit.

The following pastors have served the Geneva Meth-

G. H. Wehn, May, 1875-Oct. 1876; J. A. Chapin, Oct., 1876-Oct., 1879; R. C. Johnson, Oct., 1879- Oct., 1880; O. P. Sheldon, Oct., 1880-Sept., 1881; C. M. Hollopeter, 1881-82; F. B. Donisthorpe, 1882-83; E. J. Willis, 1883-84; A. L. Folden, 1884-85; G. M. Couffer, 1885-88; G. H. Moulton, 1888-90; J. A. Barker, 1890-94; Duke Slavens, 1894-95; F. A. Stuff, June, 1895-Sept., 1898; O. W. Fifer, 1895-98; F. A. Colony, 1898-1901; E. M. Evans, 1901-03; G. W. Abbott, 1903-05; L. G. Parker, 1905-07; C. M. Shepherd, 1907-09; J. W. Embree, 1909-10; C. L. Myers, 1910-13; W. L. Austin, 1913-17; R. H. Thompson, 1917-24; D. T. Morton, 1924-25; H. G. Langley, 1925-27; Harold C. Capsey, 1927-31; W. H. Shoaf, 1931-38; William Kilburn, Sept., 1938-Oct., 1940; W. B. Pardun, Nov., 1940-Sept., 1944; Elmer L. Peterson, Sept., 1944-Oct., 1945; Ben F. Wallace, Nov., 1945-Sept., 1951; Frank E. Pfoutz, Sept., 1951-June, 1957; Alden Sears, June, 1957-June, 1964; Dr. Frank Jackman, June 1964-June 1966; Orlando K. Lee, June 1966-present.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church was founded later than the other churches. The first Mass was said in Geneva in 1878 by the Rev. F. Lechleitner of Crete. Since there was then no church building here, Mass was offered in the Longly hall. Only six Catholic families were here-John J. Burke, Nicholas Longly, Joseph Schaubel, Patrick Doud, Joseph Weis, and John Thoma.

During that summer a church was built in the rural parish of St. Mary's on Turkey Creek and for the next 20 years Geneva Catholics attended Mass there, except on

those rare occasions when Mass was said here.

The first resident pastor was the Rev. Bernard Ulbrick, who served the parish from January, 1898 to August, 1900. During the next year the parish was attended from Hebron by the Rev. A. Petrasch and the Rev. C. A. Becker. Four lots were secured in South Geneva and the first church was built, also the rectory, which is now the Sisters' convent.

In August, 1901, Father Becker was appointed by Bishop Bonacum as second resident pastor with St. Mary's at Shickley as a mission. In 1908, Father Becker had the church enlarged at a cost of \$13,000 and in 1912 the parochial school was built, also at a cost of \$13,000. The School Sisters of Notre Dame were invited to teach and have been here ever since. The sisters live in the former rectory, Father Becker having built the present parochial residence during the summer of 1913 before their coming. Thus under his leadership all four buildings were erected and on his departure for Lawrence, late in 1915, the treasury showed a balance of nearly \$1,000 on hand.

The next resident pastor was the Rev. Geo. Agius, D.D., J.C.D., who remained here during the next 11 years. Msgr.



Photo from Mrs. Rena Kamler St. Joseph's Catholic Church and Parochial School.

Agius, a man of deep learning, had received his education in Rome where he was a classmate of the late Pope Pius XII. He was a prominent member of the State Historical Society and author of a number of historical works, among them a history of the Lincoln Diocese written for the Golden Jubilee celebration thereof in 1937.

When he was transferred to Plattsmouth in 1927, he was succeeded by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Patrick J. Healey. The years of Msgr. Healey's pastorate, 1927 to 1939, will long be remembered as the period of the great depression, when the little parish of 77 families had a hard struggle to keep both

the church and the school going.

When, in 1939, Msgr. Healey was appointed pastor of Falls City he was succeeded by the Rev. James Gilroy, who remained in charge here until his death in 1949. During his pastorate the parish almost doubled in population due to the large number of Catholic soldiers stationed at the Fairmont Air Base. After the closing of the air base the parish dropped to its lowest enrollment, 74 families. Thus membership has remained fairly constant. Enrollment in the school had dropped to 19 pupils, threatening its existence. But in 1947 a steady improvement began and as of May, 1967, there were 82 students in attendance, and the Sisters and their students have won many honors in the county and in the state. New slate roofs were placed over the church and school during Father Gilroy's time.

Upon the death of Father Gilroy the present pastor, the Rev. Paul Ulenberg, was given charge of St. Joseph's. In 1950, repairs and improvements to the amount of \$35,000 were made on the parish plant. Also in 1950 the Golden Jubilee of the parish was observed with an outstanding celebration with the Most Rev. Bishop Lorris B. Kucera pre--Miss Nellie Sheridan

The Faith Mennonite Church is the newest religious group in Geneva. In November, 1964, the first steps were taken toward organizing a Mennonite Fellowship. With help from the Henderson Mennonite Church, as well as from the Northern District Conference, and with counsel from the General Conference of Mennonites (with central offices in Newton, Kansas), this group began meeting regularly on March 14, 1965. Their first meeting was in the Meeting House of the Meridian Courts, and here they held their worship services for more than a year.

In the summer of 1965, the group extended a call to Albert Gaeddert to come and serve them as pastor. He accepted the call, and the Gaedderts moved to Geneva in late August. Steps were taken toward the organization of a congregation, and also toward incorporation. November 21, 1965, was observed as Membership Day, at which time 23 persons

formed the original charter membership.

Early in 1966, the group began to discuss plans for building their own edifice in which to worship and to meet for the church's teaching programs. The plans rather quickly produced action. A ground-breaking ceremony was held on Sunday, May 29, 1966. The very next week, work on the building began, and by early December the building was ready for occupancy. The church was dedicated on Sunday, December 11, 1966.



Photo from Guy Brown, Jr. Faith Mennonite Church, built in 1966.

¹From 1881 to 1938, all dates run from September to September except as otherwise noted.

The group chose the name of "Faith Mennonite Church," which replaced the earlier name of Geneva Mennonite Fellowship.

During the sessions of the Northern District Conference in June, 1966, the Faith Mennonite Church became a member of the District Conference, and filed application with the General Conference Mennonite Church to become a member of this larger body of 55,000 souls.

Our heritage stems from the Anabaptists, one of the groups that developed during the Reformation days of the sixteenth century. Our group is named after Menno Simons, who gathered together in Europe the groups that came out of this heritage and underwent severe persecutions for their beliefs. To accept the challenges of living as disciples of the Master is one of the principles that we set for ourselves.

—Albert Gaeddert

The new Prince of Peace Lutheran Church at 16th and Oak Sts. began with a meeting of 25 families with Dr. E. G. Fritschel in the Rialto Theater in Geneva on October 29, 1961. This meeting voted to form a congregation, and elected a steering committee, consisting of Harry Carlson, Lawrence Wattles, and Dr. D. C. Anderson. The building committee were M. M. Rosen (chairman), Henry Fangmeier, Edward Reinsch, Dick Deets, and Lawrence Wattles.

Pastor Leon Bauer of Carleton was asked to serve the group. The first service was held on November 11, 1961, in the Geneva City Auditorium, with 63 persons present. Preparations for the formal organization of a congregation were begun at once. By January 14, 1962, the necessary steps of incorporation, adoption of a constitution, election of officers and of a church council were completed.

Some time in mid-February, the Rev. Otto Hesla, regional director of American Missions of the American Lutheran Church, met with the congregation to explain the home mission program. Shortly thereafter, Prince of Peace was certified as a "Package Mission." Arrangements were then made for the purchase of the plot on which the church unit now stands.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, with parsonage at left (1965).

A ground-breaking service for the new building was held on November 4, 1962, and three days later construction began. Good weather enabled rapid progress, and the building was finished by mid-February, 1963. It was dedicated at special services on the morning of Sunday, March 19, 1963, at which time 550 members of the congregation and friends joined in the two services.

In early 1968, the congregation numbered 300 members. The Rev. Woodrow Wilson, who became pastor of the church in June, 1966, is still serving us.

SCHOOLS

A History of School District 75, Geneva by Howard W. Hamilton

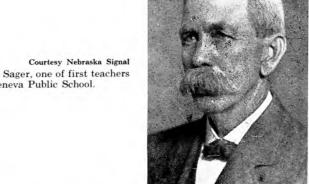
The history of the Geneva public school, District 75, might well be prefaced with a reminder that the school was established within a short time after the county was officially organized and Geneva was named the county seat (as described earlier).

In June, 1871, the county seat was surveyed and recorded. In June, 1872, some of the lots were sold at auction. The new town developed slowly for two years, even after a courthouse was built in 1873. In 1875, however, the town improved rapidly and by January 1, 1876, it had a population of 140.

On February 1, 1876, the citizens, foreseeing a need for a school, organized a school district. The district included land in four townships: Chelsea, Madison, Stanton, and Geneva.

Although no enrollment figures for the first school are available, the annual report on file in the office of the county superintendent, signed by Director J. B. Thompson, shows there were 15 males and 24 females in the district between the ages of 5 and 21. The report for 1877 shows the district received \$88.50 from the county and \$510 from other sources. The teacher received \$88.50 while \$510 was paid for a building, leaving the district owing \$1,154.15. The levy was 25 mills. This report, also signed by J. B. Thompson. showed there were 34 males and 36 females in the district between 5 and 21. There were three men teachers and one woman teacher. Salaries totaled \$145 for the men and \$35 for the woman. The value of the school was fixed at \$930 and the lot \$125.

Emma McKelvey Johnston headed the first school in Geneva in 1876. John Chase also taught three months of the term. In 1877, J. H. Sager taught three months as did J. B. Lewis. Emma McKelvey Johnston taught the school three months in 1878.



J. H. Sager, one of first teachers in Geneva Public School.

Others listed as heading the school before a superintendent was elected were as follows: 1879-80, Charles Fort; 1880-81, H. W. Caldwell; 1881-82, D. B. Huston; 1882-83, Jesse Hesseltine.

The first superintendent of the Geneva school was C. C. Heltman, who apparently became head of the school in 1882. He served until 1888.

Superintendents following Mr. Heltman until the present time were as follows: 1888-94, H. L. Chaplin, deceased; 1894-95, George Thornbrook, deceased; 1895-97, Robert J. Boyd, deceased; 1897-1901, J. L. McBrien, deceased; 1901-08, Charles W. Taylor, deceased; 1908-12, R. W. Eaton, deceased; 1912-15, Earl M. Cline, Lincoln, Neb.; 1915-18, Earl L. Meyer, Alliance, Neb.; 1918-19, G. W. Hansen; 1919-23,L. W. Weisel, deceased; 1923-24, J. P. Rigg, Grand Junction, Col.; 1924-27, R. W. Kretsinger, Oakland, Cal.; 1927-32, L. S. Devoe, deceased; 1932-45, H. B. Simon, deceased; 1945-61, Glen E. Felix, Jefferson County, Colo.; 1961-64, M. M. Rosen, Alliance, Neb.; 1964—, Bernard Bliefernich.

Although the Geneva school had operated since 1876, the district actually had no title to the land on which it operated a school until 1887. At that time the State of Nebraska executed a deed to District 75 in the names of Daniel Lynn, Charles C. Miles, and Joseph H. Springer to Outlot 17 in Geneva for \$1,000. The deed, dated May 25, 1887, was signed by Governor John W. Thayer and attested

by Joseph Scott, commissioner of public lands and buildings. Fillmore County also gave the school district a quitclaim deed to the property. The deed from the state recited that the sale was made June 17, 1872, when the officials of Fillmore county purchased the land at public auction.

In 1917, E. J. Dempster, president of the board of education of District 75, gave the following account of the Geneva public school in an address before the 1917 graduat-

ing class:

"In the year 1876, in February, School District No. 75, now known as the school district of the city of Geneva, was organized. The first term was for six months in a small schoolhouse of one room but it was soon found another room and an additional teacher were necessary; the term also was lengthened to nine months.

"After a time, these facilities becoming too small, the old building of two rooms was abandoned and a new house built with four rooms. In a few years two more rooms were added and still later another building was built on the school block and a ward schoolhouse was erected

in the west part of town.

"All of this was found after some years to be inadequate and as a result we have our own present high-school building which at this time we find none too large, every room being occupied."



Photo from Miss Delia Fisher
The Geneva Public School, erected about 1885 on Block 17, original
town. This picture was taken about 1899; the building faced the north.



Courtesy Geneva State Bank

Geneva High School, built in 1905.

The new building referred to by Mr. Dempster is the present "main" building. It was built in 1905 at a cost of \$36,000. A complete description of the building was carried in a special Union Normal Institute edition of the Nebraska Signal, dated Friday, May 4, 1906; here are some excerpts: "A feature new in the construction of the schoolhouses in Ne-

"A feature new in the construction of the schoolhouses in Nebraska, principally, is the complete finishing of the basement rooms ... Seven feet of the 10' basement are above the grade line."

"On the north of the large central hall in the basement are two more rooms which could be used well for school purposes, and an elegant gymnasium, 75' x 25', with a 14' ceiling."

"From the grade line to the water table the building is built of Tiger Eye Omaha hydraulic pressed brick. The balance of the building from the water table up is built of hard Omaha hydraulic pressed gray brick."

The old wooden building which was replaced by the structure described above was sold to Dr. H. L. Smith of Geneva. He divided the building and moved the sections to lots south of the courthouse park, making three houses, which have since been known as the Smith houses.



The old school building, divided to make three identical houses; at the southeast corner of Courthouse Square.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal West Ward schoolhouse (about 1960).

The ward school was used for many years but school was discontinued there just prior to World War I. The building was used as a meeting hall and polling place for many years. It was finally sold to the Chaney Brothers in 1949 and is now used only for storage purposes.

In 1921, another building, called the Smith-Hughes building, was added to the school campus. Later it became known as the gymnasium building. The Smith-Hughes vocational and home economics classes were located on the ground floor of the building, as they are today, the gym-

nasium being on the second floor.

The bids on the new building were opened August 31, 1921. Low bidder was the J. W. Assenmacher Co. of Lincoln with a bid of \$24,000. The building was to be completed within 90 days. The first basketball game was played in the new building Friday, December 2, 1921, when Geneva met Shickley in a special game. Geneva defeated its guests 28 to 10

The old gymnasium in the main building was converted to indoor toilets, which replaced the outdoor latrines located southeast and southwest of the main entrances; the space between the new toilets was used for storage. During the



Photo from Guy Brown, Jr.

Smith-Hughes Building—second floor, music rooms and junior high classrooms.

later years of the depression, between 1937 and 1939, the storage space was converted to an auditorium for plays and music programs. Later yet, it was used for a music room and in 1957 the space was made into two grade classrooms. During this time, the gymnasium was remodeled, eliminating the old balconies at each end of the room.

On April 29, 1953, a disastrous fire broke out in the gymnasium building during the night. Dozens of students had been working in the room preparing decorations for the annual spring festival. The fire was discovered about 2 A.M. and was attributed to an overheated flue used by the vocational agriculture department.

After assessing the damage and holding public meetings on what to do about replacing the destroyed facilities, the board of education submitted a bond issue to the voters, who voted \$132,000 toward construction of a new gymnasium, the bonds to supplement insurance money in the amout of \$43,112.05 received as payment for the fire loss.

New public rest rooms, a large lobby, school lunch facilities, and a fine 50' x 90' gymnasium floor were included in the new gymnasium building, which is attached to the Smith-Hughes building.



Courtesy Geneva Photo Co.

New Geneva High School Gymnasium.

The new gymnasium, with a seating capacity of nearly 1,400, was officially opened when the Geneva basketball team met Loup City for the championship of the Trans-Nebraska conference. The game, played March 7, 1955, before a packed gymnasium, saw Geneva roll over the highly touted visitors by a 67 to 51 score.

Playing on the Geneva team which opened the new gymnasium were Larry Fiedler, Bob Johnson, Dick Mc-Cashland, Keith Everts, Bob Hamilton, Charles Grothe, Donald Hiatt, Bob Schneider and Larry Nichols. The coach was John Haberman.

Geneva Graduates

The first graduate of the Geneva high school was Edward J. Dempster, who received a diploma for graduation from the tenth grade in 1885. There were four graduates in 1886 and the school continued to grow. Another year was added to the high school and in 1908 the full four years of

Photo from Miss Delia Fisher Frank ("Daddy") Cross, earlyday janitor of Geneva schools.



high school were offered.

The class of 1933, with 69 graduates, was the largest graduation class in the history of the school. Altogether, Geneva High School has graduated 2,718 students. Of this number, 390 are listed as deceased. (Both these figures are as of April, 1967.)

Many Geneva graduates have served in the armed forces and nine have given their lives while serving their country. Lost while serving in World War II were Lyle Robertson '36, Donald Edward Kelly '38, Gene Walter Watmore '38, Clair Miller '38, Robert Fisher '42, Gordon Herman Burham '45. Lost in Korea were Francis Gene Gergen '44 and William Soukup, Jr. '49. Bert Bishop, Jr., was killed while serving with the Navy Air Corps in 1958.

Basketball

The Geneva high school has compiled a fine record in many fields but basketball has been the activity with the longest and probably the most outstanding record in the school's history.

Early-day basketball teams played a few games each year on a court on the school grounds. After the construction of a gymnasium in the main building in 1905, basketball became a regular part of the school program and games were scheduled throughout the winter season.

Geneva boasts many fine teams during its history, including four state champions. The first state championship was claimed in 1909, when the team challenged the state for the title. Crete accepted the challenge but the Geneva team defeated the challengers.

The 1909 Geneva team included Tryon Shepherd, Hugh Garrett, Roscoe Hill, John Curtiss, Verne Baroch, Hallie Fellows, and Earle Hill. The coach was L. I. Frisbie.

The first official championship was won by Geneva in 1913 when the third annual state tournament was held in Lincoln. There was only one class in the tournament. Geneva won the championship in a grueling series of games with the following results: Geneva 46, Herman 6; Geneva 19, Temple 8; Geneva 25, Omaha 24; Geneva 35,



Photo from Mrs. C. C. Camp

First official Geneva Champion basketball team (1913). Back row, left to right: Earl Kline, Jay Davis, Herb Ashton, John Davis. Front row: Art Weis, Harry Yates, Al Davis, Vincent Janda, Willie Huston.

Albion 19; Geneva 43, Gothenburg 17; Geneva 41, University Place 26. Members of the team were Jay Davis, Herb Ashton, John Davis, Art Weis, Harry Yates, Al Davis, Vincent Janda, and Willie

Huston. The coach was Earl Cline.

Forty-three years later, in 1956, Geneva won its third championship when the team won top honors in Class C at the annual state tournament in Lincoln. The team defeated Clarkson 53 to 51, in a game described as the best in the entire tournament, to take the championship.

Members of the 1956 team were Donn McCashland, Bob Hamilton, Harry Crawford, Larry Nichols, Larry Fiedler, Lynn Koehler, Richard Koehler, Gary Schumacher, Gary Elznic, and John Dudley. The coach was John Haberman. Larry Nichols was named to the Class C all-tourney team while Larry Fiedler was selected on the all-tourney, all-class team as well as the all-state Class C team.

Geneva won another state championship in 1957, this time in Class B, the classification being based upon the number of boys in high school. The victory came after another final game in which Geneva nipped University High of Lincoln 51 to 50 with a last-minute basket.

Members of the 1957 team were Richard Koehler, Steve Newman, Dick Anderson, Larry Fiedler, Larry Nichols, Sid Stastny, Dick Nelson, Raymond Nichols, Arlan Sherman, Gary Schumacher, Gary Elznic and John Dudley. The coach was Archie Chapman. Larry Fiedler was named to the all-class, all-state team as well as the alltourney, all-class team. Dick Anderson was selected for the Class B all-tourney team with Larry Nichols receiving honorable mention on the same team.

One of Geneva's finest teams was the 1947-48 team which was rated at the top all season but lost out in the finals of the district tournament to Seward, which later became state champion, although

Geneva defeated Seward during the regular season.

Members of the 1948 team were Gerald Walton, Charles Curtiss, Lester Reemts, Ronnie Hughes and Jim Smith. Also playing on the squad were Norman Sothan, Jack McCluskey, William Soukup, Bob Jezek, George Bender, Dale Becker, and Jerry Nittler. One member of the team, Gerard Walton, was named to the all-state team by the Omaha World-Herald.

Another Geneva basketball star, Condra ("Beano") Clark, achieved all-state, all-class honors in 1952, although the Geneva team was edged in the district finals in Class B by a strong York team.

Keith Everts, a member of the 1955 team, also won all-state honors in Class B, although the team was put out of the district tournament after compiling a fine record, including the defeat of Loup City for the conference championship, mentioned earlier in this history.

Geneva also won the Class B championship in 1965. The coach was Archie D. Chapman. The players were Bob Gratopp, Brian Cellar, Paul R. Farmer, James Nichols, Daniel Petersen, Gary Suhr, James Strickland, Jr., and Gaylord Cradduck. Gratopp was named

all-state in other classes for the second straight year.

Football.

In football, Geneva also has had many fine teams, including three undefeated aggregations. The history of football, however, shows a series of struggles to install the sport in the school, to keep it in the school program, and to keep up interest in the sport, which traditionally seemed to take second place to basketball at Geneva.

Football was introduced in the school in 1901 by the new superintendent, Charles W. Taylor. Games were usually played on Saturday and sometimes players out of school

were recruited to fill vacancies on the team.

Apparently, there was opposition to having a team in 1902, because an article in the Signal for October 17, 1902, stated: "President George Mozee and Secretary Sager state to the Signal that members of the school board do not object to the city superintendent of schools having any connection with any football team that may be mutually agreeable to the team and to the superintendent provided this connection is maintained outside of school hours and that no team be called a high-school football team."

Several of the boys mentioned as being members of the 1901 team were Glen Carson, Chan Hrubesky, Donald ("Doc") Koehler,

Jim Burke, Leo McFarland, and Lester Ryman.

The 1902 team, although unofficial, played several games with varying success. The team was given publicity in the Signal, however, when it defeated Fairfield 6 to 0. Listed as members of that team were Roy Hampton, Ben Mozee, Joe Yates, Claude Kimbrough, Leo McFarland, Roscoe Mozee, Lester Ryman, Floyd Tallmadge, Charles Thompson, Earl Gabler, Ralph Bringman, and James Burke.

High-school football at Geneva was not restored on an official, approved basis until 1916. With two weeks of practice, the team played an experienced Hebron team, losing by a 59 to 0 score. The team lost to Exeter 16 to 0, but during the season the team laid the

groundwork for a football tradition at Geneva.

Members of the 1916 team listed in the Signal for October 17, 1916, were Carl Schneider, Tom Otis, Herb Mowry, Everett Roles,

Francis Sullivan, Warren Edgecombe, Ed Fussell, Golie Swails, Cass Camp, Ben Koehler, Seymour Martin, Frank Martin, and Lester Nicholas. One member of this team, Ben Koehler, continued his football career after graduation and starred on a United States Naval Academy team that twice defeated the Army team.

Geneva's first undefeated football team was the 1931 team, coached by Leslie Lowe. A first game scoreless tie with Seward Academy was the only blot on its record. On the team were the following: Sterling Cope, Charles Domeier, Maurice Rotter, Kenneth Kimbrough, Ralph Hitch, David Tudor, Pete Burns, Alvin Christiancy, Gerald Braden, Charles Grothe, Lawrence Doud, Paul Ford, Clyde Moss, Paul Peterson, LaVelle Svatos, Dale Murrell, Don Fixemer, Norbert Gergen, and Fred Waltemade.

The next undefeated, untied team to represent Geneva was the 1940 team, coached by Harry Pitcaithley. On that team were the Jesse Domeier, Kenneth Leonard, Lawrence Domeier, Eugene Betka, Everett Moon, Waldo Hafer, Howard Wilkins, Truman Clark, John Edgecombe, John Brower, Jr., Dick Ingwersen, Bob Lovegrove, Bob Myers, Earl Schroder, Vaughn Fulton, Gaylord Hurley, Bill Brower, Bob Halsey, Dean Garrett, David Bertram, Lyle Hall,

and John Bixby.

Several of the above named boys returned in 1941 to make another perfect record. The team in 1941 was coached by Duane Sams. On the team were the following: Raymond Dockter, Elmer Reinsch, Vaughn Fulton, Earl Schroder, Bob Lovegrove, Gene Watmore, Bill Brower, John Bixby, Bob Myers, Dean Garrett, Jesse Domeier, John Adams, Dick Ingwersen, Henry Brower, Jr., Eugene Betka, Charles Elznic, James McCarthy, Roger Christiancy, and Virgil Ostdiek.

The 1953 and 1954 teams, coached by Kenneth Ackerman, were rated number 1 in Class C, with the 1953 team having a perfect

record. The 1954 team lost only to Crete, a Class B team.

On the 1953 team were the following: Galen Kennel, Lynn Koozer, Fred Biba, Jr., Jack Blanke, Rodger Felix, Gary Elznic, Dick Mc-Cashland, Larry Fiedler, Albert Simacek, Bob Hamilton, Lynn Koehler, Ronnie Reinsch, Roger Schmidt, Bill Stiers, Maurice Crawford, Richard Koehler, David Linde, Ed Scheil, Bob Schmidt, Gary Schumacher, Jerry Higel, Donn McCashland, Dan Schrock, Keith Everts, Bob Schneider, Verlyn Naimon, Dick Nichols, Harold Moravec, Richard Nun, Bob Johnson, Fritz Murrell, Hank Peden, Don Hiatt, Charles Grothe, and Dick Hofferber.

On the 1954 team were the following: Keith Everts, Albert Simacek, Bob Schneider, Bob Hamilton, Hank Peden, Lynn Koozer, Don Hiatt, Dick McCashland, Bob Johnson, Charles Grothe, Donn McCashland, Harold Eppler, Dick Hofferber, Larry Fiedler, Gary Elznic, Roger Schmidt, Bob Schmidt, Ronnie Reinsch, Jim Shaw, Charles Krupicka, Gary Schumacher, Bill Stiers, Richard Koehler,

and David Linde.

Dick McCashland of the 1953 and 1954 teams made all-state fullback in all classes, later being a star at the University of Nebraska. He was captain of the 1958 Cornhusker team. Lynn Koozer and Dick were members of the 1953 all-state team in Class C and several members of the team won Trans-Nebraska honors, as Geneva topped the conference both years. A highlight of the 1953 season was to 9 to 0 victory over Loup City at Geneva on Armistice Day for the conference championship.

Other teams and players made fine records in football but special mention should be made of Leonard ("Butch") Goold who made "all-state" in 1922 as a member of one of the finest teams ever produced at Geneva, considering the tough schedule played in that year. The season was climaxed with a victory over Hastings.

Goold made his reputation on an unusual play. The quarterback placed the ball in the bend of the center's right leg. Two large guards, Gale Walton and James Fisher, supported the center while the quarterback ran back and faked a pass. The right tackle paused and on count took the ball from the center's leg, shot through the line and usually into the clear for a touchdown. This was usually good for one good run, or for one touchdown, per game. The play was declared illegal the next year; there is some reason to believe that it was illegal in the first place.

Track, baseball, and golf also have been included in Geneva's sports program during the years and several individuals have won top honors in those activities. The track teams in the late 1920's and early 1930's under Coach Leslie Lowe dominated the Southern Nebraska conference; otherwise, achievements in track have been made by individuals or small squads.

Debate and Speech

In debate, Geneva boasts three state championships. In 1912, Jesse Ertel won the individual state championship. In 1913, Robert Waring was selected as state champion from a team that also included Roscoe Mohrman and Leslie Wilson. A Geneva team, coached by Miss Ellen Mauder, won the state debate tournament in 1924, the team being made up of John C. Gewacke, Roland Propst, and Howard Hamilton. Another team, coached by Donald Warner, won the Hastings college tournament in 1928. On the team were Lucille Eaton, Anne Taborsky, and Charles McEachran.

Geneva also won several district championships in the twenties and thirties, qualifying for the state debate tournaments at Lincoln. Several district championships and high ratings also have been received in other speech work, including one-act play contests.

Music

Geneva has for many years emphasized the teaching of music in the public school. Apparently the first organized music program in the school was started by the Geneva Woman's club, which hired Miss Claire Owens, later Dr. Claire Owens of Exeter, to organize a class in harmony in 1916. Professor H. R. Grant was secured to organize a school orchestra and band the same year.



Geneva High School Band (taken in old gymnasium), 1946-47. Front row, left to right: Ramona Laun, Elveda Montgomery, Virginia Koehler, Janice Schupbach, Barbara Biba, Beth Wilkins, JoAnn Fussell, Wincel Nelson, Jr., William Minich, Jr., Richard Ralston, Bert William Bishop. Second row: Nancy Hall, Virginia Laun, Nancy Koehler, Mary Ann Hrubesky, Marlys Everts, Florence Humphrey, Jeanne Lindstrom, Ethel Kiester, Thomas Wallace, Joann Miller, Glen Fussell, Dorothy Ralston, Virginia McPeck, Doris Peterson, Beth Rosenau, Harold Rosenau, Charles Curtiss, James Shaner, Marvin Saum. Back row: Dale Saum, Carol Calder, Richard Shaw, Shirley McPeck, Mary Maude Bedford, Delbert Fussell, Gerard Walton, Paul W. Curtiss

Paul W. Curtiss directed the first school band at Geneva in 1925. He continued to direct the school bands until a few weeks before his death in 1951. In May, 1951, Herman L. Larsen was hired on a full-time basis to teach instrumental music in the Geneva schools. He is the present director of instrumental music and boys vocal music in the school. Vocal music has for several years been under the direction of Norma (Mrs. Richard) Wagner (formerly Miss Norma Kohler, of Sutton).

Geneva was the location of the District 1 music contest 27 times since the contest was started in 1928. Geneva's entries have usually received top ratings, with Geneva leading all schools in all classes in superior ratings practically every year.



Photo from Mrs. C. C. Camp

Geneva High School Cadets, organized in 1911. Back row, left to right: Albert Held, Wilbur Sherrard, Virgil Bentley, Roy Bell, Hugh Garrett, Ross Miller, Vincent Janda, Ross Lincoln, John Knox, Wallace Chesnut, Harold Pinkerton. Front row: Blaine Sloan, Walter L. Huston, Jay Davis, Wayne Moore, Porter Sloan, Roscoe Mohrman, Donald Moore, Percy Bedford, Frank Sloan.

Geneva High school has been notable for the number of its graduates who continue their education in colleges or other institutions of advanced learning. From 1949 onward, their numbers have been as listed: 1949-60; 1950-65; 1951—58; 1952—70; 1953—60; 1954—58; 1955—61; 1956 -59; 1957—60; 1958—62; 1959—62; 1960—69; 1961—79; 1962—89; 1963—98; 1964—101; 1965—109; 1966—112.

Geneva High School Today

As of June 1, 1959, by virtue of an order by the Fillmore county superintendent, the Geneva school district assessed valuation was \$6,088,489. This resulted from the legal consolidation of 12 rural school districts which had contracted with other districts for education of their pupils for five years or longer.

The 12 districts were 61, 48, 7, 47, 13, 46, 45, 35, 65, 76, 30, 18. Their total valuation was \$3,063,488 while the valuation of District 75, Geneva, before consolidation was \$3,025,-001. Practically all of the pupils concerned were already



Photo from Geneva Photo Co. Geneva High School Boys' Glee Inset: Herman Larsen, instructor.



Photo from Geneva Photo Co.

Geneva High School Girls' Glee (1967). Inset: Mrs. Richard Wagner,



Photo from Geneva Photo Co. New Geneva Elementary School, built in 1964.

attending the Geneva school, being transported by buses operated by District 75.

By 1966, the assessed valuation of the Geneva school district had risen to \$11,531,790.

Enrollment in the school year 1966-67 totaled 742 students. Of these, 260 were in the senior high school, 127 in junior high, and 355 in the elementary grades.

The professional staff in the same year—teachers, administrators, nurses, etc.—numbered 39; the nonprofessional staff—bus drivers, cooks, janitors, etc.—numbered 20.

In 1966-67, the superintendent of schools was Bernard Bliefernich; the principal of the junior and senior high schools, William McNaught; and the elementary school principal, Robert Myers.

Teachers' Institutes

As school districts were established in Fillmore County, other educational activities began to take shape.

The first teachers' institute for Fillmore County was held at the Hall in Fairmont, commencing December 1, 1872, and continuing for one week. The second and fourth institutes were also held at Fairmont, but the third institute was held at Geneva, commencing on November 16, 1874.

In 1880, additional instruction was given at the institute. The session was called the first annual County Teachers' Normal Institute and was held at the schoolhouse in Geneva for two weeks. The notes of County Superintendent J. B. Lewis state: "This Institute begins a new era in facilities afforded for improvement of teachers. Not only is instruction given in branches taught in the schools but also methods of giving instruction. A tuition fee of \$2 was charged to pay expenses of instruction and incidentals."

The third Teachers' Normal Institute session was held at Fairmont for three weeks commencing on July 17, 1882. Sixty-two teachers were enrolled. The curriculum was broadened to include school managements and methods, grammar, analysis of sentences and study of the verb, arithmetic, percentage, methods of teaching, compound numbers, physiology, nervous system, history, causes leading to the adoption of the Constitution, bookkeeping, and orthography.

Before 1891, the expenses were born by the teachers' paying a \$2 fee and by admittance fees for evening lectures. The records show that in 1891 the county superintendent received \$100 from the county treasurer. This amount was increased to \$350 in later years.

Names important in early education in the state appeared often as teachers and speakers in the institutes and normal school programs. State Superintendent S. R. Thompson was on the faculty several summers; also mentioned was State Superintendent W. W. Jones. Chancellor Fairfield was listed on the programs repeatedly. E. J. Hoenshel, noted grammarian and textbook writer, taught in the Junior Normal in 1902.

—Miss Emma Renken

Junior Normal School

In the summer of 1902, State Superintendent W. K. Fowler organized junior normal institutes of five weeks' length at Holdrege, Culbertson, and Sidney. These were the precursors of the junior normal schools. In 1903, the legislature appropriated \$12,000 for the biennium to support five such summer schools of ten weeks each, located at Alliance, Valentine, McCook, Holdrege, and North Platte. In 1907, with an appropriation of \$15,000 for the biennium, eight schools were maintained—Alma, Broken Bow, O'Neill, and Geneva being added and Holdrege being dropped. The length of term was reduced to seven weeks.

Junior normals were established to encourage the teaching profession among those in the western and northern parts of the state for whom distance to established schools in eastern Nebraska was hundreds of miles and expense prohibitive. The Junior Normals were placed in the centers of the vast areas of country where the problem was that of overcoming isolation and insufficient local school facilities. During the first five years of Junior Normals, from 1903 to 1908, 5,000 teachers and prospective teachers from remote

districts were enrolled, only a small percentage of whom would or could have attended any other institution of summer training.

Junior Normals did the work of university extension, and inspired young men and women to carry on their education in established institutions of higher learning.

Before a student was entitled to a Junior Normal credit in any subject he had to attain an average of at least 70 per cent and attend instruction in each subject for at least 30 days. A student who had attended Junior Normal for four sessions of not less than six weeks each could receive his elementary state certificate upon completion of the entrance requirements as provided by law at the state normal schools and the completion of the junior normal training course.

The instructors were men and women of scholarship, experience, and integrity, men and women of well-known and approved educational opinions. The tuition was free but an enrollment and incidental fee of \$2 was charged each student-teacher.



Photo from Mrs. William Fenske Junior Normal class photo, taken in 1910.

The Junior Normal was held at the Geneva public schoolhouse. The courthouse supplemented the schoolhouse in accommodating the teachers in class and lecture periods. The basement of the high school building was used for the dining hall, with the Geneva domestic science instructor in charge. It accommodated 150 to 200 students. They could secure board there for from \$2.50 to \$3 per week. Board and lodging was made available in private homes for \$3.50 per week. Those who boarded at the dining hall could secure rooms in homes for 50 cents a week.

The Junior Normal school was held in Geneva from 1907 through 1912. In 1913 Geneva lost the school owing to lack of interest in securing the school. Many educators felt that it was now unnecessary because Normal Training had been added to the high school curriculum. The subjects offered in 1908, when enrollment totaled 153, were listed in the *Signal* as follows:

History Reading and Literature Agriculture Algebra I Music Geography Composition Geometry I Algebra II Course of Study for Geometry II Arithmetic Rural Schools Arithmetic-Written Orthography Penmanship Bookkeeping Drawing Physics I Physiology and Botany Physics II Civics Hygiene Grammar

Other subjects were taught if the number desiring such study was sufficient to warrant forming a class.

UTILITIES

Water

The earliest water supply was provided by wells and windmills, with cisterns for storage. Inadequate fire protection and the steadily increasing water consumption each year caused J. H. Luke and a number of other citizens to petition the city council on April 15, 1889, for a modern waterworks system, with an investigation and cost estimation of such works in other cities.

A special election was held August 15, 1889, to vote on \$23,000 in bonds for construction, maintenance, and operating costs of waterworks. There were 279 votes cast, with 265 for and 14 against.

The engine house and standpipe were placed on the west side of Garfield St. and facing Court St. between Lincoln and Court Sts. For the sum of \$200, A. A. Richardson of Lincoln drew up plans and specifications for waterworks and acted as consulting engineer; W. G. Hames was to superintend construction.

The following bids were let: Boilers-Brownell & Co., of Omaha. 722.00 Standpipe-Porter Jackson & Co. 3,795.00 Engine house-L. L. Fisher. 1,286.00 Two wells with pumps and engines guaranteed to furnish 125,000 gal. of water per 24-hr. day-Cook Well Co. 2.100.00 Stone for base of standpipe-Keys & Bullock. 53.30 Two hose carts and 1,000 ft. of hose-Rubber Co... 1,220.00 Boiler smoke stack-T. J. Beals. 207.00 Twenty-eight or more Adams Patent Improved Fire Hydrants with two 2½" nozzle and 4" bell at \$31.00 each— Tamaqua Mfg. Co. 868.00 Bids of Shicklen, Harrison & Howards of St. Louis, Mo., for 2,600 ft of 8" cast-iron pipe, 7,744 ft. of 6" cast-iron pipe, and 4,208 ft. of 4" pipe—All totaled...
Five 8" Lorain Hub and brass-mounted gate valves, seven 8,863.23 6", and four 4"—U. S. Wind Engines & Pump Co. Ladder on standpipe—Porter Jackson & Co. 1,286.00 Building for hose carts Geneva No. 1 and Geneva No. 2-Sager lot Total 125.00

On January 16, 1890, the final test of the waterworks system proved satisfactory. The plant consisted of a standpipe 110 ft. high, capacity 93,000 gallons; 2 pumps, each capable of raising 125,000 gal. of water per day and driven by a 60-horsepower boiler; about 21/2 miles of mains ranging from 4" to 8" in diameter. Auxiliary to this was a two-hosecompany fire department supplying 1,200 ft. of hose and 40 fire hydrants. Water rates fixed by the council were \$5 per year for household purposes and \$2 for connecting on the mains.

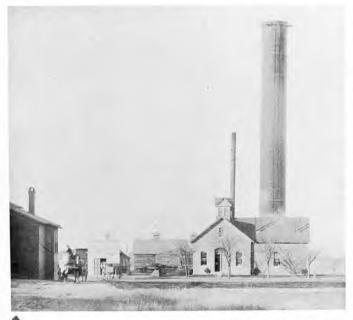


Photo from Miss Delia Fisher

Geneva Waterworks in 1899.

By May, 1890, the water system was self-supporting. The demand was so great that more bonds were voted to extend 2 or 3 miles more of water mains.

In April, 1894, water rent was raised to \$18 per place, provided there were four taps per main. The water commissioner charged 25 cents per load of water.

The bonded indebtedness of the city, because of the water system, was \$27,000 on April, 1896.

On January 30, 1898, meters were placed at the Courthouse, Citizens Bank, and Geneva National Bank buildings.

In June, 1902, water meters were installed all over town. Water rent was to be paid quarterly at the rate of 20 cents per 1,000 gal. for the first 10,000 gal. and 15 cents per 1,000 gal. thereafter for each quarter.

In May, 1904, a new well was added at a cost of \$673.05. In the fall of 1904 water was run to the city school.

In October, 1907, the city voted to furnish 2 motors, 2 transformers, and 2 geared-head pumps to furnish full-day service of water and lights, at a cost of \$1,245. Adding another boiler, engine, and dynamo doubled the plant service for a full day

On April 1, 1909, the city changed from steam to electric pumps at an annual cost of \$1,953 for a five-year contract between the city and the Geneva Electric Co. (G. F. Skinkle,

At present Geneva has four wells. The older ones are at 7th and H and 8th and K Sts. All are now powered by electricity, although the oldest well (at 7th and H) can be converted to gas operation in case of emergency. The capacity of each well is 550 gallons per minute. The standpipe holds 100,000 gallons.

In May, 1959, the council awarded a contract for construction of a new city well and about eight blocks of new water mains to replace the old third well (located west of the Koehler lumber yard). The well contract went to Layne-Western of Omaha, whose bid was \$10,295; the contract for the mains was awarded to Munt Brothers of Beatrice with a bid of \$15,201. The new well was located at the NE corner of the junction of Highway 81 and I St. The addition of this well gave the water department a pump capacity of about 1,900 gallons per minute.

The newest well, added in 1965, is at the NE corner of

the city park, at 15th and F Sts.

The present water rates are as follows; \$1 minimum for 200 cubic feet per month; next 300 cu. ft. at 25 cents per 100 cu. ft.; next 500 cu. ft. at 20 cents per 100 cu. ft.; next 1,000 cu. ft. at 15 cents per cu. ft.; next 8,000 cu. ft. at 10 cents per 100 cu. ft.; and all over 10,000 cu. ft. at 7.5 cents per 100 cu. ft. During the summer a special rate is given: All the water used over 1,000 cu. ft. is given a 50 per cent discount.

Sewers and Paving

\$20,525.53

A modern sewage disposal system was accepted by Geneva in November, 1922. The contract was let on May 8, 1919, to S. A. Canaglia and Co. of Omaha for the sewer and disposal plant for the sum of \$30,244.70. The right-ofway for the plant was purchased from Charles H. Sloan, to be located on his farm north of Geneva. In July, 1943, plans were accepted to enlarge the sewage disposal plant to include the Government Housing Project in east Geneva. In the winter of 1954-55 a lift-station was constructed at 10th and A Sts., in the south part of town, giving more Genevans in that area access to the sewer. The sewerage system was extended until by the end of 1959 most of the city was connected to the sewer system. A sewer-use fee has been added to the water rates to provide for expansion of the system.

The first paving contract was let to the Abel Construction Co. of Omaha on May 29, 1919, for the sum of \$140,493.75. The contract called for the paving and storm sewers of 101/2 blocks-G St. from 6th to 11th Sts.; H St. between 9th and 10th Sts.; 8th St. from F St. to the alley between G and H Sts.; 9th St. from G to H; and 10th St. from F north to H St. This district was completed early in 1920. Gradually more streets were paved, and by 1958 a total of 46 blocks had been hard-surfaced or paved. Thirteenth St., being a part of U. S. Highway 81, was paved by the state from the south to the north city limits. F St., which is part of State Highway 41 from 13th St. to 5th St., then north to the Girls' Training School, was also constructed and maintained by the state.





Top Photo from Nebraska Signal Lower Photo from Mrs. Carl Janing Top: Laying brick pavement on Main Street in 1919. Bottom: Paving gang.

The first residence street in the city to be graveled was North 11th St., in 1929. Graveling the streets was completed in 1931.

As of December 1, 1967, a total of 156½ blocks were hard-surfaced, with gutters and storm sewers. Of these, 26 blocks—on Highways 81 and 41 and the highway to the Girls' Training School—are maintained by the state; the rest are maintained by the city.

Stop signs were installed at numerous places and stop lights placed around the school area. (In 1926, the city voted to place "stop buttons" on streets and a man was employed to enforce traffic laws.) In 1953, the city purchased its first police car from the Steider Plymouth and Chrysler Co. It was a black, 2-door, 1953 sedan and cost \$1,332.78.

Electricity

Interest in electric lighting was aroused in 1890 when some eastern capitalists presented a plan to build a plant. They were not successful in their attempt. In April, 1893, it was voted to grant an exclusive franchise for 10 years to the Geneva Electric Light and Power Co. to erect and operate a plant, with the privilege of purchasing the plant at the end of 10 years if desired. This plan also failed to materialize.

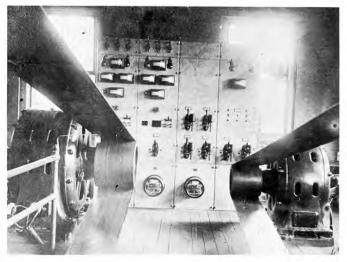


Courtesy Geneva State Bank

Scene at the Pierce Store fire in 1912 (Skinkle Power Plant at center right).

The first plant which actually produced electric current was built by Gregory F. Skinkle in 1904. Mr. Skinkle sold his drugstore in Geneva and secured a franchise to build this plant, which he owned and operated until 1916. The plant was a house 45' x 48' located on 9th St.—¾ block north of the courthouse (about where Consumers is located now). This location was chosen by Mr. Skinkle because it would be a great saving, especially in furnishing heat, to have the plant close to the business houses. The building was divided into two rooms, leaving plenty of space to double the capacity of the plant.

The engine was a high-grade Atlas Corliss of 115 horse-power. The engine had a 12-foot flywheel, occupied a floor space of 9' x 20', and weighed 23,000 pounds. The boiler had the same indicated capacity as the engine, with an overload capacity of 25 per cent.



Courtesy Geneva State Bank

Interior of Gregory Skinkle's Geneva light plant (about 1905).

The crowning piece of machinery was the dynamo. It was a single-phase Wood alternating, manufactured by the Fort Wayne Electric Works. This dynamo was a 60 K.W., having a frequency of 60 cycles, 1,100 volts, 900 revolutions per minute.

Under the Wood system an alternating current of high pressure is generated at the power station and is reduced to low pressure by transformers placed on poles in various parts of town. (The voltage of an electric current corresponds to the pressure of the waterworks system.) There were 14 of these reducing transformers, with a total capacity of 660 lights.

The vitalizing current was turned through the street lamps for the first time on January 22, 1905. The city had four arc lamps, located respectively at the principal Court St. (G St.) intersections and 21 incandescent lamps at as many residence street intersections. Several business houses were connected and lighted the following week. Among the first residents to have electric lights were F. B. Donisthorpe, Frank Sloan, Mrs. Kate Koehler, Mrs. Frank Keeler, B. Koehler, E. Sandrock, C. A. Thorpe, C. A. Warner, Dr. W. E. Propst, and Dr. M. Propst.

Electric service at this time was intermittent. The plant operated from dusk to 11 P.M., with a little longer service on Saturday nights. Daytime service was established in 1907, and at that time several motors were installed. On June 19, 1911, the city contracted with Mr. Skinkle for 67 Mazda street lights of rated 60 candlepower each at a monthly rate of \$1.75 per lamp. The lights were maintained on a midnight-moonlight schedule. The lamps burned from dusk until midnight only, and on moonlight nights were not turned on at all.

Five years later a new contract provided Geneva 24-hour service for residential and commercial use. The commercial lighting rates at that time (1916) might also be of interest; the top rate was 20 cents per kilowatt hour and the cheapest, 9 cents.

"Betsy," as the generator was called, with her two boilers was able at the beginning to supply the demand for electricity, but as time went on the engine with its 90-K.W. generator could not meet the demand, and transmission lines connected to larger plants were installed. Betsy was disassembled, sold, and shipped away to be recast into some other type of equipment.

The plant (called the Geneva Electric Co.) was sold in 1916 to the Continental Gas & Electric Co., which owned the plants at York and Aurora. The name of the new company, after being purchased from Mr. Skinkle, was the "Public Service Co." F. J. Gunther of York came to Geneva as

manager.

In 1916, 18 electroliers were installed on the north side of G St. and along 9th St. In January, 1917, 20 more electroliers were added.



Photo from Geneva State Bank Laying steam pipes to heat courthouse and business houses (about 1910).

By 1922, the building of transmission lines bringing current into the city had caused the plant to be abandoned for generating electricity. The old plant, however, was kept as a standby for emergencies and was used as a heating plant for the courthouse and quite a number of business buildings. Modern advancements finally made it unnecessary; and so, shortly after Herbert Lauber built a brick building adjoining the south side of the powerhouse in 1948 and 1949, the old plant was rebuilt into the present Consumers Public Power office building.

As the years passed, several different companies furnished Geneva's electricity. In October, 1927, Nebraska Gas & Electric passed on their franchise to the Iowa-Nebraska Light & Power Co. Although on August 19, 1929, an ordinance granted a 25-year franchise to Iowa-Nebraska, they relinquished this in April, 1941, when Consumers Public Power District started serving the city.

Consumers today supplies current to Geneva through the Nebraska Public Power System, an intricate statewide network. A Nebraska Public Power System sub-station that supplies Geneva is located 2 miles N of the fairgrounds. In case of trouble, power may be secured from York, Hebron, Beatrice, or Seward by switches located at this sub-station.

The residential rates in 1967 were: \$1 for the first 13 kilowatt-hours per month, 6 cents per kwh for the next 37 kwh, 2¾ cents up to 100 kwh, 2 cents per kwh for the next 450, and all additional at 1.5 cents per kwh. Commercial

rates are higher than residential.

The latest improvement in electricity for the city was accomplished in January of 1951. Sixty-one luminaires street lights were installed to replace the electroliers extending from Highway 81 throughout the downtown area. These have also been extended to the high-school street because of the many community activities there. The units consist of 25-foot standards whose brackets support scientifically designed luminaires, equipped with 10,000 and 6,000 lumen lamps, to provide maximum output of usable light on traffic area.

Natural Gas

Geneva was one of the first communities in Nebraska to pioneer the use of natural gas. A franchise to serve Geneva was granted to the Iowa-Nebraska Light & Power Co. on Oct. 14, 1931. Natural gas was turned into the distribution system for 42 customers on December 22, 1931. Although many old records are no longer available, it is believed that natural gas was first turned on at the Geneva Hotel and that Jake Weis, of 311 South 10th St., was the first customer to use natural gas for cooking.

The Central Electric & Gas Co. purchased the naturalgas system on February 26, 1945. By 1967, a total of 1,003

Geneva customers were using natural gas.

The company, now known as the Western Power & Gas Co., buys its gas from the Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas Co., a Nebraska firm located in Hastings. Natural gas is gathered from western Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. By means of underground pipelines, the gas is brought to Geneva for house heating, cooking, water heating, refrigeration, clothes drying, incineration, all-year air conditioning, and many other uses.

In 1932, approximately 7,713,700 cubic feet of gas were used in comparison to 217,688,000 cu. ft. during 1966. This overwhelming acceptance of natural gas has been partly responsible for maintaining the lowest possible rates.

The first year natural gas was used in Geneva, 20,000 cu. ft. cost the customer \$14.20. This rate prevailed until 1945, at which time Central Electric & Gas reduced the rates. Again in August, 1946, and November, 1947, rate reductions gave Geneva customers even cheaper gas service.

World War II started an inflationary spiral that caused prices to rise. In many instances, the price of normal necessities increased as much as 200 per cent before 1947. Not until January, 1955, was the first price adjustment made for natural gas, and this increase did not absorb the previous three reductions. The second price adjustment was made on October 1, 1957, due to increased cost of natural gas by the pipeline company. Another upward adjustment was made on August 17, 1964; but, in contrast to other costs, the average home owner pays less for natural gas today than in 1931.

-Data from Western Power & Gas Co., Inc.

Telephones and Telegraph

As early as 1883, telephone service was brought to Geneva by the Nebraska Telephone Co., which started with about 12 subscribers. By 1886, 30 telephones were in use. In the early 1890's, the Bell Telephone Co. organized in Geneva. The company had its office in the Will Stewart home, now the Hugh Hadsell residence. Laura Bender (later Mrs. Monroe Heisey) was one of the first telephone operators. Mr. Stewart's daughter, Bess, was also an operator.

In 1903, Mr. Wettstine came to Geneva, bringing with him a crew of men (one of whom was Monroe Heisey), with wagons and equipment to build a telephone line. When the



Early telephone switchboard. Left to right: Laura Bender, operator; Kate Porter; Monroe Heisey, trouble man.







The shift to the dial system (1963). Left: Switchboard before pulling picks for dial system (Miss Emma Ebbeka in foreground). Second picture: Pulling picks in old office—L. D. Anderson (left) and Roger Bates. Third picture: Pulling picks to make change from operator switchboard to dial system. The second man from the front is Lowell Garrett of the Geneva exchange; the other three are from the Lincoln office. Fourth picture: Mayor Francis McPeck making first dial call to Commercial Supervisor in Lincoln.

line was completed and the crew moved on, they left Mr. Heisey here to take care of the line, which he did on horseback. With the completion of this line the first independent company was formed. This, called the Fillmore County Telephone Co., consisted of operating exchanges at Geneva, Exeter, Fairmont, Strang, Grafton, Milligan, Shickley, and Ohiowa. This company was managed by John Barsby. The office was located over the Citizens' State Bank. Later, because of the fire, it was moved to a room over the Signal office. Here it stayed until the new and present telephone building was built in 1924.

The Independent company almost immediately became the dominant one of the two telephone companies then doing business at Geneva. In 1904, the Bell company, with R. J. Dean as manager, was operating only 31 telephones on the Geneva exchange, most of which were in business establishments.

The Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Co. purchased the Bell properties at Geneva in January, 1912, and of the Fillmore County organization in July, 1913. These properties were consolidated in September, 1913, at which time the Bell company was serving 356 subscribers and the Independent 570. This, of course, represented a duplication of service, because a majority of the subscribers of both companies had to have two telephones in their homes or offices, because there was no interconnection between the Bell and Independent switchboards.

In 1913, several switching companies also had telephone facilities on the Geneva switchboard. These were the Chelsea, Alpine, West Geneva, and Big Four telephone companies. The Pioneer Telephone Co., also a switching company, was purchased by the Lincoln company in 1918, at which time the Pioneer company had 78 subscribers who received switching services from the Geneva switchboard.



Photo from Norman Yates

Geneva Fire Company in 1900, taken in front of the old Methodist Church. H. F. Mohrman, chief of the fire department for more than 20 years, standing in front of hose cart (marked with a cross).

At about the same time that the Lincoln company purchased the Geneva properties, it also reached an agreement with the Bell system for a general division of properties in the state. The Bell company withdrew from the area south of the Platte River westward to Adams and Webster counties and Lincoln T. & T. purchased all the Bell properties in these 22 counties. A number of Independent properties were also purchased at that time.

At present (1967), the Geneva exchange serves approximately 1,600 local patrons, as well as all the other towns in Fillmore County, plus Ong and Tobias. Geneva went over to the all-dial system in 1963 and is now on Direct Distance Dialing. The local exchange also provides mobile phone service for microwave transmitters.

The telegraph line was put in at the same time the Burlington line was built in June, 1886.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Volunteer Fire Department

As the village of Geneva grew, so did the need for an organized fire department. In 1890, the first books were kept and the department was named the Geneva Hose Company. The first officers and members of the Geneva Hose Company were the following:

Hose Company No. 1 F. A. Kuler, Foreman C. L. Rathbun, 1st Assistant O. C. Houchin, 2nd Assistant W. B. Holmes G. R. Wolf S. S. Walker L. F. Landmesser W. W. Fellows Clink Shickley William McCartney C. R. Burnett A. B. Payton Robert Schofield Frank McGrew

Will Carson

Chief-H. F. Mohrman Hose Company No. 2 H. B. Young, Foreman Arthur Atherton, 1st Assistant F. C. Laflin, 2nd Assistant Bert Cobb Walter Spear, Treasurer Louis Cobb Frank Crawford Charles Spangler W. S. Huston J. W. Burt A. Stephenson A. Koehler O. A. Beals J. D. Kessler J. H. Sager, President Frank Burke

E. A. Webster, Secretary H. F. Mohrman served as chief for 20 consecutive years. In 1895, he wrote to the city council this letter:

"After 5 years' experience as Chief of the Geneva Hose Co. and knowing full well that at every fire the boys spoil more or less clothing I would therefore pray that your honorable body allow out of city funds the sum of \$1 to each member of the hose co. that answers to his name after each fire. Also \$.25 to each member participating in monthly practice.'

The company was located on North 10th St. in a frame building. A large bell served as an alarm until about 1923 when an electric siren was purchased. Their first equipment consisted of two hose carts, a hook-and-ladder wagon, six buckets, and five lanterns. In March, 1890, the department gave a ball to defray the expense of uniforms.

The first fire in Geneva after the completion of the new

water system occurred on September 11, 1890. The barn of C. A. Smith burned to the ground with all its contents. The hose companies were promptly on hand, and though too late to save the barn, prevented its spreading further, which it might have done without them, as the wind was very high.

A terrific explosion occurred on August 16, 1893, at 5 A.M. The fire took place in the Fisher Block in rooms occupied by Byron Mershon, grocer, and J. R. Ballard, boots and shoes. One of the upper rooms was occupied by Ryson & Co. Photo Gallery. The blaze was a loss of \$16,000. Frame buildings adjoining this block were saved.

At 4:30 a.m. on April 9, 1894, a fire started in a frame building owned by L. Fiegenbaum and rented by J. P. Desher for a clothing store. The fire swept to W. L. Spears & Co. hardware store, which had a machinery house in the rear filled with new farm implements. The fire also destroyed one-half of a building owned by the First National Bank.

A laundry and livery stable burned in 1903 and a frame restaurant building in 1904.

A large fire causing a gross loss of \$33,400 occurred at 3 A.M. on October 28, 1904. Destroyed were the Fraternity Temple and properties, property of Company G, Fillmore Co. Telephone Co., Geneva State Bank, and tenants' property on the first floor, and the basement was burned and damaged. The fire originated in the Benson & Hensley restaurant in the little Geiselman frame building that stood next to the west side of the Temple Building (Geneva State Bank location). At first the water pressure seemed below normal, as it was impossible for the hose stream to reach the windows on the second floor. This difficulty was overcome, but later during the fire one of the pumps refused to produce water. The only possible explanation was perhaps an injury or disarrangement of the check valve.

In 1908, the Fillmore Hotel was burned and in 1910 the Citizens State Bank on the northeast corner of 9th and G Sts. was destroyed by fire. On February 26, 1912, a fire estimated at \$25,000 destroyed the Boston Store on 9th St., located the first door north of the Signal office in the brick building that replaced a livery barn, damaging the adjoining



Photo from Mrs. C. C. Camp Masonic Temple Fire (Citizens Bank), February 13, 1910.



Geneva firemen pulling a ladder and bucket cart, about 1913. Left to right: Sam Walker, Fred Eaton, Fred Ford, Harry Ford, Marian Walker, M. W. Dinneen. Notice Lake's Auto Garage at right.

post office and Nebraska Signal. The mail was saved, however. The local Independent Telephone Co. sustained some damage.

In 1915, the present City Hall was built and the Geneva

Hose Company moved into its present location.

In 1917, the firemen were still using their hose carts and were badly in need of a fire truck. That same year the city purchased a Ford fire truck, its first motor-driven vehicle. The city council, which had been asked to purchase one, did so without consulting the firemen as to the type they wanted. This created such a situation that the men all resigned. Knowing that the town could not be without fire protection, a new company was soon organized. W. E. Bruce was made fire chief, a position he held for 18 years; president, Charles Underwood; vice-president, Clay Thomas; secretary, Bert A. Lynn; treasurer, H. E. Fellows. The men then set to work to install on this truck the necessary equipment.

Several years later a second-hand Chevrolet truck was secured. The Mowry fire of 1936 showed the great need for a pumper truck and within a short time it was purchased. On numerous occasions this truck was called out of town; since this left the town without adequate protection, the council purchased another Chevrolet truck to answer fire calls in the country and surrounding towns.

On May 6, 1931, the firemen aided a fellow member when his 19-month-old daughter fell into an abandoned well. After many hours of digging they were successful in returning Carol unharmed to her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Brower.



Photo from Mrs. Carol Shafer Carol Brower rescue, May 6, 1931.

In 1931, an attempt was made to organize a rural fire association. After some 21 years of effort, this dream became a reality in 1952.

On the morning of July 28, 1936, fire completely destroyed the double brick building at the northwest corner of the courthouse square, the Hinkle Package Store, Mowry Tent & Awning and Radio business, and Fiegenbaum's Jewelry Store. Mr. Mowry had had a very interesting display of antique items in his building; just a few weeks before the fire, however, he had moved them to the House of Yesterday at Hastings, Nebraska. The loss of the buildings and their contents was estimated at \$10,000. The Sutton, York, and Ohiowa fire departments were summoned to give aid.

The Bedford Produce Co. building on the west side of the courthouse square, along with all its contents, was completely destroyed on October 26, 1937. Two International trucks were also destroyed. Grave danger existed for the Coryell filling station on the south and the Barker & Heath ice plant on the north. Without the new city pumper engine, these two would have burned also. The pumper at this fire saved enough property to pay its cost.

In 1938, during the Fillmore County Fair, the grandstand, numerous concessions, and the city chemical truck were all destroyed. Fair officials estimated the total loss at \$20,000. Fortunately the fire occurred between the after-

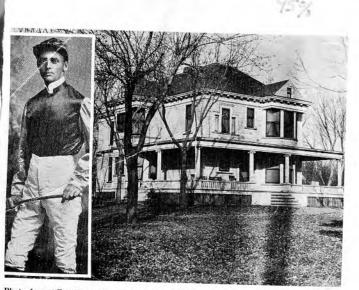


Photo from "Frank W. Sloan," by C. H. Sloan Courtesy Geneva State Bank Charles A. Thorpe residence. Inset: Charles Thorpe, world-famous jockey.

Mordecai Pangle, son of Isaac Glass Pangle, was born in Lima, Ohio, in 1838. He enlisted in the Union Army (6th Ohio Light Artillery) and was mustered out in 1865. He married Rebecca Carpenter in 1869, and they became the parents of 11 children.

In 1871, he came West looking for land. He came from Delphos, Ohio, to Lincoln by train, and then walked to the present farm location (SE V_4 of Sec. 22) and staked a claim. Then he walked to Nebraska City to tile his claim, paid \$1 per acre to squatters to relinquish the land, and went back to Ohio. He had to return within six months and live on this land for five years to hold his claim.

In September, 1871, Mr. Pangle drove a team and wagon from Delphos to Chicago. There he purchased a cookstove for \$30, and some lumber. These and their other goods he loaded on a railroad car and came to the end of the line (at Crete), and from Crete he drove to the homestead. While in Chicago, he wrote to his wife and told her to address her letters to Empire, Fillmore County, Nebraska.

Mr. Pangle built a dugout and a barn. When he had lived on the homestead 18 months, his wife and three children came West. By this time the roadroad was built to Fairmont. No one was at the depot to meet her. (Mord had not received her letter telling when she was arriving, as the mail sometimes was not delivered for two weeks.) The railroad agent, who knew the general location of the farm, offered to take her to her new home in his wagon. When she reached the place which she thought might be her husband's farm, she



Photo from Nebraska Signal Grandstand fire at fairgrounds, September 15, 1938.

noon and evening performances and no one was seriously injured.

The Economy Paint Mill burned in 1939 and the Ellison Cafe in 1943. The Ellison fire proved very dangerous to the adjoining filling station and a near-by home, but both were saved.

In January, 1945, the Geneva Mill was damaged by fire. Firemen fought the fire for a full week, because the grain blazed up intermittently. The owners, John and Charles Grothe, rebuilt the mill.

The last large fire was the Geneva High School Gymnasium on April 29, 1953. A new gym has now been built and the damaged gym has been repaired and is now being used for classroom space.

The fire company is composed of 30 men. Bert A. Lynn recorded the minutes of the first reorganization and served as secretary and treasurer for 44 years until he retired in 1964. Tom Brower, another faithful member (died December 30, 1965), served for more than 32 years. The following men of the present company (1967) have served for 20 years or more: Harry Helton, Kenneth Heisey, Wilbur Kelch, Leslie Shuster, Harold Stiers, Jim Willy, and Wayne Chapman.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal Long-time members of the Geneva Fire Department: Harry Helton, Tom Brower (deceased), Bert Lynn.

The company has two well-equipped trucks, and also houses the truck of the rural fire organization, which they also operate.

The firemen have always contributed generously to worth-while projects. Over the years, by selling magazines, they have accumulated 10 hospital beds and five wheel-chairs. These are available without charge to any resident of Fillmore County.

—Mrs. Clair Christiancy

City Park

On October 29, 1935, the city council voted bonds not to exceed \$10,000 to buy land for a city park and swimming pool.

The Federal Emergency Administration gave the city a P.W.A. grant not to exceed 45 per cent of the completion cost of the project nor in any event the sum of \$6,955. Contracts were let to A. E. Brabam of Geneva for plumbing; A. Biba Construction Co. of Geneva and E. W. Nichols Construction Co. of Fairmont for the construction; and Everson Filter Co. of Chicago for the filtration plant. Total cost of







Geneva City Park Facilities. Top: Club House. Center: Swimming Pool. Bottom: Paul W. Curtiss Memorial Bandstand.

project was \$15,506.88. C. G. Hrubesky was employed as engineer in designing, erecting, and constructing the project.

On June 17, 1936, at 1:30 P.M. a large crowd participated in a dedicatory ceremony for the new city park and swimming pool. Those in charge of the pool estimated 300 persons swam that day. Robert Miller was swimming instructor and Curt Ogg was in charge of the grounds.

The city has since established a recreation and picnic ground on the rest of the land it owns north and east of the swimming pool. Tennis courts are located to the northeast, a ball field on the east, and picnic grounds between the pool and ball field.

In 1941 the Geneva Woman's Club aroused interest in a shelter house at the park. By June, 1942, a new clubhouse, at a cost of nearly \$1,600, was completed under the leadership of the Woman's Club and other local organizations. The cottonwood logs used in the building were donated by and removed from a farm owned by the Geneva State Bank.

On February 3, 1947, City Engineer C. G. Hrubesky filed plans and specifications for further park improvements. At the city election on April 1, 1947, the voters approved a \$5,000 bond issue for the construction, building, and erection of a public lighting system and ball park, to be located across the street south of the clubhouse, and so the present ball park was built.

In June, 1950, West Brothers of Fairmont were given a contract to erect a bandstand east of the clubhouse at a cost of \$3,979. On the evening of July 27, 1951, a mass band concert was given at the newly completed bandstand and it was officially named the "Paul W. Curtiss Memorial Bandstand." The members of this special band had played under Paul's direction at some time during his more than 30 years

of conducting the city band.

The latest improvement to be built at the park was the modern rest rooms constructed in 1955.

Until this park was constructed the "Courthouse Block" was used for recreational activities and celebrations. In 1896, a bicycle track was built around the edge of the block by the Bicycle Club. Later, a croquet ground and horseshoe court were constructed on the east end of the block; these were wiped out when the parking lot was built. A bandstand was located at the west end of the park area. In earlier days a "swimming hole" was located in the vicinity of the present city auditorium.



"Ol' Swimmin' Hole," located ½ block west of present City Auditorium, was constructed by J. G. Burress about 1897.

Public Library

The Geneva Public Library was originally the idea of Dr. H. L. Smith. In June, 1897, Dr. Smith donated some 2,000 books from his personal library to the Masonic and Odd Fellows orders for public use. These books were housed in a room on the third floor of the Masonic Temple.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal Dr. H. L. Smith, originator of the Geneva Public Library.

The library was first placed under a board of nine trustees from the Masonic and Odd Fellows orders. The lodges were to alternate in the majority of the board year by year. J. M. Ward was president and W. H. Stewart was secretary of the first board.

The library was later moved to a room on the first floor of the Citizens Bank building at 9th and G Sts. Dr. Smith granted free rent on condition that the library belong to the City of Geneva on approval of the Masons and the Odd Fellows; this approval was given. The library was accepted by the city and on January 15, 1906, Mayor A. H. Stevens appointed the first city library board. On November 12, 1906, the library board appointed Miss Nellie Williams, who later became the wife of W. C. Bleaven of Washington, D. C., as the first librarian at the salary of \$21 per month. She served until November, 1915, when she took a position with the State Library Commission at Lincoln.

When the library was opened as a city institution on January 1, 1907, an appeal was made to residents to subscribe to magazines for the library and to donate books. The first subscription—to the *Review of Reviews* for 1907— was the gift of the Hon. Charles H. Sloan.

The building was open on Wednesday from 2 to 6 P.M. and on Saturday from 2 to 8 P.M. for the delivery and return of books. The reading room was open for "the perusal of magazines, papers, and reference books" every weekday afternoon and evening from 2 to 9 P.M. and on Sundays from 2 to 6 P.M.

On February 13, 1910, the Citizens Bank Building burned and the library suffered a loss of \$2,265.40 in books, on which \$2,000 insurance was paid. The library was given temporary quarters in the lecture room of the Baptist Church at 11th and G Sts. Later the library was housed in a rear room in the Dempster Block.

In the meantime, the trustees had taken up negotiations with Andrew Carnegie for a library building. The result was a gift of \$8,000, to which was added \$2,000 raised by popular subscription, and the present library building was erected. The ground was purchased from the Shumway heirs for \$1,900. The four Shumway heirs each gave \$100 toward this purchase and the remainder was raised by popular subscription and a Tag Day which netted over \$150. R. W. Grant of Beatrice was the architect. On May 7, 1912, L. L. Fisher's bid on the construction contract was accepted. The contract for the heating plant and hardware was awarded to Walter Spear. Mr. Skinkle supplied the lighting system and Mr. Hrubesky the cork floor matting.

The library board at the time of the erection of the present building was composed of: E. J. Dempster, Sarah (Mrs. H. P.) Wilson, B. Koehler, Elnora (Mrs. M. U.) Hadsell, the Rev. Charles Becker, Dr. J. Bixby, the Hon. Charles H. Sloan, County Superintendent Alice Jennett (later Mrs. James S. Real of Alhambra, California), and Miss Hattie Little.

The new library building was dedicated on January 7, 1913 with an open house from 2 to 6 p.m. The Geneva Military Band played at 4 p.m., and at 8 p.m. a program was given in the library audience room.

On October 17, 1917, the library received a \$1,000 bequest from the will of Mrs. Pierce B. Brayton, president of the board from June 26, 1906, until her death in October, 1911. This money established the first trust fund for the purchase of books—called the Pierce B. Brayton Trust, as the money was given in his memory.

Since then the library has received several gifts which



Courtesy Geneva State Bank Geneva Public Library.

established additional trust funds. They are as follows:

Woman's Club Revolving Fund-established June 1, 1937-\$50, current books.

Community Club Revolving Fund-established in 1944-\$200, for current books.

Martha M. Meyers Fund-established in 1945-\$500, for books for the moral education of children.

Earl H. and Grace W. Wilkins Fund-established in 1945-\$1,000,

for books of permanent value.

Miscellaneous Maintenance Fund-established in 1945. The first gift was \$2 from Lt. and Mrs. Krebs who were stationed here during World War II. Other contributions have brought this general maintenance fund to \$961 at the present time.

Josie B. Hamilton Fund-established in 1947-\$2,440, for salaries

of librarian and assistants.

Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Nichols Trust-established in 1950-\$200, for general maintenance and salaries

Grace W. Wilkins Trust-established in 1954-\$1,000 for books of an educational nature. Nettie Henry Book Shelf-established in 1955-\$100-originated

in the gift of Nettie Henry, who had taught in the Geneva Public Schools 50 years before. The members of the class of 1905 have added to this gift until it is now \$2,416.15.—Purpose, purchase of biographies useful to Geneva High School students.





Photo from Geneva Photo Co. Former Librarians at Geneva City Library. Left: Miss Nellie Williams, first librarian. Right: Mrs. Isabel Bixby, librarian 35 years

Mrs. Isabel Bixby succeeded Miss Williams as librarian in 1915 and held this position for the next 35 years—years during which the Geneva Public Library grew and increased its services. During this time free library privileges were procured by the citizens of Geneva township, Chelsea township, and for a time, Madison township.

In 1949, Mrs. T. B. Moore became acting librarian for Mrs. Bixby, who was in poor health. In 1950, Isabel Bixby retired and Thelma J. (Mrs. Howard W.) Hamilton, who had acted as librarian from June, 1950, was appointed librarian in 1951. Since that time the library has been completely modernized, with a new floor covering of asphalt tile, venetian blinds, a new lighting system, a new roof, new storm windows, attic insulation, and air-conditioning. In February, 1953, when the major part of these improvements were completed, the library held an open house both afternoon and evening.

Many clubs have made it a practice to give money each year toward book purchasing, and for some years the library has had a Memorial Shelf on which many fine books have been placed.

The following figures show library use in a typical recent as indicated in the Librarian's Annual Reports

ar, as indicated in the Librarian's Annual Repor	L.
Amount received from tax levy on Geneva property	\$6,080.43
Fines collected on overdue books	\$96.78
Number of books on shelves	12,123
Books circulated during year	13,763
Magazines circulated during year	2,510
그런 그그렇게 되었다. 이 그러워 하게 되었다고 뭐 하는 것들이 그러워 된다고 말했다. 그렇지 않아 그렇지 않아 다니다.	

The library subscribes to about 50 magazines and four newspapers. Some 1,300 individuals hold library cards.

The following persons were members of the Library Board for the term of June, 1966, to June, 1967: Dr. J. Q. Adams, president; John Bixby, vice-president; Mrs. John Fahlberg, secretary; Mrs. Sherman Ashby; and Robert B. Waring. —Thelma J. Hamilton

Fillmore County Hospital

The need for adequate hospital facilities in Fillmore County had been long recognized. The earliest hospital beginnings pre-date World War I when Dr. Royal Woods and Dr. Joseph Bixby built the two-story frame house east of the schoolhouse in Geneva, later known as the Archer house and later occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Hobart Ridpath and Marion.

These facilities, however, were wholly inadequate and it was not until late in 1925 that the first state-recognized hospital was opened in the county.



Photo from Dr. Edith Ridpath

First hospital in Geneva, built by Dr. Royal Woods and Dr. Joseph Bixby



Photo from Nebraska Signal

Fillmore Hospital, located at 324 No. 12th, in operation from 1925 to 1942-later the home of Emma Eggenberger.

Anna Eggenberger, a registered nurse, bought the large George W. Smith property located on 12th St. two blocks north of the schoolhouse on October 20, 1925, and opened a hospital which remained in continuous operation from its opening until September 1, 1942.

About March 1, 1937, Mr. and Mrs. William Armstrong of Bruning came to Geneva and converted the former home of Charles Thorpe, world-famous jockey, into a hospital which was named the Geneva General Hospital.

On September 1, 1942, the Fillmore Hospital was closed after nearly 17 years of continuous operation. On the same day Mrs. Mabel Schlecty re-opened the former Geneva General Hospital, which had been closed for nearly two years. She continued to operate this hospital until late in August, 1946, when she announced that she was closing it.

A group of Geneva businessmen, realizing the urgent need for the continued operation of a hospital in the county, met on August 26, 1946, and decided to buy the hospital and keep it going. They started a drive at 4 o'clock that afternoon and by 10 o'clock that evening had enough money

collected and pledged to assure the purchase of the hospital from Mrs. Schlecty.

On September 3, 1946, the Geneva General Hospital Association, Inc., was incorporated by C. G. Hrubesky, John H. Koehler, and Edith M. Elder, with a capital stock of \$15,000. The first board of directors consisted of Dr. Joseph Bixby, John H. Koehler, and C. G. Hrubesky.

The new corporation took over the management of the hospital October 15, 1946, with Mrs. Bertha Leeds, formerly of the old Fillmore Hospital, as manager. About a year later the management was taken over by Mr. and Mrs. Joe Bender, who continued to operate the hospital until it was closed by order of the state fire marshal January 31, 1957. After that date Fillmore County had no hospital facilities.

Those who had salvaged the old Geneva General Hospital in 1946 by the formation of the hospital corporation had realized full well that this was no permanent solution to the need for adequate hospital facilities in the county and that this was only a stopgap measure until something better could

be obtained.

Those who had formed the corporation shortly thereafter named a committee consisting of Earl H. Wilkins, chairman, John Koehler, Ross Dorrance, W. H. Weiss, J. A. Fischer, Clarence McCartney, and John Stohs to organize the county for the voting of a bond issue to build a county hospital. Architects were employed and plans prepared for a 30-bed hospital. The committee went to the county board and obtained approval to have placed on the ballot at the general election November 2, 1948, a proposition to vote \$190,000 in county bonds for the erection of a hospital. Despite many public meetings and an extensive effort on the part of the committee and many others interested in obtaining a county hospital, the proposition was defeated by 316 votes (2,003 for the measure and 2,319 against).

The county board, at the request of the committee, again placed the proposition on the ballot at the general election held November 7, 1950. The proposition and plans were the same as in 1948. This time, little public effort was made in support of the proposition and it was defeated by

950 votes (1,103 for it and 2,053 against).

The matter was not again submitted to the voters until a special election held August 10, 1954. State authorities were threatening to close the old Geneva General Hospital unless something drastic were done by way of change and improvement. The county bond issue again went on the ballot. This time, however, different plans were prepared, calling for only a 20-bed instead of a 30-bed hospital and only \$150,000 to be raised by bonds.

A new committee was formed with Earl H. Wilkins as chairman, and an extensive county-wide campaign was made. Notwithstanding this effort the proposition was defeated by 46 votes, the vote being 1,759 for and 1,805 against.

After the old Geneva General Hospital was closed by the fire marshal on January 31, 1957, people became more aware of the need for some hospital facilities in the county.

In order to get a bond issue on the ballot again, petitions were circulated throughout the county calling for a special election. New plans were prepared, this time for a 24-bed hospital. This time it was proposed that a large portion of the cost would be raised by subscription. A goal was set for a bond issue of \$97,000, private subscriptions of \$98,000 and the balance to be raised by Hill-Burton funds. Before the election, solicitors for funds had gone over the top for the \$98,000 to be raised by subscription. The special election was held June 10, 1958. The proposition this time carried almost two to one, the vote being 2,122 for and 1,150 against.

Three days after the special election the committee went to Lincoln for a hearing on Hill-Burton funds and were promised a grant of about \$130,000. The total project was planned to cost \$325,000.

On June 23, 1958, the old hospital corporation gave the old building and site to the county for the new hospital.

August 25, 1958, the Fillmore County Board of Supervisors appointed the following hospital board: Calvin Serr.



Fillmore County Hospital in 1961.

Robert Nichols, J. A. Fischer, W. R. Dorrance, and Milo Kottas. Calvin Serr was elected president, with Robert Nichols as secretary.

September 24, 1958, the county board selected the Lincoln firm of Arter & Speece as architects to design and plan the new building. On December 3, 1958, the old building was auctioned off to make way for the new construction.

After plans were prepared, a letting was held June 11, 1959. The general contract was let to the John Beall Construction Co. of Lincoln for \$182,339. The mechanical contract was let to Stewart Plumbing & Heating of Hastings for \$99,007. The electrical contract was let to Myrl Moxham for \$28,375.

Ground was broken for the new building on July 18, 1959. Dedication ceremonies and an open house were held on Sunday, February 5, 1961. —Data from Dedication Program

Roselawn Home

On June 1, 1947, Mrs. Irene Bobbitt opened the doors of the Roselawn Home. She had been caring for two wellknown Geneva citizens, Mr. and Mrs. Frank O. Edgecombe, in their home. After their deaths, Mrs. Bobbitt was urged to open a nursing home and so secured a state license to open a home for aged women in the Edgecombe residence.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Roselawn Home in 1967.

The Home opened with three guests. Within four days there were 10 occupants and soon it was operating at a capacity of 14, with a long waiting list. Applicants wrote in from various parts of Nebraska, Iowa, Wisconsin, Montana, Florida, and other states.

The Roselawn Home held religious services every Monday afternoon. The Rev. Maude Mann, Rev. W. L. Schreurs, and Dr. Walter Bachman, all of the Geneva Evangelical

United Brethren Chruch, served as pastors.

Birthdays of the guests and special holidays were always observed and friends and relatives were invited in for the festivities. The guests had television and other things to make life interesting and to make them feel at home.

On January 30, 1954, Mrs. Bobbitt was honored as Geneva's "Good Neighbor" on the air over radio station KMMJ, Grand Island. She was also nominated by the people of Geneva for "Nebraska State Mother for 1955."

The Roselawn Home, after exactly 20 years of community service, closed down on June 1, 1967, upon the opening of the newer rest home, Colonial Manor.

Colonial Manor Rest Home

This modern rest home, erected by the Turcon Construction Co. of Ainsworth, Nebraska, and owned by Goscor, Inc., of Ainsworth, is located at the north edge of Geneva



Colonial Manor, Geneva's new home for senior citizens.

east of Highway 81. It was built at a cost of approximately \$300,000 and financing of the building was arranged by the Geneva banks.

It is an attractive brick-faced structure with a pentagonal area in the center which houses the office, nurse's station, nurse's utility room, dining room, living room, personal care room, physical therapy room, and kitchen. Four wings extend from the pentagon; three of these are residence wings with space for 69 guests. The fourth wing is a maintenance wing. There are three "drive-in" showers, a whirlpool bath, and two island tubs for the residents.

Construction began in the summer of 1966 and open house was held on May 28, 1967. About 25 employees are needed to operate the home, of which Mr. Bernard Correll is the manager.

Cemetery Association

Shortly after the location and establishment of Geneva as the county seat, the inhabitants formed a cemetery association, but it apparently kept no records and filed no plat of the burying grounds with the county clerk. So no information is now available, although the ground was used for

A meeting was held at the courthouse on July 14, 1877, after a notice had been published for three weeks in the local weekly paper, the Review, to organize a Geneva Cemetery Association. At this meeting, J. A. Dempster was temporary chairman, and V. A. Jones, secretary. It was first moved and carried that they do away with all proceedings of the earlier so-called Cemetery Association and organize anew. The following trustees were then elected: C. M. Northrup, C. H. Bane, F. Heiderstadt, S. B. Camp, and J. A. Dempster; and the following residents of the county in attendance were enrolled as members: J. T. Platt, J. D. Hamilton, H. Stewart, J. A. Dempster, R. B. Likes, D. H. Goodrich, C. M. Northrup, S. Burr, S. B. Camp, J. B. Lewis, C. H. Bane, George Selby, F. Heiderstadt, M. M. Neeves, D. Warner, V. A. Jones, and V. Fifield.



One of first graves in the Geneva cemetery-William H. Ray, died July 30, 1875.

The trustees were instructed to purchase from the County Agricultural Society not to exceed 20 acres. For this purpose, Mr. F. Heiderstadt was to solicit subscriptions for lots in the new cemetery at \$5 per lot. V. A. Jones was employed to lay out the lots at 25 cents per lot, which he did on the 16th, 17th and 18th of July, 1877. It was moved and carried that all persons holding receipts in the old association be allowed first choice of lots in the new.

Thus was organized the present Cemetery Association. Later, there was received from the old association \$6.68. Mr. Heiderstadt reported on his solicitation of subscriptions, and for 20 acres off the east end of the land of the Agricultural Society, the new association paid the Agricultural Society \$55.16, and the State of Nebraska, \$144.50, a total of \$199.66.

The association then proceeded to function in routine manner until the year 1913. In April, 1913, the First Baptist Church of Geneva, having sold their church property in Geneva, submitted to the president and trustees of the asociation the following proposition: "1. To donate and place in Trust for the Permanent Care and Improvement of the Cemetery the sum of \$2,000 conditioned that the Association donate \$1,000 and lot owners and others interested donate \$3,000, making a total of \$6,000 to be put in trust, the income to be used for the Permanent Care of said Cemetery.' In October, 1913, the association donated \$1,000. The lot owners donated, at \$50 per lot, the sum of \$3,170, and thus the Permanent Care Fund was established with \$6,170 in the fund. Since that date the fund has been increased by gifts and by the payment into the fund of one-half the price of lots sold after that date. On April 1, 1956, the Permanent Care Fund amounted to \$40,688.06. After 1913, with the above start, others gave sums in trust for special purposes on special lots, and these trusts now amount to over \$4,000. So the year 1913 marks the beginning of the present financial structure of the Association.

Since that date the association has operated in regular routine manner, but now it will have to expand and enlarge its platted area.

-Guy A. Hamilton, Secretary (dated March 11, 1957)

ORGANIZATIONS

Throughout the years various groups have organized. Many are still strong in numbers and goals; some have dissolved, perhaps for lack of interest or because their purposes were fulfilled. It is impossible to obtain a history of all organizations that have had a part in the development of the city and surrounding territory, but the following clippings from the city's newspapers suggest many.

1876: I.O. of G.T. (Independent Order of Good Templars) was organized May 8, 1876, with 15 members. George Bigelow was Worthy Chief and E. B. Brown, Worthy Secretary. (At one time the organization had a membership of 150 but by 1882 had decreased to 40.)

1879: Lovers of music met at the courthouse to organize a permanent musical association. M. M. Neeves was elected chairman. Twenty members joined. Quarterly dues for men were 25 cents; ladies' dues were free. Professor Ballou was music instructor.

1879: G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic). Department Commander, Adjutant General Wood, of Omaha, completed the organization of a Post of the Grand Army of the Republic at this place last Tuesday night. The following named officers were elected and installed: Post Com'd, M. D. Williams; S.V.G., W. J. Carrier, Jr.: S.V.C., C. H. Bane; Adj't., G. P. Wintersteen; Surg., G. R. Hart; Chap., M. L. Spear; O. D., G. W. Stultz; O. G., S. Harbaugh; O. M., R. M. Hazlett; Searg't M., J. A. Dempster.

Those who signed the roll and have not been mustered are requested to be present at the next regular meeting, which will be held at the courthouse, Thursday evening next. Soldiers, please turn out; let us remember old ties, and make this organization socially a benefit.

All honorably discharged Union soldiers are cordially invited to

1881: The Geneva Woman Suffrage Association meets Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock, September 7, with Mrs. Belle G. Bigelow. Ladies and gentlemen are cordially invited to attend. Gentlemen are entitled to all privileges of the society, excepting eligibility to office.

1882: Company G, First Regiment of National Guard, was organized in the summer of 1881 and was first known as the Independent Rifles, but in the spring of 1882 it was transferred to the National Guard. In reviewing the company on July 3, 1882, the Inspector General pronounced it one of the best drilled in the state. Lieutenant N. S. Oliver, an experienced tactician, is drill master. The chief officers are George P. Wintersteen, captain; N. S. Oliver, first lieutenant; W. S. Crawford, second lieutenant.

1890: August. The Vigilant Society of Geneva, Madison, Fairmont, and West Blue Townships met at Fairmont, more than 100 determined farmers being present. The object of the society was to put a stop to horse stealing. The officers were: president, George W. Jackson; vice-president, M. Rodgers; secretary, F. F. Robbins; trea-

surer, William Searles.

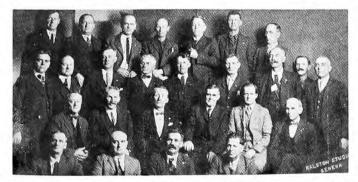


Photo from Geneva State Bank

Spanish American War Veterans. Reunion of Company G, First Nebraska Infantry (February 4, 1925). Bottom row. left to right: Charles Higginbotham, Ed Spafford, Henning Jacobson, Dr. L. H. Warner. Second row: Elwood Bender, Burton Fisher, W. J. Merrill, George H. Nelson, A. E. Holt, Dr. M. M. Akin. Third row: E. E. Placek, Harry Shumaker, Oscar Harvey, Charles Smrha, E. E. Moody, Ed Marsh, Ed Ogden, Shelley Heckman, Dr. J. M. Stewart. Top row: Carl Propst, George Ray, Art Hannes, Sylvester Eaton, Art Smith, Ward Roberts, Harry Hannes.

1896: February. Swine Breeders of the county met at the courthouse on Thursday, February 13, 1896, to organize the "Fillmore County Swine Breeders' Association." Elected the following officers for one year: President, B. F. Benedict; secretary, S. F. Antes; treasurer, G. A. Walker; directors, George E. Finley, S. Logsdon, and W. J. Hildreth. Those who enrolled as members of the temporary organization: B. F. Benedict, G. A. Walker, J. E. Fancher, George E. Finley, J. R. Scholfield, J. R. Darrow, B. C. Kenyon, Ralph Pardue, E. M. Finley, E. W. Sprout, R. A. Matteson, and W. A. Thompson of Geneva; Jacob Pflug of Exeter; Joseph Roesler, Anton Roesler of Sawyer; O. L. Skinner, C. Crocker, E. A. Tomlin, of Martland; Samuel Logsdon, Shickley; E. E. Wheeler, C. G. Sheppard, Watson Weldon of Strang; B. C. Thompson, Burress; George Jenkins, S. F. Antes, Fairmont; John Olson, Ong.

1896: Nebraska National Guard, Co. G, First Infantry, Geneva, January 10, 1896. "At the regular meeting of the company last evening it was decided to hold a special meeting of the company on next Thursday evening, January 16, 1896, at the armory in commemoration of the return of the company from the Sioux Indian war of 1890 and 1891. A cordial invitation is extended to all members of the company and their ladies as well as all veterans of that campaign who are not now members of the company. It is desired that all members wear their uniforms and all who possess Indian War badges wear them also.—C. D. Jensen, Second Lt. and Chr. Com."

1896: The Geneva Gun Club elected the following officers: President, C. E. Summers: secretary, W. L. Spear; treasurer, W. P. McCall; managers, D. I. Guthrie, C. G. Buehrer, and G. F. Beeson.



Photo from Rex Shaner

Geneva Gun Club trap shoot winners in 1967—Bill Watmore, Robert Cellar, and Cy Howells.

1896: The Geneva A.O.U.W. (Ancient Order of United Workmen) elected the following officers: Master Workman, Ed Yates; foreman, R. D. Phillips; overseer, O. D. Wilson; recorder, S. B. Camp.

1897: Geneva Lodge No. 18, subordinate lodge of the Business Men's Fraternity, was organized by the supreme president. The following were officers: president, J. B. Sixton; vice-president, A. W. Shickley; secretary, Joe Rosenstein; treasurer, Dr. W. T. Smith; guide, Dr. W. E. Propst.

1897: The members of the Cosmopolitan Club of Geneva gave a banquet in honor of Charles A. Thorpe, famous jockey, who was home for a short stay. The menu was elaborate, including lake trout, veni-

son, quail, chicken, roast veal, and loin of beef. Dick Low Lee, Geneva's Chinese laundry-man, was the chef.

1897: A mass meeting to discuss the raising of sugar beets was held at the courthouse. A. H. Steven presided and James Rodgers acted as secretary. A committee was appointed to draft a constitution for an association of beet growers.

1900: A local lodge of the Banker's Union of the World was organized in Geneva. The officers were: president, Dr. George Mozee; vice-president, Dr. A. J. Kauffman; secretary, Dr. W. T. Smith; overseer, A. R. Scott; treasurer, Mrs. Mary Held.

1902: A group of farmers met at the courthouse and formed a stock association. The following officers were elected: president, H. R. Deming; vice-president, B. F. Benedict; secretary, James Rodgers; treasurer, I. N. Trask. Eli Redfern was elected stock buyer.

1904: The Y.M.C.A. (Young Men's Christian Association) boys did not hold a meeting Monday evening because of the Fraternity Temple fire. The athletic goods that had been ordered for use in the temple room that the boys had arranged to rent are piled in a window at Picard Pharmacy awaiting disposition.

1905: April. The *Geneva Boys' Anti-Cigarette League* gave a very interesting patriotic program at the Methodist Church under direction of Mrs. A. D. Curtiss last Friday evening.

1905: Bee Keepers met and organized a group to be known as the Fillmore County Bee Keepers' Association. Members were F. B. Donisthorpe, Lee Huston, F. N. Ayres, W. R. Hitch, L. L. Fisher, J. H. Morgan, Charles Stoldorf, H. C. Smith, Carl Yates, Henry Heiderstadt, J. B. Miller, V. A. Benway, E. G. Hall, G. H. Meyers, W. J. Pierce, R. A. Matteson, L. Chestnut and C. F. Bordner. Officers elected were: R. A. Matteson, president; J. H. Morgan, secretary; committee on constitution and by-laws, J. H. Morgan, F. N. Ayres, and F. B. Donisthorpe.

1905: The Fillmore County Boys' Agricultural Association and the Girls' Domestic Science Association were organized in Geneva under the auspices of County Superintendent Henry Vauck.

1907: March. A local aerie of the Order of Eagles was organized in Geneva with more than 100 members.

1912: The Geneva Commercial Club sponsored a public meeting to consider means to secure consolidation of the two local telephone systems.

1916: The Geneva W.C.T.U. (Women's Christian Temperance Union) elected the following officers: president, Mrs. Grace Flory; first vice-president, Mrs. T. T. Hill; second vice-president, Mrs. J. T. Limback; recording secretary, Mrs. Anna Ertel; corresponding secretary, Mrs. J. E. Beeson; treasurer, Anna Wernimont.

1917: The Fillmore County Hog Cholera Association was organized at the courthouse to assist in the eradication of cholera.

1918: Farmers from the various townships met at the courthouse to organize a county farm bureau, now the extension service. L. Chestnut was elected temporary chairman and C. J. Watson temporary secretary.

1918: In response to a call by the *Fillmore County Threshermen's Association*. 77 men gathered at the courthouse to perfect an organization. The saving of grain was also discussed.

1922: February. About 75 men met at the courthouse to discuss the advisability of organizing a co-operative grain marketing company. A temporary organization was formed with John P. Davis as chairman and J. H. Morgan as secretary.

1922: March. Members of the Geneva Epworth League gave the play, "Mary Jane's Pa," at the city auditorium.

1933: The Fillmore County young men selected for government reforestation work were sent to Fort Crook. This work was later changed to the C.C.C. (Civilian Conservation Corps).

1933: July. A temporary organization was formed to put the government wheat allotment program into effect.

1934: April. The county F.E.R.A. (Federal Emergency Relief Association) staff was organized to handle the federal relief work in

the county.

1935: The Fillmore County Old Age Pension Board held its first
meeting. The members were R. A. Matteson, Geneva; Henry Jensen,
Exeter; E. W. McFarland, Ohiowa: Tom Fitzgerald, Grafton; and

Albert Thornton, Shickley.

1942: The Geneva Community Club organized a "housing bureau" with headquarters in the city auditorium. Bert Lynn was in charge of the offices, which helped find housing for people coming to Geneva to work on the air base.

1948: Several Geneva organizations co-operated to organize a summer recreation program for grade-school-age youngsters. Principal M. L. Christensen was selected to direct the program.

American Legion

After the end of World War I, several local veterans met at the Geneva courthouse to form an American Legion post, which was at first called Fillmore Post No. 68. A few years later the name was changed to Sloan-Bolton Post No. 68 in memory of Frank Blaine Sloan and Clarence J. Bolton.

The charter was granted on September 13, 1919. Commander at that time was Donald D. Donovan. The charter members were M. Francis Hourigan, Thomas E. Ashton, Arthur A. Weis, William P. Schneider, Walter Weis, Andrew



Photo from Nebraska Signal

Geneva Legion Baseball Team (1960). Standing, left to right: Ron Kleinschmidt, Rod Schoenholz, Jim Weiss, Jim Everts, Ken Lefever, Dick Nelson, Dick Newman, Fred Lapcheska, Bob Nunns, Bob Higel, Jerry Parks, Duane Schrock. Kneeling: Jim Joe, Dick Everts, Dennis Bumgarner, Dan Stengel, Larry Lichti, Larry Bornschlegl, Gary Suhr (bat boy).

N. Schaf, Charles Edmond Rock, William Aldrup, Robert B. Waring, Eric Johnson, Frank F. Fiedler, William T. Saul, Clay Thomas, Donald D. Donovan, and Roscoe H. Mohrman.

The meetings were at first held in various buildings in town. Following the end of World War II, the Legion purchased a large brick building on Main Street, formerly known as the Economy Paint Mills. After extensive remodeling, it was dedicated on July 4, 1947.

The Legion sponsors a Geneva High School junior to Cornhusker Boys' State each spring; assists several other organizations in presenting a summer recreation program for boys and girls; sponsors a Legion Junior Baseball Team; sponsors Boys' and Girls' County Government Day; and presents a Certificate of Distinguished Achievement each year to an eighth-grade boy and girl.

The officers in 1966-67 were: Charles Massoth, commander; Henry Reinsch, vice-commander; Mervin Leonard, adjutant; Melvin Ralston, finance officer; Willard Mussman, service officer; and Wilson Miller, chaplain.

Legion Auxiliary

The Sloan-Bolton Post No. 68 was organized in the spring of 1920. The first meeting was held in the City Auditorium on August 19, 1920. Mrs. J. K. Waring was elected the first president; Mrs. R. P. Wilson, vice-president; Regene Rock, secretary; and Mrs. Cora Smith, treasurer. Mrs. Rock, Mrs. Gilmore, and Mrs. Barker were the Executive Committee. Dues were fixed at 25 cents for National, 50 cents for State, and 25 cents for Local.



Photo from Geneva Photo Co.

American Legion Auxiliary (1967). Seated, left to right: Mrs. Bert Lynn, Mrs. Armin Ackerman, Mrs. Ralph Gipson, JoAnn Placek. Back row: Mrs. Porter Sloan, Mrs. Henry Steinacher, Mrs. Wilson Miller, Mrs. Marcella Placek, Mrs. Henry Reinsch, Mrs. Harry Carlson, Mrs. George DuBois.

Charter members were Mrs. Matthew Rock, Mrs. William Baroch, Mrs. Fred Kenny, Mrs. J. K. Waring, Mrs. Sarah E. Wilson, Mrs. Cora M. Smith, Mrs. Cynthia M. Hill, Mrs. Cora Ashton, Mrs. Emma P. Sloan, Mrs. Lillian Sloan, Mrs. Hannah Gilmore, Mrs. Mary Parris, and Regene M. Rock, all from Geneva, Nebraska.

The Auxiliary is kept busy throughout the year with many activities. They give a \$50 donation to the park recreation fund. They send a check and make gifts for the Veterans' Gift Shop in Lincoln and also at Christmas time make four Tarlton Men which are filled with cigarettes, cards, socks, and other small items. They sponsor a girl to the Girls' State each year, make close to 100 wreaths for the veterans on Decoration Day, sell poppies in the spring for the veterans, give a check to the "Yanks who gave" at Christmas time, and give Hallowe'en parties for one or two grades of the public school. They have a "Little Red Schoolhouse" to donate to at each meeting, which collects money for nurses' scholarships; there is usually one girl from the local high school eligible for nursing scholarships. They serve lunches for the monthly square dances. They send cards to all who are ill, or in time of death (for immediate members, they send flowers). They give \$2 to each new baby born to a member of the Auxiliary. Each spring the Legion Auxiliary gives an annual birthday dinner for the Legion; that in March, 1968, was its 48th such dinner.

The following have served as presidents of the organiza-

tion:

Mrs. J. K. Waring Mrs. Cora Smith Mrs. Percy Bedford Mrs. Catherine Schuelzky Mrs. Emma Crawford Phyllis Walker

Mrs. Naomi Lockard Mildred Howell Mary Parris Vera Waring

Blanche Kroll Mina Churchill Margaret Johnson Muriel Pearson Dona Jean Brower Lois Weis Marcella Placek Ann (Mrs. W. E.) McDonald

Mrs. Agnes Baroch Lillian (Mrs. Porter) Sloan Marjorie (Mrs. Henry)

Reinsch Mrs. Henry Steinacher Mrs. Armon Ackerman Louise (Mrs. Ralph) Gipson

Beta Sigma Phi

The Geneva Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi was organized on Founder's Day, April 30, 1947, with 8 charter members, one transfer from Colorado Upsilon, the director and sponsor present. Beta Sigma Phi is a nonacademic organization. Its aims and activities are social, cultural, and educational. Meetings are held twice monthly.



Photo from Mrs. Edith Elder

Beta Sigma Phi-first initiation group in 1947. Back row, left to right: Dorothy Allgood, Marjorie Yates, Margaret Fahlberg, Edna Tucker (sponsor), Evelyn Lauber, Shirley Isley, Mary Becker, Helen O'Brien. Dorothy Hofferber, Ann Jirkovsky, Mrs. Elder (director). Seated on floor: Mary McPeck, Betty Caton, Camilla Reinsch, Patty Kline

The first 9 members were: Mary Hoarty Becker, Shirley Isley Larkin, Margaret Fahlberg, Mary McPeck, Helen O'Brien Jennett, Evelyn Lauber, Ann Jirkovsky McDonald, Betty Caton Bumgarner, and Camilla Reinsch Rosener.

Mrs. Edith Elder and Mrs. Edna Dennis Tucker were made director and sponsor of Beta Sigma Phi in 1947. Mrs. Blanche Rosenau was director for one year. In 1952 Mrs. Tucker was made an honorary member and Miss Mae Matson was made sponsor; she still remains the same. Mrs. Elder was director until 1957 when she also was made an honorary

member. Mrs. Elder became director again in 1958 and remains in that role (1967).

Space prevents our listing all members since our founding, but our presidents have been these: 1947-48, Margaret Fahlberg; 1948-49, Shirley Isley Larkin; 1949-50, Erma Burch and Helen O'Brien Jennett; 1950-51, Evelyn Lauber; 1951-52, Ann Jirkovsky McDonald; 1952-53, Erma Burch; 1953-54, Mary McPeck; 1954-55, Doris Weis; 1955-56, Norma Jean Babst; 1956-57, Shirley Asslen; 1957-58, Shirley Hughes; 1958-59, Carolyn Bernasek; 1959-60, Rosemarie O'Brien; 1960-61, Barbara Abker; 1961-62, Phyllis Steffens; 1962-63, Lorene Hofferber; 1963-64, Sharon Barbur; 1964-65, Doris Weis; 1965-67, Mary McCarthy; 1967-68, Rosemarie Thurin.

In June, 1956 all girls that had been in Beta Sigma Phi four years or more formed an Exemplar Chapter, Xi Alpha Gamma. The group, limited to 12, listed the following members in 1967; Norma Babst, Sharon Barbur, Erma Burch, Dorothy Eich, Lorene Hofferber, Helen Hromadka, Mary McCarthy, Ann McDonald, Mary McPeck, Phyllis Stephens, Rosemarie Thurin, Doris Weis, Mrs. Elder (director), and Mae Matson (sponsor).

The funds we raise from our different projects have gone to help redecorate the hospital, to the Brownie and Cub Scouts, and for books for the library. We were always on call to Mrs. Bobbitt of Roselawn Nursing Home. We give yearly to the March of Dimes, Red Cross, Cancer and Heart funds. Our organization has chapters in every state of the Union and in foreign countries.

—Mrs. William Eich

Boy Scouts

It is difficult to secure a complete official record of the history of Boy Scout Troop No. 175, of Geneva; but a report of the National Council, Boy Scouts of America, New Brunswick, N.J., shows the following records of various troop organizations in Geneva:

Troop 1: Organized by a group of citizens, September,

1913; dropped September, 1914.

Troop 1: Geneva Community Club organized a troop May, 1917; dropped May, 1922.

Troop 1 (185): Organized by the Geneva public schools

December, 1925; dropped December, 1931.

Troop 162: Organized by Geneva Methodist Episcopal Church April, 1936; dropped April, 1937.

Troop 175: Organized by Geneva Community Club and



Photo from Guy Brown, Jr.

Boy Scout Troop No 175—January, 1938. Back row, left to right: James Barbur, Dr. Edward W. Day, Earl Wilkins, Guy Brown, Sr., Alva Fulton, Harry McKibben, Robert Bailey, Russell Hershey, Paul Emery, Sterling Harris, Charles Crew. Second row, left to right: Guy Brown, Jr., John Brower, Eugene Elward, William W. Wilkins, Charles Hourigan, John Edgecombe, Leonard Kelly, Vaughn Fulton, David Bertram, John Bixby, George Pickerell, Jr., George Brown. Third row, left to right: Harry Johnson, Jr., Truman Clark, Jr., Eugene Archer, Calvin McKibben, Clyde Propst (scoutmaster), Keith Hershey, Hugh F. Wilkins, James Barbur, Jr., Charles Kroll. Front row, left to right: Jack Adams, James Biba, Howard McBeth, Wallace Swanson, Robert Earl Wilkins, Francis Churchill, Bob Myers.

American Legion, December, 1935; dropped December, 1942. Troop 175: Organized by Geneva Community Club

March, 1944; dropped March, 1948.

Howard Boyd, director of registration of the National Council, in a letter dated June 17, 1966, stated: "The present troop, 175 of Geneva, was first registered in May, 1949, under the sponsorship of the Geneva Community Club. It remained active until May, 1950, after which it lapsed for five months. Your troop has had unbroken registration since that date and is now in its 17th year."

Cornhusker Council records in Lincoln indicate the troop was chartered in December, 1935, sponsored by the First Congregational Church of Geneva. Dr. Edward W. Day, pastor of the church, signed the application. J. R. Freeman was listed as scoutmaster with Charles G. McEachran as assistant. Other members of the committee were Sterling Harris, J. W. Hammond, Charles J. Crew, and Edward W. Day.

Scoutmasters

According to personal recollection of the writer and information recalled by others, Rev. B. A. Warren of the First Congregational Church of Geneva probably started the first troop in Geneva in September, 1913. He served as scoutmaster then and through the World War I years, although the charter probably was dropped between 1915 and 1917.

Chris Peterson, Geneva produce station operator, led the troop during the 1917-1922 years with others assisting. Recalled are Len J. Davis, Milford Carlson, LaVerle Peter-

son, Charles Jeremiah, and J. C. Swinbank.

R. W. Kretsinger, superintendent of schools at Geneva from 1924 to 1927, was responsible for re-activating a Scout troop in 1924, the charter being dated and issued December, 1925. He also served as scoutmaster.

Superintendent Kretsinger was followed by several highschool executives and teachers. Included were David Bize, Howard W. Hamilton, Coral Dubry, and others who assisted.

For several years in the thirties the troop was unsponsored but regular Scouting activities were carried out. Howard Hamilton was succeeded by Clyde Propst, who devoted much time and energy to the troop during several years.

Others serving as scoutmasters during the intervening years are not listed but the following names are recalled: Ben D. Fussell, Fred Waltemade, George Brown, Hugh Wilkins, Elmer Sprague, Marion Ridpath, Marion Harrington, and Floyd Richardson.

The current scoutmaster is Cliff Adcock. The troop is now sponsored by the Geneva Lions Club and seems to be on a sound basis.

Meeting Places

Through the years the Boy Scouts have met wherever they could find space, including the Congregational Church school rooms, the Methodist Church basement, a basement room under the Odd Fellows building, two or three empty buildings in the business district, Firemen's Hall, the high-school gymnasium, the second floor of the building now occupied by the Schults shoe repair shop, a cave in north Geneva that has long since been filled in but which was located just west of the Rex Shaner home, the Legion Hall, the library basement, and possibly other places utilized for short periods.

Several attempts have been made to provide separate and permanent quarters for the Scouts. One was the cabin built on Turkey Creek in 1936, located 2 miles N and 1½ miles E of Geneva. It was used briefly but was destroyed by

a mysterious fire the following year.

Following World War II, a building was moved from the Fairmont Air Base to the lots just east of the present pumphouse on North 8th St. It was remodeled and used for a time but it was never completed. Troop inactivity caused the building to deteriorate and it was later demolished.

The current drive by the Geneva Lions Club to erect a building in the city park promises to meet a long-felt need. Wendell Lauber, as president of the club, during 1966 spearheaded the drive to get the building started. It was completed and dedicated in mid-1967. The building is also used by other organizations, including the Girl Scouts, and also for the public.

Eagle Scouts

It has been impossible to secure a complete list of all Geneva Boy Scouts who have attained the rank of Eagle Scout, but the following are among those who have done so: Norman Sothan, Elmer Sprague, Jr., Hugh Campbell Wilkins, Paul Weis, Tom Weis, James Hammond, Quinton Friesen, and Larry Heath. -Howard W. Hamilton

Chamber of Commerce

On November 20, 1914, businessmen of the city met in the Commercial Club room in the Citizens Bank Building, with J. A. Harris in the chair. The revised constitution was read and was then signed by the following persons:

J. A. Harris, C. C. Spangler, W. H. Stewart, Newton Hitch, Fred Picard, J. L. Limback, N. E. Thomas, F. L. Beck, Charles H. Sloan, C. G. Hrubesky, A. E. Holt, F. O. Edgecombe, F. H. Hitch, J. Delaney, F. A. Montgomery, R. H. Holbrook, W. H. Sissler, H. E. Stowell, L. F. Johnson, C. B. Reeve, N. H. Blakely, F. S. Bailey, F. R. Dana, F. H. Camp, W. C. Peterson, and A. Koehler.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Geneva Chamber of Commerce honoring 96th birthday (in September, 1964) of William Manning (who opened a bakery in 1901). Some of his long-time friends and fellow Chamber members are (left to right): Ben Koehler, Tyler Edgecombe, Guy Brown, Sr., William Manning, Earl Wilkins, Mrs. Edith Elder (in jewelry business in Geneva 49 years), Wayne Winchell.

F. O. Edgecombe was nominated and unanimously elected president of the association. From a slate of eight names, four were elected directors: F. Picard, A. Koehler, L. F. Johnson, and J. A. Harris. C. C. Spangler was appointed secretary by the board of directors at \$10 per month.

Meetings have been held in the Geneva Hotel, cafes, the Geneva Community Club House, the Fire Hall, and the

V. F. W. Hall.

The officers in 1966-67 were: president, Milford Scarlett; vice-president, Clyde Lambertz; secretary and treasurer, Charlene Brower; directors, Walter O'Neal, Orville Ellison, Leon Walker, Hugh Wilkins, and Joe Adamson.

The Business Men's Club was known as the Geneva Community Club for a number of years, but in 1951 it voted to join the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, and it now goes under the name of the Geneva Chamber of Commerce.

The purpose of the Chamber of Commerce is to promote a better community in which to live, to help with 4-H work, to sponsor a recreational program for the children during the summer months, and to stimulate better business for the merchants. A large Christmas program of decorating the streets and courthouse and an Easter program for the children of the trade territory are annual projects.

Past presidents: 1915, Frank O. Edgecombe; 1916, W. R. Fulton; 1917, Ed J. Pierce; 1918, Dr. L. H. Werner; 1919, Fred Picard, Sr.; 1920, Frank W. Smith; 1921, H. P. Wilson; 1922, R. A. Matteson; 1923, L. C. Laun; 1924, G. R. Borland; 1925, Guy A. Hamilton; 1926, W. L. Chenoweth; 1927, John Koehler; 1928, Harry McKibbin; 1929, Harry

Vanier; 1930, Ben Koehler; 1931, Dr. Joseph Bixby; 1932, Guy Brown, Sr., L. O. Swails; 1933, Dr. J. Q. Adams; 1934, A. B. Cope; 1935,
 George Koehler; 1936, Chan Hrubesky; 1937, Earl H. Wilkins; 1938, Charles McEachran, Paul Curtiss; 1939, J. W. Hammond; 1940, Charles Grothe; 1941, C. N. Humphrey; 1942, Sterling Harris; 1943, H. B. Simon; 1944, Carl E. Schneider; 1945, Mervin Bedford; 1946, Tyler Edgecombe; 1947, John C. Gewacke; 1948, Howard W. Hamilton, Frank Friesen; 1949, Elmer Purdy; 1950, Vaughn Fulton; 1951, Howard W. Hamilton; 1952, Frank A. Martin; 1953, Hugh Wilkins; 1954, Wesley Lechtenberger; 1955, Howard T. Hershey; 1956, John R. Friesen; 1957, Ray Bull; 1958, K. O. Nelson; 1959, Ralph Reemts; 1960, Joe Bixby; 1961, John Edgecombe; 1962, John Baumfalk and Ralph Gipson; 1963, Wallace Swanson; 1964, Phil Kline and Jim Brumbaugh; 1965, Joe Adamson; 1966, Milford Scarlett.

Past secretaries: 1915-16, G. S. Spangler; 1917-19, F. H. Hitch; 1920-35, Tyler Edgecombe; 1936, Charles McEachran; 1937-39, Wesley Ogg; 1940-46, Guy A. Hamilton; 1947-63, Wayne Winchell; 1964-68, Charlene (Mrs. John) Brower.

Circle 8 Square Dance Club

On August 3, 1953, 12 couples organized the Circle 8 Square Dance Club, with Ray Ainsworth, president; Mrs. Reno Weis, secretary; and Mrs. Clyde Jacobsen, treasurer. The organization was founded for the purpose of family recreation. A constitution and by-laws were made, and a membership limit of 200 was set-members to be admitted only after application had been approved by the executive board. When parents have membership, the children may also attend the club dances. The use of alcoholic beverages is strictly prohibited; violation results in forfeiture of membership. The officers consist of a president, secretary, treasurer, board of directors, and entertainment committee.



Photo from James Barbur

Circle 8 Square Dance Club starting the Hospital Memorial fund in 1955. Left to right: John Bixby, Dr. V. S. Lynn, James Barbur, president of Civil 2014 (1975) ident of Circle 8; Mr. Barbur is presenting a check to members of the Board of Directors.

Although the club's primary purpose is to promote family fellowship, it has benefit dances throughout the year and the net proceeds are given to various groups such as March of Dimes, Heart Fund, and the local baseball treasury. In May, 1955, the club was the first donor to the Memorial Hospital fund set up in 1952.

Presidents and secretaries of the club have been:

	Presidents	Secretaries
1953-54	Ray Ainsworth	Mrs. Reno Weis
1954-55	James B. Barbur	Mrs. John Brooke
1955-56	Virgil Clinkenbeard	Mrs. Howard Miller
1956-57	Ed Newman	Mrs. Ben Koehler
1957-58	Charles Grothe	Mrs. Bernard Weis
1958-59	Ben Koehler	Mrs. Fred Slepicka
1959-60	Fred Slepicka	Mrs. James Barbur

Daughters of Union Veterans

Barbara Frietchie Tent, Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, 1861-1865, was organized in Geneva on July 18, 1921, by Department President Georgia Priestly of Fremont. The following names were on the charter: Martha Walker, Pearl Walker, Rose Wells, Stella Gilmore, Clara Thomas, Elizabeth Ford, Ethel Ford, Gladys Anderson, Beulah Wells, Mary McKibben, Elsie Laurine, and Hannah Gilmore.

The first officers were: president, Elsie Laurine; senior vice, Hannah Gilmore; junior vice, Mary McKibben; chaplain, Elizabeth Ford; treasurer, Clara Thomas; patriotic instructor, Martha Walker; secretary, Stella Gilmore.

We hold membership in the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies and in the Women's Patriotic Conference on National Defense. Through our legislative committees and the National Defense Committee, we keep in close touch with the pulse of the nation and in tune to the needs of proper patriotic sentiment.

We are alert to the courage and vision of our fathers when they opened the doors to our organization, that nothing will admit you excepting the noble heritage of being a direct lineal descendant of honorably discharged soldiers, sailors, or marines who served their country for the Union between 1861 and 1865.

At present (1967) our Tent has 5 members. Our oldest member now is Mary Kreachbaum.

It was the pleasure of our District, with Mrs. Hannah Gilmore as president, to aid in the 100th birthday celebration of Georgia Compher Hart, which occurred just a few months before her death (Dec. 18, 1952). She was the oldest member in our organization in the United States. She was the mother of Joy Hart Case.



Photo from Mrs. Hannah Gilmore Mrs. Georgia Compher Hart

We were at first associated with the Hastings Tent in District No. 5, but after other Tents relinquished their charters, Hastings was placed in District No. 4 farther west and we were placed in District No. 1 with Tents to the east and northeast.

Past presidents of our Tent are Hannah Gilmore, Mary McKibben of California, Minnie Carson of Fairmont, Joy Hart Case, Clarice Tice of Clay Center, Elizabeth Crawford, Janet Kreachbaum, Dollie Ellis, Alma Myers of Greeley, Colorado, Edith Ridpath, who is also our present (1967) president, Josie Hamilton, and Margaret Battle, both deceased.

The object of the Daughters of Union Veterans is to perpetuate the memories of our fathers and of their loyalty to the Union, and to keep alive the history of their heroic struggle for the maintenance of our free government. We spread widely the teachings of patriotism.

Our Tent has been favored with offices in our State Department. In 1935 we held three offices: president, Hannah Gilmore; secretary, Joy Hart Case; patriotic instructor, Josie Hamilton. In 1954 we had three: chaplain, Edith Ridpath; treasurer, Hannah Gilmore; press correspondent, Joy Hart Case. Joy held this office a number of times. She was national aide in 1934 and she and Department President Hannah Gilmore attended the national convention at Rochester, New York. The convention president was Mrs. Dorothy



Photo from Mrs. Hannah Gilmore
Daughters of Union Veterans and Women's Relief Corps (1933). Front
row, left to right: Unidentified, Nannie Wilkins, Minnie Carson, Clarice Loghry Tice, Hannah Gilmore, Mrs. Frank Battles, Joy Case, Josie
Hamilton, Mrs. Ed McKibbon. Middle row: Unidentified, Mrs. H.
Sheldon, Mrs. Stulz, Mrs. D. Kreachbaum, Mrs. Tom Shires. Back
row: Dr. Leonard Warner, Ethel Loghry Nicewander, Mary Kreachbaum, Elsie Bender Fisher, Mary Burt, unidentified, Mrs. Clara
Koehler, rest unidentified.



G.A.R. Veterans (1933). Back row, left to right: Henry Sheldon, George White, Ralph Stowell, T. T. Hill, A. H. Steven. Front row: T. J. Bender, David Kreachbaum, Frank E. Andrews. The fourth man is Ben F. Grant, a son-in-law of Mr. Stowell, not a veteran.

Houghton of Wichita, Kansas, formerly of Lincoln.

We hold a picnic each summer. In our earlier years members of the G.A.R. and W.R.C. gave us the pleasure of having them with us.

Our duty is to inculcate a love of country and patriotism and to promote equal rights and universal liberty.

-Hannah Gilmore



Photo from Fillmore County Farm Bureau A board meeting of the Farm Bureau, September 26, 1967. Left to right around table: Clair Christiancy, Jr.; Vaden Myers, secretary; Rodger Christiancy; Ronald Tatro; George Nelson; Vorus Myers; Richard Janing, president.

Farm Bureau

Farm Bureau first began in Fillmore County in approximately the late 1930's. At first it was a group of interested farmers meeting together, as units, in homes or schoolhouses. They discussed farmers' problems, legislation, and various issues of the day. In these early days, fertilizer and seed corn were sold.

Farm Bureau then was organized on a county basis about 1955. Insurance services were added over the state in 1948. While Farm Bureau has been inactive in the county at times, in 1967 it is a strong organization with a membership of 327 farm and town families. Today the services include all types of insurance, tires and batteries, and animal health supplies. The county office is in Geneva.

The Fillmore County Farm Bureau Women's Group has had a program the past few years of placing books in the school libraries of the county. In 1966, books were placed in seven schools. They also sponsor some contests for the young people of Farm Bureau families. An annual picnic, a Christmas party, and other meetings of interest are held at intervals during the year.

Farm Bureau is the oldest and largest farm organization in the county. Past presidents are Wayne Steiger, Calvin Serr, Bob Yates, Karl Brinkman, John Pittard, Stuart Gratopp, Rodger Christiancy, and Vorus Myers. The president in 1967 is Richard Janing.

Fillmore County Fair

The May 16, 1872, issue of the *Bulletin*, published the constitution and by-laws of the Fillmore Agricultural Society. The article stated that during the preceding winter interest had been shown and a committee had been chosen to draw up the constitution and by-laws and meet to organize in March. On the appointed day a severe storm kept from the meeting the man who had the prospective constitution and by-laws. Three of the committee of five being present, it was moved to draft a constitution as nearly like the adopted one as possible. This action later caused much dissatisfaction, so the elected president, Judge Blain, called a meeting and a committee of seven was appointed to meet with the officers elected to form the constitution and by-laws that were published.

Apparently because of lack of interest, little progress was made until the early summer of 1875, when a newly organized Fillmore County Agricultural Society board of directors filed a petition with the county supervisors asking assistance in the purchase of permanent grounds for the society. They purchased 80 acres, the S ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 36, T7, R3W, as the permanent fair grounds.

This society was organized during a period of adversity. Grasshoppers had descended upon the county and destroyed nearly everything that was edible. Yet a small band of courageous men met together to form a society to promote the agriculture of Fillmore County. The first officers were C. H. Bane, president; J. J. Jensen, secretary; H. T. Hager, W. P. Friend, J. E. Cramer, and C. A. Warner, directors.

It is almost unbelievable that a group of men would have the faith in the future exhibited by this group under conditions existing at that time. Yet, when we consider their other manifestations of faith in the future of the community, we know their actions in organizing an agricultural society were typical of their actions in other fields.

Good times followed bad times, not once but often. The faint-hearted abandoned the new country; the hardy remained to carry out the purposes of the first settlers.

Throughout the years, good and bad, the Fillmore Agricultural Society carried on. Sometimes its resources were small; sometimes they were exhausted. At times it seemed that the organization was doomed and it seemed unlikely that another county fair would be held.

The records show, however, that as spring came and crops promised a better prospect for the new year there came talk of another fair and the next fair was always held. The next fair always was to be the largest and the best. Sometimes it was, but often weather, hard times, or failure of



Photo from Geneva State Bank

County Fair Midway in the early 1900's.

events to come off as planned caused disappointment.

Those who were active in promoting the Fillmore County Fair over the years were clearly optimists by nature. Usually they served at great personal sacrifice of time and money for an organization that became part of their lives.

We learn much from reading the annual reports of past presidents of the society. First came pride or disappointment in the number and quality of agricultural exhibits. Then came pride or disappointment in the quality of entertainment furnished fair patrons. Always came elation or dejection at the size of the attending crowds.

As officers of the association have changed during its history, so has the fair itself changed. Changing methods of farming, methods of travel, and forms of entertainment, all have caused the county fair to change with them.

Whereas people once came by horse and buggy, now they come by automobile. Whereas they once came for the entire day, now they come for separate sessions, returning home between programs. Whereas once a bicycle race, a baby contest, or a horse race was considered the ultimate in entertainment, now patrons expect a thrill show, spectacular acts, fine music—or just anything new and different.

Some lament the passing of the time when exhibitors brought large assortments of fruit, dairy products, fancy work, baking, and other household arts. Many lament the absence of fine horses, poultry, and cattle. But here again change has produced different types of exhibits.

The emphasis now is upon youth, as exemplified by 4-H Club activities and the work of the county's schools. Little need be said about the accomplishments of these groups, but many may need to be reminded that they are the backbone of today's county fair.

The Fillmore County Fair, like most successful county fairs, represents a compromise between the old and the new. Undue emphasis upon either the ultra-modern or the ultraconservative probably would mark the end of such fairs.

The county fair board always has the task of pleasing the average person and in so doing aims to please the most people, always keeping in mind that the main purpose of a fair is to attract county residents to the fair grounds to see what has been done to promote agriculture in the county.

Despite changing times and the shifts in emphasis of the county fair, one thing has remained constant through the years. That is the urge of people of the county to go where others will. The average person still looks forward to fair time. It is something he probably can't explain.

The county fair has been an annual event since 1875, but the first record available appears in the Geneva *Review* for October 1, 1879:

"Fillmore County's 5th Annual Fair. The Grandest County Exhibition ever held in the State.

"Our county fair held last week was indeed a success far surpassing our hopes. The weather though dry was otherwise pleasant, and by noon of the first day—Wednesday—articles for exhibition began to come in and continue to arrive until evening of the second day. Up to noon of the second day the astonishing number of 509 entries were made up to the hour for closing entry books, and the attendance on that day was estimated at 4,000. The third and last day was the day of days and the attendance was estimated on that day to be from 5,000 to 6,000 people. The horse, cattle, and swine show, in respect to thorough breds, is as good as can be shown in the state, as their pedigrees, and records at our state fairs will prove."

Since the society was organized, three Agricultural Buildings have been constructed. The second hall, with 3,600 square feet of floor space, was erected in 1890; the old building was rearranged for a speed stable. In 1925, the present "Anniversary Hall" was built at a cost of \$15,000. This building, with two stories and a basement, is 90' long and 60' wide. The new building was dedicated the first day of the fair on September 15, 1925. The cornerstone was laid by the Masonic Grand Lodge.

Starting in 1909, the Fillmore County Fair Board has found it necessary to build three new grandstands. According to the records of the board, a new amphitheater was built in 1909, another in 1919, and a third in 1939. On the first two occasions the old structures were dismantled, much of the old material being used to build larger structures to accommodate the growing crowds. President Weis stated in the 1919 annual report, "During the year we have completed the grandstand at a cost of \$1,158.35 and now have one of the best amphitheaters of any county in the state." It was a modern building, 36' wide and 144' long. This structure, with additions and improvements, served the fair crowds until the disastrous fire of September 15, 1938.



Photo from Geneva State Bank Judges stand on quarter stretch, early 1900's.

Fifteen minutes after a capacity crowd had filled the grandstand, a blaze broke out in a concession under the seats. Bystanders calmly watched a concessionaire nonchalantly attempt to beat out the fire. Suddenly a gasoline stove exploded, showering flames over the dry timber in the structure. Within seconds, it seemed the entire grandstand was in flames. Fortunately, no lives were lost, but there was considerable damage to personal property of concessionaires.

The fair completed its annual showing that year without a grandstand. The following year the present grandstand without a roof was erected, the association spending \$1,738.83 for material, labor being furnished by W.P.A. Later the roof was added and the boxes rebuilt.

In 1910, the cattle, hog, and horse barns were moved from the south and east sides of the grounds to the present location south of the speed barns and rebuilt and enlarged. In 1921, the cattle and hog barns were again rebuilt and enlarged.

In 1921, connection was made with the city sewer plant and modern rest rooms were installed.

The most recent improvements on the fair grounds have been the construction of the two steel quonset buildings by John Wilkins Construction Co., erected in 1956 to replace the barns demolished by a severe windstorm early that same year. Because of growing interest in 4-H livestock projects, more space was needed to exhibit these animals at the fair, and so, in 1959, another shelter was built (constructed by Courtesy Construction of Geneva). All these three buildings were constructed with the financial aid of Ak-Sar-Ben grants.

Following is a list of presidents and secretaries that served the Fillmore County Association throughout the years. Since the fair board records prior to 1900 have become misplaced, the list of officers before 1900 is incomplete. Those available have been compiled from the newspaper files.

Year	President	Secretary
1872	Judge Blain	
1873	David Lee	A. W. Chase
1874		
1875	C. H. Bane	J. J. Jensen

Year	President	Secretary
1876		
1877		
1878	M. M. Neeves	
1879	J. J. Jensen	
1880		
1881		
1882	J. F. Coulter	
1883	C. B. Darrow	V. A. Jones
1884		
1885	J. J. Jensen	E. J. Scott
1886		
1887		
1888		
1889	J. J. Jensen	
1890		
1891	J. Jensen	J. D. Hamilton
1892	J. Jensen	
1893	F. H. Briggs	
1894	F. H. Briggs	W. H. Cooksey
1895	F. H. Briggs	
1896	A. H. Steven	J. D. Hamilton
1897		
1898		
1899	H. R. Deming	F. M. Flory
1900	Lee Huston	F. M. Flory
1901		F. M. Flory
1902		J. D. Hamilton
1903		C. H. Burnett
1904		J. D. Hamilton
1905	Mark Butler	H. P. Wilson
1906	B. B. Ogg	H. P. Wilson
1907	B. B. Ogg	H. P. Wilson
1908-1	5 Jacob Weis	H. P. Wilson
1916-2	22 Jacob Weis	S. E. Ralsten
1923-2		Clay Thomas
1929-3	B1 A. A. Russell	Clay Thomas
1932-3	33 A. A. Russell	Lee W. Thompson
1934-3	38 A. A. Russell	Charles McEachran
1939	A. A. Russell	Wesley Ogg
1940-4	A. A. Russell	Howard W. Hamilton
1942-4	5 A. A. Russell	Elizabeth Drake
1946	Guy Case	Elizabeth Drake
1947-4	49 Guy Case	Howard Hamilton
1950-5	54 John Koehler	Howard Hamilton
1955-5		Sylvester Weis
	9 Kenneth Heisey	Sylvester Weis
	33 Herman Weber	Sylvester Weis
1964-6	66 John Wilkins	Sylvester Weis
1967	John Wilkins	Charles Brabec

Bert A. Lynn holds the record of service for length of time served in one office—34 years as treasurer of the Fillmore County Agricultural Society. He was elected to this office in 1920.

4-H Clubs

Little did the handful of rural school teachers and county superintendents of over a half century ago, who tried to make their courses of study fit into the home life of their students, visualize the huge 4-H program of today. Some of them, however, maintained their singleness of purpose as state and national leaders in making it possible for thousands of farm boys and girls to appreciate the dignity of rural living through a national junior program, which grew into 4-H clubs.

A growing tide of farm sentiment for better living and improved methods of raising crops and livestock during the early years of the new century gave impetus to the efforts of these forward-looking educators. It was expressed in corn contests and, for girls, in home economics projects. Many rural educators of a half-century or more ago rebelled at the cut-and-dried textbooks and courses of study that were being handed down by city-trained educators. They found little that would appeal to the boy and girl on the farm and began searching for corrective measures. One of the first of these in this area to put the welfare of boys and girls above such things as courses of study, buildings, equipment, or books was E. C. Bishop. In applying this philosophy to his teaching in the Middle Creek district school in Seward County, Nebraska, in 1894, he launched a career that was to be of service to both Nebraska and Iowa youth.

Mr. Bishop made his greatest contribution to Nebraska boys and girls as assistant state superintendent of schools. His outstanding work with corn clubs and home projects as





Photos from Nebraska Signal Four-H boys and girls at the annual Achievement Day program at the City Auditorium, October 29, 1959. The occasion also saw the crowning of the 4-H King and Queen. Top panel: First row, left to right: Johnny Kubicek, Richard Ellison, Virginia Peterson, Gayle Unash, Cheryl Hennessey, Francis Lefler. Second row: Ronnie Perkins, Mike Johnson, Marlene Tracy, Bobby Bettger, Nancy Ellison, Glenda Meyer, Barbara Budler. Third row: Joan Novak, Lavonne Lichti, Nancy Anderson, Kathy Hesse, Eldon Swails, Frank Schultz, Frances Ogden. Bottom panel: First row, left to right: Lowell Anderson, Louis Lichti, Larry Budler, Kenneth Lefever, Ray Lee Wells, King; Elaine Guthrie, Queen; Carolyn Budler, Zona Salmen, Patty Nun. Second row: Wayne Simmons, Rodger Anderson, Marvin Real, Charles Dondlinger, Louis Becker, Jeanette Kritner, Lois Anderson, and Judy Miller.

county superintendent of York County, prompted J. L. Mc-Brien, who was elected state superintendent in 1904, to bring the young educator to Lincoln. He was asked to put on a program for the whole state patterned on his county activities. Several hundred boys in 65 counties enrolled in the junior corn club in Nebraska during 1905. For girls, a cooking project was also outlined.

Those who completed their work and made reports were invited to take part in the first state junior corn show held at

the Agricultural College in December, 1905.

During this session, the first state-wide boys' and girls' organizations were formed—the Nebraska Boys' Agricultural Association and the Girls' Domestic Science Association. They elected officers, approved a constitution and by-laws, and outlined a full program for rural youth of the state.

At this meeting Hugh Garrett of Geneva was elected secretary for the boys' club and Eva Bolton of Geneva secretary for the girls. Mabel Wythers, now Mrs. Henry Foster of Geneva, was the secretary to E. C. Bishop.

Slowly but surely the farm boys' and girls' club idea was welded into a nation-wide organization which became officially known as the 4-H Club in 1918.

Since that time many 4-H clubs have been organized and hundreds of Fillmore County 4-H youth have enjoyed and received much benefit from being 4-H members.

During these years many Fillmore County men and women have served as 4-H leaders. As of 1967, Don Kimbrough had the distinction of having served the longest time as a 4-H leader-20 years.

The following have served as County Agents: J. L. Thomas, 1918-1921; Lee W. Thompson, 1921-1935; Paige L. Hall, 1935-1941; I. E. Lindstrom, 1941-1960; Elbert Lowenstein, 1960-1965; Richard Mohrman, 1965-present.

In 1966, 47 organized 4-H Clubs were active in Fillmore County. -Mrs. Melvin Anderson

Girl Scouts

Girl Scouting was first organized in the county at Geneva on July 15, 1935, through the efforts of Mrs. Robert B. Waring, Mrs. Charles Crew, and Miss Delia Fisher. Twenty girls were enrolled in two age groups or troops.

Troop No. 1, whose members were Roma Biba, Lurene Fulton, Blanche Kroll, Betty Jean Lynn, Corene McKibben, Laverne Ogg, Frances Simon, and Lila Waring, was led by Mrs. Charles Crew, captain.

Troop No. 2, whose members were Dorothy Bertram. Betty Crew, Margaret Anne Corbitt, Marylyn Heath, Marion Kroll, Phyllis Most, Helen Most, Donna Mae McKibben, Helen Nahrgang, Katherine Sloan, Jean Ward, and Mary

Waring, was led by Miss Delia Fisher, captain.

In 1939, Troop No. 3 was organized for younger girls, with Miss Delia Fisher as captain and Miss Phyllis Mc-Kibben as lieutenant, Mrs. Robert Waring taking over leadership of Troop 2. Members of Troop 3 were Mary Adams, Carol Bender, Eloise Bender, Rosemary Biegler, Genevieve Elward, Gladys Grothe, Mary Kelley, Patty Kline, Carol Kroll, Marilyn Lynn, Doris Merrill, Patty Murrell, Ethel Most, Colleen McDonald, Dixie Beth Winchell, and Corene Woodhead.



Photo from Miss Delia Fisher

Girl Scout Troop No. 3 in camp at Horkey's Park, Crete, in 1939. Front row, left to right: Virginia Thomas, Carol Bender, Doris Merrill, Mary Adams, Mary Kelly, Colleen McDonald, Genevieve Elward, Patty Kline. Back row: Marilyn Lynn, Coreen Woodhead, Eloise Bender, Gladys Grothe, Ethel Most, Carol Kroll, Patty Murrell, Dixie Beth Winchell, Rosemary Biegler. Seated in front: Delia Fisher (captain)

In addition to the knowledge and skills acquired in earning Second and First Class ranks and proficiency badges, many point-to-point hikes, cookouts, and overnight camps were enjoyed, with week-camps at Horkey's Park at Crete in 1937, 1938, 1939, and 1940, and a 10-day trip through Rocky Mountain National Park in 1941.

Assisting as examiners during this early period of Scouting were the following: Homemaker, Miss Pearl Brown and Mrs. Victoria Day; Health and Nursing, Mrs. Blanche Rosenau; Child Nurse, Mrs. Rosella Ward; Hostess, Mrs. H. C. Walker; Life Saver and Swimming, G. Joy and R. H. Hagelin; Scholarship, H. B. Simon, Anna Kyker, Creola Wythers, Vera Ebmeier, and Jeanette McNamara; Star Finder, Mrs. Grace Wilkins; Nature, Mrs. Harry Campbell; and Craftsman, Miss Mae Matson.

Interest in Girl Scouting has varied in intensity; but some time before 1948, Mrs. Ray Holroyd had a troop, and the group was active from 1948 to 1952 under the leadership of Mrs. V. S. Lynn and Mrs. Rex Shaner. Another slight lapse of interst ended with a revival in late 1950, with Mrs. Shaner and Mrs. George Cruse as troop leaders. At the present time (1967) there are 120 girls between the ages of 7 and 15 enrolled in Girl Scout work-54 Brownies, 40 Junior Girl Scouts, and 26 Seniors and Cadettes. A total of 29 adults preside as troop leaders and troop committee members.

The Grange

In Nebraska, county agricultural associations were organized as early as the territorial period. The most important factor in rural life during the 70's, however, was a new school of social reform which was at work. The great popular movement destined to affect profoundly our political and social history through many years was the Grange, or Patrons of Husbandry. Although this organization, founded in 1867, was national in scope, it was supported most effectively in the frontier and

post-frontier regions.

The reason for the great strength of the Grange on the frontier was largely the strained financial circumstances of the pioneers. To the pressures caused by natural hazards such as drouth, hail, and blizzards were added the exactions of often unfair-indeed, often gouging-railroad freight rates, mortgage-holders, and the great centralized grain and cattle markets.

The Grange brought the isolated farmers together, welding them into a strong unit with bargaining power, and in a short time made them a force to be reckoned with. One of its principal achievements was in forcing railroad legislation into the constitution, and so giving the state some control over rates, keeping them in line with prices paid to the farmers. It also advocated a "pay as you go" policy, educating its members to save a sum before purchasing, thus enabling them to save considerable amounts in interest.

The regular meetings of the Grange brought the people together 12 or more times a year. New friendships were formed and old ones strengthened, and the discussion of the common problems of their vocation gave them courage and

made for progress.

What was originally conceived as a co-operative designed for the particular needs of farmers has evolved into an organization concerned with diversified community problems.

Several Granges were founded in Fillmore County townships in 1873 and 1874. There are few if any records of the achievements of individual groups; but it is interesting to note who the early Grangers were, and where. The Granges of those years were the following (listed in the order of their organization):

Geneva Grange No. 316 (Sept. 7, 1873): C. H. Bane, master; V. A. Jones, secretary, and wife; W. T. Barnett, H. R. Leming, David Lee, L. Rockwell, John Jensen, and wives; W. P. Renshaw, C. A. Warner, S. R. Bane, John A. Dempster, J. A. Blain, and Miss

Hannah Lemming.

Union Grange No. 317 (Belle Prairie Township; Sept. 8, 1873): H. P. Jones, master, and wife; W. M. De La Meter, secretary; J. H. Ward, A. Talbott, T. Matson, B. F. Cheesman, P. H. Williams, E. G. Beals, P. Trenary, E. Phillips, and wives; I. H. Stone, S. Holderness, George Matson, Simeon Albro, Robert Shields, William Bell, H. K. Stickney, J. H. Burwell, I. Metcalf, I. Rakestraw, S. Wilcox, and Mrs. Hester De La Meter.

Liberty Grange No. 318 (Exeter; Sept. 8, 1873): J. F. Shirley, S. O. Hubbard, J. S. Beardsley, John Lindon, Willard Logan, John Watson, S. C. Oaks, M. F. Burge, Thomas Clark, and wives; Shirley, H. Marshall, Peter Youngers, C. S. Jordan, Mathew Youngers, John Kelley, Thomas Nugent, S. P. Morris, and Elias Bean.

Hamilton Grange No. 329 (Oct. 15, 1873): E. K. Cobb, master; E. K. Fisher, secretary; I. E. Allen, W. F. Bradley, S. A. Orr, J. D. Hamilton, and wives; J. S. Brown, J. F. McNee, James C. Keeler, John Williams, S. N. Chambers, T. E. Stickle, Mrs. Lucy Cobb, and Mrs. Huldah Fisher.

Madison Grange (Dec. 6, 1873): Oliver P. Chapman, Joseph Thompson, secretary; Edwin Place, Jake Hiskey, Oliver P. Thomas Wheeler, Frank Andrews, Patrick Murphy, Chapman, Sr., Alexander McCarty, Henry Sheldon, Alfred Keller, Calvin A. Songster, Stephen Singleton, Chester Stephens, Charles C. Fouts, Charles Hole, Lewis Butterbaugh, Alfred Corp, Robert C. Williams—and numerous wives.

Exeter Grange No. 356 (about Dec. 1, 1873): Samuel E. Root, master; Warren Woodard, secretary; Orson Hager, John Dayton, Lemuel T. Mead, Willard D. Paine, John P. Drummond, John T. Borland, Daniel L. Russell, Job Hathaway, N. S. Babcock, Benja-

min F. Stilley, and Thomas B. Farmer.

Prairie Flower Grange No. 359 (Glengary Township; Dec. 6, 1873): Isaac F. Scott, master; George Tyson, secretary, and wife; Francis Story, John T. Lippencott, H. W. Brown, Thomas Gilroy, Francis Story, John T. G. W. Gesell, Robert Folden, Warner Folden, Moses Taylor, Gerry

Lippencott, Benjamin F. Bothwell-and wives

Eureka Grange No. 368 (Franklin Township-Ohiowa and Walnut Creek; Dec. 24, 1873): Thomas E. Barnett, master; Cyrus McPherson, secretary; T. F. Snow, H. McLaughlin, Morris Thomas, David Hadley, A. M. Johnston, Levi Baldwin, William Baldwin, William H. Garrison, E. V. Garrison, Thomas Hughes, Peter Garrison, George W. Morley, W. J. Medlar, Joseph Taylor, William Case, and Martin

Bryant Grange (Jan. 24, 1874): J. H. Springer, master, and wife; Samuel Teter, Andrew Williams, Elijah Shephard, W. C. Rizer, Elisha White, Edward Randall, John W. Price, Enoch A. Woodbridge, James W. Cassel, and wives; J. W. Ireland, William Keeler, George Leash, George M. Hoag, William McBeth, Lewellan R. Hoag, Nels Anderson, Genoa Chambers, H. F. Smith, and John C. Hunter.

Stanton Grange (Jan. 26, 1874): W. B. Gray, master (address:

Belle Prairie); C. A. St. John, secretary, and wife; Henry J. Davis, Daniel Axtell, Adam Wilson, H. Beach, James O. Merryman, and wives; John H. Lincoln, D. B. Lincoln, William H. Sherwood, J. M. Wilson, William Zim, Mrs. C. P. Stone, and Miss Sarah Stone.

Chelsea Grange No. 436 (Feb. 3, 1874): Cyrus Macy, master; Thomas F. Whitzel, secretary; Benjamin F. Ryman, Austin C. Shackelford, Mathew Young, Daniel Miller, Isaac Croley, John Raines, and wives; John Lawrence, P. K. Folden, Walter Churchill, David Warner, William Shackelford, W. D. Gage, Daniel R. Miller, George W. Miller, Walter Mullikin, James Swayze, Miss S. J. Bruce, Miss Emma Zerba, and Miss L. W. Andrew.

Grafton Grange No. 449 (Feb. 7, 1874): Joseph S. Le Hew, master, and wife; Joseph Tatro, Daniel Angell, Xerxes Cole, Daniel W. Besack, Norton W. Stannard, Deloss Angell, Jasper Culow, and

wives; George Tatro, Orin Angell, and Lemuel L. Evans.

Momence Grange No. 467 (Turkey Creek; Feb. 16, 1874): Giles S. Thomas, master; John Merryman, secretary, and wife; George W. Smith, Marcellus Morgan, Rudolph B. Campbell, George W. De Wolf, George Robinson, D. W. McClurg, Clinton L. Spear, W. H. Combs, and wives; James C. Howard, Samuel H. Wheeler, W. H. Wild, T. F. Combs, Hans Koch, and Mrs. Henry Combs.

Belle Prairie Grange No. 531 (March 13, Arnold, Josiah Shephard, Alexander McKinney, W. J. Donohoo, Eli Shultz, J. O. Chase, James Vasburgh, Edward Hickey, Peter Eggenberger, Ralph W. Stowell, and wives; John Taylor, A. W. Rex, and

John Shaffer.

The Nebraska Granges went into a number of co-operative business enterprises; but these failed, partly because of inadequate management, partly because of the general agricultural depression. "With the failure of its economic enterprises," writes one recent historian, "the Grange generally went into a decline; after 1875 hardly any local Granges were organized; after 1876 the order rapidly declined in Nebraska"1-and, naturally, in Fillmore County as well. Later, many of the former Grangers and other farmers joined the newer Union Alliance and the Farmers' Alliance. But "by 1876 the Grange had achieved one of its major political objectives, and that, too, may have contributed to its decline"—the constitutional provision for the regulation of railroad rates-so that its efforts were by no means wasted. The Grange at its peak had a membership of about 800,000. Today (1967) it still has more than 620,000 members, in some 7,000 local Granges.

Geneva Community Grange

One of the youngest organizations in Geneva is the Geneva Community Grange No. 403. On the evening of February 19, 1952, 26 farmers and their wives gathered in the I.O.O.F. Hall in Geneva. The Friend (Nebraska) Grange wished to organize a new Grange as a community service project. Thus the first Grange in Geneva came into being.

Of the present 88 Grangers, 34 are charter members. They are: Mr. and Mrs. Clair Christiancy, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Orville Dunkin, Mr. and Mrs. Darrel Hughes, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Jacobsen, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Sheldon Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Warren Lefever, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Nelson, Mr. and Mrs. William Novak, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Nunns, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Norman Ogden, Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Peterson, Mr. and Mrs.



Photo from Darrel Hughes

Officers of Geneva Community Grange No. 403 in 1955. Back row, left to right: Mrs. John Nun, Warren Lefever, Don Tatro, Mrs. Keith Tatro, Mrs. Orville Dunkin, Herbert Nichols, Keith Tatro, Duane Tatro, Guy Brown, Jr. Front row: Mrs. Frank Koahler, Mrs. Charles Wendell Christiancy, Darrel Hughes, Mrs. Guy Brown, Jr., Dean Richards, Mrs. Warren Lefever.

¹ James C. Olson, History of Nebraska (University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 178.

Cecil Richards, Mr. and Mrs. Dean Richards, Mr. and Mrs. Jess Richards, Mr. and Mrs. Duane Tatro, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Tatro, Mr. and Mrs. William Watmore, Jr., and Mr. and Mrs. Alvah Ward. The Grange has added new members each year.

Each year, the State and National Granges sponsor community service contests. In 1954, our Grange, entering for the first time, placed third in the state. In this year, we made a health survey of the entire county, the results of which have been discussed at several medical conventions. A Grange at Sutton was also organized in 1954.

The year 1955 proved to be one of our most rewarding and exciting ones. Members worked hard all year on community service projects, and in October our Grange was informed that we had placed first in the state contest and would receive two \$100 bonds and a plaque. All state winners were eligible for the national award of \$10,000. We soon learned that we were among the top 10 Granges of the nation and would be visited by five judges. On October 26, the Grange women prepared a luncheon to be served at the Congregational Church and a delegation of members met the judges at the Fairmont Air Base. Among our guests were the State Master, a few state officers, representatives of Geneva organizations, radio and TV men, and many Fillmore residents who had been very helpful in carrying out our projects. After the luncheon, the project chairmen told how each project had been begun, what had been accomplished, and the merits of each project.

A few of our outstanding projects in 1955 were: Sponsored day at the Fillmore County Fair; F.F.A. hog project; 20 blind road corners eliminated; and preparations for the publication of a county history. During this year, members worked 3,343 hours and traveled a total

of 9,605 miles in community service work.

Although our Grange placed only fifth in the 1955 national contest and won only \$1,000 in prize money, we felt that the year had been a dramatically successful one. The mere fact that our Grange had served its county so well as to attract nation-wide attention was enough.

In 1955, the Geneva Grange quartet won the honor of "Nebraska Grange Quartet," went on to the national contest in Cleveland, Ohio, and won fourth place. The members of this quartet were Mr. and Mrs. Guy Brown, Jr., and Mr. and Mrs. Sheldon Johnson. In 1957, the Nebraska State Grange announced a "couple of the year": Mr. and Mrs. Darrel Hughes. Two members have had the distinction of being officers in the Nebraska State Grange: Mrs. Warren Lefever, Ceres (1954), and Guy Brown, Jr., executive committee (1958-61).

Past masters of the Geneva Grange include: Donald Tatro (1952-53), Warren Lefever (1953-54), Darrel Hughes (1954-55), Charles Miller (1955-56), Guy Brown, Jr. (1956-57), Dean Richards (1957-58), Donald Moravec (1958-59), Herbert Nichols (1959-60), William Watmore (1960-61), Richard Nunns (1962-63), Oscar Nelson (1963-64), Wilson Miller (1964-65), Sheldon Johnson (1965-66), and

Charles Miller (1966-67).

Some of the Grange's 1967 projects included final steps toward the publication of the Fillmore County History; erecting a Nativity scene for Christmas in the Courthouse yard; sponsoring the 4-H Coronation at the county fair; sponsoring two 4-H youths to the Conservation Camp at Halsey; providing Christmas packages for residents of rest homes in the county; and providing a covered wagon and oxen for Centennial parades. (The wagon was built by Grangers and the oxen were grown by Granger William Novak.)

-Data from Grange members



Courtesy Nebraska Signal Geneva Junior Chamber of Commerce members presenting a kiln to the Pleasant Day school (1964). Left to right: George Volkmer, Cliff Oliver, Mrs. Ernest Heinrichs (teacher of the school), Clem Gergen, Wayne Reinsch, Charles Pearson, Tom Blevins, Leroy Hulse.

Home Demonstration Council

The Agricultural Extension Service was set up in Fillmore County in 1918. There is no record of activities until 1921, when an advisory council or committee of volunteer leaders helped to plan and direct a county-wide network of project clubs. That was the beginning of the Home Demonstration Council.

The purpose of the council, as stated in its constitution, is to serve as an advisory board for the Home Agent; to develop, strengthen, and correlate all interests aimed at advancement of home and community life in the county; to develop leadership and initiative among women; and to formulate and develop home demonstration programs for the project clubs and the 4-H clubs. The council is composed of present and past county chairmen, group chairmen of the seven training centers, two women on the county extension board, and a representative of the 4-H committee.

The Geneva Township Club was the first one organized in Fillmore County. Through the years, many women's project clubs have been organized; at present there are 32 project clubs in the county.

The women who have served as Home Agents in Fillmore County have been the following: Edna Pegler (1921-23), Edith McCone (1924-25), Lena Hauke (1926-27), Mary Runnalls (1930-34), Irene Goodhue (1934-37), Florence Emmett (1937-40), Agnes Arthaud (1940-50), Mabel Cooper (1950-53), Donna Tinkham (1953-56), and Mrs. Ardis Bates (1957 to the present.)

-Mrs. Melvin (DeVee) Anderson

Ku Klux Klan

A Geneva citizen provided the following account of the brief existence of the Ku Klux Klan:

The local Klan was organized about 1925 and included many leading citizens during the years from 1925 through 1928. Membership increased greatly during these years, but the quality of the new members was not equal to the original members.

After 1929 most of the original members dropped out and the Klan began to fall apart. In 1928, however, the local Klan entertained a large group from York who came by special train. A big parade was the outstanding event of the evening.

During 1930 the local Klan ceased to exist. During the



Photo from Mrs. Pete Kelch

Knights of Pythias Lodge of Geneva (about 1890). Bottom row, left to right: Charley Summers, Orlie Beals, Frank Burke. Second row: Fred Williams, L. G. Cobb, Walt Spear, Issac Ashton. Third row: George Green, Ed Dempster, Jesse Walker, Sam Light. Fourth row: W. H. Cooksey, E. Sandrock, Robert Sloan, Will Waite. Fifth row: Robert Turner, W. T. Mozee, Jere Donovan. Top row: Dan Haskins, H. C. Brunner, J. M. Noyse, G. E. Sorrick, Will Shickley.

earlier years of its organization, the Klan performed many charitable acts, including the distribution of food packages to the poor of the community.

While the Klan did no spectacular good things in the community, neither did it do any harm. The Klan, as Geneva and neighboring areas knew it, was not the same type of organization as the South has known it to be during the 1950's and 1960's.

There was a Woman's Auxiliary to the Klan during the time it was active.

Lions Club

In the summer of 1944, a representative of Lions International, "Stu" Holcomb, came to Geneva to see if business and professional men were interested in forming a Lions Club. The club has six basic objectives: (1) To form a body of men representative of the business and professional interests of the city and to promote a closer business and social union among them; (2) To encourage participation in concerns of commercial, civic, and industrial betterment; (3) To uphold the principles of good government; (4) To aid in furthering the interests of its members and to bring about better understanding among men; (5) To teach that organization, co-operation, and reciprocity are better than rivalry, strife, and destructive competition; (6) To encourage application of high ethical standards in business, and to try, by exchange of methods and ideas, to increase all-round efficiency.

The first meeting was held on August 23 at the Geneva Hotel. On charter night, held October 18, 1944, the following became charter members: Glen E. Felix, Dr. J. Q. Adams, Mervin V. Bedford, Dr. C. G. Delfs, James B. Barbur, Lawrence Doud, Ralph E. Reemts, David Engel, Charles Grothe, Sterling Harris, Harry Helton, K. C. Brinkman, J. W. Hammond, Harry A. Hulse, George Koehler, Ivar Lindstrom, Orval McDonald, W. E. Newell, Elmer Sprague, Waldo Schupbach, Joe Uhlig, Harry Vanier, C. M. Humphrey, and Duane Sams.

The first officers were: Mervin Bedford, president; James Barbur, 1st vice-president; Elmer Sprague, 2nd vice-president; Dr. C. G. Delfs, 3rd vice-president; Glen E. Felix, secretary-treasurer; Waverly Hammond, lion tamer; W. E. Newell, tail twister.

As a service club, the Lions Club has been specially interested in aiding the blind. It has provided glasses for needy children and paid medical bills for eye treatment.

Other useful activities have included: Donating \$500 to the Geneva General Hospital for a sterilizer; donating \$75 each summer to the boys' and girls' playground program; financing the polio shot program; sending annually two Boy Scouts to the Boy Scout Camp in New Mexico; financing a fish pond north of Geneva, on the



Photo from Geneva Photo Co. Lions Club members in new building (1967).



Photo from Geneva Photo Co Lions Club Building, constructed in 1967.

Porter Sloan land, and planting all the evergreen trees around this tract; planting trees at the County Fair grounds; purchasing materials and donating many hours of labor when various organizations helped remodel the Geneva General Hospital; sponsoring and producing a successful home-talent play in 1948; sponsoring and promoting the 1957 Agricultural Conservation Book for Fillmore County; paying the expenses for sending a boy and a girl to the state Boys' and Girls' County Government Programs; taking an annual blanket donation at local basketball games for the March of Dimes; furnishing ticket takers and gatekeepers at home football games; conducting several trapshoots; and taking an active part in promoting a new hospital for Fillmore County.

At the present time, the club meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month at 7 P.M. at the V.F.W. Hall in Geneva. The club has 44 members and a limited membership of 44.

Past presidents of the Geneva Lions Club have been: Mervin V. Bedford (1944-45), James Barbur (1945-46), Elmer Sprague (1946-47), J. W. Hammond (1947-48), C. M. Humphrey (1948-49), Howard Hershey (1949-50), I. E. Lindstrom (1950-51), Karl Brinkman (1951-52), Paul Farmer (1952-53), Robert Cellar (1953-54), Harry Helton (1954-55), Glen E. Felix (1955-56), Judson Cumberland (1956-57), Vaughn Fulton (1957-58), Ray Cellar (1958-59), Wallace Swanson (1959-60), Sherman F. Ashby (1960-61), John R. Bixby (1961-62), Dr. Charles Ashby (1962-63), Joe Adamson (1963-64), Willard Foster (1964-65), Wendell Lauber (1965-66), Claiton Lauber (1966-67), and Louis Issler (1967-68).

In 1966-67, the Lions Club erected a \$16,000 building in the City Park, dedicated to all Scouts, with a shelter house at the back of the building to allow for its being used by two groups at the same time. The building is available for community functions except when in use by Boy or Girl Scouts.

—Data from Willard Foster

Masonic Lodge

Dispensation was granted a group of Masons in Geneva, Nebraska, by Grand Master Rolland H. Oakley, to organize a probationary lodge. The first meeting under the dispensation (a term used to denote the status of a lodge before being officially instituted by the Grand Lodge) was held December 2, 1879, with the following officers:

Julius E. Spear, worshipful master; J. E. Cramer, senior warden; Sherwood Burr, junior warden; H. L. Smith, treasurer; G. P. Wintersteen, secretary; J. M. Fisher, senior deacon; B. F. Benedict, junior deacon; Mark Butler, senior steward; C. A. Warner, junior steward; and M. D. Williams, tyler.

The charter was granted to Geneva Lodge No. 79, Ancient, Free & Accepted Masons (A.F. & A.M.) on June 23, 1880. The first meeting held under the charter was October 11, 1880, with the following charter members: Benjamin F. Benedict, William H. Blain, Calvin B. Darrow, William Harrold, Edward D. Place, Hiram L. Smith, Charles A. Warner, Sherwood Burr, Mark Butler, Joseph M. Fisher, Warren C. Massey, Walter C. Scott, Julius E. Spear, George P. Wintersteen.

The following men were the first officers: Joseph M. Fisher, worshipful master; Hiram L. Smith, senior warden; Sherwood Burr, junior warden; Julius E. Spear, treasurer; Warren C. Massey, secre-



Guy Brown, Sr., being presented the Jordan Medal by Masonic Lodge No. 79 (1967). Left to right: George Brown, Tyler Edgecombe, Lee Harrold, Henry Foster, Guy Brown, Jr., Jim Biba, Earl Wilkins; Guy Brown, Sr., in wheelchair.

tary; Benjamin F. Benedict, senior deacon; George P. Wintersteen, junior deacon; Mark Butler and Charles Warner, stewards; William H. Blain, chaplain; and William Harrold, tyler.

In 1882 the membership was 34. Hesperian Lodge of Shickley, Nebraska, transferred its membership to Geneva Lodge in 1906. In former years there were also Masonic lodges at Ohiowa, Grafton, and

The Temple Craft Association erected a Masonic Temple on the third floor of the building located at what is now known as the northeast corner of 9th and G Sts. in 1890. This floor of the building was bought for the lodge by a Mason brother, Hiram Smith. That temple was razed by a conflagration February 13, 1910. The present temple was erected on the same site. This place has also been used by the Geneva Chapter 180 of the Eastern Star since that order was established.

Cornerstones laid by the Masonic order, in Geneva, were those of Trinity Chruch (October 8, 1890), the county courthouse (July 6,

1893), and the City Auditorium (April 27, 1915).

It is customary to award a bronze Jordan Medal to the oldest living members of each local Masonic lodge. This medal was first presented in 1953 to Walferd C. Peterson, who had become a Master Mason on March 15, 1890. After his death in 1955, it was presented to William Manning on August 30, 1955. Mr. Manning had become a Master Mason on April 26, 1890, at Kinsley, Kansas, later transferring to the Geneva chapter. On October 7, 1958, the lodge presented Mr. Manning a Masonic apron honoring his 68 years of Masonry. He was awarded the Gold Jordan Medal on September 7, 1961. He passed away January 23, 1966. The present holder of the bronze Jordan Medal is Clarence McCartney (deceased May 16, 1967).

Fifty-year pins are given to members with that length of membership. At the end of 1967, holders of these pins were William A. Biba, Claude J. Kimbrough, Bert A. Lynn, Robert Hill, Ben Mozee, Clarence McCartney, Horace D. Mathewson, John A. Fischer,

and Earl H. Wilkins.

The Geneva lodge has enjoyed a steady growth over the years. Its 1967 membership was 170, of whom 85 were nonresident members. Having philanthropic as well as fraternal purposes, the lodge makes regular contributions to the Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children at Fremont, the Boys' Home in Omaha, and the Old People's Home at Plattsmouth, as well as to other worthy charities. The Centennial year of Masonry in Nebraska was 1957.

The officers of the Geneva lodge in 1967 were: Leslie M. Newman, worshipful master; Joseph Adamson, senior warden; Vernon A. Wortman, junior warden; John R. Bixby, treasurer; Henry Foster, secretary; Everett Renken, senior deacon; Doyle Lade, junior deacon; David A. Portwood, chaplain; Robert J. Cellar, marshal; Melvin Kuska, senior steward; Ben D. Fussell, junior steward; and Edward

Newman, tyler.

Order of the Eastern Star

The Eastern Star is auxiliary to the Masonic Lodge, open to wives, daughters, mothers, widows, or sisters of Master Masons. It is a service organization for the care and relief of widows and orphans. Nationally, the order co-operates with the Shriners in their program of aid for crippled children. The local chapter contributes to the Nebraska Masonic Home for Old People at Plattsmouth and to the Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children at Fremont.

Geneva Chapter No. 180 of the O.E.S. was chartered May 4, 1904, with 45 charter members and with Anna Matteson as worthy matron, Hiram L. Smith as worthy patron, and Minnie Roberts as associate matron. Other charter members

were:

Emma J. Benedict, B. F. Benedict, Mary Bennett, Joseph Bixby, J. C. Bortner, Mary Bortner, C. H. Burnett, Maude Butler, R. A. Case, Elizabeth and Laura B. Donisthorpe, E. F. Elmore, Lora Harrold, R. M. Hazlett, Bertha Heald, Lee Huston, Lou Huston, Rosetta Lemmon, Richard Matteson, W. E. Purviance, G. B. Roberts, Lottie Rodgers, Austin Shackelford, Delma and Ina Shackelford, Franklin and Ida Skipton, Emma Sloan, H. L. Smith, Ella Stephenson, J. W. Stephenson, A. H. and Maude Steven, Ella West, Joe West, John W. Yates, Lura Yates, Bertha, Elnora, and Matthew Young, and Marilla Youngers.

The Geneva chapter celebrated its 60th anniversary in 1964. Fifty-year members who have been honored by the local Eastern Star have been Jessie Bearnes, Alta Brown, Guy Brown, Sr., Pearl Brown, Guy Case, Bertha Crawford, Nell Huston, Lettie Ingles, Minnie Nelson, Linnie Propst, Allie Richeson, Maude Stringfield, Mabel Trobaugh, Susie Ward, Minnie Warner, Alice Watmore, Neva

Weidman, and Nannie Wilkins.

Members who were past Grand Chapter officers were Richard

 A. Matteson, grand sentinel; Minnie Warner, grand electa, 1915;
 and Anna C. Biba, grand electa, 1939.
 The officers in 1967 were: Betty Bumgarner, worthy matron; Mervell Bumgarner, worthy patron; Sharon Barbur, associate matron; Charles Barbur, associate patron; Ethel Hall, secretary; Irene Merrill, treasurer; Edna Schneider, conductress; Mary Portwood, chaplain; Kathryn Miller, marshal; Wynona Petersen, organist; Linda Leaming, Ada; Esther Turek, Ruth; Neva Kassik, Esther; Esther Janing, Martha; Donna Brumbaugh, electa; Rhea Randall, warden; Mary Kassik, sentinel.

Through the 63 years of its existence, the local chapter has initiated or affiliated 623 members. There are 195 members at the present time (1967). Chapter meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month in the Masonic Hall on the NE corner of 9th and G Sts. The past matrons are organized into a club that meets once a month

Modern Woodmen

Modern Woodmen of America, a fraternal benefit society. with head camp located at Rock Island, Illinois, chartered Geneva Camp No. 558 in 1888. Charter members were C. J. Barnett, O. A. Beals, J. C. Clark, J. D. Carson, D. H. Caldwell, J. R. Darrow, J. H. Dempster, F. M. Flory, G. R. Green, J. S. Houchin, F. G. Limback, J. F. Morrill, J. McFadden, J. H. Phelps, C. S. Robinson, C. S. Rathbun, F. J. Stephenson, H. Sheldon, S. W. Thompson, T. S. Williams, and F. A. Wil-

In later years the camps at Martland and Burress consolidated with the Geneva camp. Over the years, Modern Woodmen paid its beneficiaries, through the Geneva camp, more than \$150,000.00. Richard A. Smith, Sr., was the last consul of Geneva's camp, which is now inactive.

-Gerald Walton

Mothers' Club

The Geneva Mothers' Club is the oldest organized club in Geneva and probably in the county. Although the earliest records have long since been lost, it is an established fact that the club was organized shortly after the turn of the century. A group of ladies, under the leadership of the late Mrs. John K. Waring, banded themselves together for the purposes of friendship, self-culture, mutual assistance, and becoming better mothers and more efficient homemakers. Available records, which date back to 1913, show that it was then an independent club. The membership in 1914 numbered 30; Mrs. Waring was president and Mrs. Bates was secretary.

The members took turns in presenting some topic of interest to the club. One meeting a year presented a special program devoted to the pioneer mothers of the community, who were invited guests. In or about 1919, the Mothers' Club, with two or three other re-

cently organized clubs, joined the State Federation of Woman's Clubs and became a department of the Woman's Club. New names appeared on the roll in the next 10 years as others began to take up the task started by those who had resigned, moved elsewhere, or passed away.

One of the most interesting meetings during that time occurred on May 7, 1925, when pioneer mothers were honored at the W. C. Peterson home. The honorees were: Mrs. C. A. Warner, Mrs. William Bell, Mrs. J. H. Robinson (the oldest pioneer present), Mrs. T. T. Hill, Mrs. J. F. McCartney, Mrs. J. W. Williams, Mrs. Theodore Voightlander, Mrs. A. J. Brown, Mrs. Melissa Goold, Mrs. J. N. Spivey, Mrs. T. F. Combs, and Mrs. D. B. Lincoln. All offered reminiscences of the hardships of pioneer days, ranging from prairie fires, rattlesnakes in their homes, dust storms, and grasshoppers to that major topic, the Blizzard of 1888.



Photo from Mrs. Orval McDonald

Mothers' Club (1939). Front row, left to right: Augusta Rischling, Anna McDonald, Beryl Grothe, Blanche Winchell, Mrs. John Waring, Anna Biba, Thelma Hamilton. Back row: Maurine Brinkman, Faye Montgomery, Anna Brower, Gertrude Dudley (hidden), Kathryn Biegler, Marie Bassett, Eileen Shaner, Lily Hampton, Rose Hammond.

In June, 1929, the Mothers' Department voted to withdraw from the General Club. In October, 1930, at the home of Mrs. Edgar Foster, the club decided to take up extension work. Miss Mary Runnalls, home agent, was present at that meeting and explained the year's extension projects. The first project leaders were Mrs. J. K. Waring and Mrs. Lloyd Wythers.

The club is now a closed group consisting of 20 active members, one of whom, Mrs. W. A. Biba, has been a member for 41 years. Three others have been members for more than 37 years. They are Mrs. Fred Merrill, Mrs. Ed Rischling, and Mrs. Orval McDonald. Two others who have been members for 34 years are Mrs. Wayne

Winchell and Mrs. Tom Brower.

In earlier years, the Mothers' Club held receptions in the early fall for Geneva teachers. The club now meets on the first Thursday

of every month at the home of some one of the members.

Past presidents of the club have been the following: Mrs. Nellie Youngers (1913-14), Mrs. J. E. Waring (1915-16), Mrs. Pearl Burns (1917-18), Mrs. W. C. Peterson (1919), Mrs. Limback (1924), Mrs. Clarence Cellar (1925), Mrs. I. McCashland (1926), Mrs. W. A. Biba (1927), Mrs. W. A. Bean (1928), Mrs. Phelps (1929), Mrs. Clarence Shaw (1930), Mrs. Rulea (1931), Mrs. Bernice Chesnut (1932), Mrs. Orval McDonald (1933-34), Mrs. Fred Bassett (1935), Mrs. Fred Merrill (1936), Mrs. Bill Minich (1937), Mrs. Elvin Montgomery (1938), Mrs. Ralph Biegler (1939), Mrs. W. A. Biba (1940), Mrs. Ed Rischling (1941), Mrs. Tom Brower (1942), Mrs. Wayne Winchell (1943), Mrs. Lillie Hampton (1944), Mrs. Myra Most (1945), Mrs. Lucy Dudley (1946), Mrs. Chester Dudley (1947), Mrs. Bill Newell (1948), Mrs. I. Lindstrom (1949), Mrs. Robert Kiester (1950), Mrs. Reno Weis (1951), Mrs. Robert Nichols (1952), Mrs. Orval McDonald (1953), Mrs. Ben Fussell (1954), Mrs. Alvan Heath (1955), Mrs. Gerald Mattock (1956), Mrs. A. E. Holmes (1957), Mrs. Robert Jezek (1958), Mrs. Lew Jezek (1959), Mrs. K. O. Nelson (1960), Mrs. John Fahlberg (1961), Mrs. William E. McDonald (1962), Mrs. Lowell Heath (1963), Mrs. Wesley McMullen (1964), Mrs. Reno Weis (1965), and Mrs. Royal Eugene Anderson (1966).

The officers of the club in 1967 were Mrs. Wallace Swanson,

president; Mrs. Robert Deterding, vice-president; Mrs. Clyde Lambertz, secretary; and Mrs. Augusta Rischling, treasurer.

-Data from Anna McDonald

Odd Fellows

Geneva Lodge No. 65, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, was founded on March 27, 1877, in a white frame building on the north side of the west block. That building is no longer standing. It was later moved to the top floor of the present Geneva State Bank Building, which in 1904 was destroyed by fire, so that all records up to that time were lost.

It was organized with 11 charter members-J. D. Hamilton, J. A. Dempster, B. F. Ryman, F. R. Stone, H. R. Deming, J. Shepherd, Samuel Walz, R. B. Campbell, S. Hanabaugh, G. A. Lynn, and J. H. Ward. J. D. Hamilton was the first Noble Grand and B. F. Ryman was Worthy Secretary. By 1882, the lodge had 50 members.

The hall in the Geneva State Bank Building was rebuilt and the lodge continued to meet there for several years, paying as their rent the roof upkeep. This, however, was a bigger expense than

planned and so they decided to make a change.

The building which the I.O.O.F. lodge now occupies was purchased April 26, 1920, for \$6,000, a sum loaned to the lodge by Mrs. A. J. Beals. The furniture from the old building was brought to the new home and is still in use. In 1947, the lodge hall was extensively



Photo from I.O.O.F. Hall

I.O.O.F. Float in 1914. Mrs. Harry (Hattie) Warner as Rebekah at the well, on a float made and driven by Harry Warner, is indicative of the activities carried on by the Odd Fellows early in the 20th century. Odd Fellows sponsored picnics were held often and attracted large crowds. Every picnic had a parade and competition was keen.



Photo from Geneva Photo Co

I.O.O.F. members honoring the 88th birthday of Charles Pittard (March 9, 1967), long-time member of the lodge. The men just beyond him are Leonard Carlson, William Lauenstein, and Don Ward. The man behind him is Cliff Cramer.

remodeled, gas heat was installed, and regalia rooms and a modern kitchen were provided, making it one of the nicest lodge halls in the state. The first floor has always been rented commercially. The basement is rented out for business purposes.

The lodge has managed to pay off all mortgages and is entirely

free of debt at the present time.

We have had the honor of at least two of our members serving as officers of the Grand Lodge. In 1949-1950, Fred Merrill was Grand Instructor and in 1956 Ronald Elznic served as Grand Outside Guardian.

One of our principal activities is contributing to our Home at York, Nebraska, which is maintained for the care and protection of the orphans, the old, and the feeble of our organization. Other projects of the order are giving to such worthy causes as the Polio Fund, the Red Cross, and kindred needs.

Through the years, the order has grown, with some fluctuations, from a membership of 50 in 1882 to 116 in 1967. The officers of the Geneva lodge in 1967 were Friedhold Ulmer, noble grand; Glen Fussell, vice-grand; Cliff Cramer, secretary; and Ronald Elznic, -Mrs. Irene Merrill treasurer.

Rebekah Lodge

The Rebekah Lodge was founded as a social organization, an auxiliary of the Odd Fellows Lodge. Membership is open to wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters of Odd Fellows, as well as to Odd Fellows themselves.

Silver Link Rebekah Lodge was instituted at Geneva on April 30, 1880, with 16 charter members: Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Beals, W. J. Carrin, Mr. and Mrs. John A. Dempster, Walter



The Degree Staff of the Silver Link Rebekah Lodge in 1950 was invited to portray the Rebekah Degree at the Nebraska Assembly in Hastings. *Back row, left to right:* Mrs. Phyllis Heath, Mrs. Emma Marie Johnson, Sheldon Johnson, Mrs. Mary Johnson, Mrs. Amolia Kimbrough, Mrs. Marguerite Miller. Front row: Miss Mae Matson, Mrs. Muriel Pearson, Mrs. Anna Brower, Mrs. Irene Merrill, Mrs. Alice Fussell, Mrs. Gertrude Dudley, Mrs. LaVerne Nixon.

Fifield, M. M. Neeves, J. W. Purell, Mr. and Mrs. L. C. Putnam, Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Putnam, J. Shepherd, C. L. Smith, and Mrs. J. W. Walters.

In 1904 the lodge room and all early records were destroyed by

fire, and so we have no records of the first officers.

The organization is and always has been very active in Geneva. They meet on the first and third Mondays of each month at the Odd Fellows building, which the Odd Fellows kindly provide, rent free, for their sister organization. The Rebekahs have tried to compensate for this courtesy by helping in every worth-while project which the Odd Fellows undertake.

In 1948, the Rebekahs helped the Odd Fellows in remodeling the Odd Fellows Hall and kitchen, making a modern and beautiful meeting place. In 1956, the lodge room was supplied with wall-to-wall carpeting and chrome chairs. The Rebekahs fu, vished a substantial amount for this project. We are proud of our Lall, which, although small, is second to none in Nebraska in appearance.

Silver Link Rebekah Lodge is proud of the fact that in October, 1950, our lodge was asked to present the initiatory work at the State Assembly at Hastings. This we did with a seven-member degree staff and took with us 28 candidates, all from Geneva, to be initiated into

the Rebekah degree.

Fifty-year jewels have been awarded to Mrs. Joy Case, Mrs. Bertha Trask Crawford, Mrs. Vinetta Eaton, Esther Axtell, and Mae Matson. Mrs. Eaton also received the Decoration of Chivalry of the order in 1956.

We also have an active Past Noble Grand Club that meets on the

second Friday of each month at the members' homes.

Past Noble Grands of the order are as follows: Bertha Trask Crawford, Joy Case, Vinetta Eaton, Belle Brown, Mae Matson, Emma Snodgrass, Emma Bertram, Annis Anderson, Nannie Wilkins, Mollie Bumgarner, Buryl Cumberland, Susie Ogg, Irene Merrill, Marie Bassett, Augusta Rischling, Anna Brower, Clara Olsen, Elizabeth Drake, Teresa Jones, Bessie Fussell, Muriel Pearson, Lucy Dudley, Floy McCashland, Velma Lauber, Gertrude Dudley, Dorothy Heatherington, Alyce Fussell, Erma Gross, Berniece Minnert, Frances Linder, Phyllis Heath, LaVerne Nixon, Helen Hofferber, Belle Barnett, Elveda Elznic, 1da Marie Kinder, Elizabeth Decker, Lottie Van Sant, Henrietta Isley, Dorothy Nichols, Kathleen Richards, Lucille Bull, Irene Ellison, Edna Garrett, Nellie Fiedler, Lois Hlina, Anna Brower, Romona Watmore, and Shirley Ward.

-Mrs. Irene Merrill

P. E. O.

The P.E.O. Sisterhood was 26 years old when Chapter O of Geneva was organized on May 2, 1895. Present at this meeting to become the charter members were Mrs. Mary Brereton, Miss Mattie Cox, Mrs. Fanny L. Elmore, Mrs. Hattie



Photo from Mrs. Charles Picard

P.E.O. in 1915. Top row, left to right: Joy Hart (Mrs. Guy Case), Hattie Edgecombe (Mrs. F. O. Edgecombe), Lora Bolton, Hattie Little, Mrs. Isabel Bixby, Grace Donisthorpe (Mrs. Ketridge), Clara Koehler (Mrs. B. Koehler), Second row: Laura Donisthorpe (Mrs. F. B. Donisthorpe), Grace Huston (Mrs. Hugh Hadsell), Nellie Williams, Bertha Dempster (Mrs. Ed Dempster), Maud Fiegenbaum (Mrs. W. E.), Mrs. M. V. King, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. M. V. Hadsell. Front row: Jessie Bearnes, Cassie (Mrs. Frank) Huston, Ella (Mrs. John) Waring, Louise Donisthorpe (Mrs. Frank Gibbons), Miss Harold, Emma (Mrs. Charles H.) Sloan, Ethel Sloan (Mrs. Grady Corbitt, Hattie (Mrs. E.) Elmore, Mrs. Stewart, unidentified. Members not pictured were: Mrs. Daisy Cottle, Miss Helen Edgecombe, Miss Idla Hrubesky, Miss Carrie King, Mrs. May Skinkle, and Mrs. Addie Smith.

M. Edgecombe, Mrs. Luella McKelvey, Mrs. Adde Sexton, and Mrs. Blanche Stewart. Meetings have been held regularly since that time.

The purpose of the P.E.O Sisterhood is educational and philanthropic as well as social. An educational loan fund of national and international proportions is available to worthy girls. So far, three girls—Mildred Berger and Neva Bishop of Geneva and Beverly Trapp of Shickley—have applied for and received this assistance.

P.E.O. International Peace Scholarships, which attract outstanding foreign girls to America to study, promote better under-

standing and peaceful relations among nations.

The national sisterhood owns and maintains several P.E.O. homes for aged members; the Nebraska home is at Beatrice. It also owns and maintains Cottey Junior College in Nevada, Missouri. Two Geneva girls have attended Cottey College: Shirley Nunns (Bornschlegl) and Jeanette Kritner (Franklin).

Chapter O was hostess to the state convention held in Geneva in 1902. Miss Hattie A. Little of Geneva served as state president in 1906 and 1907 and was secretary of the Supreme Chapter from

1911 to 1914.

Nine members have been honored by the chapter for 50 years of membership: Hattie M. Edgecombe, Clara Koehler, Laura V. Donisthorpe, Louise Gibbons, Joy Case, Grace Ketridge, Ethel Corbitt, Vera Waring, and Edith Elder.

The following members have served as president of Chapter O

since its organization:

1895-97	Hattie M. Edgecombe	1932-33	Ethel Corbitt
1897-98	Adde Sexton	1933-34	Vera Waring
1898-99	Virginia McGrew	1934-35	Blanche Rosenau
1899-00	Martha Skinkle	1935-36	Lillian Sloan
1900-01	Eva E. Hines	1936-37	Virginia Koehler
1901-02	Emma Porter Sloan	1937-38	Maude Stringfield
1902-03	Clara Koehler	1938-39	Esther Sloan
1903-04	Kate Koehler	1939-40	Marieta Kerl
1904-05	Alma Williams	1940-41	Faye Curtiss
1905-06	Laura V. Donisthorpe	1941-42	Edith Elder
1906-07	Hattie A. Little	1942-43	Edith Elder
1907-08	Addie Smith	1943-44	Minnie Brice
1908-09	May Skinkle	1944-45	Emma Renken
1909-10	Sarah King	1945-46	Nina Ralston
1910-11	Ella Waring	1946-47	Vesta Harris and
1911-12	Pearl Woods		Nina Ralston
1912-13	Maude Fiegenbaum	1947-48	Faye Curtiss
1913-14	Elnora Hadsell	1948-49	Helen Biba
1914-15	Grace Donisthorpe	1949-50	Angela Humphrey
1915-16	Joy Hart	1950-51	Evalyn Koehler
1916-17	Clara Koehler	1951-52	Ruth Ann Hrubesky
1917-18	Hattie A. Little	1952-53	Louise Picard
1918-19	Hattie M. Edgecombe	1953-54	Jean Ashby
1919-20	Laura Bates	1954-55	Dorothy Gewacke
1920-21	Adeline J. Allen	1955-56	Evalyn Foster
1921-22	Laura V. Donisthorpe	1956-57	Susanne Brinkman
1922-23	Edith Elder	1957-58	Gwendolyn Kritner
1923-24	Emma Sloan	1958-59	Anna Biba
1924-25	Marguerite Davis	1959-60	Barbara Wilkins
1925-26	Bertha Dempster	1960-62	Margaret Fahlberg
1926-27	Allie Richeson	1962-63	Minette Nelson
1927-28	Isabel Bixby	1963-64	
1928-29	Pearl Burns		Helen Lynn
1929-30	Grace Wilkins	1965-66	Norma Lauber
1930-31	Florence Devoe	1966-67	Kathryn Ashby
1931-32	Florence Devoe	1967-68	Evelyn Lauber
			—Faye Curtiss Hadsell

Parent-Teacher Association

The Geneva P.T.A. was organized November 15, 1950. The first officers were: Dale Otte, president; Mrs. LaGrande Shaw, first vice-president; Mrs. Helen Crawford, second vice-president; Mrs. Woodrow Kinder secretary: Hugh Wilkins, treasurer.

row Kinder, secretary; Hugh Wilkins, treasurer.

Presidents of the group from 1955 onward were: Mrs. Robert Cellar (1955-56), Hugh Wilkins (1956-57), Mrs. Raymond Peterson (1957-58), Mrs. L. C. Shaw (1958-59), George Hull (1959-60), Mrs. Robert Casper (1960-61), Mrs. Raymon Gough (1961-62), Paul Caton (1962-63), Wendell Lauber (1963-64), and J. R. Stewart (1964-65).

During its 15-year existence, membership in the group varied from 50 to 100 persons. It was disbanded in 1965.

Among the accomplishments of the P.T.A.: 50 folding chairs were purchased for gym; Halloween parties have been sponsored with cooperation of other local organizations; coffees between parents and teachers to promote better understanding have been held yearly; and books have been purchased for the grade-school libraries. Many interesting and educational speakers and films have been presented by the P.T.A.

Rotary Club

The Geneva Rotary Club, the newest of our city organizations, was organized in 1958 and received its charter on November 11, 1958, under the sponsorship of the Hebron club. The club started with a membership of 24. The first



Courtesy Nebraska Signal The Rotary Club presented Robert Newman a Perkins Braille typewriter as one of their worthy projects, in 1965. Left to right: Ben Fussell, past president; Robert Newman, W. C. Nelson, Community Service chairman; Dr. V. S. Lynn, president.

officers elected were John Gewacke, president; Robert Nichols, vice-president; Hugh F. Wilkins, secretary-treasurer; and John H. Koehler, sergeant-at-arms.

The club meets every Tuesday noon. The weekly dinner is followed by a program designed to further the objects of Rotary. These objects are: (1) To encourage acquaintance as an opportunity for service; (2) to hold high ethical standards in business and profession; (3) to apply the ideal of service to each member's personal life; and (4) to advance international understanding, good will, and peace through world fellowship of men dedicated to the ideal of service. It is not the intention of Rotary to compete in community affairs but to inspire its members to take an active part in the other organizations designed for such activities.

Following is a list of the charter members: John Q. Adams, Earl W. Anderson, Donald F. Best, Orval M. Ellison, John R. Friesen, Ben D. Fussell, Delfs W. Gehrke, Diebold W. Gehrke, John C. Gewacke, Charles A. Grothe, Chester Hayden, Kenneth Heisey, Albert E. Holmes, Robert M. Kiester, Woodrow W. Kinder, John H. Koehler, Lloyd L. London, James McDowell, Oscar E. Nelson, Robert Nichols, Alden B. Sears, Kenneth L. Shaner, Hugh F. Wilkins, and John W. Wilkins.

Veterans of Foreign Wars

Samuel J. Marsh Post No. 7102 of the V.F.W. was organized on May 29, 1946, at a meeting held in the Geneva Fire Hall. When it came to selecting a name, it was decided to name the post after the first Fillmore County boy to lose his life in World War II, Samuel J. Marsh. His father, Ed Marsh of Grafton, a Spanish-American War veteran, told a formal meeting of the post that he would be honored to have the post



V.F.W. observance in 1961 of 15th anniversary of organization. Kneeling, left to right: Merl Archer, Kenneth Heisey, Orval Ellison. Seated: Mervell Bumgarner, Don Barney, George Cruse, John Bixby, Paul Becker, Mervin Leonard, Harry Carlson. Standing: Francis McPeck, Wayne Lefever, Dick Wagner, Francis Walker, Henry J. Langhorst, Reuben Ackerman, Dale Thole.

named after his son. The name became official, then, at the meeting on October 10, 1946, and the post number, "7102," was added. (The number represents the order in which posts are organized.)

The first elective officers were: Charles H. Miller, commander; Ernest Pavel, senior vice-commander; Louis Kelch, junior vice-commander; Gerald Churchill, quartermaster; Kenneth Heisey, chaplain; Ed Rock, advocate; Wilbur Pearson, post surgeon; Lowell Eich, Eric Johnson, and Ray Willy, trustees.

The first appointive officers were: Dick Wagner, officer of the day; Bernard Rischling, adjutant; Francis Weis, post historian: Dale Thole, guard; Virgil Ostdiek, national color-bearer; Mervin Leonard, post color-bearer; Joe Bixby, patriotic instructor; Fritz Placek, legislative officer; and Harlan Heath, quartermaster sergeant.

Meetings are held on the second and fourth Fridays of each month. The first meeting place was the Picard building. In June, 1949, the post moved from there to the basement of the Odd Fellows Hall. After prolonged discussion, the post decided to build its own meeting hall, and paid down \$1,000 on a lot on the N. E. Thomas property on G St. Money raising was started, and the building was soon under construction, much of the labor being donated by members. In December, 1953, came the proud moment when the first meeting was held in the new building. It has since been used extensively by other groups in the community as well as by the post and the V.F.W. Auxiliary. Completion of the building also saw the post membership increase to 200.

In May, 1948, three boys entered the state marble tournament sponsored by the V.F.W.; Glen Johnson, Jr., of Geneva placed second. In August, 1948, the V.F.W. ran a stand at the Fillmore County Fair in the former Farm Bureau building, which was turned over to the organization. The V.F.W. have completely remodeled it and have run the stand every year since taking it over. In September, 1951, the post acquired folding wheel chairs, sun lamps, and crutches, to be used by county residents rent free.

In December, 1950, the members voted to grant life membership in the Samuel J. Marsh Post to Spanish-American War veterans. The members thus honored were Charles Higginbotham and William Merrill, Ed Marsh having been given a life membership previously.

Commanders of the post have been the following: Charles Miller (1947), Francis Walker (1948), Roscoe Heater (1949, 1950), Donald Apley (1951), W. W. Biegert (1952, 1953), Francis Walker (1954), Lumir Slepicka (1955), Francis Reinsch (1956), Leslie Arent (1957), Robert Thomas (1958-59), Floyd Doremus (1959-60), Charles Massoth (1960-61), Lewis Kelch (1961-63), Otis Mattox (1963-64), Clarence Najmon (1964-65), Michael O'Brien (1965-67), and Ted Hedden (1967-69).



Photo from Ervin Weber

Members of the Fillmore County contingent of World War I who left by troop train from Geneva on September 21, 1917. Top row, left to right: Albert Gergen, August Piper, Leroy Landgren, Frank Moravec, Charles Baker, Peter Lott, Harry Carlson, Conrad Kleinlein, James Houska, George Becker. Second row: Emil Berquist, Ed Stetina, Ivane McCashland, Arthur Akerson, Joe Bors, William Due, James Svec, Mike Schmidt, Arlie Strine, Albert Garey. Third row: Glen Jones, Lawrence Farrar, Fred Stofer, Emery Leonard, Wilber Merrill, Clarence Bolton, Frank Novak, Clarence Warren, Earl Babst, Ed Leff. Fourth row: Fred Dittmer, Frank Bernasek, Henry Garland, Robert Wilkerson, Ervin Weber, Victor Solberg, Stephen Kovanda, Fred Sommer, J. W. Kraul, Harry Bordner.

V.F.W. Auxiliary

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary to Samuel J. Marsh Post No. 7102 was organized June 16, 1947. The meeting date was set for the first Tuesday of each month at 8 P.M.



Courtesy Geneva Photo Co.

V.F.W. Auxiliary (1966).

in the post club rooms in the Picard building north of the Signal office. In 1949, they moved to the basement of the Odd Fellows building, and early in 1954 moved into their own building.

Goldie Tull, department president of Kearney, Veral F. Meyers, department president of Hastings, and Eveloy Harbolt, district senior vice-president of Superior, together with the officers of the Superior Ladies Auxiliary, were present to organize and initiate members. Eighteen were initiated and four others were unable to attend.

Charter members were: Alice C. Price, Hendricka Thole, Nellie Bell, Rose Leonard, Helen Marsh, Ruby Miller, and Augusta Rischling.

The object of this organization is fraternal, patriotic, historical, and educational. The Auxiliary contributes to the maintenance of a home at Eaton Rapids, Michigan, for the benefit of widows and orphans of V.F.W. members. It sponsors the Buddy Poppy sale each year, raises money for various drives such as cancer research, polio, tuberculosis, etc., and contributes time and funds to worth-while community projects.

The first regular meeting of the Auxiliary was held July 14, 1947, with Augusta Rischling as president. Eighteen members were present to receive pins, among whom were: Lottie Van Sant, Hendricka Thole, Evelyn Tomlinson, Marie Bassett, Minnie Clark, Nellie Bell, Anna Belle Mason, Rose Leonard, Eileen Mitchell, Dorothy Rosenquist, Augusta Rischling, and Betty Jean Clark.

Presidents of the V.F.W. Auxiliary have been the following: Augusta Rischling (1947-49), Mildred Miller (1949-50), Augusta Rischling (1950-51), Evelyn Heater (1951-52), Edith Peterson (1952-55), Mabel Ernst (1955-56), Clara McGee (1956-57), Delores Jirkovsky (1957-58), Felicienne (Becker) Neville (1958-59), Edith Peterson (1959-60), Marjorie Doremus (1960-61), Mabel Ernst (1961-63), Alyce Domling (1963-65), Clara Magee (1965-66), and Berneice Willcoxon (1966-67).

The Auxiliary has now (1967) a membership of approximately 78.

Woman's Club

The Geneva Woman's Club developed from the Culture Club which had a limit of 20 members. The Culture Club was



Photo from Lillian Sloan

Woman's Club Initiation (May, 1961). Left to right: Ethel Corbitt, Lillian Sloan, Florence Reinsch, Delia Fisher, Marguerite Lynn, Helen Ewalt, Velma Lauber, Mabel Fox.

organized in September, 1911, and federated with the Nebraska Federation of Woman's Clubs as a Culture Club in December, 1911.

Mrs. Pearl Burns and Mrs. Roe Moore suggested that the club reorganize to allow more women the opportunity to join. Thus, the club reorganized in July, 1919, took the name of Geneva Woman's Club, and opened its membership to all who were interested in woman's club work. There was a total of 144 charter members.

The members of the Culture Club for the year prior to its becoming the Geneva Woman's Club (1918-1919) were: Mrs. Mary Blakely, Mrs. Pearl Burns, Miss Pearl Brown, Mrs. Alta Brown, Mrs. Josephine Bixby, Mrs. Laura Carlson, Mrs. Mildred Cellar, Mrs. Ruby Chenoweth, Mrs. Lou Donisthorpe, Mrs. Sophia Ertel, Miss Josie Hamilton, Mrs. Iva Hansen, Mrs. Bess Hess, Mrs. Lou Huston, Mrs. Roe Moore, Mrs. Cordelia Phillips, Mrs. Minnie Pierce, Mrs. May Reeve, Mrs. Allie Richeson, Mrs. Edith Spangler, Mrs. Ella Stephenson, Miss Cora Stewart, Mrs. Aurilla Ward, Mrs. Minnie Warner, Mrs. Sarah Wilson.

The constitution committee for the new club was: Pearl Burns, Ruby Chenoweth, Rosalie Peterson, Roe Moore, and Cordelia Phillips. The newly organized club had five departments—Mothers', Literary and Art, Nature Study, Book Review, and Music.

The object of this organization is to promote culture in the homes and to assist any movement aiming toward the betterment of social and commercial conditions of the community and to strengthen, by organization, individual and philanthropic measures.

One of the club's most outstanding projects was its sponsorship of the building of the Geneva Club House. This club house was constructed in 1942 at the Geneva City Park under the leadership of the Geneva Woman's Club. They also maintain and operate the building, which is used for a variety of activities.

One of the club's charter members, Mrs. T. B. Moore, has had the honor of serving as vice-president of the Fourth District of the Nebraska Federation of Woman's Clubs from 1923 to 1925; she also served during the next four years as a district board member.

The club presently has only three departments: Book Review, Junior Women, and Literary and Art. In 1967, it had a total of 100 members; all ministers are included as honorary members.

Following is a list of presidents of the club: Mrs. Pearl Burns (1919-21), Mrs. C. S. Stover (1921-23), Mrs. C. B. Nicholson (1923-24), Mrs. G. R. Borland (1924-25), Mrs. L. L. Fisher (1925-27), Mrs. W. E. Fiegenbaum (1927-28), Mrs. T. B. Moore (1928-29), Mrs. C. L. Shaw (1929-30), Mrs. L. S. Devoe (1930-31), Mrs. Howard Hamilton (1931-33), Mrs. Ben Koehler (1933-34), Mrs. L. H. Kerl (1934-36), Mrs. George L. Koehler (1936-38), Mrs. H. A. Rosenau (1938-39), Mrs. H. B. Simon (1939-40), Mrs. J. Bixby (1940-41), Miss Delia Fisher (1941-43), Mrs. William M. Sloan, Mrs. Guy Case (1943-44), Mrs. W. A. Biba (1944-45), Mrs. J. Bixby (1945-46), Mrs. K. C. Brinkman (1946-47), Mrs. J. W. Hammond (1947-48), Mrs. Guy Brown, Sr. (1948-49), Mrs. Clarence Newman (1949-50), Mrs. Bert Lynn (1950-51), Mrs. Robert Kritner (1951-52), Mrs. L. O. Swails (1952-53), Mrs. Bert Lynn (1953-54), Mrs. Clyde Ewart (1955-55), Mrs. Robert Waring (1955-56), Mrs. K. C. Brinkman (1956-57), Mrs. Marvin Asseln (1957-58), Mrs. James B. Barbur (1958-59), Mrs. John L. Sloane, Miss Delia Fisher (1959-60), Miss Delia Fisher (1960-61), Mrs Porter Sloan (1961-63), Mrs. C. L. Cramer (1963-64), Mrs. Porter Sloan (1964-65), Mrs. Charles Picard (1965-67), and Mrs. Vera Lovegrove (1967-68).

RECREATION, ENTERTAINMENT, AND SPORTS

Even though the town and the surrounding territory were developing rapidly, the people seemed always to have time for various activities. The following items, condensed from newspaper accounts, indicate in chronological order the types of entertainment and recreation from year to year.

1879—July: A Fourth of July dance was held at the C. A. Warner farm in Chelsea precinct. Six to eight sets could dance at a time. Music by Messrs. Luke and Miller; F. C. Chamberlain called. Dance and supper—\$1. Dance started at 4 P.M. Floor managers were James Bridgewood, H. S. Heiderstadt, and M. C. Matson.

1883-Home Dramatic Club organized; will give entertainment

the first night the new Opera House is ready.

1884—The clerk was ordered to notify the proprietors of the skating rink that a license fee of \$25 per annum would be required hereafter while the same is used as a hall or place of amusement.

January: Mrs. J. B. Finch gave a temperance lecture at the

January: Mrs. J. B. Finch gave a temperance lecture at the Geneva Opera House. Will Dempster's juvenile band furnished music.

May: Memorial Day was observed county-wide at Fairmont. Geneva had 60 teams and two brass bands in the parade. Grafton sent 30 wagons and a band.

1886—The Fourth was celebrated in grand style in Geneva. Mr. Chapin of Lincoln was the orator of the day.

1887-The charity ball at Geneva was largely attended. The proceeds were \$35.35. The prize was won by Miss Nellie McClosky.

1889-Blind Boone gave a concert in the Ward Opera House and drew the largest crowd ever in the building.

1890-June: The Salvation Army pitched their tent in Geneva Thursday evening and will hold a three-week series of meetings

July: The Hose Companies were granted the exclusive privilege of running booths and stands on the Fourth of July—they are to furnish at their own expense two policemen for that day and night and to erect no stands on the street.

1892—January: The home talent operetta, Trial by Jury, was given at the Ward Opera House. It was a great success.

1893—Professor Tillotson, noted baritone soloist, will give one of his unique entertainments at Ward's Opera House Monday evening, April 17. The Republican hopes our people will turn out in mass and give the blind professor a rousing audience.

A very large crowd attended the Decoration Day exercises in Geneva. In the parade were the band, Company G, 300 G.A.R. members, 80 W.R.C. ladies, 50 Odd Fellows, 100 A.O.U.W., and 300

carriages and buggies.

December: There is a skating rink in the northwest part of town

between the B. & M. and Elkhorn tracks.

1894-January: The skating club appeared and asked permission to use the city hose to fill their pond.

June: Geneva businessmen raised \$600 for a Fourth of July celebration.

1895-A race between a man riding a bicycle and a team of horses drew a large crowd at the fair grounds at Geneva. The bicycle rider won.

1896--The Nebraska Wesleyan quartet gave a program at the Geneva Methodist church. Frank Farmer of Exeter was member of the quartet.

The Geneva Bicycle Club was grading the bicycle track around the courthouse square.

A popular form of entertainment was the phonograph. These machines were taken about the county, drawing large crowds.

May: The Fillmore County Agricultural Society held a meeting at the office of the secretary, J. D. Hamilton, to discuss the racing question. It was finally decided to have both county races and open

races The Fourth was celebrated at Geneva. The crowd numbered around 7,000. The parade was in charge of A. J. Beals as marshal.

The Grafton band, Company G, patriotic floats, and business floats made an interesting parade, Rev. G. W. Fifer was the speaker. 1897-Dan Haskins, who ran a bicycle shop in Geneva, got a new

tandem bicycle, to rent out to boys and girls.

W. H. Gregg, a blind man, lectured at the Geneva Opera House on how the blind were being educated at the state school at Nebraska City.

A team of York whist players defeated Geneva players in a match in Geneva. Members of the Geneva team were Messrs. Bruner, Russell, Hutchens, Koehler, and Sandrock.

The Geneva Choral Union met to study the "Anvil Chorus"

under the direction of Professor Worley.

Campbell Bros. Circus pulled into Geneva and gave two performances at 10 and 20 cents. The balloon ascension given with the show was fine.

1899-The new opera house in the Fraternity Temple in Geneva was opened with a home-talent production of Kathleen Mavourneen.



Photo from Delia Fisher

Fraternity Temple, about 1900. The new Opera House was on the third floor.

1901-Fred Emerson Brooks, well-known poet, appeared in Geneva on the high-school lecture course.

1902-The Canadian Jubilee Singers pleased a crowded house

at the Methodist Church.

1903-Uncle Tom's Cabin showed at the Geneva Opera House and drew a good-sized crowd.

April: A balloon ascension by a woman drew a large crowd to Geneva. Afterward there was a ball game between Geneva and Bruning.

The council approved the application of Harry Glasscock for a bowling alley.

November: The first moving-picture entertainment was given at the Opera House. A speaker explained the pictures as they were shown.

Geneva Volunteer Fire Department has made arrangements for a carnival and asked the privilege of the streets from Tuesday, August 2, to Saturday, August 6, inclusive.

The skating rink will be open hereafter only on Tuesday evening, Thursday evening, Saturday afternoon, and Saturday evening.

1907—The Geneva orchestra, consisting of 12 pieces, gave a concert at the Christian Church for the benefit of the ladies' band.

1910-License fee for picture show is \$25 per year.

1913-January: A large audience gathered to hear the Kaffir Boy Choir, appearing on the high-school lecture course.

1914-The Time of His Life was presented by Geneva home talent for the benefit of the Mothers' Club.

April: The Geneva Equal Suffrage Club sponsored a play, The Marriage of the Midgets, with a cast of children.

1917-Forty-five singers met at Prof. H. R. Grant's studio in Geneva to organize a community chorus.

The Geneva Chautauqua was well attended and the program was considered very good. (Note: Chautauquas brought many fine programs to the people in the Middle West and were a popular medium of entertainment for many years. The programs included outstanding speakers, musical groups, Negro singers, comedians, and the magician, who was always a great favorite with everyone.)

1918-Mr. Dow closed his Jolla Theater at Geneva and the town

was left without a picture show.

The Geneva Progressive Temperance Party held a mass meeting at the courthouse with speeches and music.

1920-May: Dr. Ole Theobaldi, famous violinist, gave a concert Geneva.

1921—The Geneva Woman's club presented a cantata, "Golden Valley," with a cast of local people, at the Congregational Church.

1923-April: A packed house, mostly children, saw Cho-Cho, health clown, at the Geneva city auditorium.

1926-October: The Lewis Stock Co., old favorites, opened an engagement at the city auditorium. More than 100 people were turned away because of lack of seating capacity.

1927-February: Permit granted to operate and charge for moving-picture show on Sunday but not to conflict with the hours of church services.

1928-January: A rabbit hunt by Geneva men netted 229 rabbits. 1937-The courthouse grounds were being reseeded to grass and many new trees were set out. The croquet grounds used by the oldtimers for 40 years disappeared.

1938—Ivan Ertel was granted a bowling-alley license.

1940-January: The skating pond provided by the city of Geneva was proving a popular place as freezing weather put the ice in good condition.

1942-The Ewalt Amusement Co. of Geneva opened the season

the Fourth of July celebration in Logan, Iowa.

1944-July: An American Legion junior baseball team was organized at Geneva with Jack Adams as business manager and Orval McDonald as field manager.

1947—The Easter egg hunt, postponed one week because of bad weather, attracted hundreds of youngsters to the courthouse park. The Geneva Community Club had hidden 1,800 eggs for the event. Tom Ewalt's circus, Bell Bros., left its winter quarters in Geneva

for the summer annual tour.

1954—September: A free square dance was held Friday evening, September 24. Music was furnished by Don Machan and his band, one of the best-known square dance bands in the Midwest. The dance was held on the pavement between the Geneva State Bank and the Picard building.

History of the Geneva City Band (1875-1958)

The first known record of any band activity in Geneva was in 1875 when Silas B. Camp came to town after having taught music in Beatrice in 1873-74. Mr. Camp organized a band that year and was active in this work until 1904. Not much is known of the first few years of this band, but in 1882 a history of Nebraska states that Geneva, a town of 500 people, had three bands: Geneva Cornet Band, Company G Martial Band, and a juvenile band. Probably some members were active in more than one band, and, as far as is known, Mr. Camp was the inspiration and motivating influence behind the entire band program as well as the director of all three bands. Company G had been organized in 1881, indicating that the Martial Band was a fairly new organization in 1882

In December, 1882, the Geneva Review reports: "The Geneva Cornet Band rendered some very fine pieces of music on Christmas afternoon. This band is one of the finest in the state and our citizens may well be proud of them." On New Year's Day, 1883, the Geneva Cornet Band came out in uniform and paraded the streets playing some of their best music, after which a photograph of the band was taken. On January 11, 1883, the band furnished music for a Geneva

Literary Society entertainment and, according to the Review, "Their music was no small feature of the program." Mr. Camp and the band continued quite active, often rehearsing several times per week. February 16, 1883, the band gave an entertainment at Grafton, which was very graciously received. The Review stated in the March 29th issue that the boys were rehearsing every night and would give one of the best entertainments that the community had ever heard. The band continued active but little of their work has been recorded until 1886 when Fred Ekwall organized a band at Martland, directed by Silas B. Camp, which played considerably in that part of the county, even marching in a parade in Geneva within a year of its organization. Mr. Ekwall reported that in 1886 at an Easter service held in the Geneva Methodist Church, Mr. Camp played a cornet solo, "The Holy City." Later that year at a concert given by the band, the citizens of Geneva, in token of their appreciation of Mr. Camp's services, presented him with a new baritone horn.

In 1896, an election year, much community activity was centered around the Republican and Democratic political campaigns. The Geneva Republican reported that "After each of the Republican parades Sile Camp was on hand and got the bands together and turned out an astonishing quantity of music and the quality was pretty good also." This would indicate that there were at least two bands in Geneva at that time although very little is known of their activities. The Republican further reported that every band in the county participated and furnished "Republican" music all day. The July 4th celebration of 1900 included a parade, led by the Fairmont Band behind Company G. There is no mention of a Geneva band, although Silas B. Camp was on the speakers' stand and furnished part of the program. There were in the parade a ladies' band, and a Rube band, both probably composed of Geneva musicians, but the Woodmen Picnic, held August 9, 1900, used both the Exeter and Fairmont bands, suggesting that the band activity in Geneva was not too strong



Courtesy Geneva State Bank

All-Girl Band (about 1900). Back row, left to right: Ollie Tilzey, Besse Stultz, Tillie Voigtlander, Millie Scott, Blanche Woodworth, Laura Mozee. Middle row: Martha Putlitz, Carrie Mozee, Addie Allen, Ora Kelly. Front row: Mrs. Martha Sisler, Silas Camp (band leader), Mrs. Ben Woodworth.

In the formation, organization, and direction of the first band in Geneva, Silas B. Camp was the outstanding personality both in instruction and inspiration. Mr. Camp's ability and pleasant personality contributed much to interest others in securing instruments and giving time and effort in rehearsal to build a really good band. After Mr. Camp's departure to Idaho in 1904, the band movement was temporarily suspended and the July 4th celebration at Geneva included a parade ½ mile long led by Professor Mitchell's band from Hebron and Major Pendelton's Drum Corps and Martial Band from York. Various civic activities in Geneva used bands from York, Hebron, Fairmont, Exeter, and Sutton for the next several years, but the desire for a Geneva band was always quite strong and in July, 1907, a number of local musicians held a meeting and the Nebraska Signal gave the following report:

"A Band Proposed for Geneva

"A number of Geneva young men would like to participate in the organization of a town band. For the most part at least they have their own instruments. So long as they are willing to provide their own instruments, they feel that the citizens of the town would be willing to co-operate with them. They have appointed Charles B. Reeve to represent them in this matter and Mr. Reeve is presenting the matter to the people through the newspaper.

"The kind of co-operation the young men need most is assistance in employment of a competent band instructor. They desire to make their organization creditable if they form an organization. To do this it will be necessary to hire an instructor and that will take some money. The Signal will be pleased to publish the names of all who are willing to contribute to such a fund and the amount of such contributions. Anyone who desires further particulars can obtain them from Mr. Reeve or any of the others interested."

On June 19, 1907, the Brotherhood of St. Paul Orchestra. so named because the members held their rehearsals in the Brotherhood Room of the Geneva Methodist Church, held a musicale at the church. This was repeated on July 2, 1907. The Brotherhood Band also held rehearsals fairly consistently for several years without a professional director. Ted Nicholas and one or two other members were acting directors at various times. And although the band improved steadily, outside organizations were used for picnics, fairs, and other occasions until around 1913, when Professor A. A. Leroy from Hebron was hired to direct and give instruction in music, both instrumental and vocal. Mr. Leroy was a very active individual and during his three years at Geneva his band played at the State Fair at least once, at the Ak-Sar-Ben Exposition in Omaha and at a large number of picnics, fairs, and other occasions. Professor Leroy was a talented cornetist and he set a high standard of musicianship for his musicians to follow. He also directed the Geneva Brotherhood Orchestra and instructed in band for a while at the Girls' Training School. In 1916, he received an offer to go to York for a similar position and, as Geneva could not match the offer, he accepted it.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal Brotherhood Band (1907). Front row, left to right: Will Layman, Len J. Davis, Alvah Nicholas, Ted Nicholas, Lloyd Ekley, Jason D. Shackelford, Wayne Moore. Second row: Paul W. Curtiss, Mike Ekley, Don Donovan, Lester Nicholas, Rack row: Emmett Sherrard Wayne Sher-

Donovan, Lester Nicholas. *Back row*: Emmett Sherrard, Wayne Sherrard, Cal Sherrard, Charles B. Reeve, Arthur D. Curtiss, Alfred Rosenquist, Edwin Lyle Cumberland, Wilbur Sherrard.

In the organization of the Brotherhood Band and for several years afterward, the personality and friendly efforts of such men as Arthur D. Curtiss, Charles Reeve, W. S. Nicholas, and others played a prominent part. Mr. Curtiss had come to Geneva from Fairmont, opened a law office here, and took an active part in civic, church, and community affairs. In the band his congenial affability and persistent efforts to make the organization succeed had a most favorable effect on the younger men associated with the band and contributed much toward the band's success. Mr. Reeve was a local businessman, very active in civic, church, and community affairs. He played clarinet in the band and violin or 'cello in the orchestra. Mr. Reeve took a leading part in the organization of both Brotherhood Band and Orchestra and gave generously of his time and effort to insure their success. Mr. Nicholas and three of his boys played in the band. His son Ted, a fine cornetist, directed the band for a time while he was still in high school. The Nicholas family, like the Curtisses and the Reeves, were associated actively with the band for many years. Mr. Curtiss and Mr. Nicholas have both passed on. Mr. Reeve, although removed to California, kept up a very active leadership in the music of his church and Sunday School until his death at Orange, California, November

Soon after the departure of Professor Leroy, Professor Hasse R. Grant of Auburn, Nebraska, was hired. He came in time to help finish out the concert season and to provide music for the County Fair. Professor Grant had a studio on second floor of the Citizens State Bank Building and gave lessons in instrumental and vocal music, music appreciation, theory, and harmony. He was a fine tenor soloist and took an active part in all his productions. His instrument was clarinet

During his three years in Geneva he promoted an active program of high-class music, both vocal and instrumental. Each year a concert was given at the city auditorium to raise funds for the band and most times a guest musician was invited to play with the band. One of these occasions featured Buck Ewing, a clarinet virtuoso from Lincoln.

At the 1916 July Fourth celebration in Geneva, music was furnished by the Geneva City Band, and at this time the band was

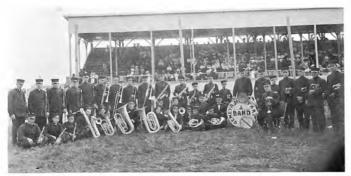


Photo courtesy of Ben Fussell Geneva Military Band under direction of Prof. A. A. Leroy (about 1915). Front row, left to right: Cal Sherrard, Don Moore, Lester Nicholas, John E. Curtiss, Wayne Sherrard, Joe Ruzicka, Cass Camp, John H. Koehler, John Peterson, Thomas Otis, Chauncey Potter, Professor Leroy (next to bass drum). Second row: Nelson Potter, Eugene Manning, Royal Woods, Walter Creston Swails. Back row: Fred M. Fussell, Ralph Allen, Oakley Hosack, Virgil Bentley, Hugh Hadsell, Edwin Lyle Cumberland, Wilbur Sherrard, Russell Myers, unknown, Arnold Lake, Warren Edgecombe, Donald Lamb, George Smith, Cliff McKimmey, Clarence Bolton, Ross Lincoln, Ben Koehler, Len Davis, Leo Dinneen, Raymond Kenney, Paul W. Curtiss.



Photo from Mrs. Hugh Hadsell

Geneva Orchestra (about 1915). Back row, left to right: Oakley Hosack, Owen Smith, Melvin Ralston, Paul Curtiss, Warren Edge-Seated: Charles B. Reeve, Hugh Hadsell, Lester Nicholas, Frank Reeve, Dr. George Carlson.

organized for a more efficiently activated program. The City Amusement Committee met and elected the following officers: president, Charles B. Reeve, and secretary, John E. Curtiss. Some of the money for the maintenance of this organization was secured through taxation and some through public subscription. This continued to be the system used to finance the band until approximately 1930, when the city council adopted an amusement tax. Since then this has been the support of the city summer band program.

On December 21, 1916, the Hallowell Concert Company was cured to give a benefit concert for the Geneva City Band. This group was composed of personnel of exceptional merit. The vocal music instructor of Geneva City Schools, Miss Claire Owens, stated that it was the finest musical program ever presented in the city. This group was all male except for one woman drummer.

At the benefit program given on February 21, 1918, the band and orchestra were assisted by the High School Boys' Glee Club. The program included "Garden Dance" by Vargas, sung by the Glee Club, and the overture, "Garden of Eden," played by the band.

Although conditions during World War I were to disrupt the band program considerably, the Signal carried the note that the Geneva Band of 22 musicians was giving concerts every Wednesday evening in the park with Professor Grant directing. During those times the band sometimes consisted of as few as eight musicians but, as Alfred Elder later reported, they never missed a concert. Alfred had come to Geneva in 1918 when he purchased the McCall Jewelry and Music Store and, as there was a shortage of bass players, Alfred played bass horn in the band for many years. He also played a most important part in promoting the finances of the band. Much of the fine spirit of good will which prevailed through the depression years when money became very scarce, was directly due to the efforts of Alfred Elder.

Professor Grant left in 1919 and the directorship of the band was handed to a young man just home from the service, Paul W. Curtiss. Paul had started his musical career on his father's tenor horn in the Brotherhood Band. He made rapid progress and while he was in high school his father presented him with a new cornet which was his pride and joy. Paul enlisted in the army and was stationed at Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Washington, D. C. He had a brilliant

career in the Army Band and at the end of the war was quite proficient. Paul gave this job everything he had and from 1919 to 1951 he directed the City Band. In 1925, a group of high-school band members, led by Burdette Higginbotham, asked Paul to organize a high-school band. Paul agreed, and served the first year without compensation. Since that time the Geneva High School Band has been an important and active part of the educational program of the Geneva schools. During Paul's tenure as band instructor at Geneva High, beginners' band practice was held immediately after school twice a week and the advanced band rehearsed from 7 P.M. to 8:30 on Mondays and Wednesdays. Mr. Curtiss achieved considerable success with the band. He produced some fine bands as well as some exceptional musicians. But even more important than this, Paul set an example of fine Christian morals and a pleasant personality which made him the friend of every boy and girl who played under his direction. He played many outside jobs with the city band at fairs, picnics, and other occasions. Paul and his band were an important part of the Fillmore County Fair every year since 1925. Paul also directed bands at various times at Tobias, Davenport, Shickley, and Fairmont. He also directed the Tehama Shrine Band at Hastings for several years and the Sesostris Shrine Band at Lincoln from 1946 to 1950. He was in great demand to play in Shrine and American Legion bands on convention trips and played in Los Angeles, Miami, Atlantic City, Chicago, Kansas City, Omaha, Denver, and other places. In 1949, Paul entered Lincoln General Hospital for surgery and his son, John Arthur, directed the band that year. In 1950, Byron Havlicek assisted. On March 19, 1951, Paul passed on, leaving many friends to mourn his death.

In May, 1951, the Geneva school system secured Herman L. Larsen of Marquette, Nebraska, to take over the band program. Mr. Larsen commenced his work by preparing for the summer concert season, the high point of which was the dedication of the new bandstand at the Geneva City Park, as a memorial to Paul W. Curtiss. At this ceremony musicians came from all over this part of the country to honor their deceased friend. The Burlington Band of Lincoln chartered a bus and brought most of the fellows Paul had played with while connected with that organization. Wayne Sherrard, director of Bands at Illinois Normal School, directed two numbers, and Harold Chatelain, director of the Fairbury Municipal Band, also directed a number. This band consisted of 96 musicians, including Paul's brother Val of Lincoln and Paul's two sons, Arthur and Charles. Arthur played a solo.

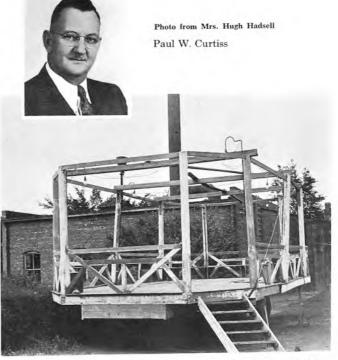


Photo from Mrs. Hugh Hadsell

Geneva's portable bandstand—used from 1937 till 1951. It was pulled onto Main Street every Wednesday night during the summer for

Mr. Larsen directed the city band during the summer season of 1951 and then organized the first full-time band program in the Geneva schools. The senior band met four times a week in addition to marching rehearsal, and group or sectional rehearsals were held during the day. The younger folk work one or two days a week in addition to small group sessions during the school day. Mr. Larsen also instructs in boys' vocal work. Herman, like his predecessor, displays not only a fine ability as a musician but also a most likable and friendly personality. He has a great deal of influence on many of the young people of this community and they have profited greatly from their association with him.

From about 1941 to the present a significant change has taken place in the membership of the Geneva City Band. For many years prior to World War II the band had been composed largely of adults, mostly men, with a few women. But with the accelerated expansion of industrial development just before the war a number of the fellows left Geneva to find employment and those who stayed at home were so busy that adult participation in the band concerts dropped considerably. Gradually high-school students were brought into the group to fill vacancies. From 1931 to 1941, high-school students were admitted into the band only after graduation or to fill vacancies, and then only when they displayed exceptional ability. Although this system was continued for some time, the need for these younger people became so great that by 1951 only a few college students and a couple of adults remained on the roster. Since then the high-school band has taken over the summer band program and the members are admitted by invitation from the director. We note this change with some regret and we miss the former feeling of community pride on the part of our adults in playing in the band each summer. But we appreciate the wide acceptance and participation in the band by our school pupils. Twenty years ago not more than 60 or 70 people composed both beginners' and high-school and city bands. Now nearly 200 students are actively engaged in band work. Many superior ratings have been received by the band in high-school competitions, both as a band and in small group and individual competitions

An important point in connection with the history of the band movement from its inception to the present is that continuously the organization has been directed, influenced, and guided by men of the highest caliber. Through the years the influence of men like Silas Camp, Arthur Curtiss, Charles Reeve, W. S. Nicholas, Ted Nicholas, Professor H. R. Grant, Hugh Hadsell, Professor Leroy, Paul Curtiss, Alfred Elder, and Herman Larsen have made a deep and lasting impression on the lives of many young men and women who have grown up in our community and gone out into the world to be better citizens for having known and experienced the guidance and influence of

these men.

In closing, we salute this organization whose primary object is to provide musical entertainment for the community but whose greatest contribution has been the building of high ethical standards and good -Ben D. Fussell character in many of our young people.

The spring and summer of 1920 marked the beginning of golf playing at the county fairgrounds in Fillmore County. What activity there was at that time took place on the quarter stretch and was mostly just knocking the ball from one end of the stretch to the other.

The first club was started the following year with nine paid members. The membership fee was \$5 a year. But as the years passed, the club grew, the grounds were improved, a ground keeper was employed, greens were located and sanded, and a team of horses purchased to operate the ground-keeping machinery the club had purchased.

The club prospered for several years and was a really going affair until the dry years of the thirties, when operations practically ceased. Through the prosperous years several tournaments were held, attracting golfers from many counties. At one tournament there were

The original club paid the Fillmore County Agricultural Society \$200 as rent for the use of the grounds. The following year the rent



Geneva Golf Course on Fairgrounds in center of picture (1962).

was reduced to \$100, but at that time the members of the club refused to pay for the use of the grounds and began looking for another location.

The board wisely decided to waive all charges for the use of the grounds, noting that by the time when the fairgrounds had to be cleaned for the annual fair, the job had been done and that expense had been eliminated.

During World War II the fairgrounds were rented for pasture. In the spring of 1947, the community expressed a strong desire for the revival of golf. A group of men persuaded Paul H. Farmer to accept the presidency and the club was organized.

The west half of the fairgrounds was all plowed and seeded to blue grass that spring. For two years only 5 holes were played, then 9 holes were established again.

The location and the greens have been changed twice since the revival of the game in 1947.

The German Lutheran parsonage on the gravel road 4 miles S Grafton was bought by the golf club in the fall of 1958 and moved to the fairgrounds and placed at the SW edge of the race track. During 1958 the house was completely remodeled into a club house. In the spring of 1959 the lawn was seeded and sidewalks built around the new club house.

The membership has grown from 87 to a 1967 membership of 134.

THE COUNTY NEWSPAPER

The Nebraska Signal is the result of the combination of 16 newspapers published at one time or another in Fillmore County. On February 14, 1894, Frank O. Edgecombe purchased the Geneva Republican, then in its 20th year, from M. V. King & Son. On the same day he purchased the Geneva Journal, published by J. A. Loudermilch. In 1896, he purchased the Nebraska Signal, which had been established in 1881 by Dr. J. B. Brazelton at Fairmont, Mr. Edgecombe moved the Signal plant to Geneva and combined it with that of the Republican-Journal. To get away from the hyphenated name, he retained instead the name of the Nebraska Signal.

Other papers which were ultimately consolidated with the Signal included the Fillmore County Republican, Fillmore County Journal, Fairmont Dispatch, Geneva Gazette, Grafton Sun, Strang Reporter, Shickley Herald, Ohiowa Ohiowan, Milligan Review, Fairmont Chronicle, Geneva Daily, Milligan Times, Exeter Enterprise, and Ohiowa Spotlight.

The early-day newspapers had no telephones or typewriters, the type was all hand set, and in the first few years the papers were printed on hand presses. When the Republican was started, there were only a few frame buildings in the business section of Geneva.

Weekly newspapers in those days were highly personalized. The papers editorially were the publishers' personal organs. Political beliefs were taken very much to heart. There were some very virulent writings in those days. Editors attacked their "esteemed with little provocation. contemporaries"

When Mr. Edgecombe came to Geneva, his first two years were times of drouth and depression. In the fall of 1894, hot winds destroyed the entire corn crop, and 1895 was a very dry year. As times got better, improvements in the printing equipment were made. Hand composition was replaced by the purchase of typesetting machines. The improvements have continued, and the Signal now has one of the best-equipped small-city plants in the state. The newspaper has for several years been printed on a Duplex web press, which prints, folds, and trims the paper and delivers it ready for mailing.

In the summer of 1949, a new front was put on the Signal building. The building was erected in 1890 and was not suited to modern business. The new front not only makes a greatly improved appearance,



Courtesy of Nebraska Signal

Signal office-left, 1896; right, 1963.

but also the editorial and news room has been enlarged and working conditions are better. The office front is all glass. The old sidewalk, with railings around two openings in the walk, was torn out, the holes filled, and a new walk laid. From the walk to the office floor level, glass bricks were used to give more light in the press room in the basement. The business office was given an asphalt tile floor.

Frank O. Edgecombe, newspaper publisher in Geneva for more than 50 years, built the Signal from a small beginning into one of the

better-known newspapers of the state and nation.
"The blind editor from Nebraska," as Frank was known, was born on a farm in Ohio on February 13, 1864. In April, 1865, his parents came to southeast Nebraska and settled on a farm near Rulo. When he grew up, he attended the Methodist college at York and was graduated with the class of 1884. (This college was later merged with Nebraska Wesleyan University.)



Three generations of the Edgecombe family who have published the Signal. Left to right: Frank O. Edgecombe, Tyler Edgecombe, and John Edgecombe.

After a few years in the banking business in Rulo, Frank Edgecombe bought a half interest in the Falls City Journal in 1889. In 1890, he retired completely from the bank and bought out the other half interest, moved to Falls City, and was in the newspaper business for keeps.

In 1892, when he was 27 years old, he lost his sight through a hunting accident. A group of hunters was walking through a stubble field in western Nebraska, and powder from a shot from one gun hit Mr. Edgecombe in the face, causing immediate and permanent

blindness After 23 days in an Omaha hospital, where he got his first experience in being read to and in dictating to a stenographer, he returned to the Journal office in Falls City to resume his work.

Two years later he sold the Falls City paper and bought the two competing newspapers in Geneva and moved his family here. This was to be his home for the rest of his life.

Frank Edgecombe won many honors for his newspaper. He served as president of the Nebraska Press Association and the National Editorial Association, and was always a leader in forward movements in his profession.

His son, Tyler Edgecombe, was graduated from the School of Agriculture of the University of Nebraska in 1907 and the university in 1911. He worked on the old Beatrice Daily Express until 1913, when he returned to Geneva to be associated with his father at the

Signal. Tyler assumed control of the Signal in 1941.

The new publisher was well grounded in newspaper fundamentals, having been indoctrinated with the life and the business from the time he was able, as a boy, to help out in the shop. He explained that he studied agriculture at the university to be able to be of better service to his rural area and to be able to understand and grow with the main industry of his county and state.

The new publisher advocated and adopted modern business principles in his operation of the Signal; but in doing so, Tyler did not alter the community-service ideals set up by his father. Signal is still a strong booster for community betterment. Its policies

stress service to subscribers, advertisers, and the area in general. Following in his father's footsteps, Tyler has long been active in N.P.A., also serving a term as president of the association. He is a past president of the Geneva Chamber of Commerce and of Geneva Rotary, has headed the four Masonic bodies of Geneva, and is active in various other civic capacities.

Tyler's son, John Edgecombe, joined the Signal in 1947 after spending three years in the Army Air Force and attending the University of Missouri's Linotype School. He is now a partner in the business and serves as advertising manager.

Howard W. Hamilton joined the Signal staff in 1948 as news

editor and has edited the editorial page since 1950.

The Signal has presently a circulation of 3,965, third largest among weekly newspapers in Nebraska.

Some interesting early newspaper history was supplied by Mrs. Marcus Alexander of Pomona, California, in a letter which the Signal published on April 14, 1930:

"In the spring of 1883, we arrived in Fairmont: mother, brother Leo, cousin Leota Merrill, and myself, bound for Geneva. There being no railroad there, we took the hack, with Ed Nuttals as driver. Father [T. Wilkins] came ahead of us from our home in Bedford, Iowa, to look around for a print shop. Dr. M. Propst of Blockton. Iowa, came a short time ahead of father. After arriving, Dr. Propst was taken quite sick and father nursed him back to health. Then Dr. Propst's family, consisting of his wife and two sons, Waldo and Clyde, came to live in Geneva. Later, Carl came with his uncle, Dan Propst.

'Father liked the looks of this little burg, so he bought the Review from Arthur Scott. Arthur and his brother Ernest had bought it from M. M. Neeves in 1882. Father changed the name from Review to Fillmore County Republican. Mr. Neeves had published the first newspaper Geneva had. Father had a job printer by the name of John Thompson from Sigourney, Iowa, come and take charge as foreman.

Quoting from Mrs. Arthur Scott, who is still living in Lomita, California: 'The Review was located in the center of the block south of the Jameson Hotel, in a story-and-a-half frame building. A family

lived upstairs.

The Scotts moved the shop to the east block over a hardware store. This building was a story-and-a-half frame. While it was still located in the upstairs room, Father bought it from Scott.

'The Citizens Bank was building a new frame building where the brick building now stands. Father had to have more room, so he rented the second story and moved the outfit there. About this time the little town began to grow, and it wasn't long until the Burlington began to lay ties and rails. The first train that rolled in was a freight engine, a freight car, and a caboose. I have a picture of that train. I do not remember the year.

[Two weeks later, in the Signal for April 28, 1930, Mrs. A. J.

Brown of Geneva gave the date as June 7, 1886.]

When we got settled over the Citizens Bank, I took it in my head to set type. This was long before the typesetting machine came out. It was talked about, but Father said it could not be done, setting type by machinery. I was taken in the print shop and was called the 'deviless' (printing office slang). I don't remember the date we had to move the shop from the bank building, as the building was sold to Nick Longly. To make room for the new building, Mr. Longly moved the building to a corner lot across from the library. It is still called the Longly Building, but now is half a block north of the corner.

"Father built a new building across the alley north from what is now the R. A. Smith store. The office was downstairs and we lived upstairs. That was when Mark and I were married. I do not know

if it still stands there or not.

"Robert Crowley came to work for us there. Father put in a new printing press and job press. We used an old Washington hand press before we moved. It was my job to stand there and ink the forms after each paper was printed.

"Father, T. Wilkins, sold the Fillmore County Republican to M. V. King and son Oran November 5, 1889. Then in 1894 Frank Edgecombe bought it and a few years later changed the name to Nebraska Signal.

PROFESSIONAL ROSTER

Doctors

Among the first doctors to locate in Geneva were Dr. Richard Dailey and Dr. G. R. Hart. Dr. Dailey, born in Madison, Indiana, began the study of medicine in that state in 1874, and commenced the practice of medicine in Geneva in the spring of 1877. Dr. Hart came to Fillmore County and located on a homestead on Turkey Creek in Geneva precinct in July of 1871; however, he did not move to Geneva until the fall of 1878. He began his practice in Ford County, Illinois. The following list of Geneva doctors, their birthplaces, and year of registration in Fillmore County is as complete as possible from available records.

1881: G. R. Hart, Pennsylvania; Richard T. Dailey, Indiana;

N. E. Oliver, Pennsylvania.

1882: H. L. Smith, New York; C. J. Harris, New York.

1883: George Mozee, Indiana; William T. Mozee, Kentucky; Ben B. Mozee, Kentucky.

1884: Morgan Propst, Virginia. 1885: Samuel M. Herb, Illinois.

1886: W. H. Davis, Canada.

1887: F. E. L. Hester, Indiana; Thomas C. Canine, Indiana.

1888: L. D. Bailar, Ohio.

1889: William H. Dempster, Illinois; Abner G. McGrew, Pennsylvania; J. T. Baird, Canada.

1892: G. W. Corman. 1894: Flora G. Harbaugh (Mrs. C. M. Barnett).

1897: George W. Johnson, Virginia; Ora S. Stephenson. 1900: Joseph Bixby, G. D. Pendell, A. J. Kaufman.

1901 to 1967: Archibald Murphy; W. C. Beaven, Osteopath; Frank Bates, Osteopath; Frederick L. Beck; Joel C. Hickman; Royal Woods; Nathan H. Blakeley; Claire Owens; Charles Curtis Wallingsford; Claus C. Delfs; Blanche R. Bailar, Chiropractor; Aaron Guengerich, Chiropractor; D. C. Stansberry; J. M. S. Chesshir; Clarence S. McKee; Harold A. Rosenau, Osteopath; William S. Musfelt; Edith Y. Ridpath, Chiropractor; Alfred H. Elder, Optometrist; W. E. Fiegenbaum, Optometrist; W. P. McCall, Optometrist; D. C. Anderson, Optometrist; A. A. Ashby; Charles F. Ashby; Vincent S. Lynn; Edward J. Hinrichs.

Of the latter group, Drs. Albert A. and Charles F. Ashby, H. A. Rosenau, Edith Ridpath, D. C. Anderson, and Vincent S. Lynn are in active practice in 1967.

R. M. Hazlett (1879), A. Mathews (1886), G. L. Stone (1882), J. C. Clark (1888), A. F. Cogswell (1894), J. W. Puckett (1898), Woodson T. Smith (1896), Charles C. Mozee (1897).

1900 to 1967: Robert Chenoweth (1900), Oliver Waldeman (1900), Waldo Propst (1901), J. H. Jackson (1902), L. H. Warner (1910), Clyde B. Cross (1913), George L. Carlson (1915), D. D. Donavan (1917), John Q. Adams (1925), Bud J. Bukacek (1929), Lewis Kerl (1930), David A. Portwood (1959).

Drs. Lewis Kerl, J. Q. Adams, and D. A. Portwood main-

tain dental practices in Geneva in 1967.

Veterinarians

W. H. Fauver (1890), J. M. Dunn (1893), F. Power (1893), J. Herriot (1894), H. N. Woller (1894), I. W. McEachran, John A. Barger, Harry Nothomb, L. C. Shaw, William F. Carter (from April 1, 1962), Carl Richard Johnson (August, 1964, to January, 1965)

Dr. McEachran was the first licensed veterinarian in Geneva, having received his license in 1905. Dr. William F. Carter remains in

active practice in 1967.

Lawyers (in practice, 1967)

Robert Waring, John C. Gewacke, Grady Corbitt, Thomas J. Keenan, Ray Cellar, Howard Hamilton, Ed Steinacher, Walter O'Neal.



Fillmore County Bar (1895). Back row, left to right: William Waite, deputy sheriff; Hon. W. G. Hastings, presiding; E. A. Cary, reporter; Bright B. Ogg, sheriff; F. B. Donisthorpe; John J. Burke, deputy district clerk; H. F. Putlitz, district clerk; H. P. Wilson. Seated: John Barsby, county attorney; Robert J. Sloan; A. Sandage, bailiff; D. Carson; James W. Christy; Frank W. Sloan; Charles A. Fowler; Charles A. Sloan.

Other Occupations

Painters (1967): Raymond Schupbach, Ray Jirkovsky, Frank Gibbons, Alvin Rizer.

Plumbers (1967)—licensed by City Clerk: Joe E. Schelkopf,

Dean Garrett, Harrison Karr, Koehler & Co. Electricians (1967)—persons and businesses licensed by City Clerk: James S. Matejka (Geneva Electric), Fred Schaldecker, Joe E. Schelkopf, Don Cuda, Andrews Electric, Kaneb Terminal (Fred Versemann), John Wilkins Construction (Wayne Churchill), Koehler & Co., Gambles, Gehrke Construction Co.

Contractors (1967): W. A. Biba Engineering Co., Nichols Construction Co., Maurice A. Nichols Construction Co., Kiester & Walker,

John W. Wilkins.

Masons (1967): Melvin Schnegelberger, Virgil Verhage Carpenters (1967): Virgil Reichert, Richard Oliva, W. W. Biegert, Dean Heath, Gehrke Construction Co. (Delfs Gehrke and Lawrence Peterson), John Wilkins Construction, Steve Watmore, Koehler & Co. (Lewis McCreath, company carpenter).

Morticians (1967): Robert Kritner, Paul Farmer. Auctioneers (1967): Iryl Shaner, Kenneth (Bill) Shaner, Rex

Shaner, Don Kimbrough.

BUSINESS HISTORY

The following summary is from the Bulletin for January 3, 1884:

Geneva This town is the county seat of Fillmore County, and is located at the geographical center of school Sec. 36, town 7, range 3 west. Its location is a pleasant one, on the level upland prairie. The town was laid out on an open prairie, but now a fine growth of forest and shade trees surround it. The population numbers about 400. It is located about 8 miles S of the B. & M. Railroad, and the nearest railroad station is at Fairmont.

ramoad station is at Fairmont.	
Business Houses and Stocks Carried	
Dempster Bros., drugs, general merchandise	995 000
Platt & Smith, general merchandise	10,000
F. H. Briggs, groceries	5,000
Mozee & Co.	1,000
A. G. Camp & Son, general	1,000
L. Fiegenbaum, drugs	5,000
H. Conant, notions	5,000
I. E. Mack, confectionery	3,000
D. W. L.	2,000
B. W. Jones, restaurant	500
Jones & Barry, hardware	4,000
Stone & Pardue, hardware	3,000
Baris & Reed, furniture	
S. H. Yates, flour and feed mill	2,000
M. Conwell, flour and feed mill	1,000
Mrs. Luke, millinery	1,000
Mrs. G. Hedge, millinery	1,500
Mr. Haywood, bakery	
J. Selby, coal	
C. Heath, harness	1,500
W. S. Crawford, harness	1,200
F. Stone, stone chimneys	1,200
Total	\$74.700
Improvements	
District schoolhouse	\$ 5,000
Opera house and stores, Jensen & Briggs	4,000
Mozee Bros., store and addition	3,000
Mr. Conant, store and addition	2,000
A. O. Taylor, office	
S. Camp, store building	500
J. M. Fisher dealling	500
J. M. Fisher, dwelling	4,000
E. Spear, dwelling	1,500
C. Donisthorpe, dwelling	
Mrs. Clark, dwelling	700
A. J. Jones, dwelling	800
Mrs. P. D. Sturdevant, dwelling	
Mrs. McKee, dwelling	
F. Heiderstadt, dwelling	
C. H. Bane, dwelling	1,200
Mrs. Moore, dwelling	800
J. Lemon, dwelling	800
O. P. Lacy, dwelling	
A. J. Beals, dwelling	
G. Nettleman, dwelling	400
	2,000

Professions

The attorneys are: C. H. Bane, J. Jensen, W. H. Cooksey, and J. D. Hamilton.

The doctors are: B. G. and William Mozee; R. T. Dailey and G. R. Hart.

The clergy are: Revs. M. E. Donisthorpe, Willis and Pardee. Societies

Geneva Lodge, A. F. & A. M.; a lodge of I. O. of O. F.; a G. A. R. post and the Woman's Christian Temperance Society.

The Geneva cornet band and the juvenile band furnish music for the town.

The real-estate business is represented by Taylor & Day, S. Camp, and B. Shickley.

The insurance agents are as follows: J. C. D. McDonald, A. V. Dworak, and J. Miles.

In the next 22 months, the business interests of the town expanded considerably, as indicated by this Business Directory from the Fillmore County Republican of October 28, 1885:

Billings & Donisthorpe—attorneys-at-law (on Center St. near Court)

Banta, C.—Fillmore Hotel Briggs, F. H.—groceries, etc.

Brunner, Adam—shoemaker (on corner next to Camp's store) Brown, Mrs. F. M.—milliner and dressmaker

Carson, J. D.-attorney-at-law (office with A. O. Taylor)

Carson, J. D.—attorney-at-law (office wi Cooksey, W. H.—post office, news depot Camp, C. D.—photographer Camp, J. H.—liveryman and feed stable

Clark, George C .- painter (east side of courthouse square)

Cudworth & Evans-milliners

Dempster, Hazlett & Green-drugs, jewelry, and books Dempster & Stewart-dry goods and tailoring (successors to Demp-

ster Bros., opposite the courthouse) Faust, J.—shoe shop

Fifield, W. A .- attorney-at-law

Fort, J. H. & Co.—real estate and loan agents Fiegenbaum, Lou S.—drugs, wall paper, and books

Fillebrown, Mrs. Ellen-milliner

Green, G. R.-jeweler and watch maker Glover, Mrs. S. J.-dressmaker (in Mrs. Fillebrown's millinery store) Hart, G. R.—physician and surgeon (office in Fiegenbaum's drugstore) Herb, S. M.—physician and surgeon (office over Woodruff's hardware store)

Heath, Mrs. C. H .- teacher of vocal and instrumental music

Heath, C. H.-harness and saddles

Henderson, S. J.-blacksmith Hitch, G. R .- groceries, etc.

Jensen, J.-attorney-at-law (in Citizens Bank)

Jensen, Fillebrown & Griffiths-bankers

King & Wilkins—real estate, loans, and abstractors Lemmon, E. O.—contractor and builder

Lacy, O. P.-furniture dealers (west side of courthouse square) Luke, J. H.—real estate and insurance (in Citizens Bank building)

Luke, Mrs. L. M.—milliner Mathews, A.—dentist

McClintock, Miss Martha-teacher of instrumental music (at Mrs. Heiderstadt's in NE Geneva)

Martin, H. H .- contractor and builder (on corner, northeast of courthouse)

Mozee Bros.—drugs and dry goods Mozee Bros.—physicians and surgeons Matson & Wilkins-tonsorial artists

Ough, T .- wagon maker Pittman, A.-carpet weaver

Smith, Fisher & Fifield-bankers Shumway & Alexander-meat market

Sayas & Boyce-plasterers and stone masons Spear, D. J.-dry goods and hardware

Stone & Sager-windmills, pumps, and belting Spear & DeWolf—livery, feed, and sale stable Shickley Bros.—Farmers' Loan and Trust Company

Turner, Robert-dairy

Voris & Reed-furniture and farm machinery Vondra, George N.-blacksmith (east side of square)

Wilkins & King-Republican printing office

Wirtz, Kate—laundry (at residence)
Woodruff, C. H.—hardware
Williams, T. L.—house and sign painter (over H. H. Martin wagon shop)

Youngers & Preston-nursery Yates, S. H .- flour and feed

Zink, George H.—confectioner Martin, E. C.—barber shop (west of Spear & DeWolf's livery barn in Charlie Downing's old stand)



Photo from Mrs. C. C. Camp View of Main Street from west end of block, about 1888.

Then, some four years later, still further gratifying growth was recorded by the Nebraska Gazetteer for 1888-89:

"Geneva is the county seat of Fillmore County and is an important railway point. It is a station on the Chester and Fairmont line of the B. & M. Railroad and the Geneva line of the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley R.R., which gives it a direct outlet to different points of the compass. Other railroad companies are extending their lines in this direction, among which are the Missouri Pacific and the Wyandott & Northwestern, and indications are that Geneva will in a few years be one of the leading railroad centers of the state. The town is situated in [the] center of [the] county, the products of which are grain, cattle, and hogs, increasing in such measure as to attract attention. The soil is rich and fertile and admirably adapted to growth of all cereals. . . . There is a large school building and an excellent graded school. The churches are the Methodist, Rev. G. M. Couffer; Congregational, Rev. H. S. Wannamaker; Baptist, Rev. L. T. Fisher.

"Societies: Geneva Lodge No. 79, A.F. & A.M.; Geneva Lodge

No. 125, A.O.U.W.; Geneva Chapter (U.D.) order; Geneva Lodge No. 65, I.O.O.F.; Wilson Post No. 22, G.A.R.; Geneva Lodge No. 73, K. of P.; Geneva Union Aid Society

"Two weekly papers are published here, the *Republican* and *Democrat*, both of which are ably conducted, the former under management of T. Wilkins, and the latter by Sumner E. King; the

Citizens Bank, capital \$50,000, J. Jensen, president, H. L. Smith, vicepresident, J. M. Fillebrown, cashier; the Exchange Bank and the Bank of Geneva are solid banking institutions and are substantial aids in building up the place.

The traveling public and others are cared for by the Stowell House, G. Stowell, proprietor; the Platt House, by Frank Strong; and the Fillmore Hotel by C. Banta.

Alexander, Mark-meat market Antes, S. F.-station agent Arnold, George F.—real estate Atherton, H. A .- manager of the Nebraska Telephone Co. Bailor, L. D.—physician Bank of Geneva-A. O. Taylor,

president; William H. Jameson, cashier

Banta, C.-proprietor of Fillmore Hotel Beals, A. J.—city transfer Beals, T. J.—lumber Beals & Webster-carpenters Beals & Wilkins—barbers Bentley, D. B.—blacksmith Berdolt, M. & Son-clothing Billings, E. M.—attorney Breitting, J. F.-restaurant Brown & Farr—groceries Brown, William-ice Burk, J. M.-hardware Burnett & Merrill-carpenters Camp, C. D.—photographer Camp, J. H.—livery Camp, J. H., Mrs.-millinery Carson, John D.—attorney-at-law Chapman, A.—real estate Citizens Bank-authorized capi-

tal \$50,000; J. Jensen, president; H. L. Smith, vice-president; E. K. Cobb, cashier

Clark & Bumgarner—agricultural implements Clark, J. C.—dentist

Cobb, E. K .- cashier of Citizens Bank Conant, D. H.—attorney Cone, C. H. & Co.—lumber—R.

W. Schmoldt, manager Cooksey, W. H.—postmaster Crawford & Brown—groceries Crowley Bros.—rubber stamps Curtis & Son-loans

Daley, E. H.—pianos, organs Darrow, J. R.—groceries Dempster & Conwell-general merchandise

Dempster & Hazlett-drugs Donisthorpe, F. B .- attorney Donisthorpe, S.—abstracts Dworak, V.—loans, insurance

Exchange Bank-George M. Smith, president; J. M.

Fisher, cashier Faust, J. F.—shoemaker Fauver, W. H., Dr.—veterinary surgeon

Fiegenbaum, L. S .- drugs, etc. Fifield, W. V.-attorney Fillebrown, Ellen, Mrs.-millinery Fillmore County Democrat-Sumner E. King, publisher

Fillmore County Republican-T. Wilkins, publisher Gaylord, Will R.-abstracts Geneva Manufacture & Repair

shop-David C. Mowry, proprietor Geneva Milling Co.—Jacob Pflug and others, incorporators

Geneva Roller Milling Co.-A. O. Taylor, president; F. H. Briggs, secretary; J. Jensen, treasurer

Glover, S. J., Mrs.—dressmaker Green, G. R.—jewelry Gustafson, John—blacksmith Hamilton, J. D.—attorney and iustice

Harris, William—plasterer Hart. G. R.-physician Haskins Bros.—carpenters Held, Frank-tailor Hitch & Rathbun-general merchandise Huston & Schofield-lightning

Jensen, J.—president Citizens Bank, attorney-at-law Jewell, T. T .- broom manufac-

turer Jones, P. W., Mrs.-dressmaker Keeler, F. A.-groceries

Kent, Mattie, Miss-laundry King, Sumner E.—publisher of Fillmore County Democrat Koehler & Co.—grain La Paul, C. A .--well digger Lau, Martin-shoemaker Lemmon, E. O.-carpenter Lightbody & Tilzy-livestock Limback & Heath-drugs Longly, N. L.—wagonmaker Luke, J. H.—real estate

McClintock, Martha, Mrs.music teacher McFadden, Jap—barber McGrew, C. F.—attorney Mayland & Gill-meat market Mussner, C. L .- dry goods Miller, H. A. & Son-furniture Mohrman & Arends-general merchandise

Mozee, B. B.—physician Mozee, George-physician Mozee, W. T.—physician Nebraska Telephone Co.—H. A. Atherton, manager

Noyes, J. M.-coal Otis, F.-carpenter Ough, Thomas-wagonmaker Pardue, Henry-billiards Parker & Son-groceries Parkhurst, H. H.-lumber and coal

Peth, George-harnessmaker Phelps & Son-hardware Platt House-Strong & Ward, proprietors Powell, W. H.-restaurant Price, Joseph-grain

Propst, M.-physician Shickley Bros.—real estate Shickley, J. B.—auctioneer Shuster & Co.-foundry Sloan, W. C .- attorney Smith, Luke—photographer Smith, H. L.-vice-president of Citizens Bank

Smrha, Charles—harnessmaker Spear, C. J.—livery Spear, D. J.—hardware Stanley, S .- flour and feed Stevens, Ed-coal Stowell House-G. Stowell, prop.

Strong & Ward, Props.—Platt House Stultz, Q.—painter The Fillmore Hotel—C. Banta,

prop. Thompson, W. H.—restaurant Tidball & Fuller—lumber and coal Traver, M. J., Mrs.—millinery Turner, Robert—dairy Tyson, L., Mrs.—restaurant Wait, J. E.—subscription books Walker, S. S.—painter

Ward, J. H .- furniture Watrous & Spear—millinery Webster & Ladmesser—carpenters Weed, W. L.--station agent B. & M. R.R.

Wheeler, T. W.—poultry
Wilkins, T.—publisher of Fillmore
County Republican Williams Bros.—painters



Photo from Mrs. Guy Brown, Sr.

Peter Youngers' nursery crew in the early 1900's. This building, later used by the Economy Paint Mills, is now the American Legion Hall.

Williams, M. D.—real estate Wolfe & Burder-carpenters Wilson, D. W.-restaurant Wood, T. L. & Co.-merchant tailors

Wyoming Improvement Co.-C. W. Shickley, secretary Youngers & Co.—nursery Zirhut & Trant-soda water manufacturers

Then, as we move some 20 years from that first list of 1884, we find the population quadrupled. This description and directory are from the Nebraska State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1902-03:

Geneva-Population 1,600, is on the B. & M. and F.E. & M.V. R.R.'s near the center of Fillmore County of which it is the county seat. It has 2 banks, 2 newspapers, 2 elevators, 1 roller mill, and an abundance of churches. Express: Adams, American. Attorneys—F. B. Thorpe Dorris, G. D. Matthewson, B. F. Shickley,

Sloan Brothers (Charles H. and Frank W.), H. P. Wilson

Abstracts-F. M. Flory

Banks-Citizens Bank, J. O. Walker, president; C. W. and V. C. Shickley, vice-presidents; E. K. Cobb, cashier

Geneva State Bank, E. Sandrock, president; E. Laffer, vice-president; C. S. Trotter, cashier

Bakery-William Manning, Fred A. Williams

Bicycles-D. W. Haskins

Barbers-Beals & Wilkins, O. Merrill, - Severens

Blacksmith-D. B. Bentley, M. L. Flick, Henderson & Son (S. J. and W. H.), F. J. Kabley, Shackelford & Son (A. C. and J. D.) Billiards-F. M. Eaton

Bottler—M. Gasper B. & M. R.R.—W. L. Wood, agent

City Clerk-J. D. Hamilton

City Treasurer-W. S. Huston

Clothing-W. P. Eaton

Carriages and implements-Walter Huston

Coal, brick, lumber-A. Koehler & Co. Coal and grain-F. F. Beals & Co.

Clerk of District Court-W. A. Combs

Confections-B. F. Walton

County Attorney-Frank W. Sloan

County Clerk-A. N. Strickland

County Judge-Frank Skipton

County Superintendent of Schools-Charles Smrha

County Treasurer-Jacob Weis

District Court Reporter-J. W. Brewster

Dentist-[J. W.] Puckett, W. T. Smith

Doctors-W. C. Beaver, Thomas C. Canine, Abner G. McGrew, B. B. Mozee, George Mozee, G. D. Pendell, Morgan Propst

Drugs-Hutchins & Skinkle (Sterns Hutchins, Gregory Skinkle), E. B. Woodworth

Drugs and stationery-L. S. Fiegenbaum

Dry Goods—Solomon & Nathan (E. Solomon, Isaac Nathan)

Fillmore County Abstract Assn.—Sid Donisthorpe, secretary Flour, feed, implements—W. T. Thomas Flour and feed confr.—C. A. Smith

Flour mill, elevator-Guthrie & Co.

Flour mill, elevator—Guthrie & Co.

Furniture—C. W. Hrubesky, Matt Youngers
F. E. & M. V. R.R.—E. F. Elmore, agent

General merchandise—W. I. Carson, Newton Hitch, F. A. Keeler,
Mohrman & Arends (H. F. Mohrman, J. H. Arends), H. L. Reeve
& Son (H. L. and C. B.), Thomas Brothers Co.

Girls Industrial School—H. W. Clark, superintendent

Grocers—VanNice & Morrow (H. A. VanNice, S. F. Morrow)

Grain elevator—W. H. Ferguson



Photo from Warren Lefever

H. F. Mohrman's general merchandise store (early 1900's).

Hardware and harness-Hranac Brothers Hardware and furniture-D. Geiselman Hardware and implements-C. M. Barnett, W. H. Spear & Co. Harness and upholstery-A. Barnes Ice and meat market -M. Alexander Hotel-Fillmore Hotel, L. W. Thompson, proprietor Jeweler—L. S. Fiegenbaum, G. R. Green Judge of 7th District—G. W. Stubbs Livery-E. A. Bidelman, Albert Kline, Wise & Owens (Peter Wise, Joseph Owens) Laundry—A. C. Phelps Mayor—H. P. Wilson Meat market-W. E. Eckley, F. Wright Newspapers-Nebraska Signal, F. O. Edgecombe, editor; Geneva Gazette, W. J. Waite, manager Millinery-Mrs. F. E. Houchin, Palmer & Wheeler (H. L. Palmer, A. M. Wheeler), Mary J. Traver Music dealer-George H. Nelson

Nursery-Youngers & Co. Pastors-Rev. C. B. Aldrich (Baptist); Rev. Charles Becker (Catholic); Rev. A. F. Colony (Methodist); Rev. T. C. Ferguson (Free Will Baptist); Rev. T. Griffith (Congregational); Rev. R. C. Talbot (Episcopal)

Photographer-Fred H. Camp

News and cigars-Hyde & Co.

Produce—Armour & Co., A. R. Daugherty, agent

Postmaster-M. V. King

Real estate and insurance—George F. Arnold, Bruner & Atherton (H. C. Bruner, H. A. Atherton), Curtiss & Waring (A. D. Curtiss, J. K. Waring)

Real estate—John Mills

Restaurant, Confectioners-Matthew & Phillips (Mrs. W. W. Matthew, R. G. Phillips)

Saloon-J. B. Cross, Lyman Russell

Sewing machines—Singer Manufacturing Co.—John Fryxell, agent Sheriff-M. W. Dinneen

Shoemaker—George Bower Shoes—F. N. Burleigh

Tailor—Frank Held Wagonmaker—Nick Longly



Courtesy Geneva State Bank

Burleigh's shoe store (in 1890's). Left to right: J. S. Burleigh, Laura Bender, J. C. Bender.

¹ One must assume that the reporter could not read his own handwriting; this is obviously "F. B. Donisthorpe."

VILLAGE BOARD CHAIRMEN AND MAYORS

Year	Chairman of Board Clerks	Year	Mayors Clerks
1879	M. M. Neeves W. Fifield	1911	W. H. Sisler J. D. Hamilton
1880	J. M. Fisher John Mills	1912	W. H. Sisler J. D. Hamilton
1881	E. Gabriel Geo. Neeves	1913	O. C. Bedford
1882	Geo. W. Smith C. H. Bane		J. D. Hamilton
1883	B. F. Shickley C. H. Bane	1914	O. C. Bedford
1884	D. H. Conant J. E. Spear		J. D. Hamilton
	F. H. Briggs J. E. Spear	1915	L. F. Johnson
1885	J. B. Lewis J. E. Spear		J. D. Hamilton
	M. V. King J. E. Spear	1916	John T. Limback
1886	B. B. Mozee J. D. Hamilton		J. D. Hamilton
1887	J. M. Fillebrown	1917	Wm. Aldrup
	J. D. Hamilton		J. D. Hamilton
1888	W. V. Fifield	1918	Wm. Aldrup
	J. D. Hamilton		Charles Underwood
	Mayors	1919	Wm. Aldrup
1889	H. L. Smith J. D. Hamilton		Charles Underwood
1890	Geo. W. Smith	1920	William Aldrup
	J. D. Hamilton		Charles Underwood
1891	W. H. Cooksey	1921	B. B. Ogg I. T. Fellows
TEATO !	J. D. Hamilton	1922	B. B. Ogg I. T. Fellows
1892	John D. Carson	1924	D. Bertram Bert Lynn
	J. D. Hamilton	1926	D. Bertram Bert Lynn
1893	J. G. Burress	1928	D. Bertram Bert Lynn
	J. D. Hamilton	1930	D. Bertram Bert Lynn
1894	J. G. Burress	1932	Joseph Bixby Bert Lynn
	J. D. Hamilton	1934	Joseph Bixby Bert Lynn
1895	Dr. H. L. Smith	1936	Joseph Bixby Bert Lynn
	J. D. Hamilton	1938	Joseph Bixby Bert Lynn
1896	Dr. H. L. Smith	1940	Joseph Bixby Bert Lynn
	J. D. Hamilton	1942	Joseph Bixby Bert Lynn
1897	Dr. H. L. Smith	1944	Joseph Bixby Bert Lynn
	J. D. Hamilton	1946	John Q. Adams Bert Lynn
1898	E. Sandrock J. D. Hamilton	1948	John Q. Adams Bert Lynn
1899	E. Sandrock J. D. Hamilton	1950	A. A. Russell Bert Lynn
1900	H. P. Wilson	1951	Woodrow Kinder
	J. D. Hamilton		(fill vacancy)
1901	H. P. Wilson		Irene Merrill
	J. D. Hamilton		(fill vacancy)
1902	H. P. Wilson	1952	Woodrow Kinder
	J. D. Hamilton		Irene Merrill
1903	A. H. Stevens J. J. Burke	1954	Woodrow Kinder
1904	A. H. Stevens J. J. Burke		Irene Merrill
1905	A. H. Stevens J. J. Burke	1956	Woodrow Kinder ¹
1906	A. H. Stevens H. P. Wilson		Irene Merrill ¹
1907	B. Koehler H. P. Wilson	1958	James Barbur
1908	B. Koehler H. P. Wilson		Irene Merrill
1909	Geo. W. Smith A. D. Curtiss	1960-	1967 Francis McPeck
1910	Frank Bates A. D. Curtiss		Irene Merrill
			Irene Merrill

SOME GENEVA FIRSTS

County Judge-William H. Blain 1871

Undertaker—J. B. Noble & Co. 1872

James H. Bigelow erected the first store building. 1873

The first building on the town site was the county jail. A. G. Camp & Sons—S. B., J. H., and C. D.—opened the first general-merchandise store in Geneva, in the G. E. Bigelow 1874

building. 1875 Mark M. Neeves published Geneva's first newspaper, the Fillmore County Review.

1879 June 18-the first Sunday service in the new Methodist Church was held. Rev. Chapin preached in the morning and Rev. Powell of Fairmont preached in the evening.

The first liquor license was granted to Amos Herr. March 26—the first appointed board of election. Judges of election were A. G. Camp, R. M. Putnam, M. D. Williams. Clerks of the election were G. E. Bigelow and M. L. Spear. 1880 Fees were \$2 per person. June 24-the citizens voted a tax of 7 mills on the dollar on

all taxable property in the town of Geneva for general purposes.

1881 The first sidewalks were built. It was decided to start on Church and Center Sts. They were to be built of good lumber not less than 1" in thickness and laid crosswise and nailed to and suported by timbers at least 2" x 4" placed not more than ' apart. The walk should not be less than 6' wide and 4' wide depending on the location of the business district. Every owner of lots shall be privileged to build the sidewalks at their own expense and not be assessed. The walks were to be completed before September 1.

1883 The first tin shop in Geneva was owned by M. W. Platt. He later moved to the country where he attended to all orders for eave-spoutings

1887 Wintersteen & Ward purchased the first hearse brought to Geneva.



Photo from Mrs. Irene Merrill

Geneva City Council, 1957-1958. Standing, left to right: Earl Jacox, Chester Hayden, Kenneth Heisey, Robert Kiester. Seated: Woodrow Kinder, Mrs. Irene Merrill, Ray Bull, John Friesen.

Geneva had its first fire since the completion of the water system-C. A. Smith's barn.

April 10-three handsome street lamps arrived in the towna gift from the retiring mayor. One was to be placed at the Union Block corner, one at the Citizens Bank corner, and the third at Spear's livery stable corner.

J. D. Hamilton was the first water commissioner at a salary of \$50 a year.

1896 Geneva had its first curfew.

In January the first water meters were placed at the court-house, the Citizens Bank Building, and the Geneva National 1898 Bank building.

A city garbage wagon, a new venture in Geneva, began its 1904 rounds. Refuse of all sorts was hauled to the dump grounds. January 13—Geneva streets were illuminated for the first 1905 time by electricity, G. F. Skinkle's plant being in successful operation.

Photo from Delia Fisher

First flight in Fillmore County (1914). Joe Pendhayn was pilot of the "Baby Day"—built by Wright Bros. at Dayton, Ohio, for Max Lilly, who was killed in a 150-foot drop at Galesburg, Illinois, in the fall of 1910. Girls' Training School in background.

The first commercial plane to visit Geneva landed in Henry 1919 Muhlenburg's pasture. A few people took rides in the air at \$15 apiece. (This farm is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Anderson, Stanton township.)

The first filling station in Geneva was erected by the late C. J. 1922 Warner on the northwest corner of the square. (This is now Eddie's Service.)

Photo from Mrs. C. J. Warner The first filling station in Geneva, built by C. J. Warner in 1922. Notice the "stop button" in center foreground.



¹ Since 1956, the City Clerk and the City Treasurer have been appointed

SOME PASSING GLIMPSES

The following miscellaneous items, mostly relating to Geneva, have been condensed from contemporary newspaper accounts.

1872 December-About 600 Pawnee Indians camped for a few days on the Blue. They have left for the hunting grounds and to fight the Sioux. One of them bought a clean white shirt of a merchant here (Fairmont).

December—A "United States" windmill has arrived for P. J.

Real and when erected all are invited to see it perform. He is the authorized agent west of Crete for Halladay's mill.

1873 Preaching at Pangles' schoolhouse on Turkey Creek on May 4,

1873, at 3:30 P.M., D. B. Lake, pastor.

1877

1880

March-The Omaha Indians returning from their buffalo hunt camped on Turkey Creek Saturday, and some of the boys from Geneva persuaded the gents of the plains to array themselves in their best blankets and appear in the Court House in the evening, for the purpose of giving citizens a treat in the shape of a war dance. Evening arrived and so did the noble red men. The people paid 25 cents to see them go through their wild orgies. Messrs. Renshaw and Warner were Masters of Ceremonies. The music was a bass drum and an Injun to pound it. They danced! They danced the war dance, the scalp dance, the squaw dance—and they danced several other dances, but we cannot remember the names nor do justice to the subject, so will merely say that the Indians had a war dance.

July—Mr. C. G. Worden, the well-known notion man with

1878 G. L. Florence & Co. of Atchison, Kansas, was in town Sunday and Monday with his traveling store (an immense wagon) of the best of goods in the line of notions. As proof our merchants always buy largely of Worden, and but very few orders for notions goods are sent away. He makes his runs here once every six weeks, consequently our merchants look to him for supplies and get them of best quality.

September-C. A. Smith, son of Dr. Smith of Geneva, left

Monday for Lincoln to attend high school.

June-Courthouse yard has been plowed and countless num-1879

ber of weeds have been destroyed.

1879 June-Messrs. Putnam have put up mosquito bars in the windows of the Putnam House. August-Geneva talking up new water works. The hawly

[Holly] system is now in use. Voted a tax on 7 mills on the dollar on all taxable property

in the town of Geneva for general purposes. 1882

January-The weather was so warm Turkey Creek didn't freeze and no ice had been harvested.

June-The Signal suggested that either the county or the city build a crossing across the street to the courthouse. June-The county safe, weight 7,000 pounds, was being brought from Fairmont to Geneva on wagons. Two miles south of town it slipped off the wagons. It took several days to get

June—Valuation of City of Geneva—Personal - \$25,682: Real

Estate - \$15,270: Total - \$40,952.

it loaded again and brought to Geneva.

May-The park around the courthouse is now a most beauti-1883 ful spot and in a few years the shade afforded by the trees will make it a popular resort, provided the business of the town does not grow up around the square so as to cause a perpetual dust in the park.

County Superintendent J. B. Lewis made the following report: There were 80 schoolhouses in the county, one brick, 77 frame, and two sod. Total cost of schools for year, \$43,500. Number of children of school age: 4,061; number attending,

2,827. Male teachers employed, 39; female, 95. The Kellogg House at Geneva has a new windmill.

Peter Youngers is making a specialty of the nursery business and will soon have one of the best nurseries in the state.

T. J. Flemming has new livery stable completed and ready for business.

1884 The public well in the courthouse square proved a great benefit to the people.

Since the completion of so much breaking of new lands in the 1884 county, there has been less damage from prairie fires, as they are now easily held in subjection by the large tracts of cultivated lands.

1885 April-At a meeting of the township assessors of Fillmore County the following basis of assessment was agreed upon: Land, \$3.25 per acre; first-class work horses and mules, \$25; work cattle, \$30 per yoke; common cows, \$10 and \$20; hogs, \$1 per hundred; sheep, 50 cents to \$1 per head.

The superintendent of the state census announced the population of Fillmore County as 13,452. The number of farms was 2,134.

September-Hog cholera was continuing to devastate the herds of the county.

October-John Jensen purchased brick from Geneva brickyard to use in the new building to be erected next to the livery stable.

1886 The total valuation of all property in Fillmore County in 1886 was \$2,510,854.

John Jensen and A. V. Dworak let a contract for a brick business block in Geneva with an opera house on the second floor.

A. C. Tucker of Geneva sold a half interest in his famous horse, Belle K, for \$1,500.

April—The steel cage for the county jail arrived.

May-A good many farmers were hauling their corn to market. The price was 13 cents per bushel.

December-an enthusiastic railroad meeting was held at Geneva to talk over the prospect of getting the Union Pacific to build through this county.

1887 The frame of the new flour mill at Geneva was nearly up. The Signal was urging farmers to plant some broom corn as there was considerable demand for that crop.

Farmers were complaining that chinch bugs were damaging

their wheat and barley.

February—A band of Omaha Indians camped on the Blue River five miles from Fairmont and spent considerable time in town begging for food.

1888 Mr. Harbaugh of Geneva left for Washington to secure a patent on a windmill. He had a model that he exhibited on the street.

1889 It was an everyday occurence for farmers to be on the streets selling apples of their own raising.



Photo from Delia Fisher The Fillmore House - early hotel.

January-Waterworks are all finished-two hose teams are 1890 drilling for business.

February-Brick for the new Citizens Bank building is being piled in the street and work will commence as soon as the old frame can be got out of the way.

February-Free meat delivery will soon be established and will be a winning card for the enterprising projectors.

March—Revival meetings at the Methodist Church have attracted a good deal of attention during the past week and inquirers have become numerous.

April-A heathen Chinese visited Geneva last week and concluded it would be a profitable place to start a wash house.

April-W. H. Jameson has about perfected arrangements for the erection of a brick hotel on his residence property at the NE corner of the courthouse block. Ground was broken for the new Jameson Hotel last Thursday A.M. and work on the building will be pushed as rapidly as possible. It will be 38' x 109', two stories and a basement, and will cost about \$18,000.

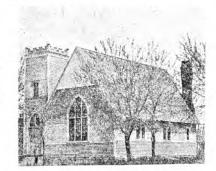
George Smith's new residence in east Geneva is rapidly nearing completion and he will occupy it early in the spring. The building will cost about \$7,000 and is the handsomest in the county.

August-On motion, a water trough was ordered put in the square near the courthouse.

August-Starting September 1, the stores in Geneva will

close every evening except Saturdays at 8 P.M.
September—Work has begun on the foundation for the new Episcopal Chapel on the corner opposite and south of the residence of F. H. Briggs.

Courtesy Nebraska Signal Episcopal Church, 10th and J Sts., erected in 1890 and dismantled in 1946 (after being purchased by a Lutheran congregation in Hastings).



September-Postmaster Stewart has gone to a great deal of expense in refitting and remodeling the post office and putting it in shape to correspond with its new quarters. doubtful if there is another office in the state in a city of this size that presents so metropolitan an appearance.

Arlington Walworth's farm (80 acres) a few miles NW of

Geneva was sold for \$1.860.

September-The new Masonic Temple is receiving its finishing touches and is the equal in every respect of any in the state. It will be formally dedicated on or about October 8th. On the same date the cornerstone of the new Episcopal Church will be laid with appropriate ceremonies by the Masons

October-J. M. Noyes has purchased the ground occupied by the Fillmore House and will commence the erection of a \$15,000 hotel as soon as the plans, which are now in the

hands of an architect, are completed.

1892

(at extreme right).

1893

1894

January-Miss Jennie Brown bought the Shumway livery barn in Geneva. (It was on the corner where the Safeway Store now stands.)



Photo from Delia Fisher Main Street looking west, before 1900. Note Shumway livery barn

1898

1899

1904

-A law-and-order mass meeting was held at the Methodist Church in Geneva. J. B. Lewis acted as chairman. February-S. Bair of near Fairmont marketed 106 hogs that averaged 328 pounds. The price was 4 cents per pound.

The best-wearing hose for boys and girls are the bicycle hose. Every pair guaranteed fast black. For sale only by Sorrick

A Regular Hack Line between Geneva and Fairmont leaving Hotel Jameson every morning at 6:30 and returning after the Flyers pass Fairmont. Persons arriving for either direction will find Hack Line ready to leave for Geneva. Remember our place of business. New Livery Barn, north of Platt House, west side of square. S. S. Moler & Son.

August-We heard someone remark a few days ago that a young lady in our city kneads bread with her gloves on. That's nothing; we knead bread with our shirt on, with our pants, drawers, and socks on. In fact, we shall soon knead bread without any pants on, if our subscribers do not walk in and pay up.

Plowing by steam successfully tested.

June-An occasional prairie schooner was seen wending its way eastward across Fillmore County, the occupants having been forced to give up western homes on account of drought. June-According to assessors' returns, the value of farm lands in the county was \$1,414,519; city and village real estate, \$255,512; personal property, \$453,690; railway and telegraph property, \$696,625; a total of \$2,819,986, or an actual valuation of more than \$16,000,000.

July-A soap peddler bought a dollar's worth of soap at Stiles's grocery at Fairmont. He cut the soap up and sold it at 25 cents per piece, taking in \$38.75 and having some soap

left to sell Geneva people.

1895 The time set for sprinkling lawns was from 6 to 9 P.M. and 6 to 7 A.M. The water commissioner was ordered to cut off the water supply of anyone found violating the order.

October-Corn husking commenced in earnest. The yield was around 12 bushels per acre.

1896 February-A couple of horse buyers were in town yesterday. They picked up a few animals but their prices were pretty low.

> February--John Currie, the sculptor of the heroic statue of Abraham Lincoln, which when completed will be erected upon a suitable pedestal on the west front of the state house at Lincoln, was in Geneva this week.

> March-Charles Lau, the laundry man, leaves tonight for Denver, having turned the business here over to his cousin. March-It is understood Col. B. Crabb of York will open the Jameson Hotel and begin serving meals March 15th.

Summer-Company G, in charge of Major T. L. Williams and Captain O. A. Beals, left for the annual encampment. Dick Low Lee, Geneva's Chinese laundry man, went along as cook. June-Fred Camp installed a large fan in his Geneva barber

shop. It was operated by a water motor. Captain C. M. Barnett's buggy horse fell into a cesspool back of the Barnett residence. The animal was taken out with a derrick.

July-On the 25th the chinch bugs, which had done great damage to the grain crop, left in great droves for the south. The air was white with them all day.

September—An acetylene gas plant was installed to furnish light in Mohrman & Ahrends' store in Geneva.

October—There had been a butter famine in Geneva for

three weeks. Hot weather had dried up the pastures and the price of cream discouraged the feeding of cows.

A number of Fillmore County people visited an Indian herb doctor at Alexandria. He was doing a big business

A shaker doctor and his troupe were giving free shows at Geneva, and also disposing of much medicine.

March-It was ordered that all slot machines be suspended and all gambling, lotteries, and raffles be prohibited in the City of Geneva.

The city paid Julia Larimer \$300 medical bills and court costs for a broken arm caused by a fall. She sued the city for negligence in repairing a loose board in the walk and not having warning signs thereabouts.

February-The growing of winter wheat in this section was the principal subject of discussion at the farmers' institute at Geneva. Spring wheat was the usual crop.

February-Frank Wight purchased the east half of the Geneva opera house building, occupied by Palmer & Wheeler's millinery and Miss Alice Burge's dressmaking establishment



Photo from Delia Fisher

Looking east from the schoolhouse in the 1890's

The Jameson Hotel of Geneva was advertising 15-cent dinners 1900 and 10-cent lunches.

Geneva had four gasoline street lights along the main business street. They were lighted for the first time and seemed to be satisfactory.

February-Work was begun tearing down the livery barn at the corner of Court and Main Sts. in Geneva (now 10th and G Sts.). Miss Jennie Brown, owner of the property, intended to erect a new brick block on the site to replace a livery stable.

F. A. Williams bought the Geneva bakery from W. B. Stephens & Co.

-The city council voted to tear out several wooden sidewalks in the business section and replace them with brick. July-A contract was let to Miller & More for \$55 to remove the old county jail.

A city garbage wagon, a new institution at Geneva, began its rounds. Refuse of all sorts was hauled to the dump grounds.

The five acres was purchased from A. Koehler & Co. The Geneva Commission House, J. Golden, manager, rented the old iron foundry near the mill to handle its poultry

Moved and carried that street commissioners be authorized to secure men and scavenger wagons and have old cans and refuse cleaned from streets and alleys. The marshal is instructed to notify all persons who have dumped ashes in streets to remove same at once.

January-W. I. Carson sold 150 acres lying at the SE corner of Geneva to Peter Youngers for \$85 per acre, the highest price ever paid here up to that time for a large tract of land. June-It was moved that Geneva State Bank be allowed to construct a crossing over Center St., of old lumber belonging to city, from post office to Hyde News Stand. Motion carried.









Photos from Delia Fisher

Birdseye views taken from Courthouse tower (about 1897). Upper left, looking north: (right) Masonic Hall and Citizens Bank; (left) Fraternity Temple. Congregational Church one block north, beyond Masonic Hall. Upper right, looking northeast: 1. Opera House, 2. Fillmore House, 3. Jennie Brown's livery stable, 4. Jayne House, 5. Old Citizens Bank, 6. Baptist Church, 7. Jameson Hotel, 8. Bicycle track. Bottom left, looking west: note bicycle track in foreground. Bottom right: Looking south.

June-The petition of C. H. Barnett et al. for the removal of the B. & M. stockyards as a nuisance was read. On motion same was referred to the Board of Health.

June-City marshal was instructed to prevent the washing of ice on the sidewalk of Court St.

The secretary of state's office at Lincoln had registered 547 automobiles at \$1 each under the state law.

1905

1906

1907

It was voted that city lay necessary pipes, make the proper connections, and furnish the water for the public fountains proposed to be established by the Geneva Commercial Club. February-Youngers & Co. of the Geneva nursery this week received a shipment of a carload of nursery stock, in all about 500,000 trees, from France, on which they paid nearly \$1,000 tariff and freight, the tariff alone amounting to \$576. April—An Equine Hospital: Last summer Dr. I. W. Mc-Eachran found in his veterinary practice quite a number of cases where he was called to treat animals that owners could not give time and attention needed. Dr. leased the Ford barn west of the tracks and opened a hospital. He employed Harry Ford, who resides near by, to look after the barn and animal patients without traveling miles into the country to see them. November—The mayor instructed to cause the triangles of the courthouse walk or watering troughs to be filled with cement.

December-The Geneva bloodhounds were called to Carleton to use in trying to trace a thief who stole some money. The city of Geneva put hitching racks along the south side of the courthouse square. Twenty-four posts and 400 feet of

chain were used. Dr. J. W. Puckett and family made a trip from Geneva to Omaha by automobile. It was the longest trip a Fillmore County citizen had undertaken by auto. The party left Geneva at 7 A.M. and arrived in Omaha at midnight. There were no bridges across the Platte at Ashland or Louisville so they went to Plattsmouth and crossed the river by ferry. The Geneva school board decided to introduce manual training into the Geneva school. Eight carpenter benches were provided for the use of the seventh and eighth grade boys.



Photo from Mrs. Porter Sloan

One of the first ice-cream parlors and candy kitchens in Geneva (1906), in the west side of newly built Geneva State Bank building. Peter J. Stiefer (at right) was the owner-operator.

A clock costing about \$1,000 was put in the courthouse tower. The county board paid half the expense and Geneva business men paid the other half. W. P. McCall installed the clock. The slabs of Colorado sandstone for a new walk in front of the courthouse arrived. The cost of the walk was \$300. (The

sandstone walk lasted until 1937 when a new cement walk was built.)

April-A mass meeting of Geneva citizens was held at the courthouse to plan for the junior normal school.

T. F. Combs counted 208 teams tied to hitchracks in Geneva Saturday afternoon.

1909

1912

It was a season when very large hats were in vogue for ladies and a movement was on foot in many churches to ask ladies to remove their hats during service. Otherwise most of the congregation were invisible.

Work was commenced mounting in the courthouse park the two cannons that had been secured for the G. A. R. by Con-

gressman Sloan. The Geneva State Junior Normal opened with an enrollment of 166.

The horse disease that was sweeping the state had caused the death of about 200 animals in this county.

1913 W. F. Smith's new steam laundry was ready for operation.



Photo from Grady Corbitt Harry Porter's livery stable, at the SW corner of 8th and F Sts. in 1914. This building is now used by Ralph Gipson as a private garage

1920

1928

1915 It was moved that the street commissioner have the old scales on Main Street removed.

and shop. (Harry Porter standing at right.)

1917 The county board was having 285 trees planted in the courthouse park. Most of the trees in the park had died during the drouth.

> March-The final report of Judge W. R. Fulton, county chairman, showed that \$31,031 had been contributed by Fillmore County citizens to various war causes.

> Geneva grocers were limiting their sales of sugar to 50 cents' worth to each family. Sugar was a very scarce article. The county food administration price-fixing committee held a meeting to fix prices on food articles. The price of sugar was fixed at 91/2 cents a pound, flour at \$2.85 per sack, and potatoes at 3 cents per pound.

> A barrel was placed in the Geneva post office for receiving contributions of tobacco and candy for soldiers in France. The Red Cross was establishing comfort stations for soldiers at junctions and railheads to care for boys traveling to training camps.

1919 February-The majority for the sewer bonds at a special election in Geneva was 304. Nearly as many women as men went to the polls. When the result was known bells were



Photo from Fletch Hanlin Geneva's muddy Main Street-taken in the west block, looking southwest, in early 1900's.

rung and the fire siren blew and a big bonfire was built in front of the courthouse. The next morning after the sewer bond election petitions were taken out to create a paving district in the business part of the town. Practically everybody signed up. Every time someone signed the petition the fire whistle blew and signatures came thick and fast.

J. J. Lightbody tore down part of the old Lamb feed barn at the NW corner of the square in Geneva to make room for a new garage building 48' x 120'.

The brick paving project in the business section of Geneva was completed

1921 Seventy-five demonstrations in gopher eradication were given in the county in one day, with 725 persons in attendance.

1923 The law making necessary the posting of an application for a marriage license 10 days before the license could be granted went into effect.

1924 Fillmore County was being visited by crowds of hoboes following the harvest across the country. Twenty-four got off one railroad car in Geneva at one time.

July-The city council was considering the construction of cement sidewalks.

February-It was voted that the mayor appoint a commit-1925 tee to investigate the matter of graveling the streets. Construction began on the new Geneva post office building

1926 north of the Geneva Bank. Occupied in July.

1927 The road from the fair grounds entrance to the Geneva Cemetery was graveled. The gravel project on the Meridian Highway between Geneva and Fairmont was finished.

Four speed limit signs were placed on streets leading into the city. October-Council voted to have free mail delivery for the

city and that the city blocks be numbered. March-Repealed Ordinance No. 11 and drew Ordinance No. 98, naming and numbering streets and avenues as they

now exist. A postal inspector was laying out city mail delivery routes in Geneva.

1931 D. C. Mowry of Geneva announced the reopening of his museum. It had been closed while he installed a painted screen at the entrance.

January-A state relief organization was formed to gather 1932 supplies of food and clothing for citizens of several western counties who were about starved out.

March-The top price for hogs was \$3.10. Wheat was 33 1933 cents, corn was 14 cents, and oats were 8 cents.

1934 April-Forty cases of canned beef stew were received by the county relief committee for use in Fillmore County. June-The Fillmore County Relief committee was issuing many orders for feed for livestock. The drouth continued unabated.

July-The government bought 214 cattle, four carloads, at Geneva. Cattle buying was a drouth relief measure and more were brought in for sale than could be taken.

July-Legal liquor returned to Geneva after 20 years when Hinkle's package store opened.

August-Fillmore County farmers had sold the government 1,111 head of cattle that they could not feed on account of drouth conditions.

Fillmore County farmers received 2,400 wheat checks from the government, amounting to \$131,000.

February-The county extension column gave suggestions to farmers for conditioning their horses for spring farm work. It's different now.

The Iowa-Nebraska Co. started a rural electrification project by constructing a 61/2 mile power line NW of Geneva. Electric service was installed for eight homes in that area.



Photo from Mrs. Darrel Hughes Hailstones, May 15, 1941—largest hail ever seen in Fillmore County.

Fillmore County's most disastrous sleet storm since 1926 1938 struck, doing thousands of dollars' worth of damage. Many telephone and power line poles were down and trees were badly damaged.

The Ewalt Amusement Co. commenced the erection of a 1939 two-story brick building back of the Ewalt residence to replace the former shop there and to house the show equipment.

April-The city made application to the Works Projects 1941 Administration for aid to improve streets, water and sewer lines, and sidewalks





Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Fairmont Army Air Field Chapel (left) and main gate (right), 1944.

1942 It was announced that all car owners would be required to display \$5 Federal Use Stamps on their automobiles.

January—The new Victory tax, 5% on all income in excess of \$12 per week or \$624 per year, went into effect. 1943 January—Government officials announced that strict rationing of fruits, vegetables, and juices would go into effect in February.

> March-Many carpenters arrived in Geneva for construction work on the Bruning, Harvard, and Fairmont air base. Summer—A contract between the U. S. A. and the city of Geneva to build a Federal Public Housing Utility was made. May-Uhlig's Bakery in Geneva closed indefinitely due to

1944

shortage of sugar.

June— Howard Nichols of Geneva, chairman of the local War Price and Rationing Board, announced that there were 10,000 unfilled applications for tires in the Omaha district. July-The Geneva Fire Department and the American Legion announced they would sponsor a Fourth of July celebration, which would include dedication of the new county service board in the courthouse park.

December-The mayor and city clerk were empowered to execute a release covering space in the City Hall which was leased to the Government on September 1, 1942, and used

by U. S. Engineers.



Photo from Mrs. Ernest Heinrichs

Pleasant Day School for retarded children in Geneva, taught by Mrs. Ernest Heinrichs. Mrs. Heinrichs (shown in schoolroom) started the school in her home in 1958 with five pupils. Later she moved the school to a Sunday School room in the Congregational Church. In 1962 it was moved to one of the housing units in Geneva. Children age 5 to 25 are eligible. Reading, phonics, language, arithmetic, spelling, science, geography, and health are taught. Children are taught crafts, many of which are sold. They also learn tap dancing and baton.

1945 Fillmore County went over the top in the Sixth War Loan drive, the county subscribing \$657,835.

September-Markets: Yellow corn, \$1.01; wheat, \$1.50; eggs, \$.30; hogs, \$11.46 to \$14.10.

October-The Second Air Force announced that the Fairmont Army Air Field would close temporarily as far as military personnel were concerned.

1946 The Nebraska barber board established minimum prices for the state, haircuts being 65 cents and shaves 35 cents.

1947 A nation-wide strike of telephone operators affected the Geneva office, where only one operator was on duty to handle emergency calls.

The Fairmont Army Air Field was returned to civilian status by the War Assets Administration, and was turned over to the state department of aeronautics.

1950 November-The city took over the housing project from the government.

June. A new fire truck was recently delivered to the Geneva 1952 Rural Fire Protection District. The truck is painted white, the color used by rural fire-protection districts.

1954 June-The new motel, called the Goldenrod Motel, opened. 1955 A 1,000-watt beacon light was put into operation at Fairmont State Air Field. The light, mounted on the water tower at the former Army Air Base, is the same one used during the war, as it was left intact when much equipment at the base was dismantled.

June-A jungle gym purchased by the Junior Woman's Club was set up at the city park.

BANKS

Citizens Bank

The Citizens Bank was established in 1885 by J. Jensen, J. M. Fillebrown, and D. Griffith, with a capital stock of \$10,000. Later, the capital stock was increased, and H. L. Smith and E. K. Cobb were added to the list of stockholders and officers. In 1900, stock of the institution passed into the hands of J. O. Walker, C. W. Shickley, E. K. Cobb, V. C. Shickley, J. W. Walker, E. M. Berkley, and H. L. Smith. These persons were the owners and officers of the bank in 1907.



Photo from Mrs. Pete Kelch

Old Citizens Bank building as it stood at original location (NE corner of 9th and G). Notice Post Office location.

As a result of some of the economic troubles of the 1920's, this bank was closed on July 12, 1927, by the State Banking Commission.

In 1890, the bank erected a new brick building at a cost of about \$30,000. This building burned down in 1910.

When the new brick building was constructed in 1890, the old wooden structure was moved two blocks east to the NW corner of 11th and G Sts. and converted into an apartment house. It was known to Genevans in later years as the "Beehive." It was moved north near the alley when the brick building was erected on the corner. It has since been dismantled, and its site is now occupied by a parking lot for the Jack & Jill Food Market.

Geneva State Bank

The Geneva State Bank started operations at its present location 69 years ago on March 27, 1899. Little information relating to banks before this date is available, though it is known that the Citizens Bank, which operated from 1885





Photo from Nebraska Signal

Geneva Bank Buildings. Left: Geneva State Bank; right: Citizens State Bank. (Photos taken after 1911).

to 1927, was one of the earlier institutions. In 1910, a Bank of Commerce was organized and managed by Floyd Seybolt, known more or less as a professional bank organizer. This bank operated only a short time before it was merged with the Citizens Bank.

According to the old stock book, the Geneva National Bank was organized January 14, 1891, and began business in the location later occupied by the Coast-to-Coast Store. John A. Dempster was president and A. O. Taylor, cashier and managing officer. In June, 1892, A. G. McGrew succeeded Mr. Dempster as president, with A. O. Taylor continuing as cashier. In January, 1895, Mr. Taylor became president and M. R. Chittick was elected cashier. Mr. Taylor died October 25, 1895. Following his death, W. L. Weed served as president until January, 1896, when E. Sandrock, who had completed his term as county treasurer and was the administrator of the estate of A. O. Taylor, joined the bank as president. In June, 1897, Mr. Chittick resigned to enter the banking business at Ewing, Nebraska, and was succeeded by C. S. Trotter of Iowa.

On March 27, 1899, the newly organized Geneva State Bank purchased the assets of the Geneva National Bank and also the assets of the First National Bank, including the banking quarters and offices on the second floor of the red-brick three-story building on the corner where the Geneva State Bank is now located. George W. Smith, president of the First National Bank, desired to retire from the banking business to devote his time to private investments.

The old building burned from the top down in 1904. The present structure was erected in 1906. That portion of the building and the second-floor offices above the Eller Store were owned by Charles Heagney and the third floor by the I.O.O.F. Lodge. Subsequently the whole of the three-story building was purchased by the bank.

The first officers of the Geneva State Bank were E. Sandrock, president, and C. S. Trotter, cashier. On July 15, 1902, C. S. Trotter, having sold his shares in the bank, resigned his position as cashier and director. On the same date George E. Aldrich was elected president. He also served as a director for many years. Frank W. Sloan was elected vice-president and E. Sandrock, cashier.

In 1906, E. J. Dempster, who had completed his term as county treasurer, was elected cashier. Frank W. Sloan became president, and E. Sandrock, vice-president, which position he held until his retirement due to ill health in 1921. Job Smith, son of George W. Smith, former president of the First National Bank, who had for some time served as bookkeeper, was on January 8, 1907, elected assistant cashier. On January 6, 1908, Earl H. Wilkins was elected bookkeeper. In February, Mr. Wilkins was transferred by Mr. Sloan to the Farmers State Bank at Fairmont to fill a vacancy there, where he remained as assistant cashier until 1911, when he was recalled to take the place of Job Smith, who had resigned to locate in the banking business in California. In January, 1912, Mr. Wilkins was elected assistant cashier. On January 4, 1916, Albert A. Held, who later became executive vice-president of the National Bank of Commerce in Lincoln, was elected teller and in 1917 elected an assistant cashier. This office he held until in 1917 he was advanced to the position of cashier and manager of a bank in an adjoining county. Carl E. Schneider started with the bank in 1918 and Melvin L. Ralston in 1920. Since then both have been identified with the bank in various positions and are now executive officers. Following the death of Frank W. Sloan in February, 1927, Mr. Dempster was elected president (which position he held until his death in 1931) and Charles H. Sloan, vice-president, Earl H. Wilkins and Carl E. Schneider having previously been advanced as cashier and assistant cashier respectively.

Following the death of Mr. Dempster, Charles H. Sloan became president; Earl H. Wilkins, executive vice-president; Carl E. Schneider, cashier; and Melvin L. Ralston, having previously been elected assistant cashier. Early in 1933, Mr. Sloan was elected chairman of the board, Earl H. Wilkins, president, Grady Corbitt, vice-president, with Carl E. Schneider and Melvin L. Ralston continuing in their previously elected positions. Since both Mr. Sloan and Mr. Corbitt were actively and fully engaged in their legal profession, the active management of the bank has remained with the other officers. Following his release from the Army and graduation from the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, Hugh F. Wilkins joined the force in 1948 and was elected assistant vice-president in January, 1950, and later vice-president.

If time and space of this rather lengthy résumé of the officials



Photo from Geneva State Bank

Interior of Geneva State Bank in 1911. Left, E. Sandrock; E. J. Dempster; Earl Wilkins.

who have served and are serving the bank permitted, a long and favorable story would include the services of the many young men and women employed at various times throughout the years, and Charles H. Sloan, John M. Ward, and Frank O. Edgecombe, who served several years as directors until removed by death. Moreover, the efficient and faithful record of service at this time of Warren Rischling, John O'Brien, and Nell Moore as tellers; Lorraine Hedden, Rosemarie O'Brien, Nancy Lentfer, Rosalie Novak, Kay Hampton, and Elaine Naimon as bookkeepers and secretaries; and Tom Hamilton as custodian is to be commended and gives assurance of their continuing best efforts to serve the bank's patrons to the best of their ability. Over the years, many young men and women have been employed and trained to take advanced positions in banking, the professions, and the business world. Most of these have been graduates of Geneva High School; some have come from Fairmont, and only a very few from other points. This continuity of home talent trained to serve the needs of patrons has been unusual and perhaps reflects to quite an extent the successful operation of the bank over the past 69 years. Last and most important is the confidence and support of the bank's patrons and shareholders.

A policy was established long ago and carried on, particularly in the later years, of the investment of additional funds to build a growing capital structure and to maintain reserves consistent with the needs and modern trends in the business.

A condensed summary of the bank's growth is appended:

Capital and Surplus	
March 27, 1899	25,000.00
January 3, 1905.	70,000.00
January 18, 1910	120,000.00
January 30, 1919	200,000.00
December 17, 1945	300,000.00
December 31, 1958	
(Capital, Surplus, and Undivided Profits)	400,000.00
December 31, 1966 (Capital, Surplus, and Undivided Profits)	830,286.44
Deposits	
December 2, 1899	69,808.18
January 1, 1910	363,095.39
January 1, 1920	772,688.74
January 1, 1930	963,399.05
January 1, 1940	798,712.78
January 1, 1950	4,002,143.04
January 1, 1959	4,687,766.32
December 31, 1966	8,713,757.99

Fillmore County Bank

In March, 1965, application for a bank charter for the Fillmore County Bank was made by John R. Bixby to the Nebraska Banking Department. After investigations and hearings, the charter for the bank was granted by banking director Henry Ley on December 23, 1965. Plans were immediately started to build a new bank building, but temporary quarters were set up at the insurance office known as the Bixby Insurance Agency at 143 No. 9th St., Geneva. January 3, 1966, was the first day of business for the Fillmore County Bank, which started with capital \$100.000, surplus \$75.000, and undivided profits \$75,000. The officers were John R. Bixby, president; Roger D. Sack, vice-president; Joseph Bixby, cashier; and Kenneth Morris, assistant cashier. One year later, on February 25, 1967, the bank opened its new banking quarters at 1022 G St., Geneva. The



Photo from John Bixby Fillmore County Bank, built in 1966.

building is constructed of white brick bordered with black trim with a vault of red Colorado flagstone, all situated on Main St. in the county seat town of Geneva, Nebraska. With six employees and four officers, this bank is enjoying a healthy increase as Geneva's newest bank.

BUSINESSES

A. Koehler Company

The A. Koehler Company was started by Anthony Koehler in 1885. The first office was on the north side of G St., about the present site of the small roofing house. When the C. & N.W. Railroad was laid through Geneva in 1887, Anthony Koehler moved his yard to the south side of G St. This office stood where the hatchery building is now located. Mr. Koehler also built a small grain elevator on the C. & N.W. right of way.



Office of A. Koehler Co. (1915). Left to right: Barthold (Bat) Koehler, Charles Summers, Edith Summers Brown.

In 1894, Barthold Koehler became associated with his brother Anthony in the business. Anthony's health failed while he was still a young man, and he died in February, 1900, at the age of 40 years. After his death Barthold and a brother, Christian, of Hastings, Nebraska, bought the business from Mrs. Anthony Koehler. These two brothers owned the business, with Barthold as active manager, until the death of Christian Koehler in 1921. During those years Barthold (Bat) Koehler was ably assisted by C. E. (Charley) Summers, who was an esteemed and faithful employee for many years. Barthold's health began to fail in 1924, and his son, John, returned home from Chicago to assist in the business. Both Bat Koehler and Charley Summers died in 1926, thus ending a long and close association.

After the passing of Mr. Koehler, his wife, Clara H. Koehler, was made president of the company, which position she held until a few years before her death on December 6, 1956. Ben Koehler, a son, returned to Geneva and became associated with the business in 1927, and in 1945, still another son, George Koehler, joined the organization.

In 83 years of continuous operation, the A. Koehler Co. has expanded considerably from its rather small beginning. Many older citizens will remember the brick yard south of town, just south of the crossing of the C. & N.W. and the C.B. & Q. railroads, which the company built in 1904. At one time this was an important source of building material, and an important industry in the town. About 25 men were employed from early spring until late fall. With the development of clay building tile this ceased to be an asset of importance, and in 1927 it was dismantled, as were scores of brick yards over the state.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal Hauling wheat to elevator (about 1915).

The brick office, which is still in use, was built in 1911. A feed department was added to the business in 1932, along with a complete grinding and mixing service. In 1937, the company embarked on a new project, the hatchery business, with Charles Picard in charge. The first turkeys were hatched in 1938, and around 1,000 were raised. In 1940, the turkey operations were enlarged, but an Armistice Day blizzard harvested most of that year's turkeys. The State Health Department advised that the frozen turkeys were definitely edible, and a number of Geneva families had Thanksgiving dinners many times that year. Mr. Picard resigned in 1941, and S. J. Weis, who had been employed by the organization since 1928, took charge, and has continued to managed the hatchery. Mr. Weis is the oldest employee in terms of years of service given the A. Koehler Company. Through his capable and efficient management, this department has made much progress. It now (1959) employs 8 men. A large layer house has been added which houses 4,500 laying hens for breeder stock and instead of 1,000 turkeys (1938), 12,500 turkeys are raised each year.

The elevator business was increased through the purchase of elevators from the Sheridan Grain Co. and the McNeal Elevator Co. during the years 1933 to 1940. From 1950 to 1954 eight steel tanks were added, and the north elevator was completely remodeled. Two steel quonsets were built in 1955 to facilitate the storage of grain. In 1954, a fertilizer department was added.

Chester Dudley, who joined the organization in 1944, brought with him a genial and friendly personality and has been a great asset to the company.

There have also been changes in the building-material department, which is the oldest part of the business. In the early years lumber, sash, windows and doors, were the chief items carried. During the thirties the paint and builders' hardware were added. The Bolton Lumber Co. was purchased in 1943. The growing business found itself short of space in the south office, and in 1947 a modern new office for the lumber department was built on the old Bolton location.

The A. Koehler Co. is in its 83rd year of operation in the Geneva community. The company attributes its success to its many loyal friends and customers, who have given the company the opportunity to serve them through the years. The company feels particularly grateful and indebted to the many faithful employees who have remained with them for so many years, and who have contributed largely in making the A. Koehler Company successful in serving the community.

—Data from A. Koehler Company

Bell Brothers Circus

The Ewalt Amusement Co. was originated by Tom Ewalt in the summer of 1934. He built two small drive-it-yourself cars which were taken to near-by picnics and celebrations and used as kiddie rides.

The next winter a kiddle ferris wheel, kiddle merry-go-round, and a large merry-go-round were added, along with extra trucks. In the years that followed more and larger rides were added, and in 1938 a new and larger winter quarters building was erected, replacing the old one just north of the post office. In 1940, a portable stage was added to the equipment, showing liberty ponies, dogs, trick ponies, and monkeys. The company played fairs and celebrations in Nebraska and Iowa.

In the spring of 1944, the show was named Bell Bros. Circus. By now it had large tents, menageries, caged animals, llamas, a string of liberty horses, and Ena the elephant. The circus was transported in 14 trucks and traveled from Texas to the Canadian border, taking in the central states.

Ena was housed in the new winter quarters buildings along with the other animals, being cared for there by a caretaker, Camel Dutch. In 1946, the Bell Bros. Circus was sold and Mr. Ewalt bought the Sunbeam Theater in Geneva, changing its name to Rialto.



Photo from Tom Ewalt

Bell Brothers Circus (about 1945) — Tom Ewalt with Ena, the elephant.

Mortuaries

The following is an account of the undertaking business in Geneva from about 1900 to the present time.

G. W. Hrubesky (from Schuyler, Nebraska) bought out the furniture and undertaking business of Tom Francis on January 1, 1898. The store (at Gamble Store present location) was an old wooden building—furniture on the first floor (24' x 60') and on the second floor was the old opera house (48' x 60'). This opera house never operated in our day and we used it for furniture later. Back of the store was the office and work-room and behind that the casket room with 7 or 8 caskets which folded back into the wall on hinged panels. Caskets (except children's which were white) were covered in black. The inside of the casket was untrimmed and we bought "pillow sets" which included all the trimmings and we put on all handles.

In that day the embalming was done right in the homes. We worked in one room while the family chatted in another and often overheard things we shouldn't have. Whenever we were called in town we walked and carried a folding slab table, that was darned heavy, in one hand and our case with instruments and embalming fluid in the other. On out-of-town calls we drove a team and hauled our equipment.

In the early days it was the old black-plumed horse hearse, of course. The livery stable kept a regular hearse team to pull it. In the summer the horses wore long black fly nets. In snow, rain, or whatever, the hearse driver and undertaker (not "mortician" in that day) rode on a high seat with no cover except a robe, and he darned near froze or floated away at times.

In 1905, G. W. Hrubesky and Frank White, who operated a butcher shop the next door east (now Gamble's furniture), bought this plot of ground. Hrubesky built a new wooden building which is the present building the Gamble store occupies.

In 1915, I received my embalmer's diploma.

In June, 1916, we got our first auto-hearse. It was the first in quite a wide territory but we kept the horse-hearse for four or five years for emergency until folks could get their Model T's.

I took over the undertaking business from my father in February of 1920. It was hard converting people to the idea of a mortuary but in 1920 we moved our casket supply and equipment north of what is now the Safeway and opened a very crude mortuary. In 1913, I moved to the first door south of the hotel (now Garrett plumbing), adding a few improvements.

In 1939 I purchased the old Bolton residence, now the Farmer-Kritner Funeral Home, from Judge Langren. Since Mr. Bolton was in the lumber business for many years in Geneva, only the finest knot-free lumber and material was put into this structure, making it very desirable for a mortuary. Our first funeral at the present location was on August 2, 1939.

In July, 1948, I sold the mortuary and business to Paul H. Farmer. Between 1898 and 1948 we took care of 2,067 people.

-Frank Hrubesky



Photo from Nebraska Signal Kitner-Farmer Funeral Home.

Arthur M. and Robert L. Kritner opened the Kritner Funeral Home in Geneva in May, 1936, in the building north of the *Signal* office at 135 No. 9th St., where the business was conducted for ten years.

In August, 1937, the Kritner Funeral Home was opened in Fairmont, in the Hall building, first door north of the Cubbison block, where the Fairmont business has now been established for 31 years. In 1944, the Kritner Funeral Home bought the Wolford Mortuary in Fairmont and in 1946 bought the Wennersten Mortuary in Shickley. Also in 1946, the Kritner Funeral Home bought the Dempster residence at 1035 H St. in Geneva and remodeled it into a modern funeral home.

In July, 1952, Arthur M. Kritner sold his interest to Sherman F. Ashby. For the next five years the mortuaries at Geneva and Fairmont were known as the Kritner-Ashby Funeral Homes. In February, 1957, Robert L. Kritner bought the Sherman F. Ashby interest and became sole owner.

Later in the same month, Robert L. Kritner and Paul H. Farmer consolidated the Hrubesky-Farmer Funeral Homes in both those

The present building at 242 No. 10th St., Geneva, was enlarged and completely remodeled in 1957 to accommodate the newly organized firm of Kritner-Farmer Funeral Home.

-Paul Farmer and Robert Kritner

Book Shop

The Kerl Book Shop, owned and operated by Mrs. Lewis H. Kerl, opened in Geneva in November, 1949. Two years later it was listed as a member of the American Booksellers' Association and as the largest bookstore of its kind in the United States operating successfully in a town of less than 5,000 population. In spite of early predictions that such a store could not survive in so small a community, the Kerl Book Store was able to report an increase of business each year. The largest single source of income is the mail-order department.

In 1951, the shop became the official bookstore for the Nebraska Congregational Conference, contracting to supply books at all state



Photo from Mrs. Lewis Ker

Mrs. Kerl in the book shop (1957).

meetings of the conference in Nebraska. This averaged about 10 meetings each year in all parts of the state, from Omaha to Scottsbluff. In addition, "book nights" were often scheduled in churches of western Nebraska (until 1965), sponsored by various church groups to acquaint members with better books for the home or the church.

Starting with only religious books, and a few story books for children, the shop now carries, in addition to a large stock of Bibles, all sorts of gift, technical, and reference books. The Harper line of Blue Ribbon Books (called "better books for both children and adults") is available at all times, as are the exclusive Gibson books for weddings, guests, and anniversaries. No "comic books" are sold, but there is a line of coloring, play, and "make-'n-'do" books for children of all ages.

The motto of the shop, "If it is in print, we will get it for you," assures customers of quick, sure, and efficient service on any and all titles.

—Data supplied by Mrs. Lewis H. Kerl

Furrier

Geneva's custom furrier, Gale Walton, came of pioneer stock. His parents on both sides were born in sod houses and lived the usual life of the early settlers. His mother was the first white girl born in Glengary precinct. Her father, Aaron McPherson, was a contractor who built many of the early houses in Geneva, a number of which are still in use and readily distinguishable by their L-shapes and steep roofs of that period. His father owned a confectionery in Geneva for a number of years and later owned the Walton Barber Shop, which is still operated by another son, Gerald Walton.

In 1929, Gale Walton, three months wed, decided to buy his bride a muskrat coat. He made the trip from Geneva, where he lived, to Lincoln and shopped for the garment. Before he knew it, he was catapulted into the fur industry, and he's still at it—quite successful as a custom furrier.

As Mr. Walton tells it: "I used to trap muskrats as a hobby. So I knew the price of muskrat skins. When I heard the price of the muskrat coat at the Lincoln furrier's, I felt it was too high. So I decided to make a muskrat coat myself."

Mr. Walton explains that he was the youngest of three sons, and had been raised practically as the "daughter" of the home. "My mother taught me how to cook and sew, and I could out-perform many of the young ladies in Geneva. So I put my talent to work and sewed the muskrat coat by hand."

First, though, he acquired a formula for tanning muskrats and dressed the skins himself. The resulting muskrat coat was good enough to bring a request from a friend of Mrs. Walton's for one just like it. And Mr. Walton, one of the original "do-it-yourself" boys, produced another garment.

Later he bought a ready-to-wear muskrat coat, opened it up, and studied the professional techniques of cutting, stitching, etc., and then applied these techniques in his own garments. For, by this time, Mr. Walton was in the fur business. He had partitioned off a section of the living room in his home as an office and showroom. Later he set up a factory in the basement.

His home in Geneva is still his base of operations 39 years later. Relying on nothing but word-of-mouth advertising up until a few years ago, Mr. Walton has built up a trade throughout the state of Nebraska, and has customers as far west as Hollywood and Seattle, and east to New York and Florida.



Photo from Gale Walton

Gale Walton (on right) buying persians in the New York Fur Market.

His first venture into advertising came several years ago when he sponsored a TV program for 13 weeks, featuring as the star his 17-year-old daughter, Gayle, an accomplished Hammond organist.

Today, Mr. Walton employs a number of skilled workers in his organization and personally travels an average of 1,000 miles a week, paying calls on customers in many parts of the country. Since 1937, he has attended fur skin auctions in St. Louis and Seattle regularly, and auctions in New York since 1949.

Mr. Walton is probably the most enthusiastic proponent of color in furs in the Midwest. For some 20 years, he has worked closely with the Superior Fur Dyeing Corp. of New York City in developing clear colors on a variety of furs. He originated the idea of dyeing sheared muskrat in many colors over 20 years ago, and still sells the item. Dyed beaver has been his number one dyed fur for several years.

A descendant of George Walton, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Mr. Walton recalls with obvious relish his early years in the fur business. He exhibits many of his ancestor's traits, particularly independence of thought and the courage to be different.

"When I began my business. I had no idea of where or how to get supplies to manufacture furs. I managed to get hold of a trade magazine, and there I spotted the name of Samuel Bauer & Sons, the New York supply house. Bauer furnished me with supplies. In 1930, I bought a second-hand sewing machine from Bonis Bros."

Curiously enough, Mr. Walton never set foot in the New York fur market until 1949. Consequently, for many years the Bauer firm labored under the illusion that Gale Walton was a woman.

"They used to send me beautiful gifts for Christmas," Mr. Walton recalls. "I'd get vanity cases, lipstick, cosmetics. Finally, I sent them a picture of myself."

In the beginning, Mr. Walton taught himself the techniques of production of a great variety of furs. His procedure was simply to purchase a garment, take it apart, examine the cutting and sewing techniques, create a pattern, and go into manufacture.

"Some years ago," he reminisces, "I got my first order for a mink

"Some years ago," he reminisces, "I got my first order for a mink coat. Now, I knew that a mink coat had to be let out, but I didn't know the first thing about it. So I went to a friend of mine—a doctor in Lincoln. His wife had a mink coat. I opened it up, looked it over, and went about making my first mink garment."

At any rate, Mr. Walton's do-it-yourself technique has paid off. Mr. Walton is convinced that the future of the fur trade is bound up with color—particularly if processors can continue to develop clear and color-fast tones.

In the Geneva plant every modern process and machine has been added as fast as it has been developed in the fur industry. They have large scientifically cooled and dehumidified storage vaults and the best in cleaning equipment. Skins (furs) were Man's first clothing. Gale Walton aims to keep furs useful and glamorous for today's standards of dress for men and women.

-Based on a "Nebraska Signal" article

Pharmacy

Fred P. Picard sold his drugstore at Juniata, Nebraska, and in 1905 established a drug business at the present location in Geneva. He purchased the building from Nathan & Solomon who were operating a mercantile business there. Because of poor health, Fred took a leave of absence from the drug business and homesteaded in Oklahoma. With his health improved, he returned to the business in Geneva about one year later.

On February 11, 1910, a fire broke out in the basement of the barber shop located at what is the west side door of the present store. While the store was burning, Fred walked down the street and purchased the Lou Fiegenbaum drugstore, operating where Heisey's news stand is now located. He continued to operate this store at that location until the present building was completed. Upon completion of this new building he moved the stock of drugs into the new location, where the business is still operating (1959).

Charles L. Picard, who was in the plumbing business in Indiana, moved to Geneva in 1911 because of his wife's health. He went into business with his brother Fred as a clerk and continued until his death in 1935.

Ralph Reemts started working for the firm in 1925 as a clerk. In 1927, after passing the State Board, he became a registered pharmacist for them.

In 1928, a subsidiary of Picard Pharmacy was formed, known as the Venus Oil Co., to buy motor oils in tank-car lots to be sold directly to the consumer. Until 1935 the warehouse was operated from the back of the Brayton building, now occupied by McPeck Produce (820 C St)

In 1935, the two warehouses in the 900 block were built and the merchandise moved to the new location. At this date Allan Kline took charge of the warehouses and began his work with the Picard Pharmacy, where he still holds the position of warehouse foreman.

During the summer of 1936, Lawrence Doud worked for Picard's as a clerk and after passing the State Board of Pharmacy in 1937 rejoined the firm as a registered pharmacist.

In 1937, Wilbur Pearson joined the firm as a clerk and in 1938 so did Creston Swails.

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On November 1, 1941, Fred Picard sold the "Picard Pharmacy" business to its present employees—Ralph Reemts, Lawrence Doud, Allan Kline, Wilbur Pearson, and Creston Swails. He retained a small interest in the corporation. At his death in 1950 he left his shares of stock to his grandsons, James McCarthy, Jr., and Fred Picard 3rd. In 1942, Creston Swails sold his shares to the other stockholders.

In 1943 the firm purchased the building to the east adjoining the drugstore, formerly occupied by Monroe Heisey, and opened an appliance business which they named the "Modern Appliance Co."

Allan Softley was employed by the firm in 1944 as bookkeeper and continued to serve the corporation faithfully until his death on December 25, 1955.

After receiving a discharge from World War II in 1946, James McCarthy joined the staff of Picard Pharmacy, Inc.

Wilbur Pearson sold back to the firm his shares of stock in 1953 and in 1954 Fred P. Picard 3rd sold his shares, leaving Lawrence Doud, Ralph Reemts, Allan Kline, and James McCarthy the owners in 1959.

Since 1905, there have been five other drugstores opened and closed out at various times.

In addition to drugs and sundries, the Picard Pharmacy, Inc., handles a complete line of school supplies, wall paper, glass, paints, motor oils and greases, poultry minerals, and appliances.

Geneva Milling Company

In June of 1887, the Geneva Roller Milling Co. was formed with A. O. Taylor, president, J. Jensen, treasurer, and F. H. Briggs, secretary. The ground was purchased from Austin Knowler, who had bought it from the railroad on June 1, 1872. This is one of the first industries in Geneva that is still in operation at the present time. It was operated under the above ownership until 1895, when H. L. Smith obtained it by mortgage. The Guthrie Brothers from Superior then operated the Geneva Mill under lease for several years and in 1903 purchased it and made extensive enlargements.

With the roller system, the grain was ground between two steel rolls and bolted or sifted out over reels with silk cloths. Later the long system roller mills came into use. More rolls were used and the grain was processed by gradual reduction and was bolted or sifted out over swing sifters or purifiers. This was the system that was put into use at the Geneva Milling Co. in 1917 when John A. Johnson, Mrs. Percy Bedford, and Henry R. Cellars purchased and remodeled the mill. It was remodeled somewhat again in 1929 when John J. and W. H. Grothe bought it, and again in 1939. John J. Grothe and his son, Charles Grothe, had purchased the mill in 1932.

In the beginning the Geneva Milling Company was mostly a flour and meal mill. In the early days a good deal of the milling was toll milling or exchange milling. The farmer would bring in his grain and the miller retained a certain percentage of it as a "milling charge." The farmer then took the balance back home in the form of flour and meal. Often the farmer would make such long drives—50 or 60 miles—to the mill to exchange wheat for flour that he would need to stay over night and return home the following day. He would lay in a supply of 20 or 30 50-lb. sacks of flour at a time. As late as the 1930's, the largest part of the Geneva Milling Co. business was of this type.

Most of the production of the mill was flour and cereals until about 1935, when large amounts of "prepared" poultry and animal feed were milled.

In 1945, Charles Grothe became sole owner. During this year the mill was destroyed by fire and was replaced with a modern feed mill. Now most of the flour milled is for bakery use. All types of feeds are milled, including pelleted and granulated feeds. Today much of the feed is sold and delivered in bulk to the farms.



Photo from Charles Grothe Geneva Milling Company (before the 1945 fire).



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Monroe Heisey being honored by Geneva Chamber of Commerce upon his 50th anniversary as a Geneva business man (1958). Standing, left to right: John E. Curtiss, Monroe Heisey, Harvey Garrett, Kenneth Heisey. Seated: Mrs. Monroe Heisey, Viola Bender Garrett, Mrs. Kenneth Heisey.

News Dealer

On Saturday, November 8, 1958, Monroe Heisey, the local news dealer, rounded out 50 years of business in Geneva. The event got wide news coverage and was celebrated with an open house at the store, where 709 friends signed the guest book. Portions of the Nebraska Signal's account (Nov. 13) of this event follow:

"The Geneva Chamber of Commerce recently honored Mr. and Mrs. Monroe Heisey, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Heisey, and Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Garrett at a banquet, where the guest speaker was John E. Curtiss of Lincoln, a patron of the Heisey store when he grew up in Geneva

"Mr. Heisey has been busy the past week recalling early history of his business and the community for reporters and friends calling at the store, so he hauled out some of his mementoes of the past and put them on display. Included was a good crystal set and a single-tube radio set, his collection of old pictures of the community, a fine collection of old coins, and a scrapbook containing a lot of history of the community and its people.

"Mr. Heisey recalled Tuesday that he would never have been in business in Geneva except for the accident he had while climbing a transmission pole near Lincoln. He broke both legs in a fall and after he had partially recovered he knew he was through climbing poles. It was then that his father-in-law, the late J. C. Bender of Geneva, sent word to him that the Tal Sheldon news stand, across the street from the Signal office, could be purchased. Monroe came to Geneva and made arrangements to buy the business. He later moved the business to the main street.

"During much of this period his father-in-law operated a shoerepair shop in the rear of the store. Mr. Heisey later moved to his present location. During 49 years of this time, his sister-in-law, Mrs. Harvey Garrett (Viola Bender), has been employed in the store, and a son, Kenneth Heisey, has been associated with his father since he was a small boy. A daughter, Leta (Mrs. Everett Ritchey), also has assisted in the business, as did Mrs. Monroe Heisey before retiring a few years ago."

(Monroe Heisey passed away on June 2, 1963.)



Photo from Guy Brown, Jr.

Geneva Nursery.

Geneva Nursery

Pete Youngers and A. J. Brown met in 1871 while planting trees on the north side of the Burlington tracks from Lincoln on west. At that time Youngers lived in Liberty township and Brown in Madison. In 1889, they became partners in the nursery business. Bill Harris had charge of the office and Stella Deland was secretary.

The nursery, which was a wholesale operation, covered between 600 and 700 acres. During the spring and rush seasons, they hired 85 men, with 5 in the office. They shipped to all states except the extreme South; but they budded almond trees for the Southern states. In 1900, they built the warehouse west of the Burlington tracks in Geneva, known now as the Legion Club.

In the spring of 1906, they had 750,000 cherry, 200,000 plum, 400,000 peach, and 3,500,000 apple trees. They also grew a great number of forest trees. In 1916, the Youngers & Brown partnership was

dissolved and both men retired.

Geneva then had no nursery for several years, until 1921, when Guy A. Brown, son of A. J. Brown, started a nursery 11/2 miles E of Geneva. In 1933, Mr. Brown bought a half-block of ground on the west side of U. S. 81 and built the present nursery building. The operation of this nursery reached its peak in 1941, when 18 men were employed. When World War II caused a shortage of labor the opera-

tion was cut down considerably.
In 1936, Floyd Schroeder began working at the nursery and worked there continuously thereafter except for the time he spent in the Coast Guard. He purchased the business in 1962 and has

operated it since then as owner.

Roster of Geneva Business Firms, 1959

Clockwise from south side of Block 7:

Clinkenbeard's Blacksmith Shop

Geneva Transfer—Moving, Transfer & Tires Apley Farm Equipment Co.—Ford Tractors & Farm Equipment

Joe Bixby Real Estate & Ins.—Office Lichti Repair—Complete Auto Repair

Ray Burton Radio & TV Service Cartwright Radio & TV—Electric Appliance & Service

Hop Inn-Cafe

Garrett's Plumbing-Installation, Sales, & Service

Geneva Hotel, Les Poole, Prop. Dr. Lewis H. Kerl—Dental Office

The Kerl Book Shop

Geneva City Library

Clockwise from SE corner of Block 6:

Eich Buick Co.-Complete Auto Repair, Sales & Service

Dr. J. Q. Adams—Dental Office Jayne Rooming House—Hannah Gilmore, Prop.

V.F.W. Hall

Geneva Sheet Metal Works-Furnace Work, Roofing & Guttering Geneva Dairy-Dairy Supplies, Fountain Service, & Teen-age Center

Myrle's—Cafe Smith's Public Market—Groceries & Meats

Fries Package Store—Liquors

Chick's Repair Shop-Auto Repair

Schelkopf Engineering Service-Plumbing, Heating, and Electrical Service

Bud's Shoe Repair

Floyd's Body Shop-Auto Body Repair



Main Street looking west (1967).

Clockwise from east side of Block 5:

Geneva Locker

Safeway Store-Groceries & Meats

Waltemade Cleaners-Dry Cleaning, Men's & Boys' Clothing

Holroyd's Bakery

Monroe Heisey's News Stand-Magazines, Newspapers, Notions, Cards & Gifts

Geneva Photo Co.

Hested's Stores Co.-Variety Store

Heath's Quality Market-Groceries & Meats

Jacox Jewelry & Vogue Clothing Store—Men's Clothing & Jewelry Rialto Theatre-Movies

Fulton's Furniture Store-Furniture

Fulton's Appliance Store

Gamble's Store-Hardware Elder Co.-Jewelry, Gifts & Watch Repair

Modern Appliance Co.—Electric Appliances
Picard Pharmacy—Drugs, Paints, & Wallpaper
Masonic Temple—third floor

McKimmey's Barber Shop-basement

Agricultural Stabilzation & Conservation-Vaults & Storage

Soil Conservation Service-Office

Side Entrance to Picard Pharmacy

Nebraska Signal Office-Weekly Newspaper Publishers

Dr. D. A. Portwood-Dental Office

LaSalle Beauty Shop Bernie's Pool Hall

Bixby Insurance Agency-Office, Loans & Insurance

M. A. Nichols, Contractor—Office Consumers Public Power—Office & Appliances

Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Office-Telephone Exchange & Telegraph Service

Enid's Gift Shop

Kritner-Farmer Funeral Home-Mortuary & Ambulance Service-NE corner of Block 2

Dr. V. S. Lynn-Physician & Surgeon-SE corner of Outlot 22 United States Post Office-SE corner of Block 3

Venus Wholesale-oil & grease-Alley of Block 5

Clockwise from NE corner of Block 4:

City Auditorium

City Light & Water Office

Geneva Fire Department-City Council Room and Fire Hall on second floor

Drs. A. A. Ashby & C. F. Ashby-Physicians & Surgeons

Shuster Radio & Electric Repair

Eric Waltemade's-Cafe

Gerald Walton's Barber Shop

Geneva Insurance Co. Office-Hugh Wilkins, agent

Geneva State Bank

Fillmore County Abstract Association-Office on second floor Dr. H. A. Rosenau-Physician & Osteopath-office on second

floor Keenan & Corbitt—Attorneys (second floor)
Waring & Gewacke—Attorneys (second floor)
Dr. George Carlson—Dental Office (second floor)

Eller Co.-Dry Goods & Ready-to-wear

Schneider's IGA Store—Groceries & Meats Dearking Radio & TV—Sales & Service

Merle Archer Barber Shop

Marguerite's Shop—Ladies & Children's Ready-to-wear J. C. Penney Co.—Dry Goods & Ready-to-wear Central Electric & Gas Co.—Office

Dondlinger & Miller Agency—Insurance Coast-to-Coast Stores—Hardware

Cumberland Style & Beauty Shop-Women's & Children's Ready-

to-wear & Beauty Shop Green Turtle Pool Hall London, Inc.-Vacant

IOOF Hall—(second floor)

Farm Bureau Office—(basement)

Swanson & Carlson Insurance & Real Estate—Office

Geneva Produce Co.

Blanke's Tavern Kinder's Accounting & Insurance—Office

Nichols Construction Co.—Office & Shop



Main Street looking east (1967).

Clockwise from east side of Outlot 26 to south side of Block 5, James Bigelow 1st Addition

Yates Welding Shop-Repair Shop

Dr. L. C. Shaw-Veterinary Hospital & Office Les McPeck's Produce—Cream, Eggs, & Poultry

C. & N. W. Depot

Koehler Lumber Co.-Lumber & Hardware

Clockwise from NW corner of Block 2, James Bigelow 1st Addition: American Legion Hall

Koehler's Elevator C. B. & Q. Depot

Geneva Grain Co.-Office & Storage

Clockwise from NW corner of Block 1 of Bigelow's 1st Addition and Outlot 27:

Koehler Grain Co.-Office & Elevator T & S Service Station-Gas, Oil, & Service

Boo Implement Co.—International Harvester Equipment

West Side Grocery & Cafe

Fillmore County Implement & Irrigation Co.-John Deere, New Idea Implements, Well Digging & Irrigation Equipment Cellar Feed & Farm Supply—Feed, Seed Corn, Custom Grinding

& Mixing

McDonald Service Station-Gas, Oil, & Service

Koehler Hatchery

South Side of street, going east along Highway 41 from corner of 6th and F:

Fillmore County Shop Geneva Sale Barn

Nelson Oil Co.—Phillips "66" Products, Tank Wagon Service South Side Mobil Service—Gas, Oil & Service

Kamler Implement Co.—Allis-Chalmers Parts & Service, Pontiac Dealer & Irrigation Supplies

South Side Tavern

Chaney Implement Co.-Minneapolis-Moline & Massey-Harris-Ferguson Farm Implements, Tire Service & Well Drilling

OK Rubber Welders—Tires & Repair
Dr. Edith Ridpath, Chiropractor—SW corner of Outlot 16 Ridpath Shoe Repair—East of Dr. Ridpath Office

M. Ridpath—Accounting—SW corner of Outlot 16



Aerial view of Kaneb Pipeline Co., Hill Oil Co., and Cafe.

The following business places are located along Highway 81: Hill Oil Co.—Service Station & Cafe—1 mile north of city limits Kaneb Pipe Line Co.-1 mile north of city limits

Hy Way Lanes—Bowling Alley John W. Wilkins—Builder & Contractor—Office, Shop

Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation—Office Rocole's Hy-Way Service—Phillips "66" Station, Gas, Oil & Service

Geneva Drive-in-Package Liquor Store

Fillmore County Hospital

Millie's Cafe & Grocery

Ellison Oil Co.-Gas, Oil & Service; also Tank Wagon Service Skelly Service Station-Gas, Oil, & Service

Cafe

Shaner & Sons-Chevrolet & Oldsmobile cars, Service & Auctioneers

Swails Standard Service—Gas, Oil & Service "81" Tourist Cabins & Mobil Service Station Sweden Cream—Drive-in Ice Cream Parlor

Melton-Issler Motors—Ford Cars, Service

Goldenrod Motel—Tourist Rooms

Goldenrod Grill

Geneva Nurseries

State of Nebraska Department of Roads

Other locetions:

Walton Furrier-Custom-made Fur Coats-237 No. 12th

Newman's Upholstery Service—542 G St.

Vern's Auto Repair—1420 G St.

Ye Ole Corral—Roller Skating Rink—16th and G Sts. Peake Transport—15th and F

Harry Bordner—Iron Dealer Hayden Oil Co.—Tank Wagon Service—310 F St. Geneva Milling Co.—Grain, Feed—709 D St.

Geneva PV-82—Fertilizer Plant—315 S. 7th

W. A. Biba Engineering Co.—Office & Shop—636 H St. Harold McCashland—Garbage Collector—1518 H St.

J. B. Barbur Floral Co.-Florist-130 No. 5th

Rodger D. Franck—Appliance Service—616 So. 10th Geneva Electric Service, Wiring & Repair Work—340 No. 15th Johnnie Miller—Hybrid Seeds—North 12th

Frank Kohler—Hybrid Seeds Wm. Soukup Repair—1021 E St.

Kiester-Walker Construction Co.-NE corner of NE 1/4 of 2-6-3

Lauber Seed Co.—Office on farm in Geneva Township

Pete Kelch-Blacksmith-F St.

Bankers Life Ins. Co.—Agent, Larry Wattles—1142 C St.

Fred Schaldecker Electric—339 No. 8th

MANUFACTURING

Since the earliest days there have been numerous attempts to found various industries in Geneva. Some have been successful, others operated only a short time. A few of these projects, taken at random from newspaper files, are listed here.

1878: Merrill Bros. have the molding of a kiln of 100,000 brick nearly completed and will soon be ready to "fire." The kiln is nearly 3 miles N of town and the clay is pronounced by experts as a superior

quality and a perfect brick will be produced.

1885: A three-story building east of the square on lots just south of W. H. Jameson's residence is a project of near future. The lower stories will be used for a carriage factory and the third as a lodge room for secret societies.

Charley Heath, the harness maker, informs us that he has never seen the time when there was such a call for fly nets and that it is all but impossible to keep a supply on hand, while the trade journals report that the demand this season is unprecedented and wholesale dealers are at their wits' end to fill the orders.

1887: Fire broke out in the fence factory and machine shop of W. L. Mowry at Geneva. Through the united effort of citizens the fire

was put out with a loss of only \$300.

A new brick yard was opened on the DeWolf farm north of Geneva. A grist mill was being erected in Geneva. O. P. Lacey was the contractor.

Will Zirhut sold his interest in the Geneva pop factory to Fred Franck. Mr. Zirhut went to Milligan to take charge of a bank in the new town.

1890: Uglow Bros. are rushing their brick yard to the limit of its capacity and will have a kiln ready for firing by next Saturday.

The Geneva Roller Milling Co. is grinding a carload of meal for the Dakota sufferers, the corn for which is being furnished by farmers in this vicinity. The corn, grinding, and transportation is all donated free of any cost. (This is the present Geneva Milling Co.)

Nick Longly was building a wagon shop in Geneva. (Located on the north side of G St. between 10th and 11th Sts.)

A general remodeling of the Geneva Foundry Co. (Geneva Iron and Windmill factory) has taken place and a new life and capital infused into it. We have a plant equal to any in this part of the state and there is no reason why it should not become the leading industry

of the city and county. (The re-establishment of the foundry took place when several Geneva men formed a corporation named "The Geneva Iron and Windmill Co." The directors elected were: John A. Dempster, A. O. Taylor, W. H. Cooksey, W. V. Fifield, and E. J. Stone. The directors elected John A. Dempster as president, and W. H. Cooksey as secretary-treasurer of the corporation. The company manufactured windmills, tanks, and iron pumps, and did a general foundry business. The company boasted: "It is no air-castle affair which will burst at the first breath of air which strikes it, for it has 20,000 good hard dollars behind it and at its head, men who are well known for their conservative and yet vigorous business principles, and we expect to see the company occupying handsome buildings and employing 100 men inside of three years.")

The foundry was located across the street north of the present Geneva Milling Co.

1896: The Geneva broom factory, owned by J. D. Syas, was broken into and four dozen brooms were stolen.

1898: T. T. Jewell returned to Geneva from Missouri and opened a broom factory west of the square.

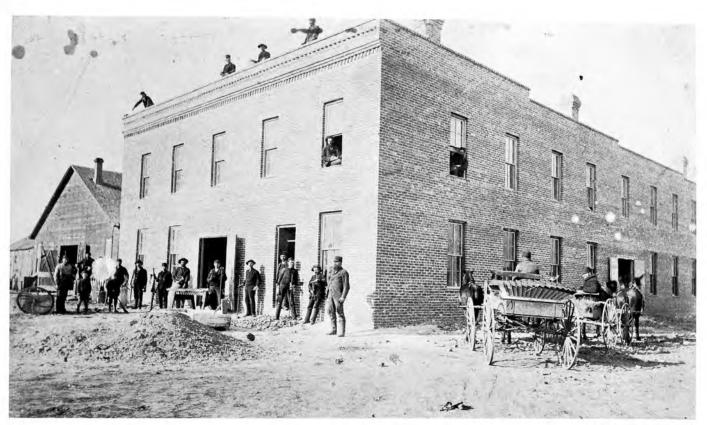
1903: The P. K. Gregg cigar factory, established a few months ago, may be developed so that it can give employment to a number of workmen.

A. Koehler Co. put into operation a new steam brick-making plant. The investment was between \$12,000 and \$15,000. From 18 to 20 men

were employed at a minimum wage of \$1.50 per day.

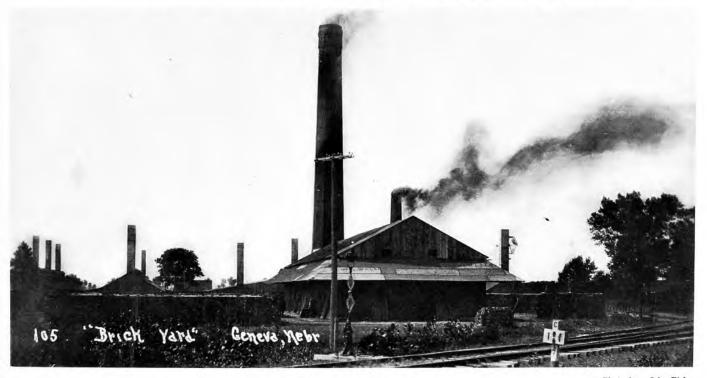
1905: M. Bolton and R. T. Dowis have arranged to go into the business of manufacturing artificial stone for building and other purposes and they have ordered the necessary machinery. With the machinery that has been ordered, Messrs. Bolton and

Dowis will be able to make blocks of stone of any dimension to suit the purchaser from 3" to 6' long, from 1" thick to 15" thick, and from 4" wide to 24" wide. This will give a wide range in variety of



Old Foundry, 1888-1889-J. P. Williams in buggy. Note wagonload of windmill slats.

Photo from Nebraska Signal



Koehler brick plant about 1905.

Photo from John Bixby

size. The stone will also be put up in ornamental designs for trimming buildings and all sorts of decorative numbers

ming buildings and all sorts of decorative purposes.

The cement blocks are also very extensively used for sidewalks, watering troughs, and in numberless other kinds of construction. The new artificial stone factory will be operated in the Sam Lightbody Building on the west side of the square.

Building on the west side of the square.

1907 W. M. and W. H. Hindman of Shenandoah, Iowa, opened a cigar factory in Geneva. Their quarters were on the second floor of the Odd Fellows building.

1910 The Geneva Bottling Works was started by Gus Gasper some time prior to 1910. The original location was a frame building on the lot where the Uhlig Cafe now (1959) stands. In 1910, Tim and William Hourigan purchased the business from Mr. Gasper. They remained in this location for nearly one year and then moved to the building occupied now by the Geneva Cold Storage at 124 North 10th. In 1912 or 1913, they erected a brick structure across the street where the Schelkopf Appliance Store is now located—129 North 10th. At the same time, William Dinneen, who operated the Geneva Ice Cream Manufacturing Co. joined the firm and they named their enterprise the Geneva Manufacturing and Supply Co. To their pop business they added the manufacture of ice cream. This business continued until it was sold to Ed J. Pierce of Holdrege in 1915. The Hourigan brothers moved to Fairmont and opened a bottling plant there.

Mr. Pierce moved to Geneva and immediately began to reorganize and enlarge the business, putting out his products under the name "Takmor," a suggestion followed by the public. The manufacture of butter as an adjunct to the ice-cream business followed.

In March, 1917, Mr. Pierce bought the offices and storehouse of the Geneva Nursery Co., just west of the Burlington tracks (now the American Legion building at 615 G St.). At this time he disposed of his ice-cream business and thereafter confined his manufacturing exclusively to soft drinks, greatly enlarging this feature of the business. The additional space provided by his new quarters in the big nursery building made it possible for him to add a new line of business, that of a wholesale distributor of fruits and vegetables. During the year 1918, Mr. Pierce handled 15 cars of salt on government contract. He also handled 4 cars of apples, 9 cars of peaches, 7 cars of cabbage, and 6 cars of potatoes. All of the fruits and vegetables were distributed to local dealers within a radius of 100 miles of Geneva. He was unable to supply the demand for soft drinks because of the shortage of sugar and syrups. Mr. Pierce continued in the business until 1920, when Frank Battle and John Spohn purchased the business, employing Henry Domeier as delivery man.

William Aldrup bought the pop factory in 1922 and moved it to a building east of the Courthouse Square (a brick building just north of the alley and south of the Launderama. This building was later occupied by the Krawolski Motorcycle Shop.) Mr. Aldrup ran the business until 1932, with Bert Parris as the pop bottler, when his son Carl took over the firm. This business was dissolved about 1934. 1911: Oliver C. Bedford asked the city to furnish water for his ice plant.

1917: Frank Ashton sought permission to install a street light before his marble works. (Frank Ashton bought the monument works from J. A. Smith in 1917 and named it Ashton Monument & Vault Works. He cut stones and manufactured cement vaults at his place in Geneva. Carl Sole and Ed Smith were employed as stone cutters. The monument works was sold to W. S. Desch & Sons of York in 1945, and the materials and equipment were moved to York. This establishment was located on the NW corner of 8th and G Sts. where the veterinary office is located).

1920: The Economy Paint Mills was a new business just opening. (Fred Picard and Dr. H. L. Smith went into partnership to supply paints and oils to this territory. Knud Knudsen was employed to manufacture paint for the firm. When Dr. Smith passed away, he left his interest in the business to Clarence Wilson. When Knud Knudsen withdrew from the firm to go into business for himself, Ray McCaulley bought shares in the firm and became paint foreman. In 1928, Clarence Wilson bought Fred Picard's interest in this business and continued to operate the paint mills until the 1930's.) 1947: The Sothan Body Manufacturing plant was moved from its headquarters at the Fillmore County fairgrounds to Plattsmouth.

Geneva Auto-Gro

One of Geneva's newest businesses is the Geneva Auto-Gro plant, set up for the year-round hydroponic growing of tomatoes. (Hydroponics is the science of growing plants without the use of soil and freed from weather conditions, by controlled and automated supplies of water and soluble plant foods.) The Geneva plant was started in 1966 by Kenneth and Donald Strothkamp in a steel and fiberglass greenhouse at 16th and F Sts. The company operates, in a sense, under the wing of, but not controlled by, Pan American Hydroponics, Inc., a nation-wide organization in this new and expanding field.



Photo from Don Strothkamp

Geneva Auto-Gro (1966).

MARKETING

From earliest times, up into our own pioneer days and until fairly recent decades, in rural areas, trading was the method of purchasing the household necessities. Farmers traded their butter, eggs, and cream for domestic needs. The general store, with its pot-bellied heating stoves, dry goods, barrels of crackers, salt, and sugar, and open bins of cookies and dried fruits, has been replaced by streamlined supermarkets, electrically controlled cases for frozen foods, gardenfresh vegetables and fruit, dairy products, and meats. Attractive cans, packages, and containers are used for foods of all kinds today. The late thirties and early forties saw the trading method replaced by cash purchasing.

The following grocery and market prices show the advances through the years:

Cattle

Geese

Ducks

Veal

Hens

Wheat

Corn

Hens

Eggs

Top hogs

Wheat

Corn

Oats

Corn

Eggs

Butter

Wheat

Corn

Oats

Butter

Eggs

Hogs

Wheat

Eggs

Hogs

Oats

Eggs

Poultry Heavy hens

16¢

15¢

\$3.00

40¢- 45¢

10e-121/2¢

121/20

35¢- 40¢

Corn

Oats

Wheat

Potatoes

Butter

Eggs

Hogs

Yellow corn

Wheat, new

Milo, per cwt.

No. 1 cream

Light hens

Old roosters

Corn, new yellow

Creamery butter

Wheat

Chickens

Turkeys

4¢

5¢

5¢

4¢

196

10¢

1933

\$3.10

33¢

14¢

8¢

1939

23¢

60¢

13¢

29¢

1942

\$1.11

630

40¢

270

-1945

\$1.01

\$1.50

-1955

\$1.37

70¢

57¢

75¢

26¢

13¢

11¢

6¢

30¢

\$11.46-\$14.10

\$9.95-\$10.25

Flour, best grade, per sack

Local Markets-

Local Markets

Local Markets-

Local Markets

Local Markets-

(September)

(March 30, 1955)

(January)

Local Markets-1932

21/2¢-

75¢-\$1.00

10¢ doz.

Quotations from Chicago (Fillmore County Bulletin, December, 1872)

December, 187	2)
Beeves, choice	\$5 90.\$6 25
good	\$5.50-\$6.25
fair	\$5.00-\$5.75
modium	\$3.00-\$3.23 \$2.50 \$5.00
medium Hogs, live Sheep, good to choice Butter, choice Eggs, fresh	\$4.00 \$4.45
Change and to shain	\$4.20-\$4.45 \$7.05 \$0.05
Sneep, good to choice.	\$7.25-\$8.25
Butter, choice	27¢- 30¢
Eggs, fresh	. 12¢- 13¢
Flour, white winter extra	
winter extra	\$9.50-11.00
spring extra	\$6.50-\$7.75
Grain:	
Wheat,	
spring No. 1 spring No. 2.\$1.3	\$1.42-\$1.44
spring No. 2\$1.3	21/2-\$1.331/2
Corn, No. 2 Oats Rye, No. 2 Barley, No. 2	42¢- 43¢
Oats	340- 350
Rye No 2	744- 754
Barley No 2	61/4-571/4
Waal tub washad	604 054
flands washed	504 CO4
Wool, tub washed fleece washed fleece unwashed	. 58¢- 66¢
fleece unwashed	34¢- 50¢
Provisions: Flour	** ** ** **
Flour	\$2.50-\$3.00
Corn meal	\$1.25-\$1.40
Wheat (spring)	. 65¢- 75¢
Corn	20¢- 25¢
Barley	. 20¢- 25¢
Oats	20¢- 25¢
Flour Corn meal Wheat (spring) Corn Barley Oats Potatoes Bacon Ham (sugar cured) Lard Tallow Butter Cheese Eggs Fuel:	40¢- 50¢
Bacon	121/6- 146
Ham (sugar cured)	160- 180
Lard	124- 154
Tallow	84- 104
Butter	204- 254
Change	204 254
Fage	204 254
Fuel:	20¢- 25¢
ruel:	04 00 05 00
wood per cord	\$4.00-\$5.00
Wood per cord Coal per ton	10.00
Groceries: Apples (winter) Sugar, per lb Tea, per lb Coffee, per lb. Rice, per lb Hominy White beans Raisins lb. White fish in kit	44.05
Apples (winter)	.\$1.25
Sugar, per lb	121/5¢- 15¢
Tea, per lb	\$1.00-\$1.75
Coffee, per lb	25¢- 30¢
Rice, per lb	121/2¢
Hominy	6¢
White beans	6¢- 7¢
Raisins lb.	25¢- 30¢
White fish in kit	\$1.50-\$1.75
Mackerel in kit	\$2.00
Dried apples	14¢
Dried neaches (Salt	Lake) 20¢
Salt per harrel	\$4.50
Syrine	70¢-\$1 40
Raisins lb. White fish in kit Mackerel in kit Dried apples Dried peaches (Salt Salt, per barrel Svrups Kerosene	400- 450
Vinegar	104
Local Markets—	-1896
(January 10, 1	896)
0	164

Local Markets—1967 (March 29, 1967) heat \$1.5

Hogs, Omaha top, \$18.50 Top cattle sold at \$30.00 per cwt. at Omaha yesterday.

VVIICA C	
Corn	\$1.20
Oats	70¢
Milo	\$1.84
No. 1 cream	59¢
Creamery butter	
Heavy hens	
Roosters	4¢
Eggs, current rec	eipts, delivered
	21¢
Top steers sold	at \$24.25 per

cwt. Hogs, Omaha top, Tuesday, at \$18.25 per cwt.

0	A	A

Glengary Township

Glengary Township, in the southeastern quarter of the county, is bounded on the north by Liberty, on the west by Chelsea, and on the south by Franklin townships. Its eastern boundary is the Saline County line. The surface is gently rolling. The south fork of Turkey Creek runs in a northerly direction from Sec. 13 to Sec. 3, where it joins the main stream. A smaller stream, Walnut Creek, runs southward through Secs. 24 to 36. These streams account for the fact that Glengary had, in 1966, only five irrigation wells.

The township is crossed from west to east by Nebraska Highway 41, which follows the first section line below the Liberty boundary for 5 miles, then jogs south a mile to Milligan, then east a mile, and south one more mile along the county line. Nebraska 71 comes in from Liberty and terminates at Highway 41, a mile east of the Chelsea line. The Fairmont-Helvey branch of the Burlington slants from northwest to southeast, across Secs. 3 to 24, passing through Milligan

In early days, a pioneer post office called Glengary was located in the NE corner of the NW ¼ of Sec. 22, but this seems to have vanished with the coming of the railroad to Milligan.

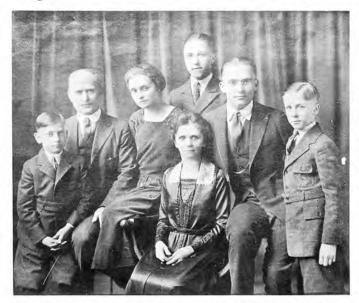


Photo from Mrs. Joe Vosoba, Sr.

The Henry J. Podlesak family in 1916. Left to right: Robert Henry Podlesak, Olga (Tresselt), George, Harry, Richard, Mrs. Henry Podlesak.

In a letter dated from Oak Park, Illinois, May 3, 1956, a former resident, Henry J. Podlesak, supplied the following recollections of early life in Glengary township.

We arrived in Fillmore County, Nebraska, about 3rd day of January, 1872, at Fairmont, were picked up by a farmer from Glengary township and moved to my uncle's farm, homestead, in Glengary township, into a small dugout shanty which was small, for seven people. Father applied for a "homestead," and dug out a shanty on it, and started farming.

After a few years we had some few acres of wheat, oats, and corn, couple cows, and lots of work. Lots of blizzards, scorching summers, even cloudbursts. Great life, out west. But we, like many others guarities.

One year—about the middle '70's—after having cut the grains, with a Walter A. Wood self-rake and bound it by hand—we were stacking the grain when all of a sudden the sky became darkened by clouds of grasshoppers, heading for our region. On seeing the hoppers father tried to hurry to shanty, particularly the vegetable garden patch, to save it from being eaten up by the hoppers. But we did not make much headway before the hoppers landed; the hoppers got into our faces, clothes, well, everything; the horses would not go

Photo from Mrs. Joe Vosoba, Sr. Joseph Podlesak (died Dec. 6, 1913)



forward because the hoppers got all over them; the horses had all they could do to keep the hoppers from eating up their eyes. By the time we got to the garden, everything was gone—very little left for us to eat. That was the worst grasshopper plague we ever had. They ate up the growing corn; on our way to the garden we went along a good-sized corn field of our neighbor but before we got to the end of the patch, there was not a leaf nor ear left, only the hard stalks were standing.

We had plenty of cloudbursts, tornadoes, cyclones, and dry years—some life! But in 1888 we had the worst blizzard on record. It came on Jan. 12, a little after 1 P.M., in our region, and lasted for three days and nights, wind blowing hard and temperature way below zero. All the quail and rabbits were frozen to death.

The fore part of January. 1888, was mild—warm, we called it—and all the children big enough to work were working in the fields. I happened to be the "cheecher" of District No. 44 on Jan. 12, 1888, had about 20 pupils attending when the blizzard started to show up, and was on us in a jiffy. Sized up the coal supply, which was very low, very little water. But I could not send the kids home, some of them had 2 miles to walk; so the only thing to do was to apportion them to the nearest farms. Took 10 or 11 to the old Steinacher farm, not far but against that fierce wind—what a task that was! Took seven to old Kotas's farm, two to Anton Kotas's farm, and five to my father's farm. I'll never forget that experience.

SCHOOLS



Photo from Mrs. Josephine (Joe) Vosoba

District No. 39 (about 1900). Bottom row, from left: John Fujan; Amanda (Dittmer) Meyer; Clara Langhorst, John Bahe. Standing: Miss Emma Podlesak, teacher; Mary Strause; Mary Stejskal; Martha Hopkins; Henry Fricke; John Claussen (murdered in the penitentiary—he was a guard there); Agnes Stejskal (murdered by her husband); Henry Dittmer; Henry Hopkins; Chris Hopkins; Lena Bahe; Mamie Gerard; Fred Frickie; Emelia Leff; Lizzie Hopkins; Edward Dittmer; Fred Dittmer; Dora Lankhorst; Frank Gerard; John Hopkins; Fred Langhorst; Bill Strauss. In 1964, there were 14 of these deceased, maybe more.

Frances Stejskal (Mrs. Joe Korbelik) missed school the day picture was taken. Identified by Mrs. R. Meyer (mother of Mrs. Ed Chudly).

District No. 39 was organized on March 12, 1872. It comprised Secs. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33. The first meeting was held at the home of Duncan McLeod on March 19, 1872 Early school board members were Henry Claussen, 1874-79; Anton Nun, 1880-81; J. Gobel 1883-85; and Frank Sieber, 1887-89. The earliest teachers

Year	Teacher	Salary	Term
1872	H. J. Morse	\$25 a month	3 months
1873	E. J. Chester	\$25 a month	3 months
1873	Emma Zerba	\$20 a month	3 months
1874	E. J. Chester	\$25 a month	3 months
1875	E. R. Gould	\$35 a month	4 months
1876	Parthenia Matson	\$35 a month	4 months
1877	Parthenia Matson	\$35 a month	6 months
1878	Parthenia Matson	\$35 a month	4 months
1879	Parthenia Matson	\$35 a month	4 months
1880	J. J. Harris	\$30 a month	4 months
1881	Parthenia Matson	\$22 a month	11 months



Photo from Nebraska Signal District No. 43 in 1913. Back row, left to right, Alice Krupicka, Lena Troubough, Alba Verjraska, Ida Troubough, Mary Matejka, Hazel Troubough, Emmet McDonald, Emil Krupicka, Lela Troubough, John Matejka. Middle row, left to right: Nina Neel, Anna Svoboda, Ed Matejka, Agnes Nadherny, James Vejraska, Emma Korbelik, James Nadherny, John Troubough, Joe Vejraska. Front row, left to right: Lynn Klatt, Emma Vejraska, Ella Matejka, Mollie Nadherny, Lee Klatt, Earl Hennessey, Joe Nadherny, Hollis Neel, Agnes Matejka. Clement Hennessy, teacher.

District No. 43, comprising Secs. 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, and 36, was organized by County Superintendent John A. Dempster on March 14, 1872. On June 25, 1881, on petition of voters in Districts 43 and 73, Superintendent J. B. Lewis detached from District 73 the NW 1/4 of Sec. 2, T5N, R1W, and attached it to District 43. Some of the early teachers are listed here:

		are listed here:		210.00
Year	Teacher	Salary Term	No. Pupi	ls Director
1879	Benjamin F.			
	Bothwell	\$25 per mo. 3 mo	. 50	D. S. Robinson ¹
	George			
	Alexander	\$25. per mo. 3 mo).	
1880	Anna S.			
	Jackson	\$25 per mo. 3 mc	. 82	D. S. Robinson
	George			
	Alexander	\$30 per mo. 4 mo).	
1881	Alice Roberts	\$25 per mo. 3 mc	. 19	James F. Lippencott
	India Thomas	\$25 per mo. 3 mc).	
1882	Flora Angstead	\$25 per mo. 4 mo	. 23	A. B. Johnson
	George			
	Alexander	\$30 per mo. 3 mo).	
1883	Ella Thomas	\$25 per mo. 4 me	o. 23	John Bechtel ¹
	George			
	Alexander \$	33.33 per mo. 3 mo).	
1884	Ella Thomas	\$25 per mo. 4 me	. 40	John Bechtel
	J. O. Harris	\$30 per mo. 3 mo).	
1885	Ella Thomas	\$29 per mo. 7 me	0. 40	John Bechtel
	Lizzie Harris	\$30 per mo. 3 me	O	
1886	No record	No recor	d 50	John Bechtel
1887	Mary Barrett	\$30 per mo. 5 me	. 46	John Bechtel
	Hattie Little	\$31 per mo. 7 me	o	
1888	Hattie Little	\$30 per mo. 5 me	o. 39	John Bechtel
	John Storie	\$30 per mo. 3 me	o	
1894	No record	No recor	d 64	B. Rogers
1904	No record	No recor	d	D. J. Davis

 $^{^1\}mathrm{Mr}$. Robinson lived at Goldrinsey, Saline County; Mr. Bechtel lived at Tobias.

Photo from Mrs. Henry Steinacher District No. 44 about 1926— Anne Slajhert, teacher. Left to right: Marie Sadlo, Rose Sadlo, Donald Laun, Donald Steinacher, Norman Steinacher, Joe Sadlo. Front row: Eddie Kottas, Bernard Svec



District No. 44 was established on March 14, 1872, by G. W. Barrows, deputy for County Superintendent G. W. Gue. It was made up of Secs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 12 of T6, R1W. T. W. Clark was notified of the election of district officers, to be held "at the nearest central place in the said district" on Thursday, March 21, at 1 P.M. In May, 1874, Superintendent Dempster, on petition, removed Secs. 1, 2, 11, and 12 from District 44 and attached them to District 71

Disti	ict 71.			
Year	Teacher	Salary Term 1	No. Pupils	Director
1879	B. F. Bothwell	\$25 per mo. 3 mo.	30	F. J. Znojensky
1880	B. F. Bothwell	\$25 per mo. 3 mo.	30	F. J. Znojensky
1881	B. F. Bothwell	\$25 per mo. 4 mo.	32	F. J. Znojensky
1882	B. F. Bothwell	\$25 per mo. 4 mo	32	F. J. Znojensky
1883	B. F. Bothwell	\$25 per mo. 5 mo.	33	F. J. Znojensky
1884	George H. Lee	\$30 per mo. 3 mo.	32	F. J. Znojensky
1885	George H. Lee	\$30 per mo. 4 mo.	30	F. J. Znojensky
	S. D. Purviance	\$31 per mo. 3 mo.		
1886	No record	No record	34	F. J. Znojensky
1887	E. S. Stevens	\$31 per mo. 3 mo.	35	F. J. Znojensky
	B. R. Stevens	\$31 per mo. 3 mo.		
1888	Henry Podlesal	\$30 per mo. 6 mo.	23	F. J. Znojensky
1894	No record	No record		Joseph Podlesak
1904	No record	No record		F. R. Kottas

On June 29, 1953, District 44 was dissolved and attached to District 71.



Photo from Mrs. Josephine (Joe) Vosoba District No. 67 (May, 1900) In doorway: Anna (Schelbitzki) Rippe; Mary (Kuska) Poch. Back row, left to right (by door): *Chas. Sluka; Gust Shelbitzki; Cyril Bernasek; James Bernasek; *Joe Bernasek; *Rose (Vejraska) Sadlo; Emma (Rehor) Rezabek. Tall ones, left to right from building: Christina (Bernasek) Krupicka; Valentine Kuska; Agnes (Vejraska) Ach; Henry Schelbitzki; Frank Fujan; Josie (Simic) Kasak; *Josephine (Podles ak) Rehor, teacher. Bottom row: *Tony (Schelbitzki) Krisl; Emma (Bernasek) Houser; Josephine (Rehor) Vosoba; unidentified boy; Joe B. Kuska; *James F. Kassik; *Frank Bernasek; *Leo Hennessey.

The teacher in this picture died on July 11, 1966, at Torrance, Calif., on her 87th birthday. This picture appeared in the Nebraska Signal on Dec. 29, 1966.

*Deceased

District No. 67, on petition of the voters of Districts 2 and 39, was set up by Superintendent Dempster on June 9, 1873, to consist of Secs. 7, 8, 16, 17, and 18, and the N ½ of Secs. 19, 20, and 21 of T6, R1W. S. J. Galimore was notified that the first meeting—for the election of a moderator for three years, a director for two years, and a treasurer for one year—would be held at the nearest central place on Monday, June 16, 1873, at 2 P.M.

Later, the W ½ of SE ¼ of Sec. 6 was transferred from District 2 to District 67; still later, the W ½ of SW ¼, Sec. 7 went to District 65, and the SW ¼ of Sec. 18 to District 32.

District	32.				
Year	Teacher	Salary	Term No	Punii	ls Director
	Aaron McPherson	100			
1874-75 1875	Aaron McPherson	\$25 per n		17 17	G. A. Tyson
1875-76	Emma Zerba	\$25 per n \$24 per n		15	G. A. Tyson G. A. Tyson
10.0.0	T. J. Whitzel	\$35 per n		15	G. A. Tyson
1876-77	W. H. Northrup	\$28.33 m			A. Tyson and
	B. J. Lawrence	\$35 per n			A. McPherson
1877-78	R. L. Donovan	\$25 per n	no. 4 mo.	24	Jacoway
1878-79	George A. Folden	\$20 per n		24	Jacoway
1050 00	Adelli Lewis	\$33.33 m		24	Jacoway
1879-80	Emma Zerba Lina Cross	\$25 per n		43	Jacoway
1880-81	J. P. Lawrence	\$30 per n \$31.50 me		43 50	Jacoway Jacoway
1881-82	L. C. Kerr	\$27 per n		50	Jacoway
1001 01	C. M. Johnson	\$33.33 m		50	Jacoway
1882-83	O. T. Gore	\$36 mo.		53	Jacoway
	Mrs. J .T. A. Hill	\$36 per n	no. 2 mo.	53	Jacoway
550e 0e	A. C. Tucker	\$30 per n		53	Jacoway
1883-84	Thede Kelly	\$30 per n		47	G. A. Tyson
1004.05	T. J. Whitzel	\$40 per n		47	G. A. Tyson
1884-85	Celia B. Grier H. P. Wilson	\$30 per n		43 43	Jacoway
1885-86	No record	\$37.50 m		57	Jacoway No record
1886-87	J. G. Timberlake	\$40 mo.		58	W. C. Wollam
1000 0.	H. P. Wilson	\$40 per n		58	W. C. Wollam
1887-88	Flora Carney		no 12 mo.	48	W. C. Wollam
1888-89	Flora Carney	No recor			
1889-90	Flora Carney	No recor			1
1890-91	Nettie Holmes	No recor			No record
1891-92	Charles Madison	No recor			No record
1892-93 1893-94	Elva Witter Lillie Sharp	No recor			No record No record
1894-95	Milt Ames	No recor			No record
1895-96	J. W. Forbes	No recor			No record
1896-97	Jennie Husmann	No recor			No record
1897-98	Sid Purviance	No recor			No record
1898-99	Josephine Podlesak		6 mo.		No record
1899-1900			8 mo.		No record
1900-01	Ethel Montgomery		8 mo.		Frank Kassik
1901-02 1902-03	Ethel Montgomery Gertrude Worley		8 mo. 8 mo.		Andrew Lynn Josef Kuska
1902-03	Marye Knopp		8 mo.		Josef Kuska
1904-05	Marye Knopp		8 mo.		Josef Kuska
1905-06	Frank Adams		8 mo.		Anton Kuska
1906-07	Lydia Linnert		8 mo.		Anton Kuska
1907-08	Marie Luksik				Emil A. Kuska
1908-09 1909-10	Bertha Massoth Effie Danielson		7 mo. 8 mo.		Emil A. Kuska No record
1910-11	Effie Danielson		8 mo.		No record
1911-12	Esther McDonald		8 mo.		No record
1912-13	Wm. F. Schneider	\$50 per	mo. 8 mo.		No record
1913-14	Wm. F. Schneider		mo. 8 mo.	NR	No record
1914-15	Anna H. Pivniski		mo. 8 mo.		No record
1915-16	Anna H. Pivniski	\$55 per	mo. 8 mo.		No record
1916-17	Rose Matejka Mrs. D. E. Franck	OFF	8 mo.		No record No record
1917-18 1918-19	Nellie Songster		mo. 8 mo. mo. 8 mo.		No record
1919-20	Mollie Sieckmann		mo. 8 mo.		No record
1920-21	Agnes Dinneen		mo. 8 mo.		No record
1921-22	Agnes Dinneen		mo. 8 mo.	NR	No record
1922-23	Mamie Steinacher		8 mo.		No record
1923-24	Mamie Steinacher		mo. 8 mo.		No record
1924-25 1925-26	Mamie Krupicka Rose M. Soukup		mo. 8 mo. mo. 8 mo.		No record No record
1926-27	Rose M. Soukup		mo. 8 mo.		No record
1927-28	Rose M. Soukup		mo. 8 mo.		No record
1928-29	Anna E. (Novak)				
	Jansky		mo. 8 mo.		No record
1929-30	Julia A. Hines	\$70 per	mo. 8 mo.	NR	Joe F. Sluka
1930-31	Julia A. (Hines)	075		ND	Inc F Clubs
1931-32	Kuska Anna A. Herynk		mo. 8 mo.		Joe F. Sluka Joe F. Sluka
1931-32	Anna A. Herynk		mo. 8 mo.		Joe F. Sluka
1933-34	Alice L. Sluka		mo. 8 mo.		Joe F. Sluka
1934-35	Erma L. Schultz		mo. 8 mo.		Joe F. Sluka
1935-36	Erma L. Schultz	\$40 per	mo. 8 mo.	NR	Joe F. Sluka

Year	Teacher	Salary	Term No. Pupils	Director
1936-37	Irma E. Soukup	\$40 per	mo. 8 mo. NR	No record
1937-38	Mildred Stejskal	\$40 per	mo. 8 mo. NR	No record
1938-39	Marie L. Sadlo	\$40 per	mo. 8 mo. NR	No record
1939-40	Marian Kassik	\$40 per	mo. 8 mo. NR	No record
1940-41	Helene Hendrych	\$40 per	mo. 8 mo. NR	No record
1941-42	Irene Bures	\$40 per	mo. 8 mo. NR	No record
1942-43	Irene Bures	\$60 per	mo. 8 mo. NR	No record
1943-44	Irene Bures	\$90 per	mo. 8 mo. NR	No record
1944-45	Evelyn Hromadka	\$95 per	mo. 8 mo. NR	No record
1945-46	Louise Bernasek	\$90 per	mo. 8 mo. NR	No record
1946-47	Louise Bernasek	\$100 per	mo. 8 mo. NR	No record
1947-48	Louise Bernasek	\$140 per	mo. 8 mo. NR	No record
1948-49	Marilyn Cecrle		mo. 8 mo. NR	No record
1949-50	No record			
¹ No Rec	cord			

With only two pupils remaining, the district was closed. In September, 1950, one 8th-grade pupil was sent to Milligan (District 71). In December, 1952, Richard Poch and family moved into the district; their two children were sent to District 65, at tuition charge of \$275. From September, 1953, to May, 1954, the Poch children were sent to District 65, with District 67 paying the tuition of \$550. In September, 1951, \$270 was paid to District 71 as Henry Allen Kassik entered the first grade. Henry and his little brother Ralph went to District 71 in 1952 and 1953 at a cost of \$500 per pupil. In 1954, the next younger brother joined the Kassik boys (in kindergarten), and three pupils were being sent to District 71 at a tuition cost of \$500 each.

District No. 71 was set up by Superintendent Dempster on May 18, 1874, to comprise Secs. 1, 2, 11, and 12 of T6, R1W. John McManas was notified of the first meeting, to be held at a central place on Saturday, May 30, 1874, at 2 P.M., to elect the usual officers. This district later absorbed District 80. (More details on this district, which became the Milligan school, are given in the history of Milligan.)

District No. 80 was set up on a petition of the voters of District 43 by Superintendent J. B. Lewis on May 18, 1880. It was made up of Secs. 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, and 24, detached for the purpose from District 43. However, on the combined petitions of voters in District 71 and District 80, these sections—comprising the whole of District 80—were re-attached to District 71, With this action, taken by Superintendent P. H. Hines on July 22, 1899, District 80 ceased to exist.

FAMILIES

Claus Henry Claussen (better known as Henry) was born October 29, 1845, in Suderheistadt Dietmarschen, Holstein, Germany. At the age of 22, in 1867, two years after the Civil War, he immigrated to America. He stopped first at Clinton, Iowa, where he remained three years. In May, 1870, he walked from Clinton to Fillmore County. He was a wagon maker by trade. He homesteaded on the NW ¼ of Sec. 32 in what is now Glengary township. He gave a plot of ground in the northeast corner of his homestead for a cemetery and a school, known as Claussen Cemetery and School District



Photo from Mrs. Rudolph Meyer Mr. and Mrs. Claus Henry Claussen in 1906

39. Three brothers followed him to Nebraska: Franz Christen (known as Christ), Hans, and John. Christ, who remained a bachelor, homesteaded on the SE ½ of Sec. 4, in Franklin, 2 miles NE of Ohiowa. Their parents, Claus Rode Claussen and his wife, Anna Rohevedder Claussen, and three daughters — Catherine (never married), Matilda (Mrs. Wenzel Landkammer), and Anna (Mrs. J. Gobel)—came to America and lived with Christ Claussen.

Henry Claussen met Maria Wieden by a lone cottonwood tree at the north edge of his homestead while she was walking to visit a neighbor. A romance started, and they were married on February 28, 1875, in the one-room schoolhouse on his land. They obtained their marriage license at Fairmont (Geneva and Ohiowa did not yet exist). They started housekeeping in a dugout. Maria often told how she would find bull snakes coiled by her milk crock in the dugout. For many years the dugout house and barn could be found in the pasture. After some time in the dugout, they built a very small house and a barn in a grove on the east edge of their land. Henry walked many a time to Beatrice, and later to Alexandria, to get and carry home a sack of flour. To their union were born 10 children, four of whom died in infancy. Henry and Maria Claussen, his parents, his two brothers, and five children are all buried in the Claussen Cemetery.

On January 1, 1880, Henry and Christ helped organize St. John's Lutheran Church and were charter members. Before organization, services were held in farm homes and in the District 40 school. Henry opened his home for services. He was a prosperous farmer, giving land to each of his children, and did many good deeds for his fellow men and his church. His generosity helped many a family when in need

In 1908, he retired from farming and became a resident of Ohiowa, with his six living children, Rudolph, John, Henry, Mary (Mrs. Fred Karre), Minnie (Mrs. Bruno Goerz), and Martha Mrs. Jess Beckwith). Rudolph and Minnie died during the 1918 influenza epidemic. John, who became a guard at the State Penitentiary in Lincoln, was murdered by an inmate on Good Friday, April 16, 1954. In 1919, a new bungalow and other dwellings were built on the west edge of the homestead, close to the highway. The place is now owned by Mrs. Joe Kaderabek of Milligan and farmed by her son.

Henry and Maria celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on February 28, 1925. Maria passed away on November 26, 1927, and Henry on December 16, 1936.

Maria Wieden Claussen was born January 1, 1857, in Hermsdorf, in the German part of Bohemia, and came with her mother, brother, and sisters to the United States in 1871. They were met at Fairmont (then the terminus of the railroad) by her father, who had been in America and in Fillmore County for two years. Her parents were Joseph Wieden and Franzijka Muller Wieden. They homesteaded on land adjoining Henry Claussen, on the NE ½ of Sec. 4, Franklin, east of Ohiowa. Her one brother, William Wenzel Wieden, a baker by trade, specialized in pastry and cake trimming. He enjoyed relating pioneer history. While living in Beatrice, he furnished bread for the Sioux Indians when the government moved them through town in 1873. On August 1, 1877, William and his wife started a bakery in a small frame store building in Sutton. He lived and hunted buffalo there. On August 1, 1924, in the evening, he became ill and closed his shop. Two weeks later, on August 14, he passed away. His business had continued more years without change of management than any



Photo from Mrs. Henry Steinacher Mr. and Mrs. Joe Janousek, homesteaders in Glengary township.

Josef Kassik, Sr., and Veronika Franck Kassik were married in 1859 in Czechoslovakia. They settled in Glengary township in 1870, on the W ½ of the SE ¼ of Sec. 10, with two boys, James and Joe. Their third boy, Frank, was born here on January 21, 1871, and passed away on



Photo from Lou Kassik Mr. and Mrs. Josef Kassik, Sr., in 1859.

September 17, 1954, at the age of 83 years, 7 months, and 26 days. He was the oldest resident born in and living in Glengary township all his life. A sister, Anna (Mrs. Charles Keberle), also had a long life in the area; she died on March 8, 1958. Of the Kassiks' five boys and two girls, the last two living in Fillmore County were Emil Kassik Sr., aged 91, and Albert Kassik, Sr., 88. Both have now passed on. Albert, with his three sons, owned and ran the alfalfa mill and pellet factory in Milligan.

Josef Kassik, Sr., used to work at Nebraska City and walk there and back, often carrying home a 50-lb. sack of flour. Once he brought a grindstone on his back. When he came to a stream, he spotted a young fawn. He laid down the grindstone and chased and caught the fawn. But he had nothing to tie it with, so he took off his suspenders and tied it up. By that time he had lost track of his grindstone. When he finally found it and got back to where he had left the fawn, the animal was gone, also the suspenders. He went on homeward, on this third day of his journey. When night came, he thought that he must be close to home. But in the dark, tired and hungry, he lay down to sleep, with the grindstone beside him on a straw pile. When he awoke in the morning, he found that the straw stack was his own.

Mrs. Veronika Kassik had an experience with Indians one day. She was at home alone, just starting a fire in their dugout, when an Indian woman came in and, seeing the matches, wanted them. Mrs. Kassik was scared, so she gave her the whole box of matches, and then for a long time had to use flint stones to start the fire. Kindlings at that time were weeds tied in small bundles.

Mr. and Mrs. Kassik managed to give each of their five boys a 160-acre farm with a three-room house, a barn, and a granary. The boys all had to work while very young. They were often tied to the seat of a machine so they would not fall off while the machine was in motion.

—Agnes Ach



Photo from Melvin O. Kuska

The Anton Kuska family about 1890. Left to right: Anton Kuska, E. A. Kuska, Val Kuska, in front of Joe Kuska (nephew), Mrs. Anton Kuska, Joseph B. Kuska, Mary (now Mrs. Poch), Joe Rehor.

Anton Kuska was born in Malkov u Lrar, Kraj Pisek, Czechoslovakia, on December 14, 1852. His parents were Thomas and Marie Vavra Kuska. He grew up in Czechoslovakia, where he learned the shoe trade from his maternal Uncle John. Upon reaching the age of compulsory military service, he entered the artillery corps of the army of Emperor Franz Josef I, King of Bohemia. Later he served in the medical corps. On completing his army service, he was released from further military obligation and decided to emigrate to the United States. Arriving in New York City in May, 1881, at the age of 28, he came on to Chicago, where he remained a few weeks with an uncle before coming to Nebraska. He then came to Exeter, where he worked as a shoemaker for a short time. Later, he found work on a farm near Milligan.

My mother, Elzbeta Kolar, and my wife's mother, Mary Bures, came to America from Czechoslovakia on the same steam freighter. My mother could get on this ship but my father had to wait a week for another ship. After they were on the ocean the weather turned stormy and dark. The water was rough and they drifted off their course. They feared they would never reach land. During the storm, the ship constantly blew its whistle to give warning to other ships to avoid collision. Food supplies ran low and so did fuel. Much sickness and many deaths occurred on this voyage. However, they reached Baltimore and proceeded to Fillmore County. Mother came to Karel Kolar's home on the creek north of Milligan. Even though mother experienced a longer ocean trip, she arrived in Fillmore County before my father.

On September 17, 1881, Anton was united in marriage to Elzbeta Kolar. To this union eight children, seven sons and one daughter, were born. The living children are Emil Anton of Fairmont, Mrs. Mary Poch of Milligan, Valentine of Lincoln, Joseph B. of Lomita, California, Henry of Berwyn, Illinois, and Clement of Oak

Park, Illinois.

Dad and mother began married life on a farm 4 miles NW of Milligan in Liberty township. Oxen were used to do the farming on this land, which was owned by Anton Kotas. Later they purchased 80 acres (S ½ SW ¼ 17-6-1 Glengary township) of B. & M. R.R. land on contract and received a deed to this land on March 27, 1885.

They lived on this land the rest of their lives.

My parents often talked about the many hardships of pioneer days. The grasshopper plague and drouth of 1894 were severe blows. Crops in previous years were fairly good; larger acreages were planted, and grew well in the early part of the season. On July 26, 1894, the hot winds came and dried the corn, causing the crop to be lost in one day. Later in the same month the grasshoppers came. They came so thick that they obscured the light of the sun like a dark cloud so that within a short time the crops that survived the hot winds were destroyed. It was said that the Indians toasted the grasshoppers and ground them into a meal for food. In 1895, there were some crops. A big corn crop was raised and the price was 8 to 10 cents a bushel. That year's crop caused many cribs to be built in town, as the farmers were hauling ear corn there to sell. However, there were several farmers who would rather burn corn than buy coal because the latter was too expensive. We had a cow for our milk supply and when it died we didn't have the money to purchase another.

I can remember the big snowdrifts of the famous Blizzard of '88 (Jan. 12). The drifts were hard and I could walk over them. The day started very nice but by noon large snowflakes began falling and in the afternoon a strong wind began blowing and soon it was a severe whirling windstorm. Visibility was zero. Some mothers lost their lives by trying to get to schools to save their children. There is no doubt that the suffering and loss in the blizzard were greater because of the suddenness with which the storm struck and the inadequate weather forecasting and communications which caught people and livestock without warning. The storm moved from Montana to Southeast Nebraska (a distance of 780 miles) in 17 hours, or an average speed of 45 miles per hour. Temperatures at North Platte dropped 32° in 13 hours and at Crete 18° in 3 minutes. This storm, in contrast to the 1949 blizzard, was much worse. The 1949 blizzard traveled at only a 3 to 4 mile gait, and better facilities of forecasting and warning and thicker settlement reduced danger to a minimum.

Another interesting fact of these progressive pioneers was their foresight in bringing alfalfa seed from their native homeland which they planted in this country. This alfalfa seed (Turkey Stand) has been kept in the family all through the years.

I, Emil Anton Kuska, am the oldest child of Anton and Elzbeta Kolar and have been a resident of Fillmore County since my birth on August 6, 1882. On February 14, 1912, Katherine Becwar, daughter of Anton and Elizabeth Becwar, and I were married. Our first home was on a farm near Milligan. We bought the SW ½ of Sec. 18, Liberty township, in 1913 and have lived there ever since.

I attended University of Nebraska short courses in Agriculture and have been in agriculture continuously. In 1936, I was recognized by the Pasture-Forage-Livestock Conference at Omaha as the pioneer in bringing brome grass as a permanent and temporary pasture into

south-central Nebraska in 1900. Also, I have kept sowing the alfalfa seed that my father brought to this country.

My wife and I had three sons. Donald graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1938 and is corporate director of quality control for the Oliver Corporation, South Bend, Indiana. William passed away during his sophomore year at the University of Nebraska in 1938. Melvin, after graduating from the University of Nebraska, spent five years in the U. S. Army Air Force in World War II as a captain, and returned to Fillmore County to take over the farming operations.

—Emil A. Kusha

John Placek was born in 1837 in Rakolusky, Kralovice County, Czechoslovakia, and in 1863 married Catherine Kotas, born in Kozojedy, Czechoslovakia. In September, 1868, they came to Chicago, then to St. Louis. The following year they came up the river (a seven-day trip) to Nebraska City, where they found Vac. Petracek, who conducted a boarding house at the time. Petracek informed Placek of a countryman named Koleno, from Brezi, Bohemia. Koleno advised him to wait until the Czech settlers from the Big Blue country came down, when they would take him back with them. Shortly thereafter, Matej and Frank Kovarik, John Brabec, and George Krajnik came down to get a seeder they had ordered. Placek bought a wagon and other necessities and set out with them. They stayed at Krajnik's for three days, sleeping in their wagon, because Krajnik's sod house was filled to overflowing.

Vincent Aksamit had a homestead in that neighborhood and on it a little shed, and so they moved in and lived there one winter. Placek had to go to Nebraska City, 75 miles, for furniture. In the spring he took a claim, broke 30 acres, and lived in an open camp. Later he built a dugout, where their son was born. When the child was three days old, the mother came to the field with it and helped Placek plant potatoes, the other children staying at home alone. A cloudburst occurred; the mother and child sought shelter under the wagon, and Placek hurried home. He found the dugout filled with water, the frightened children in bed. When he came, he had brought with him a nephew, who found work with a settler, but sickened and came to Placek's to die. Their home measured only 4' x 6'; they had to place the corpse outside and cover it until the funeral.

The next year Placek planted 70 acres. Many settlers poured in. The year following that, he bought railroad land in Fillmore County, selling it two years later (an 80 for \$800) and buying a quarter-section for \$700. Then he bought another 80 for \$400 and, still later, school land for \$1,000, all in Fillmore County. As his boys grew to manhood, he kept on selling improved land and buying unimproved, to give them farms—all earned by hard work of himself and his family. It was a good example of the way many others did and in time were rewarded.

Settlers kept coming, railroads were built, towns were established, and Placek was able to retire with his wife to Milligan, in his old age, to enjoy a well-earned rest, and, as he said, to await the time when they were to abide in that last and smallest "sod house" of all, which measures but 2' x 6' but in which its occupants find eternal peace.



Photo from Mrs. Henry Steinacher

The John Placek family. 1. Fred E. Placek, 2. Louis Placek, 3. Albert Placek, 4. E. E. Placek, 5. Frank Placek, 6. Anna Rohla (Placek), 7. Christine Kubicek (Placek), 8. Mrs. John Placek, 9. Mr. John Placek, 10. Mary Boxa (Placek).



Photo from Mary E. Krisl Emil Placek

Emil Edwin Placek, son of Jan and Katerina Placek, was born in a sod house in Fillmore County on December 14, 1877. Emil worked on the home farm and attended public school at Milligan. In the fall of 1894, he entered Western Normal College at Lincoln; the next year he transferred to the University of Nebraska, taking a law degree in June, 1897, followed by graduate work in law. He was appointed recorder in the office of the Fillmore County clerk on January 1, 1898, but soon resigned to enlist in Company G, 1st Nebraska Regiment, U. S. Volunteers. He served in the Philippines campaign and was present at the taking of Manila, August 14, 1898; he then served through the Philippine insurrection from February 4 to July 1, 1899, and was honorably discharged on August 23, 1899, at San Francisco. Upon his return, he again became recorder in the clerk's office. On January 1, 1900, he was appointed clerk of the county court, but on June 1, 1900, he resigned to take a post in the Census Department at Washington.

On March 1, 1901, Emil Placek took up residence at Wahoo and engaged in the general practice of law. He served as county judge of Saunders County for two terms (1906-1911). In the meantime, in 1907, he was one of the organizers of the Bank of Prague, Nebraska. of which he has been president since its inception. In March, 1909, he purchased a controlling interest in the Nebraska Culvert & Manufacturing Co. of Wahoo, of which he has since been president and general manager. All of his employees in this firm-which makes road machinery and corrugated culverts, and does general sheet-metal work-work on a profit-sharing basis. Besides his various business and civic interests, he served two terms (sessions of 1911 and 1913) in the Nebraska State Senate. He also served two terms as mayor of Wahoo.

In 1904, he was united in marriage with Elizabeth Lindercamp, a daughter of John and Agnes (Lent) Lindercamp, the former of whom had served in the German army during the Franco-Prussian War, To this union were born three children; Corenne S., born at Wahoo, May 21, 1905; Enid Elizabeth, born at Wahoo, September 10, 1910; and Wayne Edwin, born at Pasadena, California, March 11, 1921.



The Wenzel Schelbitzki family about 1913. Back row, left to right: Henry, Frank, Anton, Mary, Antonie, Anna. Front row: Gust, Wenzel Schelbitzki, Mrs. Schelbitzki, Sarah.

At the age of 27, in 1870, Wenzel Schelbitzki came to America from Austria-Hungary. It took three weeks to cross the ocean. He worked in Nebraska City for one year and then came to Fillmore County, where he homesteaded 80 acres on Sec. 20, Glengary township, 11 miles SE of Geneva. He lived in a dugout and during the first year walked many a mile to Beatrice for groceries, carrying a sack of flour on his back and groceries in a bucket. Sometimes a snake would make its way into the dugout. Once, while working in his potato patch, he was bitten by a rattlesnake. To draw out the poison, he buried his arm in the mud of the creek, thus averting poisoning. He built chairs, tables, and beds the family used for years. Stones for the foundation and lumber for the frame house he built were brought by wagon and oxen from Alexandria.

In 1875, he married Mary Kruta, who had come from Czechoslovakia. He bought 80 acres adjoining the homestead and moved the frame house there. Here he reared his family of four sons-Anton, Frank, Henry, and Gust-and four daughters-Sarah, Mary, Antonia. and Anna. He lived there continuously until his passing at the age of 85 years. His wife preceded him in death. These hardy pioneers are buried in Glengary Cemetery.

A large granite rock which was partially embedded in the ground was taken from the homestead pasture and placed in the Geneva park

as a memorial.

As of this year (1966), the survivors of the Wenzel Schelbitzki family are: Henry and Gust Schelbitzki of Ohiowa, Mary (Mrs. John Sieber), of Ohiowa, and Anna (Mrs. George Rippe), of Sidney, Nebraska.

Among our local pioneers, the family of Frank J. Sieber of Ohiowa is a four-generation family: the great-grandfather, the grandfather, the father, and the son all had the same names, and lived all their lives in Fillmore County.

In 1870, four men from Hermsdorf, Bohemia, decided to come to America. Each had a profession but thought that opportunities were few, and so they sailed for America hoping to find a better situation. These men were Frank J. Sieber, Joseph Stoy, Joe Staritz, and Carl Wieden. Their families were left in Bohemia to come later if the men found America to be a desirable place to live and bring up their families.

From New York they came to Beatrice, to contact a land agency. They were first shown land in western Nebraska but decided to come back farther east, as they were impressed with the level prairie land. The Homestead Act of 1862 provided that anyone who was an American citizen, or who declared his intention to become one, could claim 160 acres of government land. They decided to homestead on Sec. 28 in Glengary township. In the center of the section they dug a well so that the four families could all share it. Dugouts were made, and these served the four men as their living quarters. For miles and miles around there was nothing but prairies and sky. The dugouts were dark caves, but when they came outside and saw the level prairie and beautiful blue sky, hardships were forgotten.

In the fall they sent someone to Bohemia to bring over their families. This did not work out too well, because the person they sent squandered the money he had been given for the families' passports. He also told the families that America had nothing to offer them but Indians, snakes, and wild animals. It was then that the aged grandfather told the families that he would go to America and write them back the truth. During this time, the men who were already here started to build sod houses to be ready for the families when they arrived. The great-grandfather finally arrived, found things favorable, and wrote the families to come.

In the fall of 1871, they sailed for America. There were the aged grandmother Sieber, Helena, the wife of their son Frank (already here), and their children, Frank, Mary, Caroline, and Tracy. Other children born in America were John and Anna. The family of Joseph Stoy (already here) coming with them were Mrs. Joseph Stoy, three sons-Julius, Joseph, and Anton-and a daughter, Mary. They were on the ocean 20 days and had many exciting experiences. Finally they arrived in Fillmore County and were united with their husbands. The husbands had the sod houses completed, and the families began a new kind of life on the prairies of Nebraska.

The winter of 1871 was severe and they encountered many hardships. The nearest post office and grocery store were at Beatrice, and the men walked together 50 miles once a week to get supplies. One time they were caught in a severe blizzard and had to seek

shelter in a haystack for several days.

When spring arrived, they turned over more prairie with oxen and a wooden plow. They also planted many trees. Although not much grain was raised the first year, a little meant a great deal to them. They had many hardships in these years, but somehow they survived them.

After a few years, neighbors arrived, and later more immigrants A schoolhouse was built not far from the homesteads, first called the Sieber district, then the Claussen district, and finally District 39. The children of these families went to school there. There was not much equipment, but as time went on more was added. The



Graves of Frank and Theresa Sieber in Glengary cemetery-Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sieber II standing by graves.



Photo from Mrs. Earl Franck Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sieber II.



Photo from Mrs. Rose Lynn Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sieber III on their 56th wedding anniversary.



Photo from Mrs. Rose Lynn Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Stoy and their daughter Mary Stoy (Sieber).

friendliness of these pioneers was marvelous. Each family helped one another in sickness, in sorrow, and in need. The schoolhouse was also used at times by Catholics and Lutherans as a meeting place.

A school program or church affair always drew a packed house; people would come for miles in lumber wagons drawn by ox teams. As time went on, trees had grown fast and were ready to be cut for material for log cabins. Later, frame houses were built. The Stoy family built a frame house on Sec. 20 and the Sieber family built on Sec. 28. More and more prairie was turned over and crops were good for a few years; then came a grasshopper year, and they destroyed all crops and even chewed harnesses and wagon tongues.

In 1886, tragedy struck the Stoy family. Their three sons, Joseph, Julius, and Anton, contracted typhoid fever and all died within three months. Their ages were 25, 23, and 21 years. Doctors stayed there day and night but were helpless. The only surviving child was the daughter, Mary.

Mary Stoy later married Frank J. Sieber III. Mr. Sieber often remarked that he could boast of having brought his wife to this country and having taken care of her on the boat. He was nine years old then, and she was two. The parents were allowed to bring along a cradle on the ship; this antique is still a treasured Sieber possession.

Later, people from Ohio and Iowa began to arrive and take up homesteads. About this time a town was to be incorporated, and someone suggested that for a name they might combine the letters in

Iowa and Ohio; and that is the way the village of Ohiowa got its name.
The third generation of Siebers, Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Sieber, moved to town in 1891. Mr. Sieber was cashier in the Bank of Ohiowa until 1907, when he incorporated his own bank, known as the Home Bank. Mr. and Mrs. Sieber were blessed with four children: three sons—Frank Jr., Joseph, and one who died at birth—and a daughter Rose. The sons later became partners in their father's bank. Edward J. Lynn served as cashier.

Mr. and Mrs. Sieber lived to celebrate their 57th wedding anniversary. Their sons preceded them in death, as did their son-in-law, Edward J. Lynn, husband of Rose Sieber.

The grandparents of Rose Sieber Lynn made three trips to their native land, Bohemia. They always enjoyed these trips, but America was home to them and they were always glad to get back.

One by one the pioneers were laid to rest in the little cemetery by the District 39 schoolhouse. On their tombstones can be read the names of many brave pioneers who helped make Fillmore County history.

As of 1967, the survivors of the Frank J. Sieber family were: Rose Sieber Lynn and her two sons, Vincent and Leland; Mrs. Sophia Sieber (wife of Frank J. Sieber, Jr.); Mrs. Grace Sieber (wife of Joseph Sieber) and her daughter, Mrs. Betty Joe Zengerle of Annville, Pennsylvania. Vincent S. Lynn, M.D., and his wife Helen live in Geneva; they have two daughters, Mary Carmen, of Chicago, and Mrs. Ray Decker, of Lincoln. Leland M. Lynn, D.D.S., teaches dentistry at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. He and his wife, Laura Mae, have one daughter, Laura Lea.



Photo from J. J. Klima Charles Smrha.

Charles Smrha was born in Styria, Austria, on September 14, 1876. In 1884, he came, with his parents, brothers, and sisters, to Exeter, from where they eventually moved to Milligan in 1893. He graduated from the Exeter High School in 1896. On August 30, 1904, he was united in marriage to Agnes Barta of Wilber.

Mr. Smrha started his adult life as a country schoolteacher, but this activitiy was interrupted by his service in the Spanish-American War (1898-99). On his return from service he became Fillmore County's superintendent of schools. In 1903, he became cashier of the Farmers & Merchants Bank of Milligan, of which he later became president, and served in the latter capacity until 1933. During this period he served two terms as a state Senator, representing the 17th District (Fillmore, Jefferson, and Thayer counties). Throughout his lifetime, he was actively affiliated with and devoted to the ideals and principles of the Democratic party.

In 1933, he became the Nebraska state manager of the

Glengary Township Homestead Map

Aaron N. Nichols Filkinson Wilkinson	Charles H. Bassett			Thomas W. Clark	Jeremiah Foley	Frank Znojensky						Karl Massek	Frederick Walmaly			
				Phillip Purcell								Frank Andill				
John Wilkinson	Joseph Franz Ondrak Kohler		.5	Joseph Podlesak John Kennedy	Iknac Podlesak	John Stein- acher			3		Thomas Gilroy Frank Suda		William W. Hanson		-	
		Peter Donnelly	Geo. A. David Tyson Griffiths				John Kotas		John Hodek	Joseph Svec				Warner Folden	Peter Bartu	
							Frank Kotas								Frank Bartu	
		Michael Kirwin					John Barnach		Jozef Kassik	Vaclav Svec				Charles W Folden	John Anspac	ch
			Albert M. Tyson				James Barnach	ik						James Wallace		
has H. John Bean Lawrence	Harrison P. McClaflin										Isaac L. Scott		Robert Cloyd			
Aaron McPherson	Robert R. Folden	**********	17		16 ool Land			1	5		Jefferso Randall	n.	Albumen L. Starr		-13	
Giles R. Folden																
		Geo. M. Rutherford					Benjami Bothwe	in F.	David S Robinso	n				John R. Heston	Moses Fitze	C.
		Mary E. Steele	Wenzel Schelbitzke													
	9		Joseph Stoy		21		Garrett V. Hancock	James A. Bothwell	Sarah Bothwell	William T. Thomas		2	3	Sarah Ann Starr	Adam Amm	Richard
		Harvey B. Macklin														
Silas B. Camp	William Purdy			Franz Sieber, Jr.	Duncan McLeod						John F Lippenco	tt	Cyrus Bechtel			
Gerhard Hopken	John W. Gassell		29	Franz Sieber	Josef Stoy			2	7		Alonzo B Johnson		John Bechtel	,	- 25	
		Claus Claussen	Franciska Wieden				Willard Brooks	Р.	Henry Eberstei	n						
		Gerd Henry Hopken	Anton Nun		33		Horatio Brook	N.	John Ebe Jr	erstein.		3	5	Sc	36 hool Land==	

Home Owners Loan Corporation, and in 1936 he was appointed state Director of Insurance by Governor Roy L. Cochran. During World War II, he served as district director of the Office of Price Administration at North Platte from 1943 to 1945.

He was a 50-year member of Stotsenberg Lodge of the Knights of Pythias, and with this organization was past grand chancellor of the Grand Lodge of the State of Nebraska; a 50-year member of the Masonic order, Geneva Lodge No. 79; a charter member of Z. C. B. J. (Western Bohemian Fraternal Association); a member of Harris Fraley Post No. 131 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; past commander of the Nebraska Department of United Spanish War Veterans; and a member of the Knife and Fork Club.

His ability as an orator gained him wide recognition. He was called upon to deliver addresses on many occasions, and he delivered the funeral addresses at almost every funeral in the Milligan community for nearly 50 years, from 1910 until

1958, when failing health made it impossible for him to continue.

Mr. Smrha died at the Veterans Hospital in Lincoln on April 19, 1961.

James (Vaclav) Svec and Marie Suda were early pioneers in Fillmore County. They lived all their married life on the farm on which Vaclav filed his homestead entry on April 17, 1871, filed his proof at the Beatrice land office in January, 1877. The farm, still in the family, is in Sec. 10, Glengary, one mile W of Milligan.

Vaclav Svec was born in Zichovice, Okris Stasecky, Czechoslovakia, on October 16, 1841. When he was only 12, he lost his mother, and so had to make his way in the world while still a young boy. He took up the trade of a cabinet maker. When he came to America in 1869, he followed this trade for a time in Iowa. He came to Nebraska two years later, settling in the neighborhood of the present town of Milligan. He pursued his trade here also, being called upon from



Photo from Mrs. Pauline Votipka

The James (Vaclav) Svec family (date not known). Back row, left to right: Mollie (Hamouz), Mary (Soukup), Frank, Joe, Anna (Soukup), Christine (Fujan). Front row: Agnes (Tesar), Emil, James Svec, Pauline (Votipka), Mrs. James Svec, James.

time to time to make caskets for his neighbors, as the need

Marie Suda was born in Bezdekova, Czechoslovakia, and came to this country with her parents in 1868, when, following the Civil War, there was a great influx of European immigrants. Her first home in America was in Chicago, where the family remained until 1871. Leaving Chicago after the great fire, the family then came to live in the vicinity of Milligan.

Vaclav Svec married Marie Suda on January 17, 1873. Their marriage was blessed with 11 children, one of whom died in infancy. One son, James lost his life in action in France, in the Argonne Forest, during World War I. To make a living for his family, Vaclav made journeys to work in Lincoln, Beatrice, and Nebraska City, walking there and back, and carrying on his return trips the necessities of life. He and his wife endured, and survived, all the usual hardships of the pioneer days. In his later years, when the family relieved him of the heavy work, he spent his leisure time walking to the creek to fish and to enjoy the shade of the trees. He loved to listen to the songs of the birds. —Pauline Votipka



Photo from Mrs. Frank Hamouz Mr. and Mrs. Josef Verjraska about 1910.

Josef Vejraska was born in 1850 and his wife, Marie Kucera, was born in 1856, both in Czechoslovakia. They were married on May 1, 1877. They had six children; the first child, a son, died of diphtheria when he was only one year old. The other children were daughters: Anna, Agnes, Mary, Rose, and Frances. Josef's father, Jan Vejraska, came to Fillmore County in 1880. Josef and his family followed in the summer of 1884 and bought 80 acres of school land on which they settled.



Photo from Donald Larson

William and Joe Svec standing in front of their home near Milligan. The house is built of bricks made from clay on the Svec farm.

They built a sod house, and after a few years, when snakes and other pests were dangerous to the children, they decided to look for clay for making bricks, as Joseph Vejraska and his father were both masons and brick makers in their fatherland where they made bricks commercially. They found the clay, so they decided to make their own bricks and build a brick house.

First they took off the top dirt and dug out enough to make a sample for bricks. They found out that this worked, so they dug out the clay, broke the clods, poured water over it, a batch at a time, worked it into a smooth dough by hand with tools and walked in it with bare feet-and all that was hard work for both hands and feet. They pulled the water from the well with a long bucket by hand. When the clay dough was smooth it was worked by hand into a breadlike loaf on a long plank table and then thrown into a wooden form with force so it would fill the corners in the form. The form was made for two bricks at a time. Then the top was cut off by a wire saw, handmade from a fresh bough of a tree skinned and soaked in water, then bent, and wire was fastened to both ends. As it was drying, the wire would stretch so tight that it cut the brick straight. These bricks were $10\frac{1}{2}$ " x $5\frac{1}{2}$ " x $2\frac{1}{2}$ ". The bricks were then dumped on a straight smooth field, brushed with fine powder-like sand, with a "know-how" so the bricks would not be lopsided. When the field was full it was a beautiful picture. The bricks lay nicely in straight rows, just an edge of form space in between. When they dried off enough to be picked, the bricks were put into a shed to finish drying, piled so that air could go through.

The shed was made of brick pillars and wooden sides. The pillars held the wooden sides which were removed when the weather per-

mitted so the bricks could dry thoroughly.

The kiln for baking the bricks was dug out in a hill made like two rooms. One opening was made at the bottom of a hill for coal and a fireplace. The other one was large and deep, about 40' square and 40' deep. It had two burners made of heavy iron to hold the large load of bricks. When enough bricks were made and dried they



Photo from Mrs. Frank Hamouz

Pictured in front of their house of hand-made bricks are four of the daughters of Josef and Marie Vajreska. Left to right: Anna (Mrs. Vac Capek), Agnes (Mrs. Vac Ach), Mary (Mrs. John Brecha), and Rose (Mrs. Josef Sadlo). Not included is Frances (Mrs. Joseph Kunce). The dog was "Dingo.

were then hauled into the kiln via wheelbarrows, and placed zig-zag so the air, heat, and smoke could go through. Then the fire was started and slowly pushed to the back end. A hoelike poker was used to push the fire far in and get the ashes out underneath the grates. It took 4 days and 3 nights to bake the bricks with slow steady heat. Intense heat would have deformed the bricks.

When the bricks were red hot and little flames started shooting up through the bricks, the fireplace was closed and the top was covered with dirt thick enough to keep the heat in for slow cooling. If rainy weather set in the top was covered with a tin roof over the

dirt.

The house built of these bricks on the Vejraska 80-acre farm in Sec. 16, Glengary township, was 22' x 24' inside. The walls were 18" thick. The dry raw bricks were used for the inside of the wall to take up any moisture and keep the house dry. In those days lime, sand, and hair was used for plaster—cement was not available. The interior

of the house was whitewashed in the spring.

As the family grew, a homemade brick addition was added on to the house which was 22' x 46'. More bricks were also made for the barn built in the hill and with a wooden roof. That replaced a low barn that was in a dugout and had a grass roof which was made of small bundles of long swamp grass and fastened on heavy laths with a smooth thick twine put over just like shingles and it never leaked and was very warm. Horses were precious in those days and the Vejraskas believed in good housing for them.

A chicken house was dug out in the hill and the lower part was made of sod and square nests were dug right in the side of the dirt

walls and the roof was of grass.

This 80-acre farm with the brick house and barn has been continuously in the Vejraska family. The grandson, Joseph Sadlo, Jr., and his father Joseph Sadlo, Sr., farm it at the present time.

-Mrs. Frank Hamouz



Photo from Mrs. Frank Hamouz Barn built in 1902 from bricks manufactured on the Vejraska farm.

[The section on Milligan owes a great deal to Robert I. Kutak's The Story of a Bohemian-American Village (1933). This was a study of the relationship between inherited and traditional customs and their transplantation to a new land, especially in a community heavily influenced by one national group of immigrants. This study, undertaken between 1928 and 1933, with the aid and co-operation of many of the people of Milligan, was the Columbia University Ph.D. thesis of Dr. Kutak, who later became professor of sociology at the University of Louisville.]

Frank Znojensky, a native of Bohemia, was granted his homestead claim on the "E ½ of the NE fractional quarter of Sec. 4 in Township 6N of Range 1W... containing 80 acres and 69/100 of an acre" on June 15, 1875, by a patent signed by President U. S. Grant. He was naturalized as a United States citizen on September 26, 1906.

Mr. Znojensky lived on his homestead from 1875 until his passing away on August 2, 1915. It took from that time until 1929 to locate his heirs overseas. At that time, the farmstead was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Joe Steinacher, who lived there until 1965, when they in turn sold it to Edward Uldrich, who is the present owner.

Milligan

In a town named Milligan, located in Glengary township, one might expect to find an Irish population, but the town is inhabited largely by the descendants of Czechoslovakian settlers.

Milligan was established as a village in the fall of 1887. In the same year, the Kansas City & Omaha R.R. began to build a branch from Fairbury to McCool Junction.



Standard Atlas of Fillmore County (1905) Map of Milligan in 1905.

The first inhabitant of Milligan was a blacksmith, Charles Polansky, and the first business here was the hardware firm of Kotas & Bulin. By the end of 1887, the following businesses had been established: Hardware: Kotas & Bulin, and Placek & Wozab; General Merchandise: D. S. Robinson, and Frank Chase; Elevators: Taylor & Burke, with C. O. Morgan and A. A. Hamouz, assistants, and Davis & Co., with Frank Stech as assistant; the Milligan Exchange Bank, with W. J. Zirhut as cashier; Lumber Yard: Bagley & Parkhurst; Drugstore: Williams & Co.; Furniture: Anton Vodicka; Livery: E. J. Hanabery; Blacksmith: Charles Polansky; Carpenters: John Havel, John Luksik, and Anton Vodicka.

The town was duly organized and incorporated February 15, 1888, with the following trustees: D. S. Robinson, chairman, and W. J. Bulin, E. S. Bagley, Frank Chase, and Anton Vodicka. J. E. Starr was elected justice of the peace, and Charles Polansky was appointed marshal. The first postmaster was Anton Vodicka, who was appointed January 19, 1888, and served until April 15, 1890. During the year 1888, additional places of business were opened: General Merchandise: N. M. Zmudsky; Hardware: F. A. Placek; Implements: Kotas & Bulin; Saloon: Kotas & Kotas; Millinery: Mrs. A. Vacek; Meat Market: Joseph Kotas; Doctors: Amy & Amy; Livestock: W. J. Kotas. This year remains memorable all over the West for one of the most violent blizzards that the oldest settlers can remember.



Photo from Mrs. Emil A. Havel

John Havel was an early-day carpenter in Milligan who helped build many of the business buildings. This picture was taken in 1895. front row, left to right: Jim, Joe, Bill, Emil, John. Center row: Frank, Mrs. Havel, Mr. Havel, Emma. Top row: Anna and Mary.

On June 15, 1872, President U. S. Grant issued a patent to the Burlington & Missouri River R.R. of Nebraska covering Sec. 11 in T6N, R1W of the 6th Principal Meridian, the section on which Milligan is now located. The first depot agent in Milligan was Charles Walker.

Transportation

E. J. Hanaberry had the first livery stable in 1888, with two teams of horses and one buggy. When William Dinneen bought out the business in 1896, a special wagon was built to pick up children each morning to bring them to school. A team and buggy rented for 50¢ and up to \$1 to \$1.25, depending on the distance. The first auto in town was owned by Frank Soukup in 1901. About 1915, automobiles became the rage and slowly took over. In 1928, Milligan also had a taxi, No. 956, run by James Kassik, who drove his patrons wherever they wanted to go around the country.

Fire Department

Milligan's Volunteer Fire Department was organized May 12, 1933, with 16 members. The charter members were Henry Rischling,



Photo from Mrs. Emil A. Havel

Milligan Fire Department in 1933. Back row, left to right: Lew Hamouz, Frank Laun, Ralph Kable, Clarence Zelenka, James Stastny, Leo Rischling, Robert Kunc, Bob Buzek. Front row: Clarence Kottas, Fred Skocpol, Eldon Havel, Bud Rischling, Ed Hamouz, Emil Havel, Len Vasina, Unknown, Jim Pavelka.

Emil A. Havel, Fred Kassik, Ernest Kotas, Bohumil Buzek, Lew Hamouz, John Bulin, John Pavelka, Albert Kassik, Joe Jicha, Jr., James Jarolimek, Joe Prokop, Milton Stastny, Fred Skocpol, Slav Petracek, and Ben Jesek. Emil Havel and Ernest Kotas are the only charter members with a continuous membership who are still active today.

The first fire-fighting equipment was a two-wheeled hose-reel cart which had to be pulled by hand. In 1950, a fire truck was purchased for \$10,000.

Telephones

The Bell Telephone Co. installed Milligan's first telephone in 1897 in A. V. Kouba's bank, located in the present Kotas building. Soon thereafter the bank was moved to its present location. The telephone, however, remained in the store building, and constituted the entire service for several years. Then the Fillmore County Telephone Co., with Attorney John Barsby as manager, took over this telephone, and others were installed both in town and in the rural areas. This necessitated the switchboard which was set up in the Milligan Times office. The switchboard was operated during the day by J. V. Kotas and E. J. Kotas, and at night by Pat Hanaberry and Frank Holpuch. About this time Ike Steele of Ohiowa started the Farmers Cooperative Telephone System, which also served this community. Later, the switchboard was moved to the home of J. V. Kotas. Dial telephones were installed in March, 1941, and Direct Distance Dialing reached Milligan in April, 1963.

Newspaper

The first newspaper published in Milligan was the Milligan Review, founded in 1892 by Fred Gilmore. In 1897, it was sold to J. A. Harris, who edited and published the Milligan Journal, which continued until 1900, when it became the Times. In 1933, Merle Furse started a new Milligan Review, but sold it in 1936 to Robert Dvorak. At present the Milligan news is published in the Nebraska Signal.

A clipping from the Milligan Review dated April 16, 1952, reads: The present day Milligan Review editor was handed a copy of the April 18, 1913, issue of the Milligan Times recently by Frank J. Schultz. Exactly 39 years ago the newspaper serving Milligan was a six-column "handset" with two pages home-print and six pages readyprint. The editor was Frank Rischling, who at present resides at Lawrence, Nebraska, and still visits the home town occasionally. With the closing of the Milligan Times several years later, the community was without a newspaper until Merle Furse started the Milligan Review in 1933. The present owners bought out from him in 1936.

Among the advertisers of that day according to the *Times* were Petracek & Co., clothing and millinery; Frank J. Korbelik, meat market; F. A. Placek, hardware; A. A. Hamouz, dry goods and groceries; Rut & Jezek, meat market; W. D. Russell, cafe proprietor; Frank Hrdy, groceries and dry goods; Frank Rozanek, furniture; Joseph Jicha, Central Hall saloon; S. H. Michener, manager lumber yard; Joseph Kotas, produce business; E. E. Cooksey was Burlington agent; Frank Laun did shoe repairing; Dr. F. A. Motis, dentist, came from Tobias on Monday to his office over Central Hall; Dr. V. V. Smrha was resident physician and surgeon; E. J. Kotas was village clerk; Charles Smrha was cashier of Farmers and Merchants Bank.

Some of the printing was in Czech language. All news items are of interest at the present time because they are history. The Milligan market of almost 40 years ago told the following story: Wheat, No. 2, 73¢; Corn No. 3, 45¢; Oats, 25¢; Eggs, 14¢; Butterfat, No. 1, 28¢; Butter, 20¢ and 25¢; and so on.

A grand wrestling match was advertised for Saturday, April 19, at 3 P.M. at Stastny & Kotas Hall between Joseph P. Bartu of Milligan and Emil Martin of South Omaha. Admission was 25¢.

The issue is yellow with age and has been patched in several places with scotch tape. These old histories of a town and its people become valuable with age and in reading the daily happenings of a past generation, one is taken back to "the good old days" for a picture of things and people as they were at that time.



Photo from Mrs. Louis Svec

Main Street, Milligan, in 1900. Notice the two windmills.

Water System

In 1888, the first water system of Milligan consisted of two windmills, each over a deep well. Most families had their own wells, but those who did not, and who lived close to the town windmills, went there to get their water. Later a town well was drilled where the power house stands and that well served the community until 1938, when the present water system and tower were installed. The new well north of town has a very good supply of water.

Post Office

A post office was established at Milligan on January 19, 1888. Anton Vodicka was the first postmaster. The records show that during 1888, \$290.07 worth of stamps and stamped paper were sold. On September 15, 1904, Rural Free Delivery service was established in Milligan, with Henry Spirk as rural carrier at a salary of \$720 per year, including horse hire.

For many years the post office was located in Block 9, Lot 12, in the bank building west of the banking rooms. In 1923, the post office moved into the new Krisl Building, on Block 9, Lots 10 and 11. On January 28, 1961, the post office was moved to the Hrdy Building, Block 9, Lot 3.

Local Politics

Nearly all of the members of the town board had to be drafted into its service. The office carries with it a great deal of responsibility, provides no financial return, takes much time, and results in but little prestige.

At one time interest in local politics was very keen; two tickets were in the field and bitter contests occurred. Charges and countercharges flew back and forth, and every method was employed by each faction to win the elections. Sometimes the law stepped in to set limits beyond which candidates might not go in their efforts to win votes.

"The local political campaign just opening will probably be the driest one that ever struck this vicinity, or, in fact, the county. Candidates are not allowed to set-em-up to the foaming pivo [beer], cigars, or other refreshments that will require the expenditure of money; and so ice-water, cornfield handshakes, and a whole lot of talk will have to be used instead on susceptible voters. For the candidate who is possessed of a social nature and liberal disposition, this will be a hardship, but for the fellow who wants your vote but hates like thunder to chip in even for a livery rig to come to town and ask for it, it will be a godsend."—Nebraska Signal, October 13, 1899, quoted in Milligan Journal.

Interest in state and national politics is still keen in Milligan, but the waters of local politics have not been troubled in many years. Such apparent indifference has caused comment from other communities in the county, but the local attitude is ably defended in the following article:

"The Signal last week commented on the fact that the Milligan ballot for the village election and the school board election contained the names of no candidates and left the voters free to go to the polls and write in the name of anyone whom they pleased for the places to be filled. If the Signal were as close an observer of Milligan events as it should be, it would have seen in this no unusual occurrence It has probably been 15 or 20 years since a caucus has been held here to nominate candidates for village officers. And the interesting feature of it is that nothing has been lost thereby

"A village fight or a school fight may break the monotony of an otherwise quiet life, but it does much more than that. It breaks up a spirit of co-operation without which no community can prosper or progress. It doesn't take very much to start a village fight . . . And when the fight is over, like engaging in a law suit, both sides to the controversy are the losers."—From the Milligan correspondent of the Nebraska Signal, April 13, 1922.

Despite this apparent indifference to local politics, and the fact that no formal caucuses are held before elections, yet the voters are not without some direction when the time comes to elect the village trustees. A few rather able politicians in the town manage to run elections pretty much to suit themselves, and the men whom they prefer sit on the town or school board. One of these men, the village banker, is the political "boss" of the village, and has been elected three times to the state senate on the Democratic ticket. Of him one of the Milligan girls who attended the state university wrote as follows: "We have one eminent man in town, and he was a Nebraska State Senator in 1923 and again in 1927. He always was the outstanding person in Milligan, and people all went to him for advice and help in business and domestic affairs. He is a good speaker, and since gaining recognition he has been called outside the community to deliver graduation and political speeches, Memorial Day and fraternal addresses. Years ago he was a county school superintendent of Fillmore County and also took part in the Spanish-American War as an officer." (From an unpublished manuscript entitled "Community Attitudes: A Study of a Town," University of Nebraska 1927.)

Churches

Milligan has two churches, the St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church. The first Catholic church, now located in the north cemetery, was built in 1876; on Sundays the people of the entire settlement gathered there for worship. Father Joseph Bartik was the first resident priest after the church was built



Photo from Guy Brown, Jr

First Catholic Church of Milligan, now in north cemetery.



Photo from Mrs. Emil A. Havel

St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church.

in town. In pioneer days the priest traveled from one mission to another to take care of the spiritual welfare of the faithful. In 1890, the St. Wenceslaus Church was built in Milligan; Father Bouska contributed not only his time but also his money. The first couple to be married in this church by Father Bouska were Frank Tenopir and Matilda Slepicka (January 6, 1891). The first baptism in this church was held for Fannie Hodek Haberman, daughter of Frank and Anna Hodek. Milligan has two ladies who joined the Sisterhood: Sister M. Geraldine, daughter of the late W. J. and Rose (Hamouz) Bulin, and Sister M. Francis Ann, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Emil A. Havel.



Photo from Mrs. Rudy Spousta Milligan Methodist Church (July, 1967).

The foundation for the Methodist Episcopal Church of Milligan was laid in 1904, when a group of women organized a Ladies' Aid Society and raised money to buy a church lot. After that year, a Sunday School was held in various buildings until the year 1924, when a permanent church organization was formed in the ZCBJ Hall under the direction of District Superintendent Rev. R. Gettys of Beatrice and Rev. Henry Ibser, who at that time was in charge of the church at DeWitt. The next pastor was Rev. Watters.

In 1931, the Rev. E. L. Cochran was instrumental in obtaining a church building from Friend, Nebraska. This was moved to Milligan on January 7, 1931, and dedicated on February 8.

Cemeteries

Milligan, like any other town, soon found that it would be necessary to set out a plot for a cemetery. On October 22, 1881, a society was formed, and 3.15 acres one mile S of Milligan were purchased from Abumen and Sarah Starr for \$10. The cemetery was named Glengary Cemetery Society. In 1897, a group from the Bohemian Gymnastic Society and ZCBJ Lodge Rabi took over the cemetery and the name was then changed to Ceska Narodni Hrbitov (Bohemian National Cemetery). In 1947, the association reorganized and new by-laws were agreed upon. The cemetery is now owned by the public, each lot owner being considered a member of the organization.

The Ceski Bratri Cemetery, one mile N and one mile W of Milligan, was established in 1876. A great many pioneers are buried there. The first burial was a Mrs. Josefa Shenkirka, who died in 1876. This plot is also known as the Pioneer Cemetery.

Schools

The 1854 act authorizing a territorial government for Nebraska provided for free public schools, and reserved Sec. 36 in addition to Sec. 16 for the maintenance of schools. Since District 71, as first organized, was composed of Secs. 1, 2, 11, and 12, it can be assumed that the first schoolhouse of the district was that on what is now the Millard Korbilek farm. John Dempster was county superintendent at the time. J. B. Lewis, a later superintendent, reported about 1882:

"I take pleasure in being able to report fair prosperity. Teachers employed are generally 'Efficient.' Epidemic sickness has been the greatest drawback. The number of children of school age has increased 26 per cent. Eight good schoolhouses have been built. The people show a disposition to meet their indebtedness."

In the years 1879-1888, the following persons taught in Milligan, with an average stay of three months: B. F. Bothwell, Minnie Butler, E. R. Gould, S. D. Purviance, S. S. Blauvelt, Mary Page, May Stewart, Eva Purviance, V. B. Crane, C. C. Spangler, and C. A. Buss.

A new building was erected in 1889, for \$1,500, on land that was part of the town site originally purchased from the C. B. & Q. R.R., and which is now the Funfrall Park. The frame building had four large rooms. The 130 pupils were in the care of two teachers; a third teacher was added in 1893. The curriculum was extended to include the ninth grade in 1895; the tenth grade was added the next year. By 1915, all twelve grades were being taught. The first commencement exercises were held in 1897 for six graduates: Nellie Hanaberry, Emil J. Kotas, Frank A. Motis, William Podlesak, Anna Smrha, and Frank A. Stech.

Transportation facilities for children living at a distance have changed with the times. The Kingsville system put into operation in 1899 was new in this part of the country. Under this system, the school district hired a driver who furnished his own wagon and horses to transport the pupils. The wagon, or hack, was a vehicle with benches along the sides; for children whose parents had probably walked long distances to school, such an arrangement was, no doubt, considered luxurious. Among the drivers of the horse-drawn hacks were John O. Kotas, Albert Boxa, and many others.

With the coming of motorized transportation, the drivers acquired buses that resembled delivery trucks. In 1953 the school district bought its first regular bus, a Ford, and hired James Hromadka as driver. A second bus, a Chevrolet, was purchased in 1956 when a second route became necessary. The new bus was driven by Herman Michl.

Within the past 15 years, shelving has been installed in the assembly room to provide for a growing library, and for current publications. The books are catalogued in the Dewey System. Facilities for music teaching have been improved by providing a music room in the new addition. The Band Mothers have worked diligently in support of music projects. The school has always had a program for physical fitness. At one time Sokol activities were a part of this program, but more recently, inter-scholastic sports contests have received emphasis.

The gymnasium is the main feature of an \$85,000 addition approved in 1956. Its laminated wood beams, oak bleachers, and maple floor help to make it one of the most beautiful and functional gymnasiums in this area.



Photo from Mrs. Rudy Spousta Milligan Public School in 1900.



High School Orchestra. Left to right: Trombone, James Luzum: trumpet, Henry Steinacher; clarinet, Joe Stech; violin, Professor Lawrence; piano, Ada Klima; base drum, Ed Kottas; snare drum, Fred Havel.



Photo from Mrs. Frank Hamouz Milligan Public School and new gym (in December, 1956).

The school now operates as a Class II minor-accredited school. Requirements for graduation are 40 hours each of English and social studies, 30 hours each of mathematics and science, 20 hours of practical arts, and 10 hours each of music and physical education.

The walk from the street to the front door crosses over a culvert with cement balustrades at either end. During dry periods the culvert has provided imaginative young minds with many delightful games, and in winter the culvert has been plugged and the basin filled with water for skating. No doubt there are many fond memories of playtime down by the "bridge."

High School Alumni Association

Since many of the graduates of the Milligan High School often said they wished that Milligan would have an Alumni Association like those all the surrounding high schools had organized many years ago, Miss Agnes M. Capek, now Mrs. Frank V. Hamouz, called a meeting of a number of interested graduates for the purpose of organizing, on Thursday, April 29, 1948, at the National Farm Loan office at Milligan. Those attending this meeting were:

Agnes M. Capek, Mary E. Krisl, Mrs. Louis (Vlasta Kunce) Svec, Arlene Laun, Irma Beth Kotas, Mrs. Joe M. (Libbie Petracek) Oliva, Irene Capek, Eleanor Kassik, Mrs. Frank W. (Emma Suda) Kassik, Frank Havel, Sr., Jim F. Kotas, Robert Chudly; A. R. Jensen, Superintendent of the Milligan Public Schools, and Mrs. Henry Kassik, president of the Milligan Woman's Club. The Milligan Woman's Club consented to serve the dinner and were pleased to be

asked to donate the plates to the honored class of 1948.



Mrs. Frank Hamouz (graduated 1930), first president of Milligan High School Alumni Association.



Mary E. Krisl (graduated (1902), first secretary of Milligan High School Alumni Association.

Agnes M. Capek was elected president and Mary E. Krisl secretary to serve till the time of the first banquet and meeting, scheduled to be held on Thursday evening, June 3, 1948, at the Milligan Auditorium. The following committees had been appointed:

Invitation Committee
Irene Capek
Eleanor Kassik
Mrs. Frank W. Kassik
Irma Beth Kotas

Program Committee
Robert Chudly
Jim F. Kotas
Mrs. Joe M. Oliva
Arlene Laun

Mrs. Otto Kotas Otto Kottas Eleanor Simacek Committee to set-up By-laws
Louis Hamouz Stanley Chudly
Mrs. Joseph G. Capek
Edward Kottas Melvin Vavra

Later some changes were made and additional committees were appointed.

With the assistance of Mrs. Charles J. Kotas, who kept an outstanding scrapbook, Mrs. Anna McClure, principal of the Milligan Public Schools, and Supt. A. R. Jensen, a list of graduates from 1897 to 1948 was made, totaling 589. The Invitation and Registration Committee worked very hard to get all the addresses.

Program-First Banquet-June 3, 1948

On the evening of June 3, 1948, it was found that 324 graduates and guests assembled in the basement of the Milligan Auditorium for the first gathering of its kind in more than 30 years. It was interesting to learn that 308 graduates had paid their dues, thus becoming members of the Milligan High School Alumni Association. 90 of these were unable to be present at this first banquet, but hoped to make it some other time. Forty-five classes were represented. The officers were pleased with this response.

The entire banquet was planned around the motto, "The Pioneers' Trails Paved the Road to Our Present." The decorations

were carried out in the school colors, purple and white. The motto, in purple letters on white crepe paper, was hung along the north wall, back of the speaker's table. At one end of the motto, placed on the piano, was a vase in the shape of a covered wagon filled with mockorange blossoms and roses. On the other end of the motto was hung a poster bearing the picture of a covered wagon and the mottoes of the first two graduating classes: 1897—"We Have Laid the Foundation," and 1898—"Know Thyself." Along one of the beams at the west and facing east, was the motto of the class of 1948—"When We Build, We Build Forever."

The nut cups were wagon wheels in purple with white hubs. Very effectively marking the places for the classes at the tables were stands of purple with the figures in white. The badges were squares of purple construction paper, with the names and years of graduation, or guests, neatly printed thereon in white ink.

The program, menu, committees, and graduates of each of the honored classes were bound in a booklet, the cover of which had a covered wagon and a bow of purple floss.

Grateful for the use of the Klima loud-speaking system, Miss Anna Smrha of Lincoln, as mistress of ceremonies, announced the program. The group singing was led by Mrs. Milo Kotas, a guest, accompanied by Mrs. Herman Michl at the piano. Miss Agnes M. Capek gave the welcome and introduced the graduates representing the honored classes that evening — that is, the first class of 1897 and those ending in "8." The 1948 graduates were Rosalie Beranek, Marilyn Cecrle, Virgie Lee Havel, James Jaros, James R. Kassik, Mildred M. Matejka, Norma Jean Most, Bernard J. Pavelka, Darlene M. Podlesak, Henry J. Rohla, Lorene Tesar, Lorene Buzek, and Arlene Weaver. The response was given by Mrs. Fred Kovanda.

At a short business meeting, the following officers were elected for the next year: Norman Steinacher, president; Miss Arlene Laun, vice-president; Mrs. Frank W. Kassik, secretary; and James F. Kassik, treasurer. The president read letters from distant graduates unable to be present.

All were disappointed to hear that Mrs. Nellie Hanaberry Roth of Bayard, one of the speakers, was unable to be present. Mrs. Roth's presence was closely felt through her fine written message covering her topic, "Pioneer Days in Schools," which was well read by Miss Anna Smrha. In her message, Mrs. Roth extended greetings from Bayard, the "Buckle of the Beet Belt," and went on to say, "Yes, we were the 'big six' (the Class of 1897), who put dear old Milligan and our Alma Mater on the map. We did not 'Roll Out the Barrel,' but we started the ball a-rolling; we pioneered, we paved the way for all the streamlining that came later." In the following paragraph, Mrs. Roth gave a vivid picture of the graduating class in 1897:

"Going down memory's lane, turning back the pages, I see our class taking their places on the stage in the old Jicha Hall. What a thrill! What a picture for sore eyes—there we were, the Gay Nineties in all their splendor! We had everything but the bicycle built for two. Emil (Kotas), brave in his snug-fitting suit and celluloid collar; Frank Stech, practically shapeless in a suit that allowed for expansion; Frank Motis like a scared bunny, hair parted the wrong way, wearing the then popular wing collar, also celluloid; next, William Podlesak—bashful William, standing very stiff, apparently afraid to sneeze lest zip would go the seams. William and Frank (Motis), swell fellows, but God called them before their work on earth was done. Now, last, but not least, Anna Smrha (Mrs. John Krisl) and the gal called 'Nello,' two roses among the thorns! Are you listening? Attention everybody, and hang on to your hats! We were there and over. Decked out in exactly what is now known as the 'new look' and today I am getting that 'old look' trying to find the 'new look' because I do not want to be the last by whom the new is tried; so there you have that thrill-packed picture as it was on the night of nights so long ago."

Emil J. Kotas of the Class of 1897 was called upon to say a few words. James R. Kassik talked on "Modern Days in School." His talk was followed by a history of the Milligan High School given by Mrs. Frank W. Kassik. Leonard Becwar pleasantly entertained the group with several selections on the accordion.

Norman Steinacher introduced the last two speakers, namely: Ernest Kotas, who spoke on "Tricks and Pranks," and Frank Hromadka, whose topic was "Athletics and Activities." The last number on the program was hearing from some of the graduates.

The graduates of the class of 1898 were Nora Dunn, Anna R. Hamouz, Lizzie A. Toomey, August B. Hromadka, Frank Kucera, and Emil Loukota. All are deceased except Nora Dunn.

The second banquet, on June 2, 1949, turned out to be another successful event with 300 alumni and guests present. Again 45 classes were represented.

Emil Korbelik of Nelson, a graduate of the 1920 class, acted as toastmaster. The group singing was led by Mrs. Henry Steinacher, accompanied by Miss Virgie Havel at the piano. Norman Steinacher gave the welcome and introduced the graduates representing the honored classes (those ending in "9"). The response was given by Agnes M. Capek.

At a short business meeting, the following officers were elected to serve the following year: Mrs. Henry Steinacher, president; Miss Marilyn Cecrle, vice-president; Mrs. Herman Michl, secretary; and Milton Stastny, treasurer. The toastmaster read several letters from graduates unable to be present.

Miss Agnes M. Capek, president of the Milligan Woman's Club. presented the corsage from the club to Mrs. Emma Havel Kolar, who had graduated 50 years before, in 1899. Mrs. Kolar gave a short talk contrasting the commencement exercises of the two periods 50 years apart. They had 20 numbers on the program consisting of orations, essays, music, and songs. Their motto was "Think for Thyself." There were three members in this class—Mrs. Emma Havel Kolar, Mrs. Emma Mengler Dye, and Mrs. Lillian Motis Vrazil, deceased. A

moment of silence was held for the departed members.

Miss Faye Kotas gave a vocal solo, "Without a Song," accompanied at the piano by Miss Virgie Havel. A song. was sung by the sextette (Miss Faye Kotas, Mrs. Alvin Kohler, Mrs. Joseph G. Capek, Mrs. Ed Kronhoffman, Jack Dunker, and Melvin Virgie Havel played the accompaniment. Attorney Joseph Vavra). Ach talked on "Not the End, But the Beginning," motto of the

Class of 1919.

The next number consisted of talks by some of the graduates. As a last number, the group sang "Fare Thee Well Until We Meet Again." After that all went to the Auditorium to dance to the music

of the Harmony Knights Orchestra.

This year the Association issued a directory of all of its graduates. This directory (which was for sale) listed the names of all deceased graduates with date of graduation and date of death, all graduates by classes, and also all graduates in alphabetical order with their present addresses. It was a 33-page booklet, attractively bound with a white-trimmed-with-purple cover, the Milligan High colors. Miss Mary E. Krisl was chairman of the Directory Committee.

The 1949 graduates were LeRoy Becwar, Lorene Bedlan, Bernice Koca, Faye Ann Kotas, Delmar Kuska, James Luzum, Jr., Blanche Michl, Elaine June Simacek, William Slezak, Norma Spicka,

and Elaine Suda.

The third Banquet was held on Thursday, June 1, 1950, with 237 alumni and guests present. The banquet was planned around the motto of the Class of 1950, "With the Ropes of the Past, We Will Ring the Bells of the Future." Mrs. Elizabeth Shirey Donisthorpe of Wiggins, Colorado, graduate of 50 years before (Class of 1900), sent a beautiful bouquet of yellow daisies, carnations, and snapdragons.

Val Kuska of Omaha, a graduate of the 1904 class, served as the genial toastmaster and enlivened the program with his humor and clever introductions of speakers and entertainers. The group singing was led by James R. Kassik, accompanied by Virgie Havel at the piano. Mrs. Henry Steinacher gave the welcome and Mrs. Helen Wilbur gave the response. Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the Class of 1950: JoAnn Beranek, Donald Kotas, Norman Kresak, Marilyn Kucera, Patricia Steinacher, Jean Vavra, Ronald Uldrich, and John

John Stastny capably addressed the audience, stressing that your learning belongs to you, and that we must have confidence in our government as they will find the way. He concluded the talk with these words, "With the ropes of the past, we will ring the Liberty Bell

of the future."

Mrs. Carrie Krisl, graduate of the Class of 1910 (first 11-grade class), spoke a few words about her commencement exercise, marked by long orations and musical numbers. Their motto was "Nothing is Impossible to Industry." Jo Ann Beranek and Jean Vavra sang "In the Garden of Tomorrow." Jean Vavra, JoAnn Beranek, and Donald Kotas sang a medley.

Recognition was given to four families, having all their members graduates of the Milligan High School - the Henry Steinacher family, the Millard Podlesak family, the Frank Hrdy family, and the Edward F. Laun family. Mrs. Mary Stastny and her six children, all graduates and all present, were also honored.

The Milligan Woman's Club again served the meal. The following officers were elected: Richard Buzek, president; Robert Chudly, vice-president; Mrs. Lillian Frycek, secretary; and Glenn Kovanda,

treasurer.

The fourth banquet was held Thursday evening, June 7, 1951, with 187 alumni and guests present. Forty-three classes were represented. James Tesar, graduate of the Class of 1919, acted as toastmaster and announced the program. Mrs. Henry Steinacher led the group in singing the doxology. Richard Buzek gave the welcome and introduced the graduates representing the honored classes. The response was given by Shirley Synovec, president of the Class of 1951. Frank Havel, Sr., a graduate of the Class of 1901, spoke a few words about his commencement. There were eight in his class-Celia Emma Hamouz (Mrs. John F. Kucera, deceased), Josie T. Bors (Mrs. Charles Slepicka, deceased), Marie M. Kopp (Mrs. Herman Stastny), Frank Havel, Estella A. Motis (Mrs. Frank J. Ruzicka), Joseph F. Lauvetz (deceased), Thomas F. Hannaberry, and Mamie A. Hrdy (Mrs. J. D. Kopp). The 1901 exercises had long orations written by the graduates and musical numbers. His oration was on "Our Government." Their motto was "We Have Reached the Hills, the Mountains Are in View." Mrs. Ruzicka sent greetings and quoted from her oration, "My America."

Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the 10 members of the Class of 1951, namely: Glen Koca, Dean Placek, Robert Oliva, Arlene Rischling, Shirley Synovec, Leo Oliva, Lumir Jansky, Donald Urban, Leslie

Svec, and Daniel Zak.

Glen Koca played a trumpet solo. William H. Kotas gave the address. LeRoy Becwar entertained with his magic tricks.

The following officers were elected: Leonard Becwar, president; Mrs. Bernard Zeleny, vice-president; Mrs. Frank W. Kassik, secreand Irene Capek, treasurer.

The American Legion Auxiliary served the dinner.

The fifth annual banquet was held on Thursday, June 5, 1952, with 178 alumni and guests present. There were 43 classes represented.

Mrs. W. A. Biba (Anna Laun) of Geneva, graduate of the 1906 class, was the toastmistress. The program began with the singing of the doxology. After the meal, group singing, led by LeRoy Becwar, took place. Virgie Havel accompanied on the piano. Songs popular in the years 1902, 1922, 1932, and 1942 were sung. The senior class of 1952 sang "Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania."

President Leonard Becwar gave the welcome and introduced the graduates representing the honored classes that evening. The response

was given by Ronald Svec.

The Association presented a boutonniere to the speaker, Len Davis, and to the toastmistress, Mrs. W. A. Biba, and to Miss Mary E. Krisl, a graduate of 50 years ago. Miss Krisl was the only one present of the seven members of the Golden Anniversary Class of 1902. Four of the members, Charles Kubicek, Leon Schnase, Fred R. Stech and James Jansky, are deceased. Mr. and Mrs. (Barbara Cecrle) Fred Kottas of Lewiston, Montana, were unable to be present, but sent greetings. Miss Krisl gave a short talk. Their motto was "By Our Efforts We Hope to Rise."



Photo from Mrs. J. Vosol

Steam-powered sawmill on the Frank Hromadka farm. Much of the lumber that went into the building of Milligan came from this mill. In the foreground, left to right: — Russell; Joseph Ladman, Sr.; Rudolph Sadlo, Sr.; Rudolph Capek, Sr.; Frank Hromadka, Sr.; unidentified man; Charles Buresh; Rose Votipka; Grandma Hromadka; Grandpa Hromadka. At the saw: William Podlesak. On the engine: Rudolph Buzek. With the mule team: Louis Buzek.

Mrs. Milton Stastny gave the tribute to the deceased alumni.

Glen Koca played a trumpet solo, "That Old Gang of Mine." Len Davis of the Class of 1906 gave the address using the 1906 motto, "By Our Efforts We Hope to Rise." The boys of the senior class of 1952 sang "Bells of St. Mary's," "That's Where My Money Goes," and "Bill Biba's Goat."

Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the 14 members of the Class of 1952, namely: Dorothea Johnson, Betty Ann Krupicka, Louis Oliva, Betty Ann Slezak, Robert Zeleny, Jerome Jensen, Betty Hendrych, Melvin Busch, Lucille Most, Jeanette Luzum, Verlyn Koca, Ronald Svec. Deloris Laun, and Edward Betka.

The Milligan Woman's Club served the dinner.
The following officers were elected: Rudolph O. Spousta, president; John H. Kotas, vice-president; Mrs. Edward Oliva, secretary; and Mrs. Donald Havel, treasurer.

The sixth annual banquet was held Thursday, June 4, 1953, with 203 alumni and guests present and 41 classes represented. Jeanette Luzum led the group in singing the doxology. The meal was served

by the Milligan Pythian Sisters.

After the meal, President R. O. Spousta gave the welcome. The response was given by Marian Jansky, president of the Class of 1953. Adolph Rozanek was the toastmaster. Edward H. Stech of the Class of 1913 gave a talk on "Memories of 1913." Their motto was "We Must Labor to Receive." Their class was the last to graduate from the old school building. They were the first class to present a play, and to start a basketball team and a debating team. Six of the seven members were present - James F. Kassik, John H. Kotas, Joseph J. Klima, Edward H. Stech, Clara Krupicka Zumpfe, and Millie Pulec Jarolimek. Agnes Matejevsky Rogers sent greetings.

Gilbert Gray and James Betka played a saxophone duet, "Where is Your Heart," accompanied at the piano by Johnny Kucera. Mrs. Carleton Flynn's address was to be on the class motto of 1903, "The Crown of Life is Hats." As she expained that hats display character,

she modeled hats of different eras.

The members of the class of 1903 were Alba A. Krisl, Emma T. Kouba (Mrs. Fred Sharp), Emma V. Bors (Mrs. Edward Uldrich, deceased), Mary G. Bors (Mrs. Phillip Walla, deceased), Charles H. Leisher, Anna E. Svec (Mrs. Key), Robert K. Laun, deceased: and Marie A. Kouba, deceased. Charles H. Leisher of Cheyenne, Wyoming, was at Milligan, but was not at the banquet as he was ill. Mrs. Anna Svec Key of Burbank, California, sent greetings.

Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the Class of 1953, namely: James Betka, Roma Buzek, William Hamouz, Marian Jansky, Grace Krupicka, Richard Rischling, Robert Slezak, Rose Marie Valda, Shirley

Vavra, and Joe Vnoucek.

The following officers were elected: Leonard Kassik, president; Anton Capek, vice-president; Mrs. Milo Hromadka, secretary; and

Mrs. Kenneth Walker, treasurer.

The seventh annual banquet was held on Friday, May 28, 1954, with 191 alumni and guests present. Val Kuska, a 50-year graduate, was the toastmaster. President Leonard Kassik gave the welcome and Norma Jean Koca, president of the 1954 class, gave the response. The invocation was given by Rev. S. J. Siegienski. R. S. Deems of Omaha, principal in Milligan in 1904, was asked to say a few words.

The Class of 1954 provided the entertainment for the evening. Gilbert Gray played a number on the saxophone, Frank Kassik played two numbers on the accordion, and the class sang "Heart of My

Heart.'

The members of the Class of 1904 were Anna M. Holpuch (Mrs. Charles Michl, deceased), James Wadman (deceased), Valentine Kuska, Gizela L. Lauvetz (Mrs. Anton Gutchovsky), James D. Kopp (deceased), Frank L. Hrdy, Emma Luksik (Mrs. James Pracheil), Albert C. Jelinek, Peter Kasak, and Lillian E. Kotas (Frycek). Their motto was "Launched but Not Anchored." Jelinek, Peter Kasak, and Lillian E. Kotas (Mrs. Albert

The Association presented a corsage to Mrs. Lillian Kotas Frycek and to Val Kuska and Albert Jelinek boutonnieres as they were

the three members present from the 1904 class.

Members of the 1954 class were Ruby L. Svec, Gilbert E. Gray, LaVern F. Novak, Norman L. Slezak, Marvin R. Slepicka, Frank W. Kassik, Louise Klima, Louis Dale Svec, Rose Lee Uldrich, Willa Jean Kotas, John J. Kucera, Arnold Filipi, and Norma Jean Koca.

The alumni voted in favor of holding annual banquets. The new officers were: Richard Maresh, president; Arnold Nadherny, vicepresident; Betty Slezak, secretary; and Betty Krupicka, treasurer.

The meal was served by the Women's Society of Christian Service at Milligan.

The eighth annual banquet was held on Friday, May 27, 1955, with 190 present. Rev. L. E. Seavers of Exeter gave the invocation. The toastmaster and speaker was Attorney Joe T. Vosoba. President Richard Maresh gave the welcome. The response was given by Gene Placek, president of the Class of 1955.

The members of the Class of 1905 were John F. Kotas, Stanley Kotas (deceased), and John Luksik (deceased). Their motto was 'Step by Step.'

The musical entertainment included an accordion duet by Edwin Gray and Jerry Hendrych, Jr., and two vocal duets by Elma and Erma Rischling.

Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the Class of 1955, namely: Henry A. Bulin, Richard I. Jensen, Kenneth E. Kresak, Richard D. Krupicka, Gene E. Placek, Elma J. Rischling, and Erma J. Rischling.

The following officers were elected: president, Tom Oliva: vicepresident, Mrs. Merle Buzek; secretary, Mrs. Donald Sluka; and treasurer, Mrs. Leo Soukup. The Milligan Woman's Club served the

The ninth annual banquet was held on Sunday, June 3, 1956, with 209 present. Forty-three classes were represented. Ed Svajgr was the toastmaster. Rev. S. J. Siegienski gave the invocation. President Tom Oliva gave the welcome and Richard Oliva, president of the class of 1956, gave the response.

Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the Class of 1956, namely: Elaine Betka, Kalyxta Kassik, Rogene Kresak, Teresa Stech, Dwain Kubi-

cek, Richard Oliva, and Norman Uldrich.

Entertainment for the evening was a song by the 1956 graduates and several accordion selections by LeRoy Becwar. Group singing was

led by Mrs. Frank Schultz.

The members of the Class of 1906 were Joseph Kuska, Anna James Gay), James Bors (deceased), Paul Leisher, Len Davis, and Charles Motis. Their motto was "Climb Though the Rocks be Rugged."

The following officers were elected: president, William H. Kotas; vice-president, Edward Smith; secretary, Mrs. Richard Brunkow; and treasurer, Mrs. John Kuska. The dinner was served by the

American Legion Auxiliary of Milligan.

The tenth annual banquet was held on Sunday, June 2, 1957, in the Milligan Auditorium with 207 graduates and guests present. Forty-four classes were represented. LeRoy Becwar was the toastmaster, President William Kotas gave the welcome and Roger Prybil, president of the Class of 1957, gave the response.

Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the Class of 1957, namely: James Bulin, Raymond Bulin, Delbert Duba, Elvin Filipi, Edwin Gray, Patricia Hamouz, Jerry Hendrych, Joseph Koca, Henry Kral, Doris Kresak, Larry Michl, Roger Odvody, Delores Oliva, Roger Prybil, Shirley Slezak, William Tesar, Bonnie Turek, Donna Uldrich, June Uldrich, and LaVern Vejraska.

The Class of 1897 was honored as the 60-year graduating class. Nellie C. Hanaberry (Mrs. O. W. Roth), the only one able to attend, was presented with a carnation corsage. Mrs. Roth gave an interesting

"We didn't have class rings, we didn't have what this generation has, but we had the will to do, determined to face the unknown and unknowable future in the knowledge that no one ever crossed the ocean without first leaving the shore.

"Sixty years is a long time to be wandering around in this vale of tears. Two of our number have gone to their reward, the remaining four waiting their call. Yes, time adds to our years, but graciously

brings beautiful memories to temper the stings.

"Life is both pleasure and pain. We must absorb the shock and keep on rolling. Look forward, never backward. If we have spent our time in the right way, our dreams are still pleasant, our regrets are few and all is well as we go down the western slope.

"So the only way to play the game of life is to take our tarts when they are passing tarts and don't wait to see what they are going to pass next. That is life."



Photo from Mrs. Frank Hamouz

First graduating class. Class 1897. Top row, left to right: Emil J. Kotas, A. Motis, William H. Podlesak, Frank A. Stech. Front row: Nellie C. Hannaberry, Anna A. Smrha.

Members of the Class of 1907 (the 50-year class) were Agnes Krisl (Mrs. Charles J. Kotas) and Albert Smrha, deceased. Their motto was "Excelsior."

The evening's entertainment consisted of a trumpet trio, "Bugler's Holiday," by Henry Kral, Larry Michl, and Ray Bulin; a piano solo, "Claire de Lune," by June Uldrich; a vocal solo, "Summertime," by Jerry Hendrych; and two songs, "Tip Toe Through the Tulips" and "In a Dutch Garden" by the Class of 1957.

Tribute to the deceased alumni was given by Mrs. Milton Stastny.

The following officers were elected: president, Merle Buzek; vicepresident, Frank W. Kassik, Jr.; secretary, Teresa Stech; and treasurer, Mrs. Jim Kotas.

The eleventh annual banquet was held on Sunday, June 1, 1958, at the Milligan Auditorium with 218 graduates and guests present. There were 45 classes represented.

Miss Katherine Kuska was the toastmistress. President Merle Buzek gave the welcome. The response was given by Dwayne Luzum,

president of the the Class of 1958.

Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the class of 1958, who were: Mary Ann Kotas, Arline Kottas, Dwayne Luzum, Roger Rut, Rose Mae

Steinacher, Stuart Vavra, and David Zenisek.

The evening's entertainment consisted of a song by the Class of 1958, a trombone solo by Arline Kottas, a vocal solo by Mary Ann Kotas, and an accordion solo by Rose Mae Steinacher. Interesting talks were given by Joseph Ach and Harry Kottas. Group singing was led by Mary Ann Kotas. The tribute to the deceased alumni was given by Irene Kotas.

The honored classes were presented. Nora Dunn is the only living member of the Class of 1898. The members of the Class of 1908 were Anna Bulin (Mrs. Fred Kovanda), Mayme Davis (Mrs. Joe Miles), Rudy Havelka (deceased), Frank Holpuch, Mary Holpuch (Mrs. Frank Hrdy), Anna Jicha (Mrs. Harry Gregory), Mamie Jicha (Mrs. Joe Varejka), Adolph Kotas (deceased), Rudolph Krisl, Emil L. Soukup, and Joe Svec. Their motto was "A Place in the Ranks Awaits Us." Mrs. Fred Kovanda was presented a corsage, being the only one present.

Officers elected for the following year were: president, Ernest Kotas; vice-president, Ellsworth Maresh; secretary, Arlene Weaver; and treasurer, Mrs. James Luzum. The meal was served by the

Catholic ladies

These reunions became such popular traditions that they have been continued; and we may hope that, not only for their sentimental but for their historical value, they may be continued on and on into the future.

Chamber of Commerce

A Chamber of Commerce, organized in Milligan, April 23, 1924, has long been active in promoting local business and other activities. Wthin a few months it had demonstrated its value to the satisfaction of the local reporter:

"Since the organization of the Chamber of Commerce, a number of projects beneficial to the community have been launched and enough of them carried to a successful conclusion to demonstrate the

value of such an organization.

"Here are some of the things that have been accomplished during the short time that organization has been in existence. Under its auspices, the Czechoslovak band was secured to come here and give a concert. People from a distance of 50 miles and more came here to hear them and complimented the spirit of the town in having secured this truly wonderful organization. The purebred sire train committee was induced to come here for the purpose of looking us over and left with the conviction that folks here do things on a big scale and broadcast the story that there was more interest manifest in the enterprise here than at any other point where they visited. The pure-bred sire train is coming, too, there is no doubt about that.

"Took initial steps to put the old school ground in condition to be used as a tourist park. When the federal road is opened east of Wilber, there will be need of such a park here, and ours will be ready by that time. Called attention of the town board to the necessity of replacing some broken fire hydrants. New ones are already in place. Arranged for a meeting with the town board for the purpose of discussing the proposition of graveling the streets. There



Photo from J. J. Klima

Lodge Rabi No. 135-Czechoslovakian Benefit Lodge; later became Lodge Rabi No. 27 of the Western Bohemian Fraternal Association. This group went by lumber wagon to Geneva to participate in the dedication of the Fillmore County Court House.

Standing, left to right: Joseph Sramek, Matias Votipka, John Havel, Amon Kolar, Anton Kucera, Vaclav Simacek, Vaclav Brt, Frank Mengler, Karel Kolar, John V. Luksik, Vaclav Chlup, W. J. Zirhut (Milligan's first banker), Joseph Kolar, Vaclav Rebicek.

Seated, left to right: Frank J. Kucera, Joseph Hulka, V. Svoboda, Frank V. Kucera, Pavel Anton, A. V. Kouba, (Milligan's second banker), Charles Smrha, Sr., F. M. Ziska, Vaclav Vodicka, Gotlieb Girmus, Victor Prokop, Matias Kubicek



Photo from Mrs. Henry Steinacher

Milligan Chapter of Jednota Ceskych Dam. (Unity of Czech Ladies) — about 1895. (None of these ladies have been identified.)

Photo from J. J. Klima Seated, first row, left to right: K. N. Barnard, Joseph R. Vnoucek, Leonard Kassik, James J. Halama, Norman W. Steinacher, Milton Stastny, Fred Hosposky, William .G Krupicka, John Halama. Jim F. Kotas.

Seated, second row, left to right: Frank Havel, Sr., Betty Jean Spousta, Vlasta M. Svec, Alice Jansky Michl, Ethel Steinacher, Velma Halama, Mary Kottas, Agnes Sramek Ladman, Rose Kotas, Stella Hospodsky, Camille Oliva, Charles J. Kotas, Darrell Portenier, Albert Kassik, Jr., Ray Rempe,

Hynek Jaros, Rudy O. Spousta.

James Hromadka, Donald Kotas, Bert J. Lynn, Milo Kottas, Charles Valda, Jr., Emil A. Havel, John A. Hromadka, Harry J. Kubicek, Tom J. Oliva, Albert Michl, Johnnie Gene Halama, Robert Chudly, Adolph J. Kotas, Leslie L. Svec, Melvin R. Suda, Bernard R. Svec, Edward J. Bulin, Ernest F. Kotas, J. J. Klima, J. V. Charvat.

Standing, top row, left to right: Frank W. Kassik, Jr., Roger Odvody, Richard W. Brunkow, Arnold Soukup, William H. Kotas, Robert Rischling.



is money on hand which is to be used for the purpose of repairing the streets and alleys and without doubt it will be possible to agree with the board on some program whereby this money can be used to

the best advantage.

Monday night six laborers came to town looking for places to work in the harvest fields. The committee on community co-operation called up all the farm lines to notify the farmers that this help was available, and those in need of harvest hands came and got their men. Projects are now in process of crystallization which will mean much to the town and community as a whole. There is no use talking -there is no limit to which a community may build and grow if it just has the proper spirit and willingness to co-operate for the promotion of the good of the whole."

-Nebraska Signal, July 3, 1924 A later news story reflected the same kind of enthusiasm:

"Word has been received here from the Omaha Chamber of Commerce that a train load of 100 businessmen from Omaha will visit Milligan on a 'good will trip' Thursday, May 22, from 5:40 to 6:05. One of Omaha's best bands will accompany the party, and they are bringing with them two cars of souvenirs for distribution.

The Milligan Chamber of Commerce will make arrangements to greet the visitors and will make an effort to impress upon them the fact that Milligan is a lively burg which measures up to Omaha standards in everything but size and what it lacks in size it makes

up in quality.
"This will be the first visit Milligan has enjoyed of this nature. This is due largely to the fact that we are off the usual beaten paths of commerce and travel, but when once we've been located most of our visitors seem to have no trouble in remembering that we're here. -Nebraska Signal, May 8, 1930

National Farm Loan Association

The Milligan NFLA was organized on February 20, 1920, when 16 farmers signed its Articles of Association and applied for Land Bank loans. Frank Elznic, the first president, with James Nohava, Joseph Sadlo, Joseph Suda, and Albert Kresak formed the first board of directors of the association. C. Smrha was the original secretary-treasurer and served until August, 1933, when J. J. Klima succeeded him. By 1923 the association had only 33 members. Steady growth brought the membership total to 69 at the beginning of 1933, and by the time the needs of the community, principally caused by nation-wide agricultural depression, were cared for, the maximum membership stood around 300. In a 1943 consolidation, the group joined with others originally formed at Crete and Geneva and organized a consolidated association, called the Saline-Fillmore National Farm Loan Association of Milligan. J. J. Klima was the first secretary-treasurer. L. W. Kubert of Crete was the first president of the newly formed association, followed by Mike Becwar, Jr., who served for many years thereafter.

It is now known as the Federal Land Bank Association. The officers in 1967 were: president, Reinhart Stuhr; vice-president, Elmer Ourecky; board members, Carl Geis, Victor Gierhan, Ray

Buzek, and Melvin Thomas.

Businesses

Ben's I.G.A. Store, located on Lot 10, Block 8, is owned and operated by James J. and Velma Halama. They purchased the property in 1962 from HSSK Post No. 240 of the American Legion, which had used the building for its headquarters. The building has housed businesses as varied as a pool hall and a meat market, and was once the office of Dr. George F. Zerzan.

In October, 1931, Ethel's Beauty Shop was opened by Ethel Chasdek (Steinacher) in the south room of the Auditorium building. In 1932, the beauty shop was moved into the north rooms of the hotel



Photo from Fred Kreici Main Street, Milligan, in 1928 — looking north. Notice old bank building at left.

building, where it remained for eight years. Between 1940 and 1946 it was located in several different places before being moved to the Steinachers' new home on Highway 41.

Early in 1921, a small group of farmers from the Milligan area organized the Farmers Co-Operative Company. They had heard of the benefits derived from Co-operatives, and they organized one in Milligan to market grain. This group of pioneer co-operators, 20 in number, held their first meetings at their farm homes, with each member donating \$5 to cover the cost of travel, mailing of letters, and other expenses. These first meetings were attended by Vaclav Ach, Vaclav Capek, Anton Fujan, Frank Fujan, Frank Jansky, Fred Kottas, Jr., Joseph Kottas, John Kucera, Sr., Robert Laun, Albert Novak, Albert Placek, Fred Placek, Louis Placek, Emil Slepicka, Bohumil Slajchert, Edward Smith, Frank Smith, James Smith, Joseph Svec, Jr., and Joseph Suda.

On June 9, 1921, the group bought an elevator from the Nebraska-Iowa Grain Co. for \$10,000, and the Farmers Co-Operative Co. took possession on July 1, 1921. This was the south elevator which is still being used today. Frank Krisl, Jr., was hired as the first manager.

The 141 charter members invested a total of \$25,200.

On February 7, 1930, two fuel-storage tanks, a truck tank, and other fuel-handling equipment were purchased from Bohumil Buzek. On February 25, Milo Buzek was hired to take charge of the oil department; he was also the first tank-truck salesman.

In the 1930's the company found itself in extremely difficult times. The first blow was dealt by the Depression, followed by several years of drouth. The volume of grain purchased was naturally very low, and farmers could not afford to purchase fuel except for the small amounts that were absolutely necessary. The company kept expenses low, and employees agreed to take a reduction in salary, so the company came through the crisis in relatively good condition.

Recent growth of the company has included building a concrete elevator in 1950, and purchasing an anhydrous ammonia fertilizer bulk plant in 1955. On December 31, 1962, the company had 622 members, assets totaling \$352,802, and fully paid capital

stock of \$164,650.

The Farmers and Merchants Bank of Milligan stands on the lot where the first bank of Milligan was founded. The State Bank of Milligan lasted only five years, from 1892 to 1897. After its failure, A. V. Kouba organized a new bank in 1897 called the Farmers State Bank of Milligan. In 1900, he converted the institution into a private bank, the Nebraska State Bank of Milligan. In 1903, he sold this bank to the following group: George E. Aldrich, Anton A. Hamouz,



Photo from Mrs. Charles Krejci Family of A. V. Kouba in 1899. Left to right: Emma, Marie, Tillie, A. V. Kouba, Richard, Mrs. A. V. Anna Kouba, Olga, Anna, Velma (in baby carriage); Irvin not in picture.



Photo on left from Milligar 75th Anniversary Booklet Left: Farmers & Merchants Bank, built in 1892



Photo on right from J. J. Klima Farmers & Merchants Bank (new building 1956).

Charles Smrha, Jr., and Frank W. Sloan, and it was renamed Farmers and Merchants Bank. In 1956, J. J. Klima purchased the old building from the bank, and rebuilt it the same year. During the reconstruction, the bank conducted its business from the Mary E. Krisl building; it occupied the new building on November 1, 1956. Mary Smrha, who joined the bank as an employee in 1908, retired in 1963, after serving the bank for 55 years, becoming in that time a director and vice-president.

The bank is now and has been since 1934 a member of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, insuring its deposits for amounts up to \$10,000, for which it pays semi-annual premiums.

The Halama Blacksmith and Repair Shop is located on Lot 1, Block 14. John Halama purchased the building in 1958, and started the blacksmith and general repair shop, which is doing business at present. F. S. Soukup and his sons operated a blacksmith and repair shop in the building for several years before selling it to Mr. Halama.

In 1904, the Taylor & Morgan Grain Co. was the first business to be conducted on the lots that the Kassik Milling Company stands on today. In 1912, Charles Smrha erected a dairy barn and silos, and operated a dairy business in this location. In 1923 he sold the lots to Albert Kassik, Sr., who built the flour mill in 1923. In the spring of 1924, "A. Kassik & Sons" was born, and started milling flour. In 1928, they started manufacturing feeds. In 1930, they built their first vertical mixer at home, and started using pre-mixes in their feeds. They stopped milling flour in 1938, and devoted all their attention to the feed business, calling their product "Kassik's Formula Feeds."

The Kassiks built the alfalfa mill on the C. B. & Q. right-of-way in 1947, and now ship alfalfa meal anl pellets to many points in the eastern and southern United States. In 1950, they built a modern seed plant onto the old flour and feed mill, but never operated it, because a few months later both plants were destroyed by fire. In 1951, a new mill was built, and Kassik's Formula Feeds were once again offered. Since its founding, the mill has been operated by the Kassik family. Albert, Jr., and Leonard Kassik are the present owners and managers.



Main Street looking north, June, 1963. Notice new bank building just beyond intersection.

In 1963, the Kotas Grocery celebrated its 50th anniversary. Charles Kotas began as a clerk in the A. A. Hamouz General Merchandise Store in 1907 and remained for three years. He then clerked in C. J. Cerveney's general merchandise store. In 1913, Mr. Kotas started his own store. He bought the Frank E. Loukota grocery store in 1932, moving his store to this building, remaining here to the present.

Lot 13 in Block 9, where the Milligan Lumber Company now conducts a part of its operations, was first established as a lumber business in 1887, by Bagley & Parkhurst. In 1920, S. H. Michener and associates organized a corporation under the name of the Milligan Lumber Co. Stanley Chudly took over the management after the death of Mr. Michener, and continued until his death in 1958, when his son, Robert Chudly, took over the enterprise.

The Milligan Transfer began operation in 1961, when Joseph E. Koca bought the Michl Transfer. Donald J. Kotas bought the business in 1962 from Mr. Koca, retaining the name "Milligan Transfer." The company has been known through the years also as "B. B. Transfer" and "H & M Transfer."

In the fall of 1954, Mrs. Agnes Sramek purchased Lot 18 in Block 15 from Joe Kassik and on this lot Mrs. Sramek has established the Milligan Variety and Gift Shop. She has operated the business

the Milligan Variety and Gift Shop. She has operated the business since 1954.

On April 5, 1947, a new business started on the west side of

On April 5, 1947, a new business started on the west side of Milligan's main street in the building on Lot 6 owned by Fred Hospodsky. The name was "Rudy's Appliance"; its proprietor was Rudy O. Spousta.

The beginning was a humble one: one work bench with a few pieces of test equipment for the repair of radios and small appliances, and some shelving to hold the repaired items until customers called for them. A few months later some small appliances and a few refrigerators were added to the store's inventory.

There was plenty of repair work, and all went well until September, 1947, when Fred Hospodsky sold the building to Jerry Krupicka, and Rudy had to move out. He set up shop again in the building owned by John Frankforter. Then, on September 26, 1947, an opportunity presented itself, and Rudy purchased the brick building on Lot 6 where he had started business.

In this 25' x 90' building the number of appliances offered began to grow, especially after R.E.A. came to farms around Milligan. Frigidaire's complete line of appliances was added in 1953. Zenith, Philco, and RCA televisions were displayed, sold, and installed.

The Standard Oil Company began business in Milligan in 1919, with Pete Sutfin as agent. His 500-gallon tank wagon was pulled by four mules. The present bulk station storage tanks were moved here from Tobias, Nebraska, in 1920. Pete worked for Standard Oil until 1933. Jim F. Kotas, who began in 1957, is the present agent. His tankwagon capacity is now 1,500 gallons, with a corresponding increase in storage tanks—quite a difference from 1919, when the company started in Milligan.

The first building erected on the present site of the **Texaco Service Station** was known as the Society Hall. It was built in 1889 by the Bohemian Slavonian Benevolent Society Rabi 135, organized in 1888. A number of ZCBJ organizations, insurance groups, Sunday Schools, town boards, and societies met in the Hall. The hall was moved to the rear of the lot in 1929, and a new brick building was built to house the Chlup filling station and blacksmith shop. At present the station and repair shop is owned and operated by Albert Michl.

The Vogltanz Painting & Papering Company was first established in 1920 when Nick Vogltanz, Sr., and his family moved to Milligan from Omaha. In 1929, Nick, Jr., began to work for his father, and after his father retired in 1945, he continued with the business, and is active today.



Photo from Mrs. Emil A. Havel Central Hall (now torn down) in 1933. The occasion was the arrival of the first load of beer into Milligan after the end of Probition.

ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

American Legion

On February 28, 1920, a group of World War I ex-servicemen met in the Nebraska State Bank Building at Milligan to plan the organization of an American Legion post. Temporary officers were elected and Joseph J. Klima was selected to prepare all papers necessary to secure a charter for a Post in Milligan from the Department of Nebraska American Legion at Lincoln. On March 31, 1920, a charter was granted. The post was named HSSK Post No. 240 in memory of four Milligan boys who had lost their lives in France, using the first letters of their family names: James Houska, Edward Slezak, James Svec, and Frank B. Koca. The bodies of two of them, Edward Slezak and Frank B. Koca, were returned to Milligan for burial. The two others, James Houska and James Svec, were buried in France. The first officers of the newly organized post were Joseph Bors, Commander, and Joseph J. Klima, Adjutant. The other charter members were: H. C. Flint, John F. Kotas, Fred Kolar, Edward Chudly, Adolph Kotas, Fred Havel, Albert Shimic, William B. Bartu, Ed Stetina, Joseph Petracek, Alois Petracek, James F. Kassik, John H. Kotas, and James C. Smith.

The post held its meetings in the lodge room of the Joseph Jicha Central Hall on the first Tuesday of each month. The meeting date was later changed to the last Tuesday of each month, a practice still followed.

Work on the American Legion Park was commenced in the spring of 1927. The park was developed on land donated to the Legion by the Milligan school district as a memorial to the boys who lost their lives in France during World War I and to World War I President Woodrow Wilson. Although the park was developed largely by the Legion members, much help, materials, and money were donated by the community. Formal dedication ceremonies were held on Arbor Day, April 22, 1927. The day started with a parade led by the American Legion Drum and Bugle Corps down the main street of the village, then to the school building to join the delegation there.

and then to the park. Trees were planted in honor of the deceased servicemen, and the address of the day was delivered by C. C. Frazier, Nebraska State Commander. A copper box containing pictures, Legion records, and other data was placed in the base of a monument dedi-

cated the same day.

In 1936, feeling the need for its own clubhouse, the local post commenced plans for such a building. After the usual discussion about a site, two lots were purchased from Joseph Jicha for \$200. On October 19, 1936, a group of Legion boys came with their tractors and scoops to dig the basement. J. J. Jarolimek, a Legion member, was the general contractor and designer of the building, and he donated a great deal of his talent and labor. The actual cash expended for the building was \$2,350. Approximately \$200 of this was used for labor, virtually all of the labor being donated by the women and men of the Legion, and the skilled labor by others in the community. The funds raised for the clubhouse came from the following sources: American Legion members, from the proceeds of their Adjusted Service Certificates, \$565.00; American Legion Auxiliary \$100.00; individuals, \$429.50; Milligan War Relief Society, \$529.81; American Legion general fund, \$25.69; mortgage loan on the property, \$700.00. All the furniture and fixtures were furnished by the Auxiliary. At this time the post had 27 members and the Auxiliary had 36 members.

On May 15, 1937, after much hard work, the post and its auxiliary realized its dreams and dedicated the new clubhouse. Appropriate dedication ceremonies were held. Principal speakers of the day were Verne R. Taylor, Nebraska State Commander; Rev. Father E. C. McFadden; William H. Weis, District Commander; and Robert B. Waring. Music for the parade and dedication ceremonies was furnished by the Milligan High School Band. During the ceremonies a box containing Legion documents, records, and pictures was sealed into the cornerstone of the building by J. J. Jarolimek. In the evening a Clubhouse Dedication Ball was held in the Milligan Auditorium.

During the following years the American Legion Post contributed in every possible way in helping to make the community a better place in which to live. It took as its responsibility leadership in all patriotic projects and assumed the responsibility for conducting services at the cemeteries on Memorial Day, as well as participating in funeral services for its members. When World War II broke out, J. V. Charvat, one of its members, was made chairman of the drive for collecting scrap metals, old rubber tires, and other materials needed for the war effort. At this time the post gave up its giant World War II artillery gun trophy. The trophy was replaced after World War II by another such gun, which now stands in the park.



Photo from Mrs. Norman Steinacher First American Legion Club house in Milligan.

After World War II the post's activities increased. Its membership grew as veterans returned. With this great increase, both in the post and its auxiliary, a need was felt for a clubhouse in the business part of town. An opportunity came when the Jansky Cafe building became available; this was purchased, remodeled, renovated, and for a time was the hub of all Legion and Auxiliary activities. However, as activities of both organizations continued to expand, both larger and better quarters were needed. After a year of planning, the Mary E. Krisl building was purchased in 1961. The front portion of the building is rented for office space and the rear of the structure was remodeled to make it suitable for the various Legion and Auxiliary activities. The Jansky Cafe building, sold to J. J. Halama, is now Ben's I.G.A. Store.

HSSK Post No. 240 of the American Legion is one of the largest and most active posts in Fillmore County and ranks as one of the top

posts in District No. 11 of the State of Nebraska.

The post has sponsored and financed the Legion Concert Band in which all community musicians take part. This project, carried on since 1947, is one in which the organization takes great pride because it gives the youth of the community a chance to develop their musical talents during the summer months.

The Legion has always taken an active part in sponsoring worthy local projects. It was the first organization to arouse interest in a new gymnasium and circulated a petition to bring the question to a vote of the people of the school district. After the gymnasium was completed, the post sponsored an event from which the proceeds were used to purchase a very fine gym time-clock and a popcorn machine to be used during sports events in the gymnasium.

Annually the post sponsors Girls' and Boys' County Government Day, a project it believes will bring about needed interest in govern-

ment among the coming leaders of the community.

Another project of our local post of the American Legion was the compilation of a Service Record Book showing the pictures and service records of all boys of the community who served in World Wars I and II. A supplement has been added to include those who served during the Korean conflict.

The goal of HSSK Post No. 240 of the American Legion and its Auxiliary is to live up to its constitution in the future as it has in the

past.

American Legion Auxiliary

The eligibility of mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters of veterans who served in the armed forces between April 6, 1917, and November, 1918, brought a large group of ladies together to form an American Legion Auxiliary.

Two years after the post was organized, an auxiliary unit began taking form. In May, 1922, a meeting was called and an application issued for a unit charter. Seventeen ladies were present and they elected Mrs. Adolph Kotas as acting president.

On April 28, 1925, a meeting was held for the purpose of organizing a unit. Acting president of this group was Mrs. Frank P. Mehuron and secretary was Mrs. Joseph Bors.

The organization was formed and a charter was issued in July, 1925. Mrs. Frank P. Mehuron was elected president and Mrs. Joseph Bors was elected secretary. The charter members were:

Bors was elected secretary. The charter members were: Mrs. Frank Mehuron Mrs. Anna Chudly Mrs. Alma Kolar Mrs. Edward Laun Mrs. Alice Hamouz Mrs. Frank Stych Mrs. Emma Krupicka Mrs. Millie Jarolimek Mrs. James F. Kassik Miss Rose Slezak Mrs. Joseph Bors Mrs. Barbara Krupicka Miss Matilda Kotas Mrs. Ada Klima Mrs. Tom Harpham Miss Anna Kolar Miss Mary Smrha Mrs. Mary Hrdy Miss Vlasta Kolar Miss Emilye Koca Mrs. Anna Kotas Mrs. Anna Suda

The April 28 meeting elected a committee of three—Mrs. Harpham, Mrs. Jarolimek, and Miss Clara Kolar— to prepare by-laws. On November 24, 1925, the committee presented the by-laws, which were accepted. (In January, 1936, new by-laws were read and accepted, which were prepared by Mrs. Mary Stastny, Mrs. Clara Cecrle, and Mrs. Mary Hrdy, as the first set were lost.)

On March 30, 1926, it was decided to purchase a wool American flag. The unit appointed Miss Mary Smrha, Mrs. Lillian Frycek, and

Miss Clara Kolar to make the Unit Banner.

Auxiliary held their meetings in homes until 1937 when they helped the Legion build the clubhouse on Highway 41 on the south edge of Milligan. Then the Legion in 1954 sold the building to Mr. and Mrs. Dave Sweney and purchased the Jansky building (now the IGA store). In 1961, they purchased the Mary Krisl building, which is now the post's meeting and social activities center.

With the passing years, membership has alternately risen and declined. World War II, with the tremendous number of servicemen involved, made eligible the wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers of those who served between December 7, 1941, and September 2, 1945. A few years later more ladies became eligible—those whose menfolk served during the Korean troubles, between June 25, 1950, and July 27, 1953.

The Auxiliary maintains a roster of Gold Star Mothers and Gold Star Sisters for all three conflicts.



Gold Star Mothers' Tea. Left to right around the tables: Mollie Hamouz, Anna Kotas, Ella Vnoucek, Emma Krupicka, Marie Koca, Emma Koca, Barbara Tesar, Mary Dlouhy. Left to right, in background: Emily Koahler, Arlene Kassik, Anna Maresh, Matilda Bernasek, Mamie Kassik, Jennie Kubisek.



Junior Legion Auxiliary (April, 1959). Back row, left to right: Letitia Bunker, Rita Urban, Marjorie Halama, Barbara Hromadka, Sharrel Krupicka, Diane Hromadka, Nancy Kotas, Diane Luzum, Carole Steinacher, Janet Maresh, Diane Pavelka. Front row, left to right: Jeanette Capek, Barbara Krupicka, Judy Hromadka, Terryl Buzek, Cherri Maresh.

American Legion Junior Auxiliary

The Junior Auxiliary was organized in the fall of 1956 by Lenora Suda, senior Auxiliary member, who also acted as junior counselor for the term of 1956-57, with Ethel Steinacher as assistant. The enrollment started with 16 Juniors.

On September 15, 1956, the first meeting was called to order the following officers were elected: President, Gloria Swartz; vice-president, Diane Hromadka; secretary, Marlene Uldrich; sergeant-at-arms, Diane Luzum; publicity chairman, Nancy Kotas; pianist, Sharrel Krupicka; hospital chairman, Carol Steinacher; chaplain, Judy Kohler.

Chautauqua

Around World War I days, there was a great deal of interest in the Chautauqua in Milligan, but unfortunately the interest was not often apparent in the gate receipts. Nearly every year the people who signed the contract were forced to make up a deficit.

"Monday a number of businessmen signed a contract for a Chautauqua of four days to be put on some time during the month of August.

"Chautauquas have not been exactly what you might call a howling success before—except for the howling of those who have had the deficits to pay for, but that does not necessarily mean that they cannot be made so. They do bring to town a series of programs that is worth taking in."

—Nebraska Signal, February 5, 1925

Early in August the Chautauqua came to Milligan and pitched camp on the schoolground south of the schoolhouse. The profits from the Chautauqua were to go toward new playground equipment, but the children had to go without the equipment that year, for the Chautauqua ran true to form and showed a deficit. Finally the sponsors rebelled, and the 1925 Chautauqua was the last one in Milligan

So ended a heroic attempt to introduce "culture" into the community. Seasonal work and the weather usually combined to cut down the attendance, and the entertainment and the instruction were often not of the best. Many people of the community could not understand the speeches and plays. But, in Milligan as elsewhere, the Chautauqua was really a device to stimulate business as much as to educate and entertain. The Milligan businessmen soon found other and less expensive methods of stimulating business.

Dramatic Societies

Although the dramatic society might not be indispensable to the establishment of a Czech community, yet such a community was not long in existence before at least one such association was formed. Two years after Milligan was founded the newspaper recorded the success of a Czech play. "The Bohemian home talent rendered last Saturday Trasák a Basa at the Kotas Opera House in a very creditable manner," said the Nebraska Signal (Oct. 24, 1889).

Throughout its earlier history Milligan was treated to liberal doses of Czech drama. In the town's early days, Czech plays were the only ones offered. Back in the 1920's a traveling company of players brought in English-language plays, but the largest crowds were always found at the Czech dramas. As late as the 1920's and 1930's the village had several dramatic societies, one of the most successful consisted almost exclusively of young people who presented Czech plays in a way acceptable to the older people. Their first play was a great success. According to the Nebraska Signal for December 5, 1929:

"One of the biggest crowds for a home talent play that Milligan has had for many years turned out Thanksgiving night to witness *Zmatek* nad Zmatek*, the play presented by the Ceska Lipa Dramatic Club, recently organized by Father Biskup. This play is a very clever comedy and for a Thanksgiving play when a good laugh is needed to help in the digestion of a Thanksgiving dinner it proved to be a very happy selection, because it kept the crowd in an uproar sufficient to digest several dinners

"Father Biskup selected and coached the play and its presentation showed his mastery of the art. The ticket receipts were better than \$300 and everybody who was there seemed to agree that it was money well earned. It is hoped that Father Biskup will take the time to help put on other plays by this group in the playing season."

This play was such a success that it attracted the attention of neighboring Czech towns. The next month the club journeyed to Bee, Nebraska, where it presented the same production. Dramatic clubs in other towns often came to Milligan to present their plays.



Photo from Mrs. Henry Steinacher Dramatic Society in 1913. Left to rights Edward Kottas, Helen Barnes, Edward Cekal, Mamie Placek, Fred Rozanek, Agnes Placek, John Svec, Ada Stech.

"The dramatic Club of Bruno presented a play at Jicha's Hall Saturday evening which drew a good audience and which was thoroughly enjoyed by all who saw it. The play was an operetta depicting the merry life of the old country mill and depicting also, of course, the pathos which comes with every story where love has a part. . . The Simen Orchestra from Brainard was also here and furnished music for the dance which followed the play. The visit of the club was thoroughly appreciated by followers of home talent plays, and it is hoped that their visit may be repeated when they have another play prepared."

Nebraska Signal, February 13, 1930

After the play a dance was usually held. The proceeds of the play were generally donated to one of the lodges or to the local unit of the Sokols.

Once or twice a year a company of professional actors came to Milligan and presented Czech dramas. On June 29, 1922, the Nebraska Signal said:

"Don't fail to see the Cesko-American Narodni Divadlo [to be] given here on the evening of July 6 and 7 under the management of Joseph R. Krejci of Chicago. Among their plays are Baby Mine, Where the Meadow Lark Sings, The Twins, and Merry War. This [will] be an unusual treat for all lovers of this sort of entertainment and all who attend are assured of an evening well spent."

Although the Czech drama was more popular than the English in Milligan, road companies which toured the small towns of Nebraska did not despair of getting an audience. One article announcing the arrival of one of those companies suggested the type of entertainment offered. To quote again from the Nebraska Signal (December 9, 1920):

"The Hazel McOwen stock company, which plays the Central Hall and Opera House at Milligan, Nebraska, on the night of December 14, is reputed to be the best organization of its kind on the road today. The company has formed a circle of towns including Wilber, Geneva, Edgar, Clay Center, Sutton, Exeter, and Crete, playing each one on the same night every two weeks. At present there are a couple of nights to fill in, and the company is playing [at] Milligan with the intention of including it in the circle permanently should the patronage warrant.

"The best of reports have been given from Geneva and Wilber, where the company has already played. Their plays are of the finest and produced by an A-1 company of ladies and gentlemen, each one

a star in his respective line.

"The play that has been chosen for Milligan is one of the most beautiful bills ever written, entitled The Girl from Out Yonder, a comedy-drama in four acts. The highest class of vaudeville is introduced between each act, including the Hazel McOwen quartette of excellent singers which is well worth the price of admission alone, singing in harmony the very latest and best ballads and numbers.

By all means come out and see this excellent company and be assured of seeing a good high-class show played by a real company

once every two weeks.

As far as drama was concerned, Milligan people were much more interested in Czech plays than in English productions. The type of drama offered by the Czech societies was generally superior to that offered by the English-speaking companies. The acting, although amateur, was rather good, and the actors had many friends and relatives in the audience. The proceeds were usually donated to some worthy cause. The lines could be followed even by those who did not understand the Czech language very well. The Czech drama, therefore, long remained one of the most important links which the people had with the Old World.

Stage plays in both English and Czech have suffered, since the above account was published in 1933, from the competition of other forms of entertainment. The strong revival, in the last 10 years or so, all over the nation, of interest in stage plays and in local theater groups may offer some hope that this fascinating tradition may not be totally lost but can obtain a new lease on life once more.

Knights of Pythias

Stotsenberg Lodge No. 43, Knights of Pythias, was named for Colonel Stotsenberg of the 1st Nebraska Regiment, who lost his life in the Philippines. The lodge was formally organized on December 31, 1901. The first officers installed were: G. W. Trobough, C. C.; Joseph Kunce, V.C.; Frank Hrdy, P.; V. F. Rohla, M. of W.; F. O. Kucera, K.R.S.; Frank Stech, M. of F.; A. V. Kouba, M. of E.; V. F. Bouse, M. of A.; Martin Leisher, I. G.; and Frank Trvz, O. G. A charter was granted by the Grand Lodge on October 14, 1902. Other charter members were: S. J. Chyma. Thomas Jicha, Rudolph Motis, F. A. Placek, W. B. Saunders, J. A. Trobough, Peter Vojta, and G. F. Zerzan.

"As of today," wrote James Tesar in 1958, "we have four 50-year members: Charles Smrha, Emil Kassik, Sr., Fred Placek, Sr., and W. B. Saunders. The lodge is composed of 90 members, from Geneva,

Exeter, Ohiowa, and Milligan.'

The purpose of the organizations is "to appeal to the good of mankind, to lift up the fallen, to minister to the distressed, to heal the broken, to bring friendship to the friendless, and exemplify the practices of brotherly love among mankind."

Pythian Sisters

In 1929, Mary Bors became interested in instituting a Pythian Temple in Milligan. It was discovered that 23 wives, sisters, and daughters of the Brother Knights were eligible for membership. On March 29, 1929, at a meeting in the home of Mary Bors, the following ladies became charter merabers: Nellie McCartney, Agnes Smrha, Mary Bors, Agnes Ach, Lillian Frycek, Tony Havey, Agnes Steinacher, Alba Rischling, Mildred Buzek, Alice Hamouz, Alba Buzek, Stella Hospodsky, Velma Halama, Anna Bulin, Emma Bouse, Mary Jicha, Libbie Petracek, Helene Petracek, Rose Placek, Gladys Placek, Viola Rischling, Mamie Laun, and Eliza Zeman.

The Nebraska Signal for April 4, 1929, reported the formal

installation of the Temple:

"Friendship Temple No. 20 was the name and the number chosen by the sisters. Meetings were to be held twice a month. Motion was made to adjourn until 7:30 in the evening. Some time was spent in meeting the visiting sisters and brothers, including 35 from York and seven from Crete and some from Hastings, who had come to assist in the work.

"All sisters, visiting sisters and brothers went to the spacious and open doors of Sister Marie Bors' beautiful home, where the Milligan sisters had prepared a delicious two-course covered dinner. The large dining room was very pretty with the well-filled table ready to give such good service to so many hungry folks; the eats were

certainly good and were relished by everyone.

"The meeting was again called to order by the Grand Chief, after which the York Temple took charge of the meeting, conducting it in ritualistic form. Sisters Rose Placek was given the initiatory work, which was well given by the officers and degree staff of the York Temple. A flower march was had and a nice collection was received to start a fund for the sick and the shut-ins. A generous payment of dues was a good start toward a prosperous financial condition of the temple.

"Most Excellent Chief Sister Marie Bors presented Grand Chief Sister Olson and G. M. of R. and C. each with an appropriate framed motto, expressing their true friendship and love. These will be prized by the two sisters. It was indeed a surprise to receive such tokens of appreciation, but we will long cherish the memory of the time spent with these sisters. The meeting was then closed until the next meeting, after which kolace and hot coffee were served. The visitors expressed a wish to come to Milligan again and invited the

local members to their temples."

The Brother Knights donated \$50 to the sisters' treasury with which they bought their paraphernalia for meetings. Meetings were held in the Jicha Lodge Room on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. The sisters moved to the Auditorium later but at present are back in the lodge room where they started.

The Temple holds food sales, card parties, birthday donations and penny marches as means of replenishing their treasury. Anniversaries are celebrated with a program, and the sisters also have a program on Mother's Day, with mothers or guests as visitors. Christmas time is observed with entertainment and exchange of gifts and a luncheon. Each outgoing Past Chief is presented a Past Chief pin. On Memorial Day each deceased Sister's grave is marked with a flag and potted plant. Sick members are remembered with cards and flowers and many outstanding things are done for members and their families.

Milligan Woman's Club

[The following history of this group was "prepared as of March 22, 1957." Although much more has happened since, this history, as far as it goes, indicates a degree of purpose and of dedication of spirit.]

The Milligan Woman's Club was organized in the fall of 1925 with 33 members. The club took the sewing project, "How to Dress Becomingly," offered by the Nebraska Co-operative Extension Work

in Agriculture and Home Economics.

The Milligan Woman's Club (then known as the Milligan Community Woman's Club) federated with the Nebraska Federation of Women's Clubs in the fall of 1926. On October 22, 1926, the application for membership to the Nebraska State Federation of Women's Clubs, together with a constitution signed by 19 of the 22 members and their membership dues, were sent to the state corresponding secretary.

The 19 members who signed the constitution were: Mrs. John R. Smith, Mrs. Fred Kottas, Jr., Miss Mary E. Krisl, Mrs. Charles Smrha, Mrs. J. B. Frankforter, Mrs. Fred Kucera, Miss Mary Smrha, Miss Hazel C. Young, Miss Eleanor Kudrna, Miss Nelle Murphy, Mrs. S. H. Michener, Mrs. J. V. Kotas, Mrs. Frank J. Bulin, Mrs. James Bors, Miss Velma Kotas, Miss Alba Buzek, Mrs. Antonie Krisl, Mrs. J. J. Klima, and Mrs. Albert Frycek. The three not present to sign were Mrs. Fred Havel, Mrs. Jesse Kovanda and Mrs. James Simkovsky. Only two of these charter members have belonged to the club continuously. They are Mrs. J. V. Kotas and Miss Mary E. Krisl, both past club presidents. At the present time, Mrs. J. J. Klima and Miss Mary Smrha are members—Mrs. Klima having been a member for 22 years and Miss Smrha 21 years. The following are deceased: Mrs. Charles Smrha (who was also a past president), Mrs. S. H. Michener, Mrs. James Bors, Mrs. Antonie Krisl, and Mrs. Fred Havel. Mrs. John R. Smith was the first president. Past presidents have been:

Mrs. John R. Smith	1926-1928	Mrs. F. J. Butcher	1941-1943
Mrs. Charles Smrha	1928-1930	Miss Agnes M. Capel	1943-1945
Miss Mary E. Krisl	1930-1932	Mrs. W. H. Kotas	1945-1947
Mrs. Edward Chudly.	1932-1934	Mrs. Mike Becwar, Jr	1947-1949
Mrs. J. V. Kotas	1934-1936	Mrs. F. V. Hamouz	1949-1951*
Mrs. R. J. Jansky	1936-1937	Mrs. Lou Vavra	1951-1953
Miss Agnes M. Capek.	1937-1939	Mrs. F. J. Butcher	1953-1954
Mrs. Henry Kassik	1939-1941	Mrs. Henry Kassik	1954-1957
*(for	merly Miss	Agnes M. Capek).	

The project for 1926-27 was "Making the Home Attractive," carried out by one group of the club. Another division called itself the Social Study Club. Its object was to "encourage intellectual development, to promote good fellowship, and to work for the good of the community." The club chose the sweet pea for their flower, pea green and pink for their colors, and "Do More and Wish Less" as their motto. They used the word "Community" in the name (Milligan Community Woman's Club) because they wanted the women of the rural area to feel that they were eligible and wanted as members. No one seems to recall just when the word "Community" was dropped from the name.

In 1927, the club, for their first money-making project, sponsored the showing of a moving picture. Also that year they undertook the care of the tourist park. During the summer they planted trees and shrubbery. For a number of years, the club hired a man to

keep the grass cut.

The year 1929 marked the beginning of the receptions held for the faculty of the Milligan Public Schools. Now for a number of years the school board of District 71 at Milligan have served as co-hosts with the club to this faculty reception. The invitation is extended to husbands of members, all patrons of District 71, and parents of all pupils enrolled in the school.

A traveling library, started by the club in 1932, was kept up by one of its members, Miss Mary E. Krisl, till January, 1943, at which time the club sponsored the opening of the Milligan Public Library housed in the south front room of the Milligan Auditorium. At present (1957) Mrs. J. B. Frankforter serves as the librarian.

[On June 30, 1962, there were 1,524 books in the library, not including many encyclopedias and other reference books and

magazines.]

The school ground beautification project was undertaken in January, 1932. In this the club was assisted by the American Legion, the village board, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the school. Plantings included 119 trees, 40 clumps of shrubbery, and 8 ivy plants. A merry-go-round and slide were purchased.

In 1934, the proceeds of a musical program and basket supper

went to purchase stage curtains for the high-school assembly.

The city hall has been renovated a number of times as a civic project. By giving this service, the club did not have to pay rent for meeting there.

In the spring of 1939, the club sponsored the two-tree project. Each member purchased two Chinese elms, which were planted in the tourist park. These trees were planted so closely together that the club was "kidded" about Milligan's "windbreak," but it was much easier to remove a few trees in 1949 when the park was renovated than it would have been to start planting trees. The club also donated 200

trees to the Nebraska National Forest at Halsey.

In January, 1940, the club held a birthday party celebrating its 14th anniversary and the General Federation's Golden Jubilee. At this meeting the guest speaker was Mrs. Joseph Bixby of Geneva, president of the Fillmore County Federation of Women's Clubs. In 1946, the 20th anniversary was observed. Mrs. Russell Freidell, vicepresident of the Nebraska Federation was the guest speaker. The Silver Anniversary of the club's federation was celebrated on October 10, 1951, with Mrs. William H. Hasebrook, president of the Nebraska Federation, as guest speaker.

The club observed its 30th anniversary of federation on October 18, 1956. Mrs. J. E. Yost of Milford, president of the Fourth District, NFWC, was the guest speaker. Especially honored were the two charter members with 30 years of continuous membership, Mrs. J. V.

Kotas and Miss Mary E. Krisl.



Photo from Mrs. Frank Hamouz Milligan Woman's Club 30th Anniversary (1956). Seated, left to right: Mrs. Agnes Hamouz, Mrs. Agnes Kassik, Mrs. Mollie Becwar, Mrs. J. E. Yost, of Milford (guest speaker). Standing, left to right: Mrs. Frances Kotas, Mrs. Ann Vavra, Mrs. Irma Kotas, Mrs. Pearl Butcher, Miss Mary E. Krisl.

In 1935-36 the club sponsored a flower show with 200 entries and a crowd of 500 people. Several other successful flower shows were

On November 10, 1938, the club sponsored a public safety program in charge of Mrs. Russell Freidell, state safety chairman, and Captain Weller, attended by a large crowd. The Milligan Auditorium co-operated and didn't charge rental.

The first mother-daughter banquet was held on May 21, 1941. This get-together has continued throughout the years, either as a banquet, a covered-dish supper, or an evening program followed by a social hour. The faculty women and the high-school senior girls are

invited as guests.

During World War II, collections of waste fat, scrap paper, and used clothing were promoted. Many contributions to worthy causes, such as Red Cross, War Chest, Cancer Fund, Library, and Infantile Paralysis Fund, were made, partially from funds earned by selling waste fat and scrap paper. The amount received for scrap paper,

\$50, was divided evenly between the two local churches.

When the Milligan High School Alumni Association was being organized in 1948, the club was asked to back them and serve the first banquet. Since the association didn't have funds to start with, the club offered to, and did, donate the plates served to the Class of 1948, the first honored class to be initiated into the Alumni Associa-

tion. Since that time the club has served many of their dinners.

In May, 1949, the club entered the "Build a Better Community" contest sponsored by the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the Kroger Foundation. The project undertaken was the renova-tion and beautification of the Tourist Park, which had been neglected during the war years. (The working out of this project is described under Funfrall Park, hereafter.) The renovated park was dedicated in July, 1949, with a community picnic; each year since that time, an anniversary picnic is held on the last Sunday in July.

This project won the club an Honorable Mention in the "Build a Better Community" contest. The club continues to sponsor the park.

The following year, the contest was "Build Freedom with Youth." The club entered this contest also, and won fifth place in the state of Nebraska. The local high-school and upper-grade students were enlisted for the tasks of raising funds, looking after upkeep, and planning organized park activities.

In cooperation with the Saline and Fillmore County Extension Service and the businessmen of Milligan, the Woman's Club sponsors the annual Grasslands Day held in Milligan. The first was held in 1949. The club sells the noon plate lunch, thus making money to cover the expenses.

A memorable trip to the Christmas City of Minden was made in December, 1949, serving as their December meeting. Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Warp made the arrangements for this visit and tour, which included the evening meal.

The club allotted \$100 in February, 1949, for the purchase of a radio-phonograph with records to be given to the Milligan Public Schools. In 1955, it contributed \$50 toward the purchase of uniforms

for the school band

By having placed fifth in the merit point plan under Mrs. Hasebrook's first year as state president, the president of the Milligan Club, Mrs. Frank V. Hamouz, received one of the spring hats at the 1951 state convention. At the state convention on April 24, 1952, the Milligan Woman's Club received two certificates of award under the merit point plan. One award honored the club for placing tenth in the state of Nebraska and the other honored them for placing first in Fourth District. The club members worked hard and deserved these awards.

The club sponsored its first grade-school music program at the Milligan High School Assembly in April, 1953, a project which they continue to carry on each year in April. All mothers of grade-school

children are invited.

At the request of Mrs. Frank V. Hamouz, then president of Fourth District, NFWC, the club gave the tea at the close of the district convention held in Geneva on October 1 and 2, 1953. Yes, they served "kolace.

In 1954, the club sponsored an international relations program with Dr. G. W. Rosenlof of the University of Nebraska and students from India and the Netherlands as well as a young man from North Ireland on the international exchange program. High-school students and others interested were invited.

A father-son banquet was sponsored by the club in April, 1956. The proceeds went toward the purchase of a time-clock for the new

gymnasium.

Some of the other projects carried on regularly are: sending articles to the annual Children's Memorial Hospital benefit bazaar, Christmas gifts for Ingleside patients, participation in the German Youth Association project, Heart Fund drive, and contributions to all worthy drives. The club makes most of the money by serving dinners and banquets.

Books were donated to the Milligan Public Library in memory of the following deceased club members: Mrs. Fred Havel, Mrs. Antonie Krisl, Mrs. James Bors, Mrs. S. H. Michener, Mrs. V. V. Smrha, Mrs. Mike Soukup, Mrs. Hynek Jaros, Mrs. Charles Michl, Mrs. Charles Smrha, and Mrs. Frank Svec. Many other books were donated to the library in memory of friends and relatives of members.

During its 30 years of federation the club has been hostess to five county conventions held at Milligan: (1) The first Fillmore County convention, held in the Milligan High School auditorium in the fall of 1928 with 117 present, and Mrs. J. B. Frankforter as county president, and Mrs. Charles Smrha, local club president. (2) October 6, 1943, at the Milligan Auditorium with Mary E. Krisl as county vice-president and Mrs. J. V. Kotas, local club president. (3) October 14, 1939, Milligan Auditorium with Mrs. Henry Kassik as local club president. (4) October 13, 1945, at the Milligan Auditorium with Miss Agnes M. Capek (now Mrs. Frank V. Hamouz) as local club president. (5) October 1, 1956, at the Milligan Methodist Church with Mrs. Henry Kassik as local club president.

Besides the county offices held by local members as listed above, Mrs. Frank V. Hamouz has held these positions: Fillmore Countytreasurer, first vice-president and president; Fourth District, NFWC -secretary, first vice-president, second vice-president, and president, Chairman of Conservation for four years, and Communications Chairman for two years. At the present time she is secretary of the Scholarship Loan and Nurses' Gift Board, NFWC.

The 1956-57 membership of the club was 50. Mrs. A. R. Jensen

was the president.

Milligan has a number of other clubs for women. A Ladies' Aid Society composed of women of the Methodist Church meets once monthly to sew and visit and discuss the ways in which the interests of the church may be advanced in Milligan. The Catholic Church has a similar society, called the Altar Society. The main activity of each, however, is the annual bazaar by which each society raises money for its church.

Modern Woodmen

"The Modern Woodmen lodge of Milligan is growing right along in membership and has nearly 100 members now. Lately there have been several members taken in The night these four were initiated it took six men to hold the goat as the boys, one by one, mounted him. Frank Vavra, Joe Rohla, and Rudolph Motis were the honorable committee that had charge of the goat for a week before that night, and they had stuffed him full of oats, oil cake, and Hi-Hi bitters, and when he started around the room he was a holy terror. The boys hung on for their lives. Delaney gave up all hope of ever seeing the livery barn again; Mengler felt that someone else beside him would be selling farm machinery this spring; Hanus thought he had made his last harness, and Rozanek never even hoped to see his farm again. But they were all rescued before being killed and each

one grinned and said he was glad he was alive. It is said Joe Rohla put a cocklebur under the goat's tail just as he started and that the goat held to it tightly all the time he was going round the room, but we do not know whether this is true or not . . . -Nebraska Signal. March 22, 1901; quoted from the Milligan Times.

The Sokols

Since its establishment in 1894, the Tel. Jed. Sokol local in Milligan has met with varying degrees of success. In its early years it was a strong organization. At that time there were many new arrivals from Europe who had been members of the Sokol organization which was originally established in Prague, Bohemia, in 1862. It was natural for these new settlers to take an interest in the organization in America. During its early days the Milligan Sokol Organization took part in both the state and national tournaments. This news item illustrates the interest displayed in the national tournaments, usually held in Chicago:

"Ben Smrha arrived home Thursday afternoon from Chicago, where he has been for nearly two months studying and practicing the new system of gymnastics arranged for use in various Tel. Jed. Sokol (Bohemian Turners) lodges over the country. He passed the examination in the highest class and has his diploma."-Nebraska Signal, September 1, 1899; quoted from the Milligan Journal.

The effect of weather on the Sokol tournaments and other Milligan social affairs is aptly reflected by this passage from an article

published in 1930:

'Until very recent times the possibility of meeting expenses at all public gatherings in Milligan was dependent on weather. Muddy roads kept not only the farmers, but also residents of neighboring towns at home. Time and again the village newspaper ascribes the lack of success of social events to the fact that it rained. The 'large crowd' reported was usually present in the editor's imagination. Today one gravel road leads to Milligan, but all of the side roads are still unsurfaced. Expenses are made today regardless of weather, but a large profit can be made only if the sky is clear."

In Milligan the Sokols did not at any time have a hall of their own. They used halls owned by other lodges. During the course of the winter, the Sokol's masquerade ball was one of the major social events. The ball of 1901 was described by the local paper:

"The T. J. Sokol's masquerade ball turned out pretty well regardless of the storm which occurred in the evening. There was a very large crowd present and everyone seemed to have a good time. The masks were numerous and some of the finest ever seen."-Nebraska Signal, March 1, 1901; quoted from the Milligan Journal.

A 1925 article from the Nebraska Signal remarks upon the

sporadic interest commanded by the Sokols from 1905 to 1925.

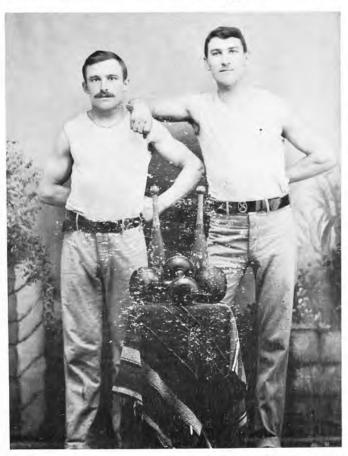


Photo from Mrs. Emil A. Havel Vnclav Bouse and Frank Laun, members of the Sokols.



Photo from Alba Buzek

"Sbor Sokolek," Ladies' Gymnastic Group, Milligan in 1907. Top row, left to right: Agnes Hernyk (Mrs. Anton Capek), Carrie Placek (Mrs. Frank Krisl), Mary Stejskal (Mrs. Harry Soukup), Anna Brt (Mrs. Joe Hass), Mary Frycek (Mrs. Albert Kassik), Emma Buzek (Mrs. Tlbert Soukup), Vlasta Podleska (Mrs. James Loukota).

2nd row from top, left to right: Agnes Vejraska (Mrs. Vac Ach), Alba Buzek, Mary Hromadka (Mrs. Rudolph Capek), Anna Podlesak (Mrs. Henry Buzek), Lula Cudly, (Mrs. Frank Havel, Sr.), Anna Bulin (Mrs. Fred Kovanda), Rose Vejraska, (Mrs. Josef

3rd row from top, left to right: Agnes Steinacher (Mrs. James Stofer), Betty Beranek (Mrs. J. J. Novak), Anna Capek (Mrs. Edward Smith), Agnes Sredl (Mrs. James Nohava), Rose Herynk (Mrs. Joe C. Laun), Bessie Selement (Mrs. Henry Wanek). Bottom row, left to right: Alba Korbelik (Mrs. Henry Rischling), Rose Kassik (Mrs. Frank Stych), Mary Bulin (Mrs. James Bors).

"Twenty years ago and more the Sokols were one of the liveliest organizations here. Classes in physical training met regularly and delegates were sent to all tournaments. Of late years the organization has dwindled down, some of the active ones having gone beyond the river and others having moved away or grown too old for the strenuous exertions to which the Sokol is put. There was also a strong girls' class and while they did not become active at any time in going through the physical exercises, they were active socially and were the sponsors of many pleasant events.

In the past few years the Sokols have been taking a new lease on life, several organizations having been formed in various parts of the state. Not to be left behind, Milligan formed an organization last Tuesday evening. Frank Chmelik, who came here direct from Czechoslovakia three years ago, spent a week here looking over the ground and holding classes at the school gymnasium. As a result of this a meeting was called for Tuesday evening at the ZCBJ hall and an organization was formed. An admission fee of \$5 was agreed upon and a further payment of yearly dues of \$5."-Nebraska Signal, November 26, 1925.

Under the leadership of the recently arrived Mr. Chmelik, interest in the organization grew. In May, 1926, it was ready to show

the home folks what had been accomplished.

The year 1926 marked one of the high points in the revival of the Sokol organization in Milligan. On a Sunday following an exhibition at Milligan, the state tournament was held in Omaha. Many Milligan people were present. A special train which started at Milligan and picked up a number of delegates along the way was filled with several hundred contestants and spectators when it arrived in Omaha. The Nebraska Signal reported:

"The exhibition at the auditorium was a revelation to those who witnessed it. The auditorium hall was full. The exercises came in a methodical and orderly manner and the drills were given with precision. The Milligan contingent took part in the various classes and did exceptionally well; the girls' drill with rings being particularly good."

-Signal, May 27, 1926.

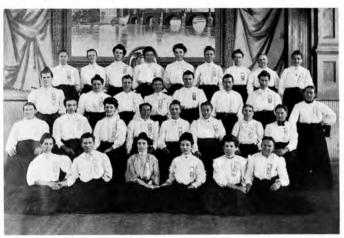
The Sokol spirit was high at this time, and another tournament was held in August at Wilber, a neighboring town. An estimated 5,000 people watched Milligan teams win several prizes. At Thanksgiving a Sokol benefit was given to help the Omaha lodge finance a new hall. The community responded liberally and furnished food and other items to help make the day a success; more than \$200 was raised.

ZCBJ Lodge

ZCBJ Lodge is mentioned here because it has close ties with Milligan; but, as it was organized and still meets in Liberty township, it is described in that chapter.



Z. C. B. J. Lodge Hall about 1910. School was held here while the schoolhouse was being built.



Milligan Chapter of Royal Neighbors of America — about 1905.

Bottom row, left to right: Mary Jicha, Mary Rohla, Amelia Cerveny, Malinda Cerveny, Agnes Naimon, Mary B. Krisl.

2nd row from bottom, left to right: Teresa Frycek, Fanny Stech, Marye Stastny, Kate Laun, Anna Podlesak, Josephine Kilma Jansky, Mary Kotas, Anna Ondrak.

3rd row from bottom, left to right: Julia Yeck, Josie Loukota, Antonie Bulin, Marie Steinacher, Frances Brt, Anna Novak, Anna Sredl, Anna Soukup.

Top row, left to right: Mary Sirucek, Mary Justa, Emma Yeck, Mary Simkovsky, Josie Rohla, Anna Placek, Anna Kubicek, Anna Barbora Slezak.

Children's Clubs

In the early days the children of the Milligan community had to wait until they were grown before they could belong to clubs and lodges. Whatever spare time they had, they spent at the old swimming hole at Placek's or filled in with various forms of informal play. In the last decades of the last century they had but little leisure. Men, women, and children spent most of their waking hours working. The newspapers of the time mention dances, masquerades, and other activities, but carry no reference to clubs organized to pursue the interests of the young.

All this has been changed in recent years. Each issue of the county paper carries notices describing activities of numerous children's clubs. The school has been responsible for the formation of most of these. In connection with the agricultural courses, 4-H clubs have been organized. Boys learn how to raise pigs, cows, corn, and other animals or plants. Records are kept of the methods used and of the cash outlay. At the end of the season, prizes are awarded to those who have been most successful, and exhibits are prepared for the county and state fairs. Most of the clubs to which girls belong are restricted to activities in which only women engage, such as sewing, cooking, and housekeeping. Milligan was quite proud one year when two of their girls from the cooking club won the state championship in bread baking.

Boys' clubs are concerned mainly with activities which do not require many meetings of the entire group. On the other hand, girls' clubs hold frequent meetings, and the activities carried on are often reported in the county paper.

"The Sunny Side cooks held their meeting at the home of Miss Sylvia Rischling Friday, July 25. Plans were made for attending the 4-H club camp at Alexandria from August 4 to 7. Plans were made for a demonstration team at the county fair, demonstrating how to make muffins. . . .

"Sylvia showed us how to knead bread by pushing it once or twice and turn around quarter way and fold it over toward you. Anna Prokop told us how to take care of bread after it is cooled and ready to to put away. The bread that the girls brought to the meeting was then judged. In the white bread Irma Havel had the best. . . . In the whole-wheat Marian Kassik had the best. . . . A delicious lunch was served. . . ."—Nebraska Signal, August 7, 1930.

"A hike has been planned [by the Healthy Hustlers] for Tuesday, August 5. The group will walk to Placek's creek and there have

lunch before walking back home.

"Some plans were discussed for the county fair. By the next meeting everyone must have a health poster made. These will be brought to the meeting and the best ones selected to send to the fair. Rose Placek and Arlene Bors will be the demonstration team. The topic of their demonstration has not been selected.

"A part of the fourth lesson was read and exercises for the feet taken. Some of these proved to be quite difficult."—Nebraska Signal,

August 7, 1930.

Movies

"Saturday, June 28, and Sunday, June 29, Billy and Dot and The Last Kiss, both of them Czechoslovak films, will be shown at

Central Hall."-Nebraska Signal, June 26, 1924.

If the producers of the Czechoslovak films had any hopes that they might find a ready market in Milligan they were doomed to disappointment. Such films were regarded more as curiosities than as regular film diet. Perhaps once a year films do penetrate from the European hinterland to the Nebraska prairie. When some important event such as a Sokol tournament occurs in Bohemia, films are usually made and sent to the United States. Pictures of the tournament held in 1920 were shown in Milligan several months after it was held.

Czech films are infrequent visitors to Milligan, while Hollywood productions are seen several times weekly. Here a typical hero pursues a typical villain and rescues a typical heroine from his clutches. The effect of these films on Milligan is much the same as anywhere else in America. This indicates the type of movie often shown locally:

"The Sage Hen, which will be shown at the Gem Theater Sunday, April 9, is a drama that goes straight to the mother heart of the world, being the poignant story of an outcast woman of the early West who was branded with the scarlet letter and turned out on the desert with her little son to die."—Nebraska Signal, April 6, 1922.

When "talkies" came, Milligan did not lag behind. Early in the spring of 1930 the talkies made their first appearance in Milligan:

"The Central Theater . . . has installed talkie equipment and gave its first public performance Saturday. . . . This equipment is being installed at an expense of about \$2,000. It compares favorably with that of the smaller theaters in our neighboring towns."—Nebraska Signal, March 20, 1930.

See also account of J. J. Klima.

CIVIC ACTIVITIES

Funfrall Park (City Park)

The Funfrall Park is located in the northern part of Milligan on the four 50-foot lots where stood Milligan's first schoolhouse, built in 1888. The ground was donated for this purpose by the Kansas City & Omaha R.R., operating through Milligan at that time. The park is bounded on the north by the American Legion Park and a part of the present school grounds. On the east, it is bounded by Nebraska Highway 41, as it comes through the town.

Such a park had long been of interest to the Woman's Club. The first beginning is credited to a "Krousek" (club) of public-spirited women who, between 1914 and 1920, started the project on this site when the Milligan school was shifted to its present location in 1913. The women got help in cleaning up the old site and built the arbor (which still stands) and tables and benches. Later, the Woman's Club adopted the park; with an eye to business as well as to general hospitality, it was called the Tourist Park. The American Legion (J. V. Charvat, Commander) was responsible for planting the cedars.

For a few years before 1939, the club paid for the mowing of the grass and some members planted and cultivated shrubbery there. However, upon hearing a report that the village board would prefer that the women stay out of the park, so far as upkeep was concerned, the club discontinued these activities.

In 1939, the Woman's Club members each planted two Chinese elms in the park, as described in the account of the club. Ten years later, in the spring of 1949, when the club entered the "Build a Better Community" contest, they convened a meeting of presidents or representatives of all the organizations in the Milligan community to discuss the project, and were pleased to find a general consensus in favor of renovating the city park.

The organizations made an impressive roster. Besides the club itself, they were: the Knights of Pythias, Pythian Sisters, American Legion and Auxiliary, Lodge Cechie, Lodge Rabi, Lodge Cornhusker, Lodge Svatopluk Cech, Altar Society, Women's Society of Christian Service, Milligan Project Club, Milligan Junior Project Club, Liberty

Homemakers, Jolly Farmerettes, Sunnyside Club, Volunteer Firemen, Sokol, Dramatic Club, Village Board, and Board of Education of District 71.

On May 17, 1949, the Woman's Club then voted to carry out the project, and the newly installed president, Miss Agnes M. Capek, appointed a park committee: Mrs. A. R. Jensen, Mrs. Norman Dunker, and Mrs. James Vavra. This committee drew up the plans and appointed the Rev. C. C. Stirn, pastor of St. Wenceslaus' Church, as general manager.

Chairmen were appointed to take charge of various units of the work: Fence building, James Laun; Sand boxes and general repair, Norman Dunker; Painting, Robert C. Dvorak; Fireplaces, Hospodsky; Tennis and volley-ball court, A. R. Jensen; Lighting, Ernest Kotas; Necessary removal of trees, William H. Kotas; Weed control and mowing, Norman Steinacher; Picnic tables and benches, Joe M. Oliva; Installing water fountain, moving in bandstand, and leveling dirt, and taking pictures, J. J. Halama.

It would perhaps not be worth the space to list such details except to show the complexities, and the real need for unified co-operation, in even an apparently simple community project. From the moment the plans were made, every effort was put forth to see that every

organization had some part in the actual fulfillment.

All work was donated. Everyone was enthusiastic and pitched in. with hopes of completing the project by the middle of June; but a rainy season slowed or halted progress many times. When the project was started, the neglected park had an arbor badly in need of paint; a table of very little value inside the arbor; a practically unrepairable picnic table with attached benches; outdoor toilets with doors breaking off at the hinges, much in need of paint and rather too well hidden in shrubbery; broken trees in need of trimming, and dead branches all over the place; and weeds, and more weeds. There was much work to be done.

Finally, not too much later than originally planned, the work drew to a close. The park had a complete new look. There were two open fireplaces, with near-by picnic tables and benches; facilities for horseshoe-pitching and croquet; a tennis and volley-ball court: sand boxes (old tractor tires put to use) for the children; and a rustic rail fence, running the length of the park. The bandstand was moved into the park and screened. Lighting facilities made the park usable in the evenings. The toilets were repaired and painted, and playground equipment was purchased.

Figuring the donated labor at about 50 cents an hour, and costs for material and equipment at wholesale prices, thanks to the cooperation of local businessmen, it was calculated that the cash value

of the park project came to about \$2,500.

A "Name-the-Park" contest was held which was entered by more than 30 people. Miss Betty Ann Slezak won the prize for her suggestion of "Funfrall."

The park was formally dedicated on a late-July evening in 1949, with the Rev. C. C. Stirn as speaker and a gathering of about 700 people. Since the dedication, more picnic tables and more recreational equipment have been added, using money from occasional donations and money raised by the Woman's Club, largely from lunch sales at the annual picnics.



Photo from Mrs. Emil Havel Professor Vesley's Band. This group played for all orations and even funerals. Standing, left to right: George Boxa, Joe Yeck, Lou Philysi, Frank Laun. Seated, left to right: Emil Yeck, Albert Boxa, Professor Vesely, John Styskal.





Left: Organizers of Funfrall Park: Mrs. Frank Hamouz, Rev. C. C. Stirn, and Betty Ann Slezak (who won the prize for naming the park). Right: View of the park.



Milligan Auditorium, with Post Office on left.

The New Auditorium

For some years Milligan had needed a new auditorium. The old hall had been built in the 1890's and was very inadequate. In 1929, a campaign for funds was inaugurated and about \$15,000 was raised. When bids were asked, the committee discovered that a suitable hall could not be built for less than \$50,000. An appeal was made to the lodges to raise the necessary money. They put on an intensive drive for funds, and succeeded in raising an additional \$10,000. The committee decided to start building the hall, relying upon the sale of \$25,000 worth of bonds to complete the cost of the building.

It was not an easy matter to sell the bonds. But if the committee had waited until all the bonds had been sold, the auditorium would never have been built. Before ground was broken for the new building, the committee expressed its disappointment at its lack of success.

The committee which undertook to raise the money by voluntary subscriptions was very much surprised and disappointed in the raising of funds. With but a few exceptions the amount subscribed by different individuals was far below that which the committee expected. In a number of cases they came away emptyhanded, when they had felt sure of a liberal donation.

The difficulty seems to lie in the fact that the people who have means haven't the generous spirit and the people who have the generous spirit haven't the means. It is no small project that the community has undertaken and it will require the loosening of the purse strings more than the exercise of the vocal cords to put the project through."—Nebraska Signal, October 17, 1929.

After the ground was broken, the community took great interest in the construction and longed to see the building completed. In November, 1929, the committee decided to issue the bonds, urging everybody to "Buy a Bond and By a Bond be Bound to Milligan." In this same month the necessity of completing a given piece of construction before freezing weather set in made it imperative for the men of the community to give of their muscles as well as of their

money.
"'Everybody works but father' is a thing of the past in the present day when necessity requires everybody working, including father. Friday the contractor at work on the community auditorium was particularly desirous of having as much concrete poured as possible for fear freezing weather might set in and seriously retard the progress of the work. He let his wants be known to Jim Charvat and Jim said to him, says he, 'I can get you all the men you want who will stay on the job until it is finished.'

'So Jim proceeded to spread the news that all able-bodied men were requested to be at the auditorium by 6:30 that evening and help pour concrete until the contractor hollered 'nuff.' About 50 fellows

were on the job at the appointed time.

"It was a jolly crowd. Wheeling that wheelbarrow up a steep incline wasn't light work, either. Some of those wheelbarrows didn't seem to have the carburetor working right and some of them seemed to be running on flat tires, but the push behind them kept them going until the job was completed. The building of King Solomon's temple or the construction of the Chinese Wall must have been some job, but when you get together a bunch of fellows who seem to have the spirit there just isn't anything that can't be accomplished."-Nebraska Signal November 21, 1929.

In April, 1930, a month before the auditorium was dedicated, the last of these bonds were sold. More than one person borrowed money at a high rate of interest to buy bonds which gave a smaller return. When the bonds were all sold the local correspondent complimented

the community on its achievement:

'The financing of this \$50,000 project speaks volumes for this community. The past six months haven't been especially favorable for the raising of ready cash for the reason that prices of farm products have been unsatisfactory and farmers haven't been selling, but in spite of all this the money has been raised and we have witnessed another demonstration of what a community can do when a respectable number of people get behind a project and determine to stay with it until it is achieved."—Nebraska Signal, April 17, 1930.

Each week the newspaper reported the progress made during the previous week. As the building neared completion, the committee was confronted with the problem of its dedication. Elaborate plans were made, and for three days Milligan gave itself up to rejoicing and

congratulations.

"As originally planned, the dedication of the new auditorium comprised three days. It had not been planned, however, that they should be three hectic days. The plans and specifications called for three sunshiny days, but the committee had some misgivings about this and as a precaution invested in some rain insurance, and they surely had need of it. It rained Friday and it rained Saturday. It didn't rain Sunday, but that made no difference, because the roads couldn't have been any sloppier if it had rained for the last 30 days.

"But even the rain couldn't stop the fitting climax which had been planned for observing in a fitting manner the completion of so fine a project as the construction of this splendid public building. All of the programs were carried out as planned, and while they were not witnessed by capacity houses, the attendance was such as to demonstrate conclusively that under favorable weather conditions the attendance would have been of such proportions as to have made it beyond all power to take care of the throngs. As it was, it was possible to handle the visitors satisfactorily and send them home with a desire to come again."—Nebraska Signal, May 1, 1930.

On Friday the ceremonies opened with a concert and a dance. On Saturday the governor of the state and other notables gave addresses. But on Saturday evening a problem confronted the committee.

"Saturday evening was designated for the jazz dance. A tenpiece high-priced orchestra was engaged from Omaha for the occasion. At about 7:30 they called up from Seward that they were having trouble with one of their cars, but would send seven of their men on ahead and the rest would follow later, if possible. About an hour later they called again that they couldn't come at all. The dance committee sweated blood and oozed tears and almost swore.

"They called up frantically everywhere they had ever heard of an orchestra being. They called up York, Clay Center, and Lincoln. They called Crete and Tobias, thinking dances there might have been called off and their orchestras be available. But to no avail. Something had to be done. So finally Jim Ach with his accordion and the help of his two sons and John Kucera took their places on the stage and substituted for Jimmy's Serenaders. Jim did a good job of it. That is, Jim Ach did. If the Omaha Jim with his serenaders had made half the effort to fulfill his contract that Jim Ach made to please the crowd, there would have been no disappointment."—Nebraska Signal, May 1, 1930.

On Sunday afternoon and evening local dramatic societies presented two Czech plays in the native tongue. Bad roads cut down the

number but not the spirit of the audiences.

"During all three days the bazaar was in progress and meals were served in the basement. The total receipts from all sources have not yet been definitely ascertained, but they will not be far from the \$3,000 mark. Hundreds of people were kept away by the rain and the condition of the roads. The management is considering repeating the two plays, giving one of them on one Sunday evening and the other the next Sunday evening. This would give our friends from a distance an opportunity to see the new hall and witness a demonstration of how it meets the needs of the community. Should this be determined upon, the final announcement will be made in a few days. In the meantime, the hectic days are over and the auditorium is formally dedicated."—Nebraska Signal, May 1, 1930.

So Milligan reached another peak, took another step along the long road which is called progress. After the dedication was over, life returned to normal again, and the people of Milligan let down and began to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

People cannot always live on the heights, nor is all community spirit exhibited there, although it is at these times of high achievement that the spirit of the community is most manifest. It finds expression also in its modern school, its seven blocks of paved streets, its water department, and its electric lights, which are no longer turned off at midnight.

FAMILIES

J. J. Klima, who became president of the Farmers and Merchants Bank in 1954, is also known for his interest in motion pictures. He first became interested in movies in 1937, when he acquired a motion-picture camera and projector. During following years, he took motion pictures of various community events and family get-togethers and each year showed the pictures at some public gathering. From this project stemmed his interest in a community theater, and in the fall of 1940, he succeeded in interesting the Milligan Auditorium and the business houses in entering into a co-operative motion-picture enterprise.

He purchased the equipment with his own funds, and agreed to donate it to the Community Club when the profits of the project returned his investment to him. The business houses contributed weekly to the cost of the operation. The first show was held on September 19, 1941. The admission for a Saturday night show was 15 cents, and every customer at the Saturday show received a free ticket for the following Wednesday's show. The theater was operated on this basis for 17 years, although the price had to be raised when World War II increased costs.

Mr. Klima operated the enterprise without any compensation

until 1958, when he transferred the motion-picture equipment to the Commuity Club. Leonard Kassik then took over the management, and continued to operate it, also without compensation, until June, 1962, when the rising competition of television forced it to bite the dust.

The projector is still housed in the Auditorium, and gets used now and then on special occasions.

The building which now stands on Lot 8 in Block 7 was perhaps visited by everyone in this community at one time or another because for over 30 years it was occupied by William Lohberger, who operated a general shop there. He repaired everything from the minutest item to tractor engine.

The building was also occupied at various times by a butcher shop, a hardware store, and a theater. The theater was known as the Gem Theater and was run by E. J. Kotas and J. V. Kotas. (See

Movies, earlier in this chapter.)

After Mr. Lohberger's death, the building was bought by Norman Steinacher, who operated an appliance store, with James Pavelka. In 1958, it was bought by Edward Bulin, who used it for storage.



Photo from Mrs. Ken Barnard J. J. Klima (1954).



Photo from Mrs. Joe Oliva Alois Petracek and grandson Robert Oliva (1935).



Mrrs. Fred Kassik Dr. V. V. Smrha (1946).

Alois Petracek started to work for C. J. Cerveney in 1899. In 1904 he started a restaurant in the Vaclav Bernasek building where the Alois Jezek building is at present, later moving next door into the larger Bernasek building. Petracek walked 3 miles out in the country to buy milk and cream to make ice cream, and was the first in town to sell ice-cream cones. He also baked bread every other day for public sale, baking as many as 36 loaves in one day. For some time, Mr. and Mrs. Petracek made up 15 lunch pails daily for men working on the railroad.

In 1910, Mr. Petracek bought the Cerveney store and did business there until 1921, when he sold it to F. R. Soukup. In 1922, the Petraceks started a general merchandise store in the Frank Rozanek building. In 1923, they built a new store, and operated it until 1930, when they retired. Their daughter married Joe M. Oliva, who started in the construction business in Milligan in 1931.

Frank A. Placek started in the hardware business in 1887 and held the longest record of continuous service. Selling out the hardware store to William H. Kotas in 1937, Mr. Placek built the first electric light and power system, which served the town for many years, giving Milligan electric lights when most towns its size did not have them.

W. B. Saunders, known to everybody as Boone Saunders, was one of the lumbermen who made more than an average impression on the community; he learned to understand the Czech language, and was a charter member of the Milligan Knights of Pythias. During his stay in Milligan, he organized and managed a boys' baseball team, which, during his two years of management, lost only one game. On the team were boys from the families of Havel, Kotas, Lauvetz, Leisher, Trobaugh, Smrha, Janda, Holpuch, Motis, Luksik, Deams, Hrdy, and Rybin. Mr. Saunders left Milligan in 1905, to operate a lumber business in Gillette, Wyoming.

Dr. V. V. Smrha came with his parents to Milligan in 1894 at the age of 15. In 1895, he started teaching school, and in 1901 he entered Creighton University. After graduation in May, 1905, he returned to Milligan and started to practice medicine. During horse-and-buggy days, he crossed Turkey Creek many times when the horses had to swim and the buggy floated on the water. He also traveled in blizzards and on icy roads to answer sick calls, first using an automobile to answer calls in 1911. Dr. Smrha delivered more than 1,300 babies.

BLIZZARD

In the winter of 1951, in response to a query in the Nebraska Signal as to how many were still around who remembered the blizzard of Jan. 12, 1888, many interesting letters were received. Almost every township had its story.

Henry Podlesak of Chicago, who was a rural teacher at

the time, wrote as follows:

"In the forenoon it was warm, springlike, enough so that the older pupils went home at noon to help cut and clear cornstalks so the fields could be plowed. By afternoon recess it was getting cold and somewhat windy so that I rang the bell right after recess started. By the time all pupils got in it had begun to blow quite hard. All pupils got in and a few tiny icicles made themselves felt.

"I knew at once what was coming. We had very little water in the bucket and very little coal in the shed, so I decided to apportion the children to the nearest farms. I took seven of the smaller ones to the Steinacher farm, which was nearest, and believe me it was some job against the wind which was blowing very hard by then. I carried Tenny Placek and draged Emil Placek, that now famous banker at

Wahoo.

"The Biba and Hodek children were among the first allocations. Then I took six to the old Kotas farm. That trip was not so bad, being with the wind, but coming back to the school house was no fun. I took five to our farm which was with the wind, though a little across it. Two of the largest boys I took to Anton Kotas's farm to the east of the school. The trip was across the wind and believe you me when I got home I was all in, froze out and worn out.

"The school was District 44 in Glengary township. There were two deaths due to freezing in our neighborhood, a Mrs. Masek who lived north of where the town of Milligan now stands but which at that time was non-existent, and a man who was found frozen near the old Andrle farm which was north of the Masek farm. The man was never identified. All of the quail and rabbits were frozen and it

took about two years to replace them.'

A later issue of the Signal gives further details reporting on Mrs. Masek's death. We read: "Hitherto all stories of the blizzard have dealt with escape from human tragedy, but this week our first story is about a little known tragedy that stands out clearly in the mind of a Geneva resident, Mrs. Mary Matejka, who lost her mother in the big blizzard. Newspaper files of the time do not seem to report the tragedy but several residents of Geneva recall that a woman was frozen to death, although the name of the woman and the details of her death are apparently not known to many.

"Mrs. Matejka, the former Mary Masek, was 12 years old at the time of the storm and she gives a good description of the

blizzard which took her mother's life.

"Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Masek, were immigrants to this country and the family lived in a sod house one and one half miles west of the present town of Milligan. Mary and her brother Charles were not in school the day of the storm but their brother Thomas was. Her father was ill and unable to be out so he sent her to feed the horses. She said the wind blew the hay out of her hands as fast as she could pull it out of the stack. The snow was like rice and the wind whistled so loud she couldn't hear anything else. She could just barely see her hand in front or her face.

"When the storm struck, Mrs. Masek became worried about Tom (in school) and decided to walk the one and one half miles to school to get him. Mrs. Matjeka says her mother arrived at school all right but everyone was gone. It developed later that Tom spent the night with a family by the name of Hanson. Mrs. Masek started home but apparently she became exhausted and fell beside the road in front of what was then the John Kotas home. Mr. Masek and the children worried all night about their wife and mother, but they decided she must have remained all night at the school house.

they decided she must have remained all night at the school house. "When Mrs. Masek failed to arrive home the next morning, Charles went to find her. He found her frozen to death. Neighbors came to the assistance of the Maseks and helped them bury her in a private cemetery near Milligan. Later Mr. Masek was buried in the Milligan south cemetery. Here Mrs. Masek rests in an unmarked grave, one of the unsung heroines of the storm which took so many

lives."

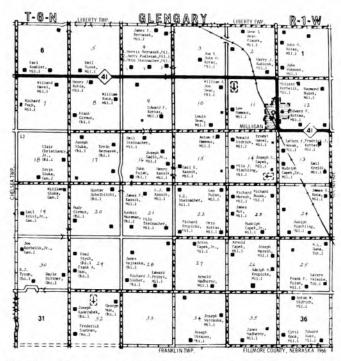
PUREBRED SIRE TRAIN

It was in 1924 that the purebred sire train came to Milligan. The article in the county paper which describes the affairs has a headline in large capital letters, "Milligan's Big Day." Subheads contained the words "A Tremendous Crowd, Great Enthusiasm and Remarkable Parade." An understanding of the great day is best through the description of the town correspondent:

"The big day came Thursday, October 23, and 3,718 individuals passed through the train and viewed the exhibits. The afternoon was given over to the biggest and finest parade of floats ever seen in Fillmore County. Thirty-one floats of local business houses, local lodges, district school, old-time farm implements, flail threshing, and

retired farmers were in line.

"The Farmers and Merchants Bank float led the parade. It was



prettily decorated, advertising over half a million dollars on deposit and saying that the local bank reflected the prosperity of the locality. Adolph Zeman had four International tractors in line advertising the fact that one can plow for gold by plowing deep. James Bors had a nicely decorated Fordson resembling a submarine. The Milligan Lumber Company had a pretty bungalow with children playing in it and a decorated lawn.

"The Farmers Co-operative Company had about 24 men pulling a loaded farm wagon, [representing] the idea that enough men must pull together to make the proper progress. Kassik & Sons had a well-decorated truck advertising their mill products and their elevator.

"All three local Western Bohemian Fraternal Association lodges had floats. The most elaborate of these was that of Lodge Rabi, which displayed a large emblem and a home fireside with the breadwinner absent and the widow and the children receiving the benefits of the fraternal insurance. They displayed the motto, "Keep the Home Fires Burning." Lodge Svatopluk Cech displayed an old-time Cech plow and depicted an event in Bohemian history. The ladies' lodge Cechie had a decorated car in which rode Mrs. Katherine Smrha, the oldest local member, together with the youngest members, the six-year-old Elenore Hrdy and others."—Nebraska Signal, October 30, 1924.

Several of the district schools had floats depicting the value of education and the necessity of using purebred sires. The American

Legion float won first prize.

"The finest float and the one receiving first prize was the American Legion float. They had a truck decorated to resemble a hospital room. The truck driver was hidden under a piece of furniture. On a cot lay a stricken soldier who was attended by two beautiful nurses. No wonder he was stricken! The float was escorted by soldiers and sailors and had a most beautiful emblem worked out in corn and wheat. It was certainly a dandy float, and well deserved the prize.

"The old-time flail threshing was pictured by Mrs. Ignac Sebesta and Mrs. Vaclav Halama, Albert Frycek and Vaclav Svajgr, dressed in Bohemian national costume. Their float was prettily decorated and they made a pretty picture threshing wheat, oats, and rye. Following this float was one decorated with farm products in which rode many retired farmers and their wives, sitting in rockers, some reading, others smoking and talking amongst themselves and having much enjoyment. They illustrated the fact that this territory is prosperous enough to retire its older members to comfort and rest. Their float bore the motto, 'We have Earned Our Comfort.'

"The surrounding farmers got up a float that was a joke on the businessmen. About twenty-five farmers decorated a float that was escorted by four pretty clowns, while they themselves were decorated with scarfs across their noble chests, each with the name of the businessman he burlesqued. The whole represented a session of the Chamber of Commerce. E. E. Slepicka represented Dr. Smrha as president of the chamber and he explained the meaning of the assembly. He was followed by Vaclav Ach, who has much forensic ability and who represented Charles Smrha. He read the minutes ability and were read out of the minutes and were most comical and entertaining."—Nebraska Signal, October 30, 1924.

"The train visited thirty-one points in the state. At but one stop did the number of those passing through the train exceed that at Milligan, and this was Broken Bow. Something over 4,000 people passed through the train there, so that Milligan lacked but few to be the top-notcher of the state"—Nebraska Signal, October 30, 1924.

Grafton Township

Grafton township occupies the northwest corner of Fillmore County. It is bounded on the north by York County, on the east and south by West Blue and Bennett townships, and on the west by Clay County. The West Blue River crosses the northeastern corner of the township, and School Creek flows from near the southeastern corner to near the northeastern, emptying into the Blue near the York County line. The Chicago-Denver line of the Burlington R.R. crosses the southern end of the township from east to west, about a mile from its southern border, closely paralleled by U.S. 6. The Lushton-Clay Center branch of the Burlington crosses from northeast to southwest, through Secs. 2 to 30, following closely the course of School Creek. Despite a reasonable amount of ground water, by the end of 1966, Grafton township had 57 irrigation wells, with more in prospect.

School Creek and the West Blue had, in the early days, a constant flow of water and were well wooded. Naturally, the first claims were taken along the north end of the township so that the settlers could be sure of water and fuel. A few log houses were built. Those who located out on the prairie had to build sod houses, which were comfortable but hard to keep clean. The settlers found that some of the soil could be baked into brick, and some of them used brick walls and thatched roofs for their homes, but the brick was not too solid and the thatch often leaked. Wells were the real problems; digging a well with a spade was a hard job.

Grafton township was settled by immigrants from Illinois, Ohio, Missouri, New York, Delaware, West Virginia, and New England, who were looking for new homes after the Civil War. These people were mostly Anglo-Saxon, though among them were a number of Germans and Irish. Some took up homesteads, while others bought railroad land. The Burlington Railroad was built through the county in 1871. This made life much easier for the pioneers, who before its coming had hauled their provisions and supplies overland; the nearest town was Lincoln.

One of the first homesteads was taken in 1869 by the Shroyers, who came here from West Virginia. There were three brothers—David John, Jake and Andy Shroyer—with their mother and their two sisters, Mary and Vina. Other names familiar to early homesteaders were Elisha Littlefield, Joseph Tatro, Wallace Fairbanks, Scott Mattern, Joseph Frazier (Lou's father), Tom and John Watt, the Lytle brothers, O. H. Parsons, George Wintersteen, Erskine Clark, Jasper Culver, Joseph Le Hew, Silas Pringle, and Xerxes Stevens.

The lives of the pioneers were not too dull. They visited their neighbors, often driving a yoke of oxen to do so. A few had ponies. If they were driving past a house near mealtime, they stopped to eat and were welcome. Dances, spelling bees, and quilting bees furnished entertainment. Prairie fires were



Photo from Leo Schal

Dog races, 1890



Photo from Walt Thomas Crowd at ball game between the Married Men and Bachelors (1911).

a terror to the settlers. Some were started (as nowadays) by carelessness, some by guns, some by sparks from locomotives. They were hard to control and did a great deal of damage.

Building up a home from scratch and organizing townships and counties was a mighty task, but these people undertook the job and finished it. The land had to be surveyed. Corner stones were buried, one mile apart, at all section corners. Many of these can still be found and are used as basic evidence for settling boundary lines. In the late 1880's a band of German-Russians moved into the northwest corner of Grafton township, and their descendants are still there.

Grafton township has seen four towns started. The first was Fillmore, located on Sec. 1, the NE section of the township. It had a store, a blacksmith shop, and one house. Grafton was first platted out for a town just five miles west of its present location in the year 1871, immediately after the laying of the Burlington railroad. It consisted of one store, a post office, and four small houses erected by the railroad company. Here it remained until 1875, when it was moved to its present location and Captain Patrick S. Real opened a store one



W. G. Hainey's General Merchandise Store in Grafton (1902). Boy on walk, Georgie Brady; on porch, Miles Longman, W. G. Hainey, Sr., Pat Brady. The little girl in the cart is Ruth, daughter of George Hainey.

block south of the present city light-plant building. This store was later sold to W. G. Hainey, who moved it nearer to the railroad. Here it remained and did business as long as there

was a Hainey in Grafton-more than 65 years.

Grafton was a lively little town in the 80's. It had three dry-goods stores, two restaurants, a newspaper (the Grafton Leader), two livery barns, a resident doctor, a lawyer who had a boy in his office studying law, a drugstore, two hotels, and a post office. Among the familiar names of that date were W. G. Hainey, George Hainey, H. J. Day, E. A. Cushing, Dr. Charles Ballard, O. J. Lytle, John Conness, Dr. Johnson, E. H. S. James, B. J. La Shalle, P. T. Tales, George Wintersteen, Elizabeth Stevens, E. F. Hinkley, George Warren, Bob Price, Captain P. S. Real, J. B. Hitchcock, John Menzie, Mrs. Keeler, A. Spandau, John Fitzgerald, Dennis & Roland, Tom Fisher, Emmet Real, A. McNickle, John Burke, John Shoff, Dan Easten, John Kalbin, and John Kahn. John Shoff was the first postmaster (appointed in 1873).

The last town to be started was Lyman; but when it was found that another town in the state had the same name, it was changed to Bixby. Bixby was on the Kansas City & Omaha R.R. (later part of the Burlington system) which crossed the northwestern corner of the township. It had a large elevator, a good stockyard, one store, and one house. It did good business for a while, but it was too close to three

other towns and faded out.

In early days grist mills were common. Three dams were built on the West Blue, and each one operated a mill. The Fillmore Mill was built on the site of the old town. Seeley's Mill was across the line in York County. The Farmer's Valley Mill was a little farther west. At that time, farmers took their grain to the mills, where, for a commission, the miller ground it and gave back flour and meal. A Mr. Ellis, John Welch, Bill Smith, and Les Frederick were millers at Fillmore.

-Ellen Fitzgerald

Grafton

The history of the present town of Grafton begins in 1874. Except for the name, the present town has little or no connection with the town of that name which figured so prominently in the early history of Sutton. More appropriately, it could be said to be an extension or relocation of Fillmore City, the first town in the county.

When the Burlington Railroad, in 1871, changed its projected course through southern York County to its present location it apparently sounded the death knell of Fillmore City, and there was soon little left of the town. In 1872, however, C. M. Northrup located there and prepared to build



Photo from Mrs. James C. Wroughton East side of Main Street (Washington Ave.)—early 1900's



Photo from James O'Brien Main Street (1918), looking south from Grafton State Bank building on corner of Manchester St. and Washington Ave.

a mill. Together, he and E. L. Martin laid out a town that was to be a bigger and better Fillmore City. To the original town site, which constituted the W ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 6, T8, R3W, in West Blue precinct, was now added the E ½ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 1, T8, R4W in Grafton township. The township line was to be the main street. The whole was surveyed, platted, and filed in the county clerk's office as a town site on December 10, 1872. Work on the mill was completed in 1873, and the production of flour was begun. The mill was well built, with four runs of burrs, and ground a good grade of flour. Despite a great demand for the mill's products, Fillmore City never grew to be a town, undoubtedly because of its lack of a railroad.

For a time, Mr. Northrup hauled his flour by team and wagon to Fairmont, the nearest shipping point on the Burlington, but this proved unsatisfactory, as the round trip added up to 22 miles. Captain P. S. Real, who had come from Illinois with his wife and family in 1872, was a friend and neighbor of Mr. Northrup. He was a personal friend of John Fitzgerald, the famous railroad builder. Thanks to his influence, the B. & M. built a siding at a point four miles south of the mill, where Mr. Northrup thereafter loaded his flour. Soon the farmers in that locality were bringing their wheat there to sell or to exchange for flour, and Mr. Northrup built a small warehouse. This made it a convenient place for the farmers to get their mail, and so, in 1873, a post office was established in the near-by home of John Schaff, with Mrs.

Schaff as postmistress.

This made Northrup's siding seem a good place for a town; and so, when, on March 27, 1874, at the request of the proprietors, the county commissioners declared the town site of Grafton, near Sutton, vacated, another town with the same name was laid out here on the farm of Joseph Tatro. Mr. Tatro, at the suggestion of Mr. Real and through Mr. Real's influence with the railroad, had previously entered into a contract to donate a share of the lots to the railroad in exchange for a depot to be built there. This town site, which consisted of about 60 acres in the SE ½ of Sec. 25, T8, R4W, was surveyed in April, 1874, by A. B. Smith. The plat was filed on June 11, and on July 1, 1874, a share of the lots was transferred to the township committee. The town did not begin to grow, however, until 1875, when a depot was built.

The first actual business house in Grafton was a flour and grain warehouse and office built by Mr. Northrup in 1875. In the same year P. S. Real bought the first grain. Later he built and kept the first lumber yard and established a store. Among those who established businesses was W. G. Hainey, an experienced dealer in general merchandise, who, on October 1, 1875, took over the store started by Mr. Real, with a stock worth \$6,000. This became one of the most progressive stores in the county.

By the fall of 1876, the population numbered about 50, and Grafton was fast becoming an important grain market and trade center. The town grew steadily, although slowly, until

¹This account of the village of Grafton was written by Mrs. Lee Parsons.



Photo from Walt Thomas Old Grafton depot with elevators in background (looking southwest)

the spring of 1879, when a new wave of settlers moved into the county and a number of business and professional men located here. Among these were A. C. Spandau, who opened the first drugstore in 1878; Dr. Charles F. Ballard, the first physician; and Arthur Murdock, who opened a lumber yard. H. J. Day opened a general store with a stock of \$6,000 and later built the town hall and the Palace Hotel.

In 1880, George H. Warren erected a new steam elevator with a capacity of 20,000 bushels and did a heavy trade in grain and seeds. For many years thereafter, Grafton was one of the best grain markets on the Burlington. R. J. Black-

burn began the livery business.

In 1881, the Bank of Grafton was organized, with J. O. Chase of the Fillmore County Bank, "one of the ablest financiers in Nebraska," as president. R. C. Price, "an accomplished young businessman who represented wealthy Eastern shareholders," was cashier. The directors were W. G. Hainey. J. O. Chase, and J. W. Price. Mr. Chase later founded the famous Chase National Bank in New York.

Grafton became incorporated as a village on March 3. 1882. The board of trustees consisted of Arthur Murdock, Jasper Culver, E. A. Cushing, C. C. Wright, and T. E. Moon.



Official State Atlas of Nebraska Map of Grafton in 1885

About this time the Hand-Book of Fillmore County (1884) gave this account of Grafton:

Seven miles west of Fairmont, on the B. & M. railway and in one of the garden spots of the country, is Grafton, a bright and growing town of 500 people. It has a beautiful and commanding location, an elegant schoolhouse, three churches, a solid bank, three elevators with a storage capacity of 100,000 bushels, two fine new hotels. a new and enterprising journal-the Leader-edited and published by D. D. Crane, a heavy shipping trade in grain and livestock, a large general trade, some live and enterprising businessmen, and a good showing of pretty, tasteful homes.

Needless to add that the most important contributing factor to all of this is the fact that it is surrounded by a rich agricultural region in which intelligent and energetic farmers are carrying on a broad

program of farming and livestock raising.

Early Businessmen

Among the first owners of general-merchandise stores in Grafton were H. J. Day and E. A. Cushing. Mr. Day moved to Grafton in 1879 and began business as a dealer in groceries and dry goods. He built a spacious home with a circular staircase and a turret, which for many years was the most elegant residence in the community. Some years later he sold his store to Mr. O'Donnell. In 1912, this store was being run by C. A. Rossman when the building and much of the merchandise were destroyed by fire. Mr. Day also built the town hall and the Palace Hotel, which many years later was torn down and rebuilt on the same location to house Jake Walters' machine shop.

Another store was being operated in 1879 under the name of Cushing Brothers; a few years later, E. A. Cushing was listed as the owner. In 1904, this store was taken over by Frank Mecham in partnership with J. C. Cox, an Exeter merchant. After the fire of March 10, 1912, which destroyed most of the businesses on the west side of Grafton's main street, he and Mr. Cox built a large brick building to house their stock (which had been only slightly damaged). Mr. Mecham continued in the mercantile business until his retirement in 1946.



Mecham's Store after fire on March 10, 1912. Left to right: Frank Mecham, Frances Muller, Carl Eller.

The first grocery and dry-goods store in Grafton was, as noted earlier, opened by Captain P. S. Real. It was taken over in 1875 by W. G. Hainey and moved to a new location. This business remained in the Hainey family until 1940, when the stock was liquidated and the building torn down.

It is not known whether these persons were the first to follow their particular business or profession in Grafton, but in 1879 these names were in the business directory: Edward Brophy, hardware store; F. F. Combs, meat market; N. J. Shenck, proprietor Cooper House (hotel); D. Easton, blacksmith; C. H. Eggleston, attorney-at-law; H. C. Johnston, agricultural implements; J. W. Price, grain and coal; and J. M. Spandau, drugs, paints, books, etc.

In 1882, Dr. Charles Ballard set up practice in Grafton, and R. J. Blackburn established a livery stable. The Grafton Gazette was being published by H. C. Hensel, and Mrs. C. A. Richards opened another hotel, the Grafton House. There were two other attorneys, George H. Ryman and T. B. Tolls. Dr. John W. Archard set up his practice in 1894 and continued in it until 1907 or 1908. He was followed by Dr. Grey, and later Dr. Sweeney practiced for some years. In 1915, Dr. C. S. Hubbard began a practice which he continued until his death,



Photo from Walt Thomas Grafton Main Street (Washington Ave.), about 1915, looking north from corner of Omaha St.



The James Store in 1899. Left to right: E. H. S. James, Ruth James, William Basserman.

except for an eight-year period during which he practiced elsewhere. During this interval, Dr. Archard returned to Grafton for a short time, and several other doctors, including Dr. Bayles and Dr. Sterling also practiced. In 1931, Dr. Hubbard retired, but remained in Grafton until his death in 1940. He was Grafton's last resident doctor.

E. H. S. James came to Grafton in 1889 and opened a drugstore which he operated until his death in 1934. This was the last drugstore in Grafton. Walter Thomas, Grafton's barber, set up his business on the east side of the street after the fire destroyed his original shop. In 1912, Brown Brothers of Sutton built a brick building south of the Mecham store, which has housed a restaurant and pool hall until recently. Sadie and Bert Willy were the first operators of these businesses in the new building. It now (1967) houses Keller's Bar.

Grafton has had three major fires. The first, some time before 1900, burned George Warren's elevator. On March 10, 1912, a fire burned out at least five business places on the west side of the street: Frank Conrad's meat market, the pool hall operated by Tony Green, the post office, Walter Thomas's barber shop, and the C. A. Rossman general store. A



Photos from Ernest Kleinschmidt (left) and Walt Thomas (right) After the fire on Oct. 16, 1929—Mecham's store on left, ruins of bank building on right.



Grafton Main Street about 1930, looking north from corner of Omaha St. and Washington Ave.

Civil War cannon which had been donated to the town by Congressman Charles H. Sloan, and which was stored in the pool hall, was destroyed. The third fire, on October 16, 1929, destroyed the bank building, a restaurant, and a meat market. Frank Mecham's store was damaged by the two-story brick wall of the bank which toppled over on it.

Two dreadful accidents have happened on Main Street where it crosses the railroad. The first was in the summer of 1891, when Nebraska was being visited by very heavy rains. The Union Pacific tracks along the Platte River had been washed out; the company asked for the privilege of running some of its fast trains over the Burlington line, and this was granted. On the afternoon of June 26, a fast U.P. train was going west just ahead of our local afternoon train. Maria H. (Mrs. Joseph) Tatro was to take the afternoon local, and Grace L. (Mrs. George) Hainey was walking with her to the station. They heard the whistle and started to hurry. Just as they reached the track, Mrs. Tatro stumbled. Mrs. Hainey reached to help her, and both were run over by the U.P. train. Mrs. Hainey's little boy was running along behind, but someone stopped him.

The other accident happened at the same place, many years later, on August 8, 1920. Jim Colman was bringing his mother home from morning church when a fast train was going through town. Jim didn't see the train; their car was struck, and both were killed.

Schools

The village of Grafton has maintained good schools through the years. There have been three buildings. The first was a one-room schoolhouse on the east side of town. The second was a two-story building, with three rooms on each floor. This was finally outgrown, and the present brick building was erected in 1914. The first graduating class was that of 1885. Over the years, Grafton graduates have entered many walks of life and are widely scattered over the United States. The townspeople were the kind that thought first of their churches and their schools; and any project started by the school always brought out a good crowd and received the support of the community.



Photo from Grace Shroyer The second school building constructed in District 16.



Grafton Public School (District 16), erected in 1914. The high school was closed at the end of the school term in May, 1956, and it reverted to a Class I school. As of 1967, it was classified as a Class I school with 5 teachers and an enrollment of 80 pupils.

Churches

St. Helena's Church (Catholic)

Back in the late 70's, the early pioneers blazed the way and arrived in the vicinity of Grafton, 60 miles west of Lincoln on the Burlington R.R., only to find that churches were a luxury out here, and as such were few and far apart.

Some of the early settlers were Schroers, Schafs, McDonalds, Reals, Schmitzes, Russells, O'Briens, Zierens, Kellers, Weisenborns, Donovans, Stahls, Rolfes, Ryans, Schencks, and Fitzgeralds.

Catholic services were held for some time in the railway section-house home of George Schroer, north and west of the Wilson elevator. This good family spared no pains to make visiting priests and fellow Catholics at home in their temporary house of worship. Later the hospitable home of Patrick S. Real, Sr., was placed at the disposal of priests and worshipers to serve their religious needs.

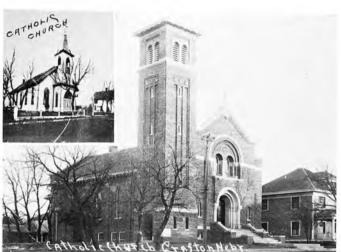
Services were held twice a month until the building of the first Catholic church in Grafton (which was also the first church erected in the township), completed in the late spring of 1880. This was a major undertaking and meant great sacrifices to provide a suitable church for a growing congregation. Many memories still cling about the old church that in those days was a Christian landmark on the plains.



Photo from Walt Thomas Grafton High School Glee Club in 1914. Left to right: Faye Hawkins, Marie Cushing, Margaret McKeon, Mary Mueller, Elsie Schalenberg, Ethel Blaesi, Ruth Hainey, Marie Finnegan, Nellie Halligan, Claire Hawkins, Marie Olexa, Mildred Sharkey, Hildegarde Bauer, Esther Kahm, Laverna Finnegan.



Grafton High School Band led by Prof. Baker in 1912-1913. Left to right: John McKeon, Tom Mueller, Clay Whitcomb, Gordon Miles, Andrew Schaf, Bert Frederick, Clarice Kahm, John Keenan, Tim Hoarty, Tom Finnegan, unidentified boy, Leo Schaf, unidentified boy, Albert Radford, Kenneth Cushing, Frank Hainey. Note James drugstore at right of picture and Hotel in background, center.



St. Helena's Catholic Church, 1922, (photo from Mrs. Frank Rolfes) (inset) shows first Catholic Church, erected in 1880.

The present church grounds—comprising Lots 270, 271, 272, and 273, Block 23—were donated to the church by Patrick S. Real, Sr. The south half of the cemetery grounds of 2½ acres was also donated by Mr. Real.

There was no resident priest in charge until the spring of 1885. During those first years several priests, including Fathers Ambler, Jennett, and Lecklughtner, came from Exeter to hold services.

Late in 1884, efforts were made to establish a rectory in order to secure a resident priest. This building was completed in the spring of 1885. Father William Murphy was the first resident priest. He was followed, in 1887, by Father J. E. English. Nine months later came Father Thomas Corcoran, who was here for 10 years. During his pastorate all the debts contracted in the building of the church and rectory were paid in full.

In August, 1897, the Rev. D. G. Fitzgerald took charge. He built an addition to the church, which improved its appearance and provided better accommodations for its increased membership.

Father J. W. Loughnot next held the pastorate, beginning in the spring of 1906, for nine months. In January, 1907, came Father William McKenna, who served until 1911. In his time here, he had modern conveniences placed in the old house. His health failed, and he was forced to seek a change. For the next few months, the pastor in charge was Father E.

F. Fitzpatrick, who was a college teacher; finding pastoral work not to his liking, he shortly returned to his college chair.

Father Patrick J. Healy was appointed May 11, 1911. As the 40-year-old frame buildings were showing wear and tear, he took steps to erect a modern two-story rectory. Started in the fall of 1912, this was completed in March, 1913, at a cost of \$5,000. The architect was C. W. May of Hastings, and L. V. Peterson of southwest Grafton was the contractor. The chairman of the building committee was Father Healy; the treasurer was James F. Burke; and the other members of the committee were John W. Fennell, John O'Brien, Sr., John Merten, Joseph Bauer, and Tom Fitzgerald.

On May 21, 1916, at a general meeting of members, the pastor proposed starting a building fund toward erection of a new church. After earnest discussion, the matter was under way. Between that date and 1922, the fund was increased not only by direct subscriptions but also by the profits realized by the good ladies of St. Helena's from their bazaars, which were patronized not only by church members but also

by members of the community at large.

By 1922, the fund had reached \$18,000, and it was time to get direct subscriptions to see the project through. The building committee—the pastor, Tom Fitzgerald, and J. F. Stahl—secured plans and specifications for a new church. Leo Daly of Omaha was the architect and Edward R. Green of Hasting was the builder.

The old church had to be moved to make way for the new one, and the contractor took it over for \$400. The last Sunday Mass in the old church was held on November 19,

1922.

Some suitable place had to be found to hold services during construction, and Paul E. Hainey kindly donated the use of the Opera House. Here church services were held until September 10, 1923. Pews from the old church were used, so that the members felt right at home in the Opera church. The situation provided a kind of echo of early church pioneering in Nebraska.

Later priests at St. Helena's included Fathers Anthony Lutz, Edward Hagan, Henry J. Denis, Thomas Kadlas, and

Thomas Cain.

The present church is an attractive addition to the village of Grafton, besides being, more importantly, a source of spiritual help to its members, a temple in some small way worthy as God's House of Prayer.

—Mrs. Frank Rolfes

Grafton Congregational Church

The earliest records of Congregationalism in Grafton show that it began here in the 1870's. In 1877, pastors Warren Cochran of Fairmont and the Rev. G. S. Harrison of York held church services here during the year. On February 21, 1878, an organizational meeting was held in Tatro's Hall, with 55 persons present, with the Rev. W. S. Wills of Seely Congregational Church as acting moderator. Officers elected were Chester Ward and Augustus Ambler, deacons; R. S. Cooley, clerk; and C. C. Miles, treasurer. A building committee was also appointed, but plans to build a church were abandoned until later.

In January, 1882, it was voted to accept one acre of ground east of the schoolhouse, donated by C. B. Banton of Chicago. The church edifice was completed in 1883. Before this time, church services were held part time in Tatro's Hall and part time in the Methodist Church. Among early members were the Stuckeys, Haineys, Waggoners, Amblers, Tatros, Mileses, Carneys, Bossermans, Burts, Shoffs, McCashlands, Murdocks, Wards, Menzies, Cooleys, Combses, Dr. Bellond, and others.

Ballard, and others.

The Rev. William S. Wills was the first regular minister, followed by the Rev. A. Dean. The Rev. John B. Doolittle served six years and during his time built a parsonage. This was later sold to the Dean Stuckey family as a residence. The Revs. Joseph Herbert, E. H. Baker, John Andreas, A. A. Cressman, and C. L. Hammond all served before 1900.

In 1879, a ladies' society was first mentioned in the church records. It was known as the "Ladies' Congregational Mite Society." There is still an active ladies' group, known



Photo from Leo Schaf Grafton Congregational Church, erected in 1883.

nowadays as the "Women's Fellowship."

In 1904, during the ministry of Mr. Hammond, the church building was moved from the north end to its present location in the south part of town. During the early 1900's, some of the ministers serving the church were the Revs. Harry Triplett, T. J. Brown, H. M. Skeels, Samuel Unger, James Deans, and Julius Kraemer. The Rev. Thomas Brown was the first pastor to live in the new parsonage, which had been built by the Ladies' Aid. The parsonage is still owned by the church but is now rented to private families.

The Rev. James Deans of Antioch was with the church for two years. During his stay, the congregation, through the Ladies' Aid Society, in 1921 bought the unused Methodist church building across the street. It was given the name of Plymouth Hall and made into a place for church-related

activities and recreation.

The Rev. Julius Kraemer of Clarks followed the Rev. Mr. Deans. During his five years here, both the church building and Plymouth Hall were remodeled, improving both their appearance and usefulness. The Rev. Alfred Robertson followed Mr. Kraemer for one year. In 1929, the church celebrated its 50th anniversary, the minister at that time being the Rev. Howard Pyche. Many former pastors and members were present.

The period of the 1930's represented "hard times" for churches as well as for families. The Revs. Howard Lacy, John Craig, and Jesse Pruitt served as resident ministers during the depression years. Following them, the Rev. W. W. Wright, minister of the Federated Church of Sutton, served the church for four years. During this time he held services in Grafton at an early hour before returning to Sutton for his

regular services in the Federated Church.

The coming of Alexander Fales, of Rhode Island, a student at Doane College, was the beginning of a series of student pastors who served the church. The Rev. Mr. Fales had come to Doane College for his health, and served as resident minister for one year and one summer. He was followed during the next five years by several students supplied by Doane College. The Rev. Frederick Leavitt of Crete was the last resident minister, serving for three years. The Rev. W. C. Brewer, a retired Presbyterian minister of York, served one year.

In the summer of 1952, the Rev. Maude V. Mann began her 12 years of service with us. She was an Evangelical United Brethren minister who also served her E.U.B. church in Lushton at the same time as her service in the Grafton Congregational Church. In September, 1964, ill health forced her to discontinue her work here. During her ministry, both the church and Plymouth Hall were extensively remodeled and redecorated.

Miss Mann was followed by the Rev. George Bartell, minister of the United Church of Christ in Sutton, who assumed the duties here in addition to those of his own church. He came faithfully for more than a year, holding services here at 8:30 A.M., until failing health made it imperative that he give up the church in Grafton.

For a time we again turned to Doane College to supply our needs. At present we share a minister with the Fairmont United Church of Christ—the Rev. William Reitmeier.

-Mrs. Lloyd Kleinschmidt

Grafton Methodist Church

Late in the 1870's, a Rev. Mr. Chapin came to Grafton and held some special meetings, which resulted in the conversion of 40 people. It was then decided to organize and build a Methodist church; their building was completed in the early 1880's. About 1910, however, the Methodist organization was disbanded because many of its members had moved away. The old Methodist church structure was bought in 1921 by the Congregational Ladies' Aid Society, and it was remodeled into the present Plymouth Hall.



Photo from Grace Shroyer Grafton Methodist Church, about 1916.

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

In the mid-1920's a group of Lutherans in and around Grafton, desiring to be served, called upon the Rev. J. Witt, president of the Nebraska District of the Wisconsin Synod, to ask that a pastor be placed in their midst.

The first service was conducted by the Rev. H. Kuckhahn of Geneva on Christmas Day, 1927. Thereafter the parishioners were served by Lutheran pastors of the Nebraska District.



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1928.

On April 18, 1928, with the guidance of the Revs. F. Brenner and W. J. Schaefer, the following charter members organized and were elected into office: Harry Lentfer, president; Jacob Baumann, secretary and trustee; John Everts, treasurer; Edward Baumann and Sam Oberlander, trustees.

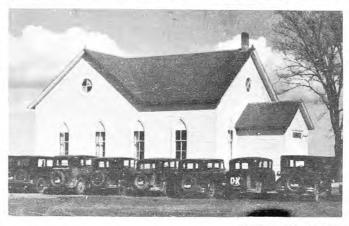
On May 22, 1928, this group decided to erect Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in the village of Grafton. A call was sent out to, and accepted by, the Rev. W. A. Krenke of McIntosh, South Dakota. He was installed on August 5, 1928, as the first pastor. After his installation, more members joined the church.

On November 25, 1928, seven months after its organization, the Trinity congregation of Grafton was privileged, by the grace of God, to dedicate its new church edifice. "God's word shall not return unto Him void, but shall accomplish that which He pleaseth, and shall prosper in the thing whereto He sent it." (Isaiah 55:11.)

—Pastor A. W. Fuerstenau

Free German Reformed Church

Salem Church, located on the SW ¼ of Sec. 7, T8, R4W, was organized in 1897. The church, built in the spring of 1898, is still on the same ground and has services every Sunday.



Free Reformed Salem Church, 1932. It was built in 1898, and an addition was constructed in 1960.

Fillmore City

(The following four paragraphs are drawn directly, except for minor additions, from Alfred T. Andreas's *History of the State of Nebraska*, 1882.)

Fillmore City was the first town ever started in the county. It was situated on a bend of the West Blue River in the northwestern part of the county, near the York County line, 4 miles N of the present town of Grafton.

The history of this place begins with the year 1870, when E. L. Martin located here and laid out a town on his homestead. On February 10, 1871, J. E. Porter opened a store, and on March 10, a post office was established and E. L. Martin appointed postmaster. It was not long until there were two stores and a blacksmith shop in operation. But in the fall of 1871, the Burlington railroad line (which was originally planned to come through this region) was completed through the county, running about 4½ miles S of the town, and with that rerouting went the bright prospects of Fillmore City. J. E. Porter moved his store to a new town on the railroad, called Hesperia, later Fairmont, and soon there was nothing left of the town.

In the following year (1872), however, C. M. Northrup located here and made preparations to build a mill. Together he and E. L. Martin laid out a town which was to be a bigger and better Fillmore City. To the original town site, which comprised the W ½ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 6, T8, R3W, West Blue precinct, there was now added the E ½ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 1, T8, R4W, Grafton precinct, and the precinct line was designated as the main street. The whole was surveyed and platted and filed in the office of the county clerk as a town site on December 10, 1872. A row of stately cottonwoods still marks the site.



Photo from William Swartz
Fillmore Mills in the early 1900's. Men on loading dock are Charles
Carroll and Lester Fredericks.

The work on the flour mill progressed, and in 1873 it was completed and the manufacture of flour commenced. Fillmore City never grew to be a town, however, and C. M. Northrup soon sold his mill to Welch & Price. Later millers were J. A. Ellis, Jasper Culver, Lowell Snow, William Smith, and Les Fredericks. Mr. Fredericks was the last miller. The mill was torn down in 1923.

The Hand-Book of Fillmore County (1884) says: "The town of Fillmore lies 4 miles N of Grafton on the West Blue, in the pioneer settlement of the county, and beyond its delightful location is mainly noteworthy now as the site of the Fillmore Mills, owned and operated by Welch & Price. These mills are well built and equipped with four runs of burrs, have an unfailing water power, and are driven to full capacity on merchant and custom work. Mr. Welch is also interested in the steam mills at Fairmont, is a successful feeder of heavy pigs, and belongs to the race of driving, money-making men."

While Mr. Welch was running the mill, an Indian squaw with a papoose on her back came by one day where Mrs. Welch and her little red-haired girl were near their home. She asked Mrs. Welch in sign language if she would trade babies. Not understanding the language, but wishing to be agreeable, Mrs. Welch nodded. The squaw then deposited her papoose on the ground and made off with the red-haired child who had captured her fancy. Mrs. Welch ran to the mill for help, and her husband and the men who happened to be at the mill followed the squaw to the Indian camp, about a mile away, and traded babies again.

People from as far away as Geneva came with ox-drawn wagons to this mill and spent the night, returning the next day with their flour.

One man living near Fillmore City occasionally gave liquor to the Indians. After enjoying a bit too much of this, they would run their ponies back and forth across the bridge south of town through the whole night, disturbing the sleep of the people of the community with the noise.

After the first post office at Fillmore City was discontinued, a post office was established in 1873 in the home of John Shoff and he was appointed postmaster. This post office was later moved to Grafton.

Bixby

The trading center first called Palmer, after Judge Palmer, but named Lyman by the C.B. & Q. R.R. when they built their branch line in 1886, is located midway on the line between Sutton in Clay County and Lushton in York County. The settlers of this community had great hopes and a 40-acre plot was provided for a town site, but the town never developed.

In the early 1920's, when it was discovered that this place was being confused with another Lyman in the western

part of the state, the name was changed to Bixby to honor the brother of the depot agent at Lushton, who was a wellknown Nebraska writer of that time.

Shortly after the branch line between Fairfield and Stromsburg was completed, an elevator was built at Lyman by Philip Schwab and August Groshans, and stockyards were constructed. Jacob Shroyer was a livestock buyer for many years and shipped many hundreds of hogs and cattle from Lyman and Bixby.

In 1901, John Eberhardt was operating the elevator for the Nebraska-Iowa Grain Company. Fred Ulmer followed him as manager in 1908 and soon after opened a small grocery store. Later managers were Adolph Trautman and Gilbert Trautman. In 1943, the Bixby non-stock Co-op Company was formed, and they purchased the elevator and are continuing its operation.



Photo from Calvin Serr Second building of the Bixby elevator, about 1910. The man is Fred

In the first elevator, horse power was used. The horse became blind from walking around in the dark room for such long periods. It needed no driver; when a new load of grain was dumped, it would start its rounds when spoken to. A gas engine replaced the horse power about 1910, and electric power has been used since 1948, when the R.E.A. lines were built through the township.

Ulmer, manager.

Many of the people living near Lyman-Bixby had come with the German immigration from Russia, where they had lived for several generations. They had been enticed to settle in Russia as a group by the German-born wife of a czar with the promise that neither they nor their descendants would ever have to enter military service. After the death of this czar and his wife, this promise was broken, and so once more they emigrated as a group and many settled in this territory. Some of the family names of this group include Serr, Trautman, Fuhrer, Peter, Griess, Hofmann, and Rauscher. Some others of the early settlers in this community were Frank Littlefield, Pete Frundall, Thomas Watt, and —Mrs. Lee Parsons

SCHOOLS

District No. 8 was organized on January 15, 1872, comprising Secs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, and 18. In 1885, Secs. 17 and 18 were attached to District 31, and in 1914, Sec. 9 was detached and added to District 29. The first teacher in the district was Lottie Milholland.

District 8 was dissolved in June, 1965, and its territory annexed to District 2, Clay County, District 16, Fillmore

County, and District 95, York County.

District No. 16 was organized on January 20, 1872, originally containing Secs. 19, 20, 29, 30, 31, and 32. On March 23, 1876, Secs. 23, 24, 25, 26, 35, and 36 were added. The first teacher was Ezra Witter.

Through the petition method, in 1956 all or parts of Districts 14, 29, 66, 70, 62, and 74 were added to District 16. The high school was closed in May, 1956, and the school reverted to Class I. In 1968, it was a class I school with 5 teachers and an enrollment of 80 pupils.



Photo fram Lee Parsons District No. 29 in 1896 or 1897. Back row, left to right: Maude Pringle, Edith Allen, George Urmson, Willet Lugenbeel, Jim Urmson, Ernest Johnson, Ray Johnson, Henry Kleinschmidt, and George Brady. Second row: Teacher Alice Jackson, Stella Evans, Emma Ackerman, Chauncey Evans. Front row: Lee Parsons, Hetty Evans, Fred Shroyer, Andrew Ackerman, and William Shroyer.

The first school in **District No. 29** was held in a dugout on the Fred Schaldecker farm on the SW ½ of Sec. 2, Grafton township. There is no record of the number or names of the pupils, but the teacher, E. Clark, drew a salary of \$30 per month for a three-month term.

The district was formed in April, 1872, to comprise Secs. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. A small frame building about 15' x 15' was erected on a hill overlooking the valley through which School Creek runs. This was near the center of the district, on the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 11. Later this building was enlarged to about 15' x 30' and still later a large hall was added onto the west end.

In October, 1873, Secs. 1 and 12 were dropped, but on June 15, 1880, the SW ¼ of Sec. 12 was again added. On January 25, 1924, Sec. 9 was added. The small frame building erected in the 1870's and later enlarged served the needs of the community until 1932, when an enrollment of 40 made it badly overcrowded. A building fund had been started several years before, so it was possible to erect a modern building. With the support of a very active P.T.A., District 29 became the first Superior Standard school in the county. This



Photo from Lee Parsons
District No. 29—First Superior Standard school in the country (erect-

high degree of efficiency was maintained for several years, but with the enlargment of farms and consolidation of districts, which were trends of the times, the number of pupils decreased until, in 1956, the district was dissolved and an-

ed in 1932).

nexed to District 16 at Grafton.

A partial list of the teachers who presided over District 29 before the turn of the century includes: E. Clark, Anna Brown, Shadrack Doty, Dora Kaufman, W. D. Ambler, Mary Shroyer, Susan Willis, Anna B. Waggoner, Eva Irwin, Frank Brannick, Alice Wallace, Adelade Allen, Drusey Miles, Alice Jackson, and Grace Fitzgerald.

District No. 31 was organized on March 24, 1872, to include Secs. 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33. In 1873, Secs. 19, 21, and 28 were attached to District 31. Since that last change, the district has contained the same territory. The first teacher in District 31 was Emma Cory.

Before the 1924-1925 term, a new two-room schoolhouse was built, and ninth and tenth grades were added. This organization continued until the end of the 1941-1942 term.

District 31 is the only Class I, one-teacher school now operating in Fillmore County. As recently as 1964, it had an enrollment of 26 pupils; but as of September, 1967, the enrollment had dropped to 10 pupils.

District No. 66 was organized on March 18, 1873, composed of Secs. 21, 22, 27, 28, 33, and 34. The first teacher was Belle Fisher. On July 9, 1956, District 66 was dissolved and annexed to District 16.

The first pupils in what later became District No. 70 attended classes in the various homes in the community.





Photos from Erma Dixon and Wm. Swatrz

On left: District No. 70 schoolhouse (commonly called Fillmore School) in 1952. On right, students, 1910. Back row, left to right: Murial Dixon, William Oberlander, Malcolm Mart, Bert Frederick, Glen Mart. Front row: Ray Frederick, Florence Allison, Erma Dixon, Marie Oberlander.

About 1880, a small building— $12' \times 14'$ —was used as a school for a few terms, and then a larger building was erected about 400 yards to the south on a site which remained the district's school yard as long as school was held there. This was on the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 1.

Some of the early teachers in District 70 were Nellie Stevens, Ella Bennett (Mrs. John K. Waring), Mary Little, Grace McCashland, Lydia Merrihew, Hattie Matteson, and Ed Standard.

An Indian camp was made every winter within a mile of the school. The Indians often came to the schoolhouse and sat around the stove, and the teacher had great difficulty getting them to leave. They would go to the mill and beg for grain and then dance around a tree just north of the school with their small sacks of meal. They also took animals which had died of cornstalk disease, and the schoolboys would steal up to the edge of their camp and watch to see if any Indians were being buried as a result of eating the flesh, but no burials were ever seen.

Following the trend of the times, the District 70 school was closed about 1955 and the land annexed to the Fairmont district.

—Mrs. Lee Parsons



Photo from Mrs. Lee Parsons District No. 8 in 1890. Back row, left to right: Ann Millholand, Grace Labart Moore, Nora Baass Lytle, Emma Salmen Kleinschnidt, Ed Arnold (teacher), Lillie Fairbanks, Laura Labart. Front row: unidentified boy, Charles Baass, Bill Baass, Charles Salmen, Ervin Ely, Cora Ely Salmen, Ellen Millholand, Lillie Ely Ebert, Emma Baass Rath. Seated children unidentified.



Photo from Mrs. John C. Griess District No. 31 in 1912. Back row, left to right: Charlie Linder, Edgar Fuehrer, Louise Issler, Mattie Hungeker (teacher), Louise Griess, Erna Leitner, John C. Griess, Earl Cory, John Linder. Second row: Esther Ulmer, Dora Linder, Verna May, Sylvia May, Irene Griess, Frances Baas, Sam Issler, Calvin Serr. Front row: Alice Linder, Ray Linder, Gertrude Serr, Lillie Leitner, Lillie Linder, Ervin Ulmer, Rudolph Ulmer, Minnie Griess.



Photo from Mrs. Henry Rath District No. 66 schoolhouse in 1928



"German School" located on the Valentine Peter farm (taken in 1910).

FAMILIES





Photos from Lee Parsons and Leo Schaffer Keller, Alvin Moritz, Dick Nolon, Tom Colgan, Sam Marsh, unidentified man, Tom Mueller, Ed Marsh, unidentified man, and Al Burke. Front row: Emil Keller, Danny Hull, Emmett Real, Jack Halligan, Orin Foltz, Leo Coleman, and Leonard Finnegan.

"Charles S. Allen's 480-acre stock ranch, 4 miles NW of town [SE ¼ of Sec. 10] is a model stock and grain farm, well watered by School Creek and by wells with windmills. The house, barn, stables, feed yards, and 5 miles of wire fence cost \$2,500. Mr. Allen raised 10,000 bushels of corn, 2,000 bushels of oats, 500 bushels of barley, 500 bushels of wheat, and 300 bushels of rye last year. He has 40 acres of clover and timothy meadow, keeps 50 high-grade stock cattle (mostly breeding cows), feeds two carloads each of steers and pigs, has made the bulk of a \$15,000 property out of Fillmore County soil in the last dozen years, . . . drives work for all there is in it, hails from the Mohawk Valley, . . . and speaks in high terms of the country."

—Fillmore County Hand-Book (1884)

The farm and home of A. Ambler, the Fillmore County Hand-Book reported in 1884, "lying on the southeastern border of the town, is noteworthy for its fine thrifty groves of catalpa, cottonwood, and box elder; the long columns of shade trees that outline it, the substantial horse, carriage,



Photo from Mrs. Earl Vauck Mr. and Mrs. Fred Baass, early settlers (pictured about 1890). Fred Baass purchased his land from homesteader William Smith in 1883.

Grafton Township Homestead Map

John A. Smith	O. H. Parsons				Daniel George	Rebecca A. Ifill			Jičma H Malick		Jacob A Werts			
Thomas Milholland	Peter George				Abbie Chase	Winfield 5. Mattern	-		Fredri Schaldec	ick lker	Calvin . Adams			1
		George H. Franklin	Jacob H. Labert	William N. Smith			Annie K Shroyer	J. H. Dunagan					Joseph Frazier	Jasper Culver
	**********	John Schuler		John Linder			Benjamin Charles Dunagan S. Alles	5 0		7-7-7-			John K. Watt	George P. Wintersteen
John Haney									Joseph Lytle	Owen T- Lytle	Jasper Culver			
William C. Benedict	George Honey		1	7		School Land		15	Arthur Murdock	L	Norten Stanor	M. d		ii
		Daniel Ellison	Elieba Littlefie	A. eld Johann Fuhrer			Thornas Watr	Montgomery Robinson Daniel W. Besack	**				Joseph S. Le Hew	John L Jenkins
	9	-	Johann Rath	Peter Honey		zi	James Q, DeQuass	George U. Lytle			23		Phineas B. Jones	Ershine C Clark
Wallace Fairbank	Charles Dunning				William Wesley Jordan	John D. Slucum		Mente	Mathias Marlott	Daniel Delosa Angell	Andrew Jackson			
Thomas George Feigh Gell	Warren G, Hull		2	19	Orin Belknap	Lemuel L. Evans		27	William Pitts	Juseph Tatro		Jenathan Tatro		
	Edwin Gundall	Harry Philp		W. H. Gould			Zens Alonto Doty A. Daty	Franklin W Hart						
		Lane R. Briggs		Miles L. Locke			Benjamin Hanger	Elizabeth Stevens			5		Sc	hool Lami

and grain barns; the strong crops of corn and small grains grown the past season, and the well-bred herd of high-grade shorthorns and pigs which Mr. Ambler is steadily improving. He came in '75, from Wisconsin, and made a most fortunate location, has increased his means 300 per cent, is an earnest Christian man, and is delighted with the country."

-Mrs. Ernest Kleinschmidt

William H. Bosserman, known as "Uncle Billy," was born in Licking County, Ohio, in 1842. He spent three years of service in the Civil War and was mustered out on June 22, 1865, at Salisbury, North Carolina. In 1871, he came to Fillmore County, where he homesteaded in West Blue township and erected a small frame house with lumber he hauled from Crete. He moved in 1877 to the then new village of Grafton and worked at the carpenter's trade. He also conducted a furniture store and in 1897 was appointed postmaster by President William McKinley. The Bossermans had four sons: Harry, Charles, William, and John.—Mrs. Ernest Kleinschmidt

Of A. W. Chase, whose 160-acre farm lay 2 miles E of Grafton, the Fillmore County Hand-Book (1884) said that the farm, "upon a commanding divide, is one of the most valuable quarter-sections in this division of the county. It is improved with a comfortable home, convenient stables, sheds, and feed yards; a well and windmill, a fine orchard and plenty of small fruits; extensive bluegrass lawns, embellished with 30 varieties of shade trees; heavy sheltering groves, long columns of forest trees, and well-sheltered feed lots stocked to tame grasses. Mr. Chase grows 3,000 bushels of corn and good crops of small grain, feeds 40 prime pigs and keeps a small herd of cattle. He came here in 1870 from Illinois without a dollar, borrowed money to pay the entry fee upon his land, and now owns this model farm; has a quarter-section of wild land south of the county seat, and could sell his personal and real property for \$8,000 or \$9,000. Mr. Chase has just closed a year of highly creditable service as county treasurer, is a gentleman of liberal and progressive views, excellent judgment and executive gifts, . . . and charitable

"Jasper Culver's 170-acre West Blue Farm, lying 3 miles W of Grafton, is watered by the Blue and improved with groves, a good house, barn, stable, and orchard, is in a good state of cultivation, and is one of the best of the old homesteads in this region. Mr. Culver also owns a 160-acre farm 3 miles NW of town [NE ¼ of Sec. 14], upon which he has a thrifty grove of 40 acres, embracing several varieties of native timber. He came here a dozen years ago from Ohio, with little means, has now town and country estate worth \$8,000, is a live, pushing, reliable man of excellent standing . . . "

-Fillmore County Hand-Book (1884)

under plow. The farm is all bottom land and was settled as early as 1866 by Mr. Dixon, who broke the first prairie and planted the first crop in the county in 1867. He came here from Pennsylvania, with a single horse and \$10, has quietly held the situation through all the ups and downs of pioneering, has now one of the finest bottom-land farms in the county, and is worth, in personal and real estate, close to \$9,000."

—Fillmore County Hand-Book (1884)

One whose history should be included with those of the early settlers of Grafton township is **Shadrack Doty.** Very little definite knowledge about his origin or family is obtainable, but many of the younger pioneers remembered him as one of their first teachers, and all of them agree that he was a "good teacher." One recalled that he never failed to begin each school day with prayer.

As early as 1871, Mr. Doty was teaching in District 8, and records show that he later taught in Districts 16, 29, 66, 11, and 2, and in other schools outside Fillmore County. His ambition was to continue in his profession for 50 terms, and it is said that he missed this goal by just one term.

His tombstone in the Grafton cemetery bears the dates November 20, 1852, to July 28, 1912.

On the earliest maps available of Grafton township more than a section of land is listed in the names of Shadrack, Frances Ann, Alonzo, and Zeno Doty, the last three thought to be a sister and two brothers of Shadrack. Zeno Doty also taught school in District 66 for several years (1875 to 1878).

Another name on this map is that of Eli Oryall, who was a stepson of Shadrack Doty and also a relative of Joseph Tatro, on whose land the town of Grafton was located. Many people recalled the day when a small child of Eli's got lost during threshing time. The machine was stopped and the crew, as well as other neighbors, joined for many hours in the search. Eli himself was the one who, by lantern light, found his child fast asleep in the tall grass and weeds growing in the middle of one of the seldom-traveled roads of that time. A joyous shout from the father signaled the good news to the other searchers.

—Mrs. Lee Parsons

Daniel Ely, a veteran of the Civil War, married Susan DeHaven at Monroe, Wisconsin. Four boys were born to this union while they were still in Wisconsin. Daniel Ely, with his wife and boys, came to Sutton in 1877. A girl was born to them in June. Daniel rented a farm in Hamilton County and lived there until he bought a place 8 miles NE of Sutton, the homestead of Peter George (the SE ¼ of Sec. 6, Grafton). This place didn't have a house on it except a combination dugout and log cabin, cut into the edge of a hill. The first floor was a dugout, with bricked-up walls; the second-floor room, above the hill, was made of logs. The family



Nimrod J. Dixon Homestead about 1900

Left to right: Emma (Mrs. Luther Valentine), Lloyd, Mrs. and Mr. N. J. Dixon, Minnie (Mrs. O. S. Townsend), and John.

A mile below the Fillmore Mills was Nimrod J. Dixon's 320-acre stock farm, "embracing nearly a mile of river front, 30 acres of river timber, a good home, and 200 acres



The Daniel Ely family about 1888. Left to right: Clarence, Milton, Cora, Mrs. Ely, Orin, Gaylord, Mr. Ely, Alice, Lillie, Clinton, and Irving. Not in the picture were Mary and Grace.

all slept in the second-floor room. Three children were born to them in the log cabin, Irving, Lillie, and Alice. They lived there for several years, and then Daniel built a frame house on the hill.

They were living in the frame house when the blizzard of 1888 struck, on January 12. Four of the boys were in school. Daniel Ely rode on horseback to the school and told the teacher to keep them there all night. All of the children who lived west of the school stayed all night. The teacher, Edwin Arnold, lived 3 miles W of the schoolhouse and drove a horse and buggy to school. He had a wife and some small children.

Will Salmen had been to the flour mill in his wagon and he stopped at the schoolhouse as the storm began and took all the children living east of the school along with him. Gaylord Ely and Ernest Kleinschmidt, the oldest boys remaining, went to the closest neighbor's house (Will Keller's), and Mrs. Keller baked enough biscuits for them all to eat. The next morning was clear but very cold. The schoolhouse was about 1 mile SE of the Ely farm.

The Daniel Elys had 11 children, 6 boys and 5 girls: Milton D., Gaylord, Clinton J., Clarence A., Cora May, Irving W., Lillie Pearl, Alice Myrtle, Orin P., Mary Elizabeth, and Grace. Grace died of spinal meningitis at the age of two years. Daniel Ely, his wife, and four of the children lived on the farm until he fell ill and died in 1904. A few years later, Mrs. Ely sold the farm and they moved to town.

—Mrs. Lillie Ebert

The J. J. Fitzgerald family came to Nebraska on June 1, 1880. The family consisted of J. J. Fitzgerald, his wife Mary, four sons—John, Thomas, Edward, and James—and three daughters—Grace, Ann, and Ellen. The father and the boys came in a boxcar with their tools, implements, and stock. The mother and daughters came on a passenger train.



The J. J. Fitzgerald family in 1910. Left to right: J. J. Fitzgerald, Sr., Ann, Mrs. Fitzgerald, John T., John J. Fitzgerald, Jr., Mrs. Edward Fitzgerald, and Ellen.

The family came from South Elgin, Illinois, where they had lived for a short time after moving from Chicago. Mr. Fitzgerald, a carpenter by trade, had been building houses in Chicago. But he had always wanted to be a farmer, so he decided to leave Elgin and come to Nebraska, as farm life would be better for the family.

When Grandfather was looking for a place to settle, he had two Irish settlements in mind, Grafton and Greeley, and he intended to look over each and then decide where to buy. But when he came to Grafton he met an old friend, former army captain Patrick S. Real, who talked him into buying land in Grafton, and so he never got to Greeley.

Their first home on the farm—the NW ¼ of Sec. 24—was a part sod, part dugout house on the side of the hill on which they later built their permanent house. This house was built in sections, and the result was floors of different levels and ceilings of different heights. Grandfather lived on this

farm until his death in 1913.

All the Fitzgerald girls became schoolteachers, and Grace and Ellen taught for many years in the neighboring schools. Edward became a doctor and practiced in Omaha. James became a lawyer and later a District Court judge. Thomas lived in Grafton. John and Grace lived on the farm until their deaths, as did Ann and Ellen except for a few years late in their lives.

—Mary Fitzgerald Hoarty

Albert F. Garbe, a pioneer of Fillmore County, was a native of Stillwater, Minnesota, where he and his father, Frederick Garbe, were engaged in farming. His father also did stone and brick masonry work. Hearing about the plentiful and low-priced land in Nebraska and about the homesteading possibilities, they decided to sell most of their belongings in Minnesota and come to Fillmore County. They loaded some machinery, tools, and household goods into a freight car and came along with their goods, arriving at Fairmont in April, 1879.

Photo from Mrs. Arthur Heckman Albert Garbe, age about 25



There were no homesteads available any more, so they bought 200 acres of railroad land in the NW ¼ of Sec. 1, Grafton township, at about \$10 an acre. Soon after arriving, they built a frame house on this land; part of this house is still standing. This farm is located on the Blue River, and the water and timber available were valuable assets. They broke some sod and planted a crop the first year. After raising good crops for three years, Mr. Garbe bought the SW ¼ of Sec. 1 adjoining their home farm. Sod had to be broken on nearly all the farm ground.

Farm prices were low, but crops were fairly good for the first 12 years. But in 1893 and 1894 drouth hit pretty hard; those years were known as the poor years. Crops were so poor that many farmers had to find other sources of income to pay taxes and make a living. So Mr. Garbe caught fish and sold them in surrounding towns and to farmers. He also shot jack rabbits during the winter and shipped them frozen to St. Louis. In 1895, rains came, bringing better crops and a return of better times. After eight more years of good crops, he bought the SW 1/4 of Sec. 12 in 1903.

he bought the SW ¼ of Sec. 12 in 1903.

In 1904, Albert F. Garbe was united in marriage to Augusta B. Hackbarth, who was a native of Custer County and a daughter of a pioneer homesteader there. To this union was born one daughter, Elsie, now Mrs. Arthur Heckman, who

is still living on the home place.

In pioneer days, the Blue River was a sort of hunter's and fisherman's paradise where fish and game were plentiful and easy to get. During the '80's and '90's, Indians were given permission to leave the reservations and hunt and fish and trap along the river. On one occasion the Indians camped on School Creek about ½ mile from the Garbe farmyard. On one warm February day Mr. Garbe visited the camp and found the squaws were washing. The little Indian children were running around naked while their clothes were being washed. Indians would come to the farm homes to beg for food or feed for their horses. The Indians also liked to play cards. To please them, Mr. Garbe would play with them, but he let them win, fearing they might become angry and could not be trusted. On another occasion an Indian came to the

farm to beg for hay for his horses. He was allowed to help himself at the haystack. Mr. Garbe was very much surprised at the large amount of hay the Indian could carry away in a bundle made with a rope sling over his back.

Albert Garbe told of another incident, where a neighbor had lost a large steer from cornstalk disease. The Indians learned of it, and when the farmer had skinned the animal they quartered the carcass. One Indian slung a hind quarter weighing twice as much as himself over his shoulder and carried it off with ease.

Besides the conventional farm crops and methods which are standard in this locality, Albert Garbe tried many side lines in farming, such as orchards and tame grass, selling fruit and grass seed commercially. He also kept bee hives and a pond stocked with game fish. In 1912, he operated an amusement park with a baseball diamond, a roller-skating rink, and a dance pavilion. He also built a dam and a power plant on the river to generate electricity and furnish electric power to the town of Lushton. As early as the 1890's he also had pump irrigation from the river.



Blue River Amusement Park power dam constructed in 1916 on the Garbe farm. Insert shows water wheel; photo below shows the dance hall at the park.

After a long and colorful life, Albert F. Garbe passed away in November, 1937, at the age of 77 years and 11 months.

—Elsie Garbe Heckman



Photo from John C. Griess
The Johann Griess family in 1875. Back row, left to right: Margaret,
Elizabeth, John, Christian. Second row: Magdalene, Mrs. Johann
Griess, Johann Griess, Henry. Front: Jacob (on mother's lap), Peter
Griess, Johann Griess, Henry. Front: Jacob (on mother's lap),

The Griess family originally settled in York County but moved to Sec. 30, Grafton, in 1901.

William G. Hainey, pioneer merchant of Grafton and one of the best-known citizens of Fillmore County, was one of the earliest settlers of this area. His parents emigrated to America from County Longford, Ireland, in 1839. William was born on the present site of Cleveland, Ohio, in 1840. In 1848, his parents moved to St. Louis, where his father worked for the American Fur Co. for three years, sorting hides and furs. There William spent his boyhood and youth attending school and receiving good business training by clerking in a store.

In 1859, he went to Pikes Peak, Colorado, where he spent some time in mining. Later he worked in the quarter-master division of the regular army on the frontiers, traveling over Colorado and New Mexico. He then entered the employ of the Overland Mail Company. He drove a stage from Fort Lyon to Santa Fe, then to Fort Union and Fort Craig, and from there to Parajo, New Mexico. He made one trip to Death Valley. In 1864, he resigned this position and came to Nebraska City, where he began freighting across the plains to Denver. He was thus engaged for three years, during which time he had three narrow escapes from the Indians. He then located at Green River, Wyoming Territory, where he helped lay out the town.

In 1869, he returned to Nebraska City and remained there until 1875, when he came to Grafton. Here he bought the town's first general-merchandise store, which had been opened a short time before by Captain P. S. Real. This store continued to be operated by members of his family until 1940, when the stock was auctioned off and the business closed. He was an extensive land owner, and held some 1,200 acres. He also had an interest in the creamery and for a time served as bank president.

He was married in 1870 to Mary B. Condon in St. Louis. They had eight children: Mary L., George F., Walter, Sarah B., Margaret E., William R., Edwin F., and Carrie. Mr. Hainey died on July 23, 1908. —Mrs. Lloyd Kleinschmidt

Patrick Halligan came from Ireland in 1877 and settled in Fillmore County west of Grafton. After starting homesteading with a tree claim, he sent for his wife, Bridget Kelly Halligan, who had been born in Drogheda, County Louth, Ireland. Their small son, Patrick, was left in Ireland with Mrs. Halligan's sister Catherine. Catherine followed later, when young Patrick was about five years old, and came to live with the Halligans.



Photo from Mrs. Rudolph Nehe Mrs. Bridget Halligan about 1900

The Halligans had a small three-room house, which they enlarged as their family grew. Their children were Patrick (born in Ireland), Mary Jane, Alice, George, Mary, Frank, Rose, Ann, and Nellie. Mary Jane died when she was small; George was drowned in the Blue River when he was 20; and Nellie died as a young woman, leaving two daughters.

During the blizzard of 1888, because the Halligans lived near the school, the children were all at home when the blizzard struck. The family all had to go to bed to keep warm, since they could not get out for fuel.

Patrick Halligan died of a heart attack at the age of 54, while working in the fields. Mrs. Halligan stayed on the farm with the children until Frank married. Then she, Rose, Ann, and Nellie moved into Grafton. The family maintained the land until after her death in 1939 at the age of 83.

Four of the Halligan family are still living: Mrs. Rudolph Nehe of Lincoln, Nebraska, with three of her four children (the other daughter lives in South Dakota); Mrs. Charles Carroll, with two children living in Nebraska; Frank Halligan and his wife (the former Elizabeth Miller of Grafton) live in Los Angeles with a son and daughter (another son lives in Nebraska); and Mrs. William O'Leary of Lincoln. One grand-daughter, who was raised by Grandmother Halligan, lives in Lincoln with two daughters, and her sister lives in the East. There are in all 11 grandchildren, 34 great-grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren. Of these only 4 of the grandchildren, 13 of the great-grandchildren, and 7 of the great-grandchildren have left Nebraska.

-Mrs. Mayme Carroll

Frederick Hofmann came to the United States from Odessa, Russia, in 1873, when he was 18 years old. In October, 1883, he purchased the NW ¼ of Sec. 6 from John A. Smith for \$2,500. Frederick Hofmann died in October, 1921, leaving this NW ¼ to his son Theodore, who farmed it until 1955. Then Theodore moved to Sutton, and his son Ruben now owns and operates the farm.

E. H. S. James came to Nebraska from Seaford, Delaware, his native home. He had a drug business first in Greenwood, Nebraska. He then moved to Osceola, and from there to Grafton in 1889. The drugstore was at first located on the west side of Main Street and was known as James & Meaker, then as James & Fulmer. About 1903, the store came to be known as the Corner Drugstore when it was moved to the east side of the street.



Photo from Mrs. James Whoughton The E. H. S. James family about 1900. Left to right: E. H. S. James, Ruth James, and Susan James. Bottom center: Glen James.

Mr. James married Susan Fisher of Fairmont in 1890. Her parents were early pioneers in Fillmore County, having come from Michigan in 1871 and homesteaded in West Blue township. Susan was an early Fillmore County teacher. To this union were born two daughters, Glen and Ruth.

Mr. James operated the drugstore from 1889 until his death on January 3, 1934. In the fall of 1934, Mrs. James moved to Hastings, where she lived with her daughter Glen until her own death in August, 1952.

John Hugh Jennett and his wife Maria came to Nebraska with their family on March 1, 1893, and settled on a farm they had purchased from the Tatro family 1½ miles W of Grafton. Hugh Jennett was born in Bureau County, Illinois, and his wife near Streator, Illinois. The '90's were not fruitful years for farmers, and so Mr. Jennett resumed his old work of school teaching for a couple of years. He took a great



Photo from Eugene Jennett Wedding picture of Mr. and Mrs. John Hugh Jennett.

interest in state and local affairs, serving as a member of the Grafton school board for a number of years. He also served on the board of county supervisors, acting as chairman for some time. Later he was named cashier of the Grafton Bank and worked in that capacity until his health failed. He died on February 24, 1901, at the age of 48 years.

Mrs. Jennett continued to live on the farm until 1912, when she moved to a new home in Grafton. She died on July 7, 1932, at the age of 87 years. The surviving children of the family are: Frank, of Dalton, Nebraska; Leo, of Exeter; Mary Jennett Casey, and Katherine, both of Omaha; Oliver, of Lincoln; Arthur, Elizabeth, and Alice Jennett Real, all of California. Emmett died in February, 1956, and Nellie Jennett McGerr in November, 1965.

—Leo Jennett

Henry Clay Johnson was born in Hayesville, Ohio, in 1834. He married Harriet Cipher in 1872, but she passed away at an early age, leaving him with five young children. He took them to a new home in Illinois for a short time and then pushed on westward to Grafton, Nebraska, in the spring of 1877.

The Burlington Railroad had received from the government a grant of every odd-numbered section of land for 20 miles on both sides of the railroad line and the right-of-way through every even-numbered section along the line through the entire state from Crete, Nebraska, on west. John D. Mc-Farland, Land Commissioner, appointed H. C. Johnson the company's agent for Fillmore County, a position he held for many years. He was also a justice of the peace for several terms.

Mr. Johnson spent the winter of 1896 in California and decided to make that state his home. He moved there in 1899 with his daughter Bertha and son Edrow and spent the remainder of his life there until his death in 1913.

Another son, Oscar, remained in Grafton. At the time of the 1888 blizzard, he and another man rode horses to the

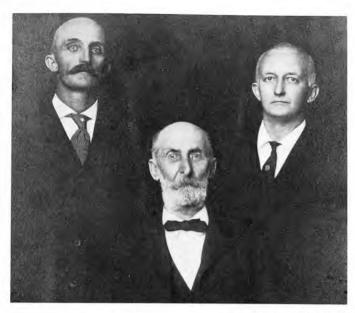


Photo from Ray Johnson Henry Clay Johnson and sons about 1899. Left, Oscar; right, Willis.

Grafton school with long ropes attached to their saddles. The pupils held onto these ropes and were led to their homes, if possible. When they reached the Johnson home, about a mile from school, their eyes were so plastered with frozen snow that they went no farther, and the rest of the children stayed there.

In 1889, Oscar Johnson married Malinda Philina Garrett and received as a wedding gift from his father, H. C. Johnson, a deed to a farm on the NE ¼ of Sec. 2. This had been homesteaded by Jacob Werts in 1866. Oscar and his wife moved to this farm in 1894 and suffered through the terrible drouth of that period. During this time he raised many hogs but no grain because of the drouth, and so he turned the sows loose to raise their own litters. One sow wandered to the farm of a neighbor, Rudolph Salmen; when he reported this to Mr. Johnson, he was told to keep the hogs if he could feed them.

The Oscar Johnsons had two sons, Ernest and Ray. In 1920, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson retired from the farm and moved to Grafton, where they spent the remainder of the lives. Mrs. Johnson died in 1932, and Oscar Johnson passed on in 1940.

—Ernest Johnson

Thomas Keenan and his son Peter purchased the SE ¼ of Sec. 27 from the C. B. & Q. R.R. for \$8 per acre in 1877. This farm is presently owned by the heirs of John N. Keenan, son of Peter. Thus three generations of Keenans have been the only owners of this land which is now being farmed by Francis and Jerry Keenan, sons of John N. Keenan.

—Thomas J. Keenan





Mr. and Mrs. Peter Keenan—taken on their Golden Wedding Anniversary, May 30, 1937.





John Linder family pictures. Left: Mr. and Mrs. Linder in 1865. Right: taken in 1890. The Linder children in 1890; Left to right: Jenny, Charley, John, Belle.

John Linder, born in Canton Berne, Switzerland, in 1835, emigrated in 1852 to Wisconsin, where he lived for two years in Milwaukee. He then went to Monroe, Wisconsin, where he and his father conducted a meat market for several years. On October 7, 1861, he enlisted in Co. K, 9th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, and served 3 years and 2 months, re-

ceiving his discharge on December 5, 1864.

John Linder and Elydia George were married in 1866. In 1872, with their two little girls, they left by covered wagon for Nebraska, where they homesteaded on the SE ¼ of Sec. 8, Grafton township. They lived in the covered wagon while they built a small frame house which was shared with other settlers until they could provide homes of their own. A few years later, John Linder was joined by his father, John Linder, Sr., and together they purchased the NE 240 acres of Sec. 17. After the death of his father, Charles P. Linder became the owner of the original homestead and the N 40 in Sec. 17, and John Linder III became the owner of the S 200 acres.

John Linder III died on October 15, 1954, and in 1955 his farm was sold to a new owner. Charles P. Linder died on May 18, 1956. The original homestead is now owned by the Charles P. Linder heirs.

—Mrs. Henry Pope

Arthur Murdock was born in Jefferson County, Ohio, August 17, 1842, and lived in Belmont County, Ohio, until he came to Nebraska. He enlisted on September 1, 1862, in Company E, 15th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, and took part in the battles of Stone River, Nashville, Mission Ridge, and many skirmishes. He was mustered out at Louisville, Kentucky, in May, 1865. He was married in 1869 to Cassie Dilworth. They had five children: Ada L., Edna, Mattie, Clyde, and an infant son.

In 1871, he located on a homestead of 160 acres, the SW ¼ of Sec. 14, Grafton. Later, in 1879, he took charge of a lumber yard in Grafton for Goodman, Bogue & Co. of Chicago. Around 1916 he moved to Denver, where he spent the rest of his life. The farm in Sec. 14 was sold to E. F. Kleinschmidt, who built a complete new set of farm buildings.

Herman B. Nehe was born in 1842 in Prussia. After serving with the German army in the Franco-Prussian War, he married Mary Gesana. Their wedding trip was a voyage to the United States. They landed in New Orleans and then proceeded to St. Louis, where Mr. Nehe helped build the famous Eads Bridge. They then came on to Grafton, where they lived in town while breaking sod and building a farm home 2 miles NW of Grafton.

To this union were born two sons, Rudolph and John. The boys grew to manhood on this farm. Herman Nehe died

in 1904, followed by Mrs. Nehe in 1907.

Rudolph married Alice Halligan of Grafton. They had four children: Herman, Agnes, Helen, and Raymond. The Rudolph Nehes lived on a farm 7 miles NW of Grafton until they moved to Lincoln in 1923. There Rudolph died in 1934; his widow still lives in Lincoln with the youngest son, Raymond. Herman Nehe also resides in Lincoln. He and his wife



The Herman Nehe family in 1892. Seated: Mr. and Mrs. Nehe. Standing, left to right: Rudolph and John.

Mary have five children: Marjorie Kannolt, Nancy Krueger, Gerald, James, and Mary Beth.

John Nehe married Sarah O'Connor in Grafton, where they lived on a farm until 1933, when they moved to Omaha. They had four children: Vincent, Gerald, Eugene, and Mary. Vincent died at 38, Gerald at 7, and Mary at 21. Eugene, the only living child, resides in Oakland, Iowa, and is married to the former Margaret Connelly of Omaha. They have five children: Nancy Lyman of Weeping Water, Mary Jane of Omaha, and Jeanne, Robert, and Patricia, all living at home.

The Nehe boys, Rudolph and John, passed on their early memories and stories told by their parents. While Herman Nehe lived in St. Louis, he bought a revolver. The year before they had a crop he provided most of the meat for the table with this revolver. This was during the time he was breaking the sod on the farm, which he bought from the railroad for \$8 an acre.

When Rudolph started to school at Grafton he could speak very little English, but he learned it rapidly in school and in turn taught it to his younger brother John. Their mother never did learn to speak very fluent English.

The main thing John remembered about the blizzard of 1888 was that Rudolph was in school two miles from home. He started home with a schoolmate, Jim Fitzgerald, but the storm soon grew so bad that he got lost. He finally found a fence and followed it home.

—Mrs. Eugene Nehe

Patrick O'Connor was born in County Mayo, Ireland, in 1857, and came to America when he was 12. Mary Ann Real, whose father and mother were born in Ireland, was born in Illinois in 1858. Patrick and Mary met and married in Illinois. A daughter, Sarah, and two sons, Mark and John, were born there; John died.



O'Connor family reunion, about 1915. 1-Patrick O'Connor, Sr., 2-Mrs. Patrick O'Connor, Sr., 3-Patrick O'Connor, Jr., 4-Mrs. Patrick O'Connor, Jr.

They moved to Nebraska and homesteaded 6 miles N of McCook in 1888. Children born there were Patrick, Julia, Margaret, Marcella, and James. The family endured the hardships of drouth and grasshoppers.

In 1900, they moved to a 120-acre farm ½ mile W of the present Grafton Public School. Shortly after this, they purchased a quarter-section ½ mile N of their first farm and established their home there. Here another son, Charles, was born. One night, while Patrick was away, this house burned down, and Mary took the children to the Fitzgerald farm. They later put up another house, but in 1919 moved to Omaha.

Patrick O'Connor died on June 30, 1934, and Mary followed him in death on December 10, 1935. O'Connor children who are now deceased are Patrick, Mark, James, and Sarah.

—Mrs. Paul O'Connor

Orin H. Parsons was born near Dorset, Ohio, on April 14, 1847. He was one of the younger members of a large family. He spent his boyhood in this community. At the age of 17, he enlisted in Company K of the 177th Ohio Regiment and served through the last 10 months of the Civil War. After his discharge, he came west in 1866 to make his own way in the world and landed in Farmers Valley, Nebraska. Subsequently he clerked in the J. C. Merrill general-merchandise store and Hoerger's hardware store in Sutton and the W. G. Hainey store in Grafton. He also served for a time as a guard at the Nebraska State Penitentiary.



Photo from Lee Parsons
The Orin Parsons family about 1897. Left to right: Orin, Lee, Don,
Sarah

On February 15, 1873, he received title to his homestead on the NE ¼ of Sec. 6 in Grafton township. Later he sold this land and, on November 9, 1877, bought the NW ¼ of Sec. 2 from J. H. Malik, one of the first settlers in Fillmore County, who had acquired this land in 1866.

Around 1890, Orin Parsons returned to Ohio and married Sarah Elizabeth Lee. They took up their residence on the Malik homestead, where he had built a small frame house, which he later added onto. Here their three children, Lee, Don, and Lucille, were born.

Orin Parsons died in January, 1917. The eldest son, Nathaniel Lee, still lives on this farm, which he purchased from the other heirs in 1930 after the death of their mother. A modern home was built in 1934 following the destruction of the original frame house by fire. In 1940, one of the first

irrigation wells in Fillmore County was drilled on this farm and has been in steady operation ever since.

—N. L. Parsons Mr. and Mrs. Valentine Peter, Sr., and their 11 children —Valentine, Jr., Elizabeth, Philip, Ann Marie, Katherina, Eva, Christina, Andrew, Margaret, Philipina, and Hannah—came from Odessa, Russia, arriving in Sutton on November 11, 1878, Sutton was chosen because relatives had settled there. The family lived with these relatives until they built a sod house on land purchased from the railroad, the N ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 28. He later added to his holdings, and one 80 (the S ½ of the NW ¼) is still owned by William Peter, a grandson. Their sod house was well constructed; it remained intact until about 1916. Onto the sod house, in the '80's, they built a frame addition which is still standing.



Photo from Mrs. Hannah Nuss Mr. and Mrs. Valentine Peter in 1880

The Peters experienced all the hardships of pioneer life, such as grasshoppers, drouth, and hail. At one time, a prairie fire started from the smokestack of a railroad engine threatened the farmstead. Indian squaws with papooses on their backs were frequent visitors, begging for money and also asking for any animals that had died.

Three of the Peter children were in school at the time of the great blizzard of 1888. The teacher dismissed school, and these children walked a mile and a half to their home. The older brother took the two little sisters by the hand and followed the fence. The girls' arms were frostbitten. In the meantime, the father and another daughter had started with a horse and buggy to get the schoolchildren, but lost their way. They let the horse choose his way, and he brought them back home safely.

Valentine Peter, Sr., passed away January 9, 1914, at the age of 83. Two daughters, Mrs. Hannah Nuss, aged 94, and Mrs. Margaret May, 92, are the surviving members of the family. Both live in Sutton.

—Mrs. John Rauscher

Michael Rauscher, Sr., with his wife and five sons, came from Odessa, Russia, and arrived in Sutton in 1875. He was a shoemaker and followed that trade until September, 1886, when he bought the SW ½ of the SW ¼ of Sec. 31, Grafton township, from the Burlington Railroad for \$500. In 1888, Michael Rauscher sold this farm to his son Jacob, who raised a family of seven girls and five boys there. Jacob added to his land holding. This farm, now occupied by Jacob's youngest son, Albert, and his wife, has been in the Rauscher family ever since it was bought from the railroad.

-Mrs. John Rauscher



Photo from Albert Rauscher Mr. and Mrs. Michael Rauscher in 1875.

Captain Patrick S. Real was born in Ireland on April 23, 1835, and came to America in 1851. He enlisted in the first call, in 1861, in Company E, 7th Regiment, Missouri Volunteer Infantry. Enlisting as a private, he was promoted to sergeant, lieutenant, and captain. He participated in 25 general battles, was wounded at Atlanta, Georgia, and Mission Ridge, Tennessee, and was mustered out at Atlanta in 1864. Although Patrick fought under the Stars and Stripes, his brother James joined the Southern army and was killed in the battle of Shiloh while Patrick was fighting in the same battle on the other side.

Patrick married Ellen Purcel, a native of Ireland, at Henry, Illinois, in 1865. They had nine children: Mary Ellen, Thomas, Emmett F., Winnefred, William, Patrick, Philip, James, and Agnes. He came to West Blue precinct in 1872, locating on a soldiers' homestead in Sec. 20, T8, R4W. He later acquired a considerable amount of real estate in Grafton precinct, where he established his residence and built, on a hill overlooking the town of Grafton, a large home which

was a community landmark for many years.

Patrick Real, initially a farmer and stock-raiser, built and kept the first store and the first lumber yard in Grafton. He also built the first elevator, bought the first grain, and built and kept the first hotel. He donated land for both the present cemetery and the Catholic church building. He reserved 65 grave plots for his family—visualizing, no doubt, that his children would remain in the area, raise large families, and be buried there. However, only four members of the Real family are interred there: Captain Real, who died on May 23, 1893, his wife Ellen, his son William, and an infant grandson.

—Mrs. James Real

"T. S. Russel, of the firm of Culver & Russel, owns a choice 150-acre farm on School Creek, 5 miles NW of town. It is improved with a fair house, orchard, and grove, has a good belt of native timber, and is devoted to mixed farming. Mr. Russel owns a good number of town lots and a pleasant home in Grafton, hails from Indiana, came here a dozen years ago, likes the country, and is a thrifty, enterprising, and successful businessman." —Fillmore County Hand-Book (1884)

Caspar Salmen came to America from Canton Glarus, Switzerland, in 1849, when he was 14 years old. He settled in New York and worked for a number of years as a delivery boy for a merchant, delivering goods from Brooklyn to New York City. While he was later living in Rochester, New York, he married Mary Krepts. They moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and later to Green County, near Monticello. Eight children were born to them while they were in New York and Wisconsin: Henry, William, John, Caspar, Rudolph, Anna, Fred, and Emma.

Mr. Salmen was a cabinet maker by trade and also did upholstering. He opened the first furniture store in Milwaukee. During the Civil War, he worked in Tennessee building artillery wagons for the Union Army and making soldiers' coffins.



The Caspar Salmen family in 1890. Left to right: Rudolph, Caspar, Mr. Salmen, Fred, Mrs. Salmen, Charles, Emma. The three smaller children are George, Chrissie, and Frank.

Photo from Lee Parsons

He came to Fillmore County in the fall of 1875. The trip to Nebraska was made by covered wagon with his wife and seven children, the eldest son, Henry, having gone to Hornell, New York, to live with an aunt.

Among the family possessions which they were able to bring to Nebraska was a walking plow which was tied on the outside of the wagon. The interior was crowded, so the three older boys took turns walking. They always managed to stop near a farmstead at night, where they purchased food supplies and the boys slept in haylofts.

They spent their first year in Fillmore County in half of the four-room house of the John Linder family, who had come here earlier from Wisconsin. The covered wagon and a granary were used for sleeping quarters until a two-room dugout was completed on a farm near by. Mr. Salmen contracted to buy this land from the B. & M. Railroad and in 1883 acquired a deed to the NW ¼ of Sec. 9 in Grafton township.

Besides the dugout, a windlass well was made and other improvements added. A frame house, still standing on the farm, replaced the dugout several years later.

At first, the farm work was done with a yoke of oxen and the team of horses which pulled the covered wagon. Indians were frequent visitors. While they were about, the younger children were kept in hiding, since, although they were friendly, they were not entirely trusted. Buffalo were a common sight in the valley which the dugout overlooked.

Within a year after the family arrived in Nebraska, the mother died following the birth of a son, Charles. Mr. Salmen shouldered the entire responsibility of caring for his family, which included several very small children, for seven years. During this time there was an outbreak of smallpox. He vaccinated all the children by first inoculating himself with a fluid from the pox of a neighbor. When that worked, he successfully vaccinated the family by scratching their arms enough to draw blood and then applying fluid from his own arm.

In 1883, he married Margaret Foltz. They had seven children: George, Chrissie, Frank, Elsie, Ernest, Ray, and Eva. They continued to live in the first frame house, to which more rooms had been added, until Mr. Salmen's death in October, 1901. After Mrs. Salmen retired to Sutton, different sons lived on the farm until 1946, when it was sold to Harold Griess.

Caspar Salmen had increased his land holdings and owned the SW ½ of Sec. 4 and the NW ½ of Sec. 16. This latter quarter-section is still in the family and is farmed by a grandson, Wesley Salmen.

—Mabel Kleinschmidt

Frederick Schaldecker came to the United States from Wittenberg, Germany, in 1869. In 1871, when he was 26, he came to Grafton township, where he made himself a dugout on the south fork of School Creek, and lived there for some time. Later he returned to Illinois where he met Sara Gustafson, whom he married in 1874. Sara had been born in Jonkoping, Sweden, June 21, 1846.



The Frederick Schaldecker family about 1882. Left to right: Frederick Schaldecker, Emma, Mrs. Schaldecker, and Jacob.

The couple came to Nebraska by team and wagon. When they arrived, they traded their team and wagon for two cows. In 1874, they homesteaded on the S ½ of the SW ¼ of Sec. 2. The south half of their 160 acres was a land grant from the government provided by an act of Congress; the papers, signed by President U. S. Grant, are dated 1874. The north 80 was acquired by homestead entry in 1880, with papers signed by President Rutherford B. Hayes. Their son Jacob was born in a sod house in 1876 and their daughter Emma in a frame house in 1881. Emma Schaldecker married Maurice Strater.

Frederick Schaldecker lived on his farm until 1909, when he and his wife Sara moved to Lushton, Nebraska. Their son Jacob married Margaret Tobiassen on January 18, 1905, and they farmed the place until 1939, when Jacob passed away. The seven children of Jacob and Margaret Schaldecker were born on this farm. They were Fred, Edward, Arthur, Carl, Twilla, Sarann Bernice, and Jacob.

Mrs. Jacob Schaldecker, Sr., remained on the farm until 1946, when she and her son Fred moved to Geneva. Jacob's son Carl Schaldecker still resides on the farm.

—Fred Schaldecker

John Schumacher emigrated from Germany in 1868
when he was 18 years old. He settled in Canton, Ohio, where
he remained for 10 years and then came to Grafton in 1878.
Here he bought the SE ¼ of Sec. 23, paying the railroad \$8
per acre.

In 1880, he married Mary Zacharius of the Sutton community. They erected a frame house on their land and made this their home for many years. They had eight children: William, Walter, Gertrude, George, Clara, Arthur, Homer, and John.

Mr. Schumacher later, in 1900, bought other land near by, and about 1908 built a new house on the NE ¼ of Sec. 26, which was their home until his death in 1910. Mrs. Schumacher and her daughter Clara moved to Lincoln in 1913.

-Mrs. Charles Linder



The John Schumacher family in 1903. Back row, left to right: Clara (Johnson), William, Walter, Arthur. Front row: George, John, John G., Homer, Mary, Gertrude.

"Adjoining Mr. Dixon's place is J. A. Schwartz's 320-acre farm, embracing 170 acres of river bottom, 50 acres of native timber, half a mile of river front, secure yards, ample cribs and stabling, a comfortable cottage, and thrifty domestic groves and hedges. Mr. Schwartz grows about 7,000 bushels of corn, from 400 to 800 bushels of wheat, 900 bushels of oats and 600 of rye, keeps a few cattle and some good teams, annually turns off 120 model Poland pigs ranging from 250 to 600 lbs. weight and recently sold a carload averaging 400 lbs. He is one of the best swine feeders in the Blue Valley, has a splendid estate, is a live, go-ahead, ambitious young Canadian who came here from Illinois in '78, with two teams and \$500 and has now personal and real property which could not be purchased for \$10,000."

-Fillmore County Hand-Book (1884)

Mrs. William Schwartz says that Joe Schwartz was her husband's uncle; that his father came in 1883, and while waiting for their own home to be vacated they lived in a log cabin, the only building left in Fillmore City, which was formerly the hotel. Besides this there used to be two stores and a blacksmith shop, also a post office kept in a store.

John Seitz was born in Wunsiedel, Bavaria, Germany, on February 10, 1830. When he was 22 years old, he emigrated to America and landed in New York, where he worked for 12 years. On April 14, 1864, he entered the Civil War as a sailor in the navy and served one year as a cook on the battle-ship *Gettysburg*. He was honorably discharged at Portsmouth, Virginia, on April 14, 1865. He then went to Sterling, Illinois, where he worked in the copper trade.

On November 22, 1873, he married Wilhelmina Kleinschmidt. In 1878, with their two children, Fred Henry and Kathryn Fredricka, they moved to Fillmore County. He bought the SW ¼ of Sec. 9, T8, R4W in Grafton township, paying the railroad \$7 an acre for the land, which was all prairie at that time. Four more children—Hermina, John, Jr., Sarah, and William—were born to them here. William died at the age of 3½ years of scarlet fever.

John Seitz broke up the sod, farmed, and worked long hours, seeing all the hardships and joys of pioneer life. He improved his home little by little until it was one of comfort and convenience, having an 11-room house and large and numerous outbuildings. He planted many trees, including apple, cherry, and pear, and also a mulberry hedge of which many of the trees are still alive. As the fruit trees died out, some of them were replaced by the eldest son, Fred, who also planted large strawberry beds and other garden crops. Many of the people of this vicinity yearly bought supplies of tomatoes. rhubarb, strawberries, and other products from this farm. The Seitzes also produced much honey. This was a thrifty place, and scarcely any piece of ground was without its crop of some kind.



The John Seitz family in 1893. Back row, left to right: Fred, Kate, Minnie; middle row: John, Sr., John, Jr., Mrs. John Seitz, Sr.; front raw: Nellie, Emma.

Mrs. Seitz always had a good garden and many flowers, which were her delight. The Seitzes retired from the harder farm work in 1904 when John, Jr., rented the farm, together with land of the Shroyer estate. At this time Mrs. Seitz remarked that they were retired but not tired farmers. The place was rich in alfalfa and prairie hay and always had good pasture. It was a good home for the family, where they raised a great deal of poultry but not many cattle or hogs.

John Seitz, Sr., passed away on October 30, 1922, and Mrs. Seitz on May 26, 1935. Their daughter Emma still resides on the farm and is the only surviving member of the family.

—Emma Seitz

Henry Serr, an immigrant from Russia, purchased his farm, located on the SW ¼ of Sec. 16, from the Kansas City & Omaha R.R. on November 4, 1884. His son Jacob took over the operation of this farm in 1891 and resided there until his retirement in 1929. Jacob married Christina Peter, and they had five children: Nora, Rudolph, Theodore, Calvin, and Gertrude. Jacob got possession of the farm in 1898, and his son Calvin in turn became the owner in 1951. At present, Henry's great-grandson, Raymond Serr, is residing on and operating this farm.

—Calvin Serr

John Shoff, Grafton's first postmaster, was born in Guernsey County, Ohio, on October 27, 1840, and lived there until 1852, when he moved to Fulton County, Illinois. In 1860, he moved to Sigourney, Iowa, where he farmed until he came to Nebraska. He enlisted in Sigourney on August 14, 1862, in Company H, 33rd Regiment, Iowa Volunteer Infantry. He participated in seven general engagements, was wounded at Jenkins' Ferry, and was discharged for disability on June 25, 1865.

He was married in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, in 1866 to Martha Taylor of Coshocton County, Ohio. They had six children: Serrepta A., William, Jesse, Hattie, Charles, and Martha

He first located in West Blue precinct in the fall of 1870, homesteading on Sec. 30 west, and held the office of justice of the peace for a number of years. Later he moved to the



Home of Henry Serr—on E ½, NW ¼, Sec. 21, Grafton township, on land the Serrs purchased from the railroad. Left to right: Christina (Mrs. John Fueher), Julia, John Fueher (son-in-law), Maggie, Henry Serr, Jacob, Mrs. Henry Serr, Rose, Catherine. Note sod house at extreme left in background.

village of Grafton. He was appointed postmaster in 1873 and held this post for 15 months. He was reappointed in the fall of 1878 and held the office over a long period. His son Charles also served as postmaster at a later date. John was also a dealer in clocks and sewing machines.

Mr. Shoff lived to the age of 94 years. He passed away at his home in Grafton in 1934 and is buried in the Grafton Cemetery.

Mrs. Anna K. Shroyer, with her husband and family of six children, left Grafton, West Virginia, to seek a new home in the West. They settled first in Schuyler County, Missouri, where some of their relatives were located. While they were in Missouri, her husband died, and in the next year (1869) she and her children—David, Jacob, Andrew, Mary, John, and Elvina—came on to Nebraska. They homesteaded on the S ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 10, Grafton township. At first they lived in a dugout near School Creek. After



Photo from Grace Shroyer Four-generation picture of Anna Shroyer family: Vina Parker and son, Mary Shroyer Miller, Anna K. Shroyer.

a well was dug on higher ground, they built a sod house near the well. Here they lived until a frame house was built years later. As time passed, more rooms were added. From the time they came in 1869 until the railroad came through in 1871 they drove, with team and wagon, to Lincoln for food and supplies.

The Shroyers applied for a timber claim on the N ½ of the NW ¼ of Sec. 10. This claim was granted at Lincoln on January 20, 1885, and was recorded in Fillmore County on May 3, 1886, as Timber Claim 106 in Nebraska. The papers were signed by President Chester A. Arthur. The Shroyers later bought adjoining lands. Their chief occupations were farming, stock raising, and buying and shipping stock.

Mary Shroyer taught school in District 29 during the terms of 1881-82 and 1882-83 and in District 66 in 1884. She and her husband moved to California in the 1890's, and in 1913 Mrs. Anna K. Shroyer, her son John, and her daughter Elvina also moved there. Anna Shroyer passed away in 1916 at Pomona, California.

Jacob T. Shroyer remained on the farm until his death in 1921. Andrew G. Shroyer purchased the SE ¼ of Sec. 3 on June 28, 1886, from the C. B. & Q. R.R. He lived there until he retired in 1919, after which his son William continued to live on the farm.

It is said that Grafton was named for Grafton, West Virginia, the town from which the Shroyers originally came.

—Mrs. William Shroyer

Joseph Tatro was born in Burlington, Vermont, on May 5, 1824. He moved to Monroe, Michigan, in 1833 and lived there until 1847, when he moved to Winnebago County, Wisconsin, and farmed there until he came to Nebraska in 1871.

He was married in 1858 to Phoebe Josslyn of Rhode Island. They had five children: Jonathan, Lewis, Lorenzo, Parriazade, and Alfred. He enlisted in 1863 in Company G, 36th Regiment, Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. He participated in 15 general engagements, was twice wounded, and was mustered out at Annapolis, Maryland, in June, 1865.

In 1871, he homesteaded on Sec. 26 of Grafton township. Later he acquired the eastern part of Sec. 25, where he assisted in laying out the town site of Grafton, donating a share of lots to the town company. He erected the first frame house in Grafton, after the railroad section house, in 1871, and engaged in the furniture and undertaking business.

After the death of his wife Phoebe, he married, in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, Maria Oryall of Clinton County, New York. He died in 1885 and was buried in the Grafton Cemetery.

The following account was written by Eva Waggoner Todd in 1966, at the age of 89:

Charles Willard Waggoner, with his wife and three children—Delos, 7, Eva, 2, and George, 5 months—came to Grafton, Nebraska, on March 10, 1879, a bleak cold day, he called it.





Photo from Mrs. Eva Todd Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Waggoner in 1895

My father, threatened with tuberculosis, was advised by his doctor to seek a dry climate, so he sold a good farm in Illinois and bought 320 acres 2½ miles NW of Grafton from a Mr. Wright. Later he added an 80 to this. Mother, used to the woods, streams, and fruit of Ohio, missed them greatly, but they had found the dry climate and Father lost his cough entirely in the outdoor life.

A native of New York State, he thought we must have a fruit orchard, and set out apple, peach, pear, cherry, and plum trees. Not many survived the hot, arid summers. He put out, also, a grove of black walnut trees for shade as well as future fence posts for the big pastures. These trees, too, failed to live long. One big success was a meadow of white clover near his dozen beehives. The honey was plentiful and very delicious. My father worked among those bees with bare hands and face, and never a sting. Watching him, I've had my eyes swollen shut and my hands aching from stings of those unfriendly insects. Mother said a bee would fly a mile just to sting her, so she never ventured near the hives. A stream called the Elk Run, which carried very little water except after heavy rains, meandered through the large pasture, and my sister and I loved to follow it, looking for the wild prairie flowers.

Father was a respected member of the community—men said "His word is as good as his bond." Mother was active in many ways. A serious sickness brought a call for her; we had no R.N.'s in those days, and many a life she saved through her good common sense and her willingness to serve. She helped slow pupils to learn.

She formed a club of young farm girls who met once a week at our home, where mother helped them with different forms of sewing and handicraft, and supervised the serving of refreshments.

She was a most ardent worker in the W.C.T.U., for Nebraska was very wet, and the results of intemperance were pathetic, sometimes tragic. Four of the brightest men of our town were victims of the "social drink": the banker, the newspaper editor, the pleasant lumber man, and our beloved family doctor. Paresis, insanity, delirium tremens, and suicide. I was forever impressed with the Biblical warning, "Wine is a mocker; whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise, for at the last it biteth like a serpent." I remember that the Catholic priest, Father Murphy, worked with the Union, for he had some weak brethren in his church and he was a real father to his parish.

Father and Mother had both been teachers in Illinois, and one winter the school board of the Allen district—Mr.

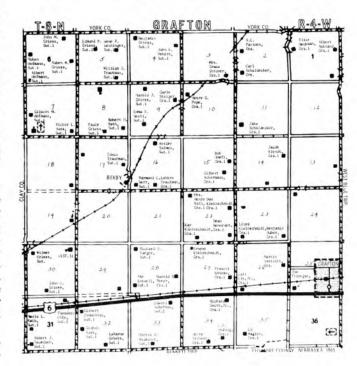
Allen, Mr. Stanord, and Mr. Watt—came to ask mother to take their school the rest of the year. It seemed that a young woman had been frightened away by the misconduct of the big boys, young huskies who came in when corn-picking was finished. Mother said, Yes, if she might take me and my sister, three and four years old. She welcomed these hoodlums and set them to work at higher arithmetic, civil government, current events, and bookkeeping, and got them so interested they wouldn't miss a day, even worked through the noon hour. When the term ended, they presented her with a handsome chair. The pleased school board coaxed her to teach a second year. Then she was persuaded to go to town as assistant principal for two or three years. Her pupils always spoke of her with admiration.

When Father retired from the farm, and I graduated from high school with a scholarship, it seemed natural that, when our Congregational minister, who was a Doane College man, suggested to us that a move to Crete would be fine for me and my sister to attend college, our parents decided to do so. This was in 1895. My brother Delos had already moved to Colorado.

George H. Warren was born in Concord, Massachusetts, and lived there until 1866. Coming west, he lived for a time in Hinsdale, Illinois, and Kearney, Nebraska, before settling in Grafton. In the fall of 1880, he began business as a dealer in grain, coal, and lumber. The elevator he erected then was enlarged in 1881 to a capacity of 20,000 bushels. It measured 48′ x 20′, was 25′ high, with a driveway 12′ wide, and cost \$4,000 to build.



Photo from Ralph Schnizel A group of hunters at the Zimbleman farm after a coyote hunt (1912).



Hamilton Township

(January, 1873, to mid-April, 1961)

[This first part of the history of Hamilton township, from here to the listing of schools by district, was written in 1961 by Mary Ethel Flory (Mrs. Charles Flory) of Shickley, at the age of 78. She prefaced it with the following note: "With sincere gratitude to each of the numerous friends whose contributions made the writing of this unit of Fillmore County History possible."]

According to data believed to be authentic, it was in the month of January, 1873, that Fillmore County was politically divided into 16 equal-area precincts (also called townships) having demarcations that as of now (February, 1961) still obtain. In the processes of choosing names for those officially defined areas, the second one from the west in the southernmost tier of divisions was christened "Hamilton." Technically, Hamilton precinct is Township 5 North, Range 3 West of the 6th Principal Meridian.

Concerning the choosing of the name "Hamilton" as a township designation, some conjecturers have opined that the appellation was a memorial tribute to the United States founding father, Alexander Hamilton, whose genius for affairs served the new nation in so many meritorious ways

Hamilton Township Homestead Map

Davis Davis	John Hyne			Henry J. Davis	John H. Lincoln			John J. Strader	John W. Watson Pearch Welden		
					Patterson Lincoln						
Robert C. Geggie	Martha George McBeth Snodgrass	i i		Robert Logedan	Daniel B. Linculn			Charles W. Cox	Herbert Sauer, Jr. Asa M. Johnston		
		Roswell B. Franklin Schelp P.Schelp	John M. Burgess			William B. Gray	John W. Yates			John A. Binler	William Glen
										Oliver P. Swett	
7		John M. Crofoot	Worthington Coffee		,	Newton L. Standish	Williant Zinn			James W. Barr	Robert T. Deakins
Mary E. Blood	A. R. Holsinger J. Greene							Cyrus Dille	Edwin Thurlow		
Madigan Benjamin F. Terry	Davis Miles F. Martin	1	17	Sel	houl Land		15	H. L. Joselyn			13
									Archibald Ward		
		Juseph A. Jennings	James Francis Arthur M. Flory Flory			Mary A Williams	John B. Hibbitts		r	Hugh L. McAnaney	Eleazer Ab Phillips T
1	9	Bowater Bryant	Willian J. Wagers	-	21	Stephen P Dille			23	David Ward	
						He)rs of Judedjah B, Chapman	John Birch				
John Williams	John F. McNee 5. A. Trucedell			Bradley A. Smith	William H. Wood			Harley H. Wood	Wilber Sikes		
Simon R. Malinda D Hölsinger Milray	Iwaac E. Allen		29	Edward K. Cobb	John L. Medlar		žī	Juseph H. Sikes	Lydia A, Evans		25
		Levi ft. Holsinger	Stewart A. Orr			Juseph D. Hamilton	Thos. M. Hamilton		1		
- 1	51	William F. Bradley	Eugene K. Fisher		38	Luciusti Beggs	Christian Maria C. Schmidt Hamilton		35	School	ol Land

that according, to the *Encyclopedia Americana*, "American history presents a no more striking figure than his." However, another well-supported tradition concerning the choosing of the name "Hamilton" holds that the act was a special honor accorded the then-contemporary citizen, Joseph D. Hamilton, a Civil War veteran and lawyer who, as a homesteader on that township's Sec. 34, was active in the organizing and promoting of both local and county welfare movements.

The emigrants who located in Hamilton Township during the very early years of its official history were, like the pioneers who preceded them to that area, mostly from eastern states, notably Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. In the main, Hamilton township's early population was comprised of young married couples, some of whom had children. Of that early populace, practically all of the adults were sturdy, energetic people possessed of refined sensibilities and high moral convictions. The most commonly-used language was English, though some other languages, especially the German, had some adherents.

TOPOGRAPHY AND SOIL

Hamilton township's topography as known to its early settlers included some bluffy terrains, especially in parts of its Secs. 11, 12, 13, 14, and 24; some nearly level lands; some gently rolling and slightly sloping areas; a few low hills; one almost-continuously watered draw (North Fork of the Big Sandy), angling irregularly through and from Sec. 7 until exiting from the NE ¼ of Sec. 24; at least seven minor draws of more or less temporary water content; one neverdry pond; variable-sized tracts of swampy lands; and some differing depressions that were, sometimes, ponds having fishing, hunting, and skating potentials.

Such early-day travel routes as there were, other than the angling prairie trails, coincided with section lines and were without benefit of grading and bridging. By the year 1961, techniques of surveying, draining, leveling, damming, irrigating, and surfacing, combined with specialized soil-conservation practices, had gradually, but markedly and constructively, altered a considerable portion of the early topography, notably the pond-prone places, swampy areas, and public roads.

In the years 1886 to 1887, two railroads, the Burlington & Missouri River line (subsequently called Chicago, Burlington & Quincy) and the Chicago & Northwestern line were, in that order, constructed across Hamilton township. The first one, in an almost straight east-to-west course, crossed Secs. 12 to 7 inclusive and the second one diagonally crossed Sec. 6 and the NW corner of Sec. 7. Both railway beds became, as of April 1, 1961, permanent parts of Hamilton township topography that, lacking any truly strategic village-founding site, seemingly became invested with a for-keeps novillage status as early as 1889.

By the year 1961, technical analyses had shown Hamilton township's predominating type of soil to be of crete (formerly called grundy) formation, although some spots, especially in Secs. 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, and 28, were found to be mostly composed of Fillmore and Scott silty loam.

SCHOOLS

Of the many problems that confronted Hamilton township's pioneers and later emigrants, none were more basic than the one involving procurement, as needed, of multiplepurpose premises usable for elementary schooling, temporary church centers, business meetings, social and educational get-togethers. During the years from 1871 to 1892, that problem was, in the main, adequately solved by way of the county's timely organizations of school districts that, in Hamilton township, eventually numbered eight. Thus, the citizenry in each of those eight districts, in the order of organization, was assured of a schoolhouse and such accompanying blessings as the name then implied. Even so, District 58 (Summit), one of the area's three school districts organized during the last pre-Hamilton year, had one short term of school in each of two sod-house homes previous to public schoolhouse availableness. That district's first schoolteacher, Frank Smith, is said to have, regularly, walked four miles to and from his teaching duties.

In due time, Nebraska's normal expansions and improvements in educational subject matter and teaching techniques led each of seven

of the township's school districts and the divisional parts of its eighth district to merge with a village-centered school district of its choice. Thus, it came about that Hamilton township's era of multiple-district schooling ended in the year 1953.1

In September, 1959, the only one of the eight schoolhouses constructed in Hamilton township, still intact and occupying its original site, was that one (Medlar) located on Sec. 28 in District 77. By that time, some six years of solitude had caused that schoolhouse to become strongly suggestive of Whittier's "Ragged Beggar Sunning." Had some magic provided gifts of thought, speech, and memory, that modern "ragged beggar," as era historian, could have named: (a) each of the 14 pupils by whom four generations of that district's Carl Heinrichs family had been represented: (b) each of the some 250 teachers who had a part in guiding Hamilton township's children and youth through paths of elementary learning; (c) each of the township's large number of pupils who had eventually acquired college or university educations; (d) the one ex-pupil who had lost his life while in military service; (e) each of some 25 pupils who had become veterans of war; (f) each of the several pupils who had become ministers of the Gospel; (g) each of the many pupils who had become public-school and church-school teachers; (h) each of the very large number of pupils who had achieved successes in various other lines of vocational endeavor. Certainly, the "historian" have continued by telling of schoolhouse business meetings and about schoolhouses having been settings for stirring evangelistic meetings, for week-night prayer services, Sunday church-school and preaching services, neighborhood literary programs, spell-downs, singing-class training, ciphering matches, quiz programs, special day observances, and last-day-of-school get-togethers. Too, the "beggar" could hardly have concluded without reminiscing about each of the large number of school-board members whose efforts had bulwarked the township's educational work.

TOWN HALL AND TOWNSHIP BOARDS

In the year 1888, the Hamilton township board named I. E. Allen, D. E. Smith, and H. Sauers as a committee to submit a plan for the building of a town hall and to lease, or buy, a suitable site on which to erect the said building. The ultimate result of that action was a 20' x 24' x 10' building, constructed during the following year, at a cost of \$300, upon the leased SE corner of Sec. 16, by Sylvester Lamb, a competent carpenter whose family home was on Sec. 19. The building project was, in the main, financed by a special two-mill levy upon the township's valuation that, in 1887, was \$129,337. (The valuation in 1959 was \$1,565,201.) The leasing arrangement was continued until in April, 1906, at which time the township purchased the 209' x 209' plot of ground constituting the town-hall site from Chris and Phoebe Lauber at a cost of \$75.

Throughout all of its years, the well-kept town hall had, as of February 1, 1961, adequately served as the precinct's voting place and as a suitable place for the transaction of all other of the township's official business. Too, until well into the twentieth century, it served the public in a goodly number of other valuable ways, especially that of being the setting at regular, irregular, and special times for organized religious activities pertinent to each of several different denominations.



Photo from Guy Brown, Jr. Hamilton Township Hall in 1967

¹ Statistics and other school data appear at the end of this chapter.

The earliest record (known to the writer) of a Hamilton township board meeting bears the date of April 3, 1888. That meeting was held in the District 59 schoolhouse. As of January 1, 1961, the aggregate of available records pertinent to township board meetings showed the names of 54 men who had served the township as board members. Each of 38 of that number had been a board incumbent for a period of two or more years. Those who had board records of six or more years were J. T. Wagers, 6 years (as clerk, Mr. Wagers called the April 3, 1888, meeting to order); C. L. Evans, 6 years; S. L. Strayer, 7 years; J. C. Rousch, 11 years; A. F. Wagers, 9 years; Ronzo Hedden, 14 consecutive years as clerk; Leonard Hillgren, 12 years; Henry Neiman, 10 years; I. N. Schelkopf, 8 years; August Frenzen, 7 years; Don Flory, 9 years; George DuBois, 12 years; Maynard Merryman, 8 years; Royal Jackson, 20 consecutive years as clerk. As of January, 1961, currently serving board members were Maynard Merryman, clerk; Robert Frenzen, treasurer; Earl Houck, justice of the peace. 1

CHURCHES

During Hamilton township history prior to 1961, there had, in the aggregate, been, at least, seven religious faiths represented in its variable populations. To a marked extent, religious faiths were the avenues by the way of which people of Hamilton township and its adjacent areas entered into co-operative relationships, from which church organizations, uninhibited by township boundary-line importances, emerged and, in variable times, erected church buildings upon such sites as, in the main, approximately centered the areas to be served.

Bethel Church (Church of the Brethren)

Although Bethel Church is not, geographically, in Fillmore County, but in Thayer, it is just across the line from the SW corner of Sec. 31, Hamilton township, 5 miles S of Shickley, and was founded by, and has long served, numerous residents of Bryant and Hamilton townships.



Photo from Bethel Yearbook, 1964-65 Bethel Church of the Brethren

Among the early pioneers in this neighborhood was James Edward Bryant, who, with his wife, homesteaded the N ½ of the SE ¼ of Sec. 14, Bryant township, in 1873. Levi Holsinger had built a sod house south of the present site of the Bethel Cemetery, on the east side of the road on the NW ¼ of Sec. 32 (the farm now occupied by the Allen Betty family). After the death of his wife, Levi Holsinger returned to Illinois. Mr. Bryant and other local adherents of the Dunkard faith met for a time in the vacated sod house and organized themselves into a Sunday Bible school that, in time, was officially expanded into a fully organized Dunkard church, later known as the Church of the Brethren.

On April 7, 1875, after a baptismal service held in a draw partly filled with water from melting snow, 54 persons gathered at the home of Simon and Carrie Holsinger, on the W ½ of the SW ¼ of Sec. 30, ½ mile W of the present Summit Cemetery, and organized a church, with the following charter members: S. R. Holsinger and wife Carrie; Alex Holsinger and wife Sarah; Isaac Wright and wife Rachel; J. E.

Bryant and wife Susan; John Fadden and wife Elizabeth; Reeve Miles and wife; Andrew Griffith and wife Elizabeth; Samuel Teter and wife Amanda; T. D. Van Buren and wife Mary; Wesley Teter, married; Unice Holsinger, married; Levi Beanblossom; W. G. Mills, William Wright and his brother Clark Wright, all unmarried.

The first Sunday School was organized in the Holsinger sod house in 1875, with James A. Flory, grandfather of Don Flory of Hamilton township, as its superintendent. From then until 1884, services were held in homes or schoolhouses, often the Summit school. James Flory, a proficient carpenter, located on Sec. 20, early in 1884 was inducted into the church's ministry and chosen to be supervisory carpenter for its church-building project.

The church acquired, for its sanctuary and a cemetery, a five-acre site "just across the way" in Thayer County, and there, in 1884, erected a building that, in due time, was given the Hebrew name "Bethel," meaning "House of God." Daniel Heiny, a Dunkard preacher who, with his family, emigrated to Hamilton township in the 1890's and located on Sec. 28, soon became a co-minister in the Bethel Church. As of the end of the year 1960, the original Bethel Church building had, at strategic times, been subjected to such remodelings, additions, and facility improvements as had kept it in continuing and, sometimes, markedly expanded service.¹

Summit Church

The first building constructed within Hamilton township's borders solely for religious uses was the Methodist Church located near the SE corner of Sec. 30 and dedicated on January 5, 1887. Specifically, its setting was part of an area donated about the year 1872 by the I. E. Allens from their homestead farm for use as a cemetery (then immediately needed) and for the church building that they hoped would, in due time, be erected thereon. The name "Summit." given to the church, was the same as that of the plot-sharing cemetery and, also, of the across-the way District 58 schoolhouse that, for some years, had served the Methodist organization as a worship center. Traditionally, the thrice-used symbolic name "Summit" originated with the Allens and was submitted by them when, in the middle seventies, they wished to make sure that their family name would not become a permanent appellative for the then-new, near-by District 58 public school.



Photo from Mrs. Tom Wagner

Summit Church-some time between 1875 and 1887

For pastoral services, the Summit Church was circuited with the Shickley and Carleton Methodist churches until 1903 and, later, with only the Carleton church. The Rev. David Fetz was pastor when the church was built. Subsequent pastors in consecutive order were the Revs. H. A. Ewell, E. J. Bird, Francis Deal, E. F. S. Darby, Findlay Smith, E. L. Wolf, C. P. Metcalf, E. D. Gideon, J. H. Stitt, and Mr. A. Reed.

The Summit Church's usually ample seating capacity was sometimes overtaxed. On one such occasion, the Rev. Mr. Gideon, as pastor, suggested from the pulpit that all who were sinners would do well to shrink up a bit, thus making room for more people.

Besides its regular Sunday church school and worship services, the Summit Church had a goodly number of other well-organized

¹ In 1967, the officials were Maynard Merryman, clerk (with 14 years of service); Rowen Kempf, J. P.; and Max Dowdy, treasurer.

This account is based largely on the original minutes of the Bethel Church of the Brethren. An account written in 1935, by charter member J. E. Bryant, for the church's 60th anniversary, and edited by Walker D. Wyman, husband of Mr. Bryant's youngest daughter, appeared in the Nebraska State Historical Society Magazine, XXVIII, No. 3 (July-Sept. 1947), pp. 187-195. On p. 193, Mr. Bryant states that the township was named for Mr. Hamilton, a pioneer Presbyterian minister.

religious interests, of which perhaps the chief one was the annual winter-time series of revival meetings that netted immeasurable benefits.

By the year 1906, natural causes had so shifted the early population of the Summit area that, in numbers, the Methodist Church's membership had become only a small fraction of what it had been in its earlier years. In that situation, dispersement of the remaining memberships to churches of other localities was agreed upon, and in due time, the church building was transferred to the Ong Methodist Church for use in an enlargement project.

After a devastating fire had, in 1948, destroyed the Summit schoolhouse, the one remaining early-day landmark of the Summit community center was the then unkept cemetery having somewhat more than 60 graves. However, goals for renovation and permanent care of the cemetery were taken on, in 1954, by a newly organized cemetery association that, in its early operations, was supported by contributions of both labor and currency, and through later years, with funds appropriated by the township. Thus, as of the end of the year 1960, a thoroughgoing cemetery renovation achieved some six years earlier, had produced a highly satisfactory cemetery status that had been, and was being, consistently maintained. Royal Jackson of Sec. 35 had, at that time, served the cemetery association as president since its time of organization and, as cemetery caretaker, since the completion of the reclamation project.

Salem Mennonite Church

The first Amish Mennonite emigrant to arrive in Hamilton township was Jacob Beller who, with his family, located on Sec. 28 in the year 1890. Others of like faith arrived soon and, very shortly, the Amish Mennonite families began holding more or less regular Sunday School services in the District 69 schoolhouse. The Amish Mennonite people's first minister was P. P. Herschberger, a temporary settler. The Amish Mennonite families organized as an Amish Mennonite Church in the latter part of the year 1891, and, for about 12 years thereafter, used the town hall for regular Sunday worship and Bible School purposes as well as for all other times of desired assembly.

Jacob Beller, Daniel Miller, Joseph Kuhns, Sr., Joseph Stutzman, Emanuel Kuhns, Daniel Troyer, and Christian Beller, with their families, were the church's charter members, and Christian Beller was its first permanently established minister.

Using the SE corner of Sec. 17 as a building site, members of the Amish Mennonite Church organization, with member Chris Eichelberger of Sec. 20 as head carpenter, constructed a 32' x 48' church building that was finished December 3, 1904, and dedicated on the following day. As one of the dedicatory rites, the church was



Photo from Mrs. Charles Flory Salem Mennonite Church (about 1950)



New Salem Mennonite Church, dedicated in 1967.

given the name "Salem," a Biblical synonym for the word "peace." The three acres used for the church building and a cemetery area were donated by the afore-referred-to Dunkard minister, James A. Flory, whose family home was about ½ mile distant. It was not until approximately 27 years after church organization that the Amish Mennonite people, as a church, adopted the English language and dropped the German tongue previously used in practically all of its religious services. In 1920, the Salem Amish Mennonite Church merged with the Orthodox Mennonite Church and therewith deleted from its title the word "Amish" and forthwith acquired charter membership in the Mennonite Iowa-Nebraska Conference, under the name of Salem Mennonite Church.

Over the years, two additions were made to the original church building. The first one provided for a hall and a nursery room. The second addition was a 30' x 30' sanctuary extension that increased the seating capacity to approximately 500.

Pertinent data assembled in early February, 1961, included: (1) There were 195 graves in Salem's cemetery; (2) Salem's then-current church membership numbered 267; (3) Its church Sunday School had an enrollment of 327 and an average attendance of 231; (4) The church had always had one or more ministers within its membership and had worthily achieved departmentally, also in number and scope of its missionary enterprises; (5) The names of deceased resident pastors were Bishop Peter Kennel, Sr.; Deacons Joseph Birky and Benjamin Schlegel; Ministers Christian Beller and Jacob Swartzendruber; (6) The resident members of the clergy currently serving the church comprised Bishop P. R. Kennel, Bishop Lee Schlegel, Ministers Fred Reeb and Jacob Birky; (7) The church's consciousness of its responsibilities was being manifested in enthusiastic plans for the future.

Seventh Day Adventist Church

It was probably at some time during the first half of the 1890's that certain of Hamilton township's families (and, possibly, some families of thereabouts location) organized as a Seventh Day Adventist Church that, for a considerable number of years, used the town hall as a setting for its church services. Rather early in the twentieth century, the township's Sec. 33 Herman Orthmans, as one of the family units of the said Seventh Day Adventist Church, made part of their home into a somewhat simulated church sanctuary that was so used by that church organization for quite some time—presumably, until in the year 1909, when the Orthmans disposed of their farmstead home. In subsequent years, centers of Seventh Day Adventist Church activities were rarely of Hamilton township location.

As of the end of the year 1960, a résumé of such religious activities as were pertinent to Hamilton township history showed that, during the years subsequent to the year 1890, a considerable number of its people, at various periods and lengths of time, had out-of-township church sanctuary affiliations that, seemingly, had worthily helped to maintain status for each of a goodly number of Christian faiths.

AGRICULTURE

As of the advent of the year 1961, it was noteworthy that, throughout Hamilton township's political history, agriculture had been the major source of its citizens' livelihoods. Even so, a considerable number of the people had, at variable times, supplemented agricultureal commitments with various other kinds of more or less lucrative work, some types of which were carpentry; plastering; dressmaking; teaching organ and piano playing; school teaching; coaching groupsinging; doing commercial trucking, itinerant merchandising, and agency selling; caring for business-office routines; and serving as official electees to positions of public service. One long ago, contemporarily significant instance of public service having been thus officially rendered was in 1907 when, as state representative-elect, Samuel Logsdon, of Hamilton township's Sec. 5, served as a member of Nebraska's state legislature.

Certain manuscripts have indicated that practically all of Hamilton township's very early would-be farmers started with very little agricultural equipment. Consequently, that early-day farming involved a great deal of manual labor such as pumping and (or) bucket-drawing of water supplies from underground sources, seeding, hoeing, spading, scooping,





Stacking small grain (perhaps about 1915)



Photo from Guy Brown, Jr. Early-day windmill with wooden tower and wheel. This was a "self-closing" type, especially suited for the high winds of the prairies. Instead of a flat wheel facing into the wind, the wheel was made of several sections forming a shallow cone facing away from the wind. As wind speeds increased, the "wings" folded forward to take less wind and so keep the windmill from racking itself to pieces or overpumping. The wings could be completely closed by a lever from the bottom; this one is shown in the closed position.



Early-day transportation



Early steam traction engine (about 1895). This is a Baker Model 1201, of 15 horsepower. Note the steering-gear chains running to the front wheels.

scything, milking, cornhusking, stacking, and blading-shocking-tying fodders. Incidentally, some intangible rewards resulting from careful and regular performance of certain of those manual labors were acquirements of brilliant skills that were oftentimes comparatively discussed and, sometimes, competitively demonstrated before interested observers.

A wind-operated invention (marvelous for its time and aptly called "windmill") designed for the pumping of ground water to above-surface objectives was introduced into Hamilton township in the early 1880's and, in that decade, rather generally acquired. In due time, the windmills were being so successfully used for their designed purpose that manual pumping was being used only in the occasional times of special need and (or) emergency situations, incident, in the main, to times of windless weather.

Farm Draft Power

In Hamilton township, the earliest sources of agricultural draft power other than the human type, were oxen, which were few in number and, soon, almost entirely superseded by horses and mules that, for approximately 40 years, rated as indispensables in that area of need and, from 25 to 35 years longer, were, in variable lessening degrees, very definitely important as farm draft power. Too, horses (draft types) were much used for riding purposes and, to somewhat lesser extent, the pony species were likewise useful.

An impressive type of agricultural draft power first brought into Hamilton township in 1897 was a 10-horsepower steam engine that its owners used as belt power for two, possibly three, years and then replaced it with a larger, much more powerful, but similar type of steam engine! which, though mainly used for practically any and all kinds of desired belt-power service, was, in selected situations, also feasibly used for direct-draft servicing. A distinctively interesting feature inherent to the larger steam engine was its whistling facility that, codified, became a medium through which the engineer could, at will, transmit certain messages to previously briefed folks.

Both of these pioneering steam engines were owned by the Flory brothers.—Editor's note.

The secondly acquired steam engine had been in use a few years when its owners applied it on a negotiated transaction whereby they acquired a big (60 horsepower) kerosene-fueled tractor with which, during the succeeding 20 or more years, a great deal of heavy belt work of considerable variety was done, also, many kinds of direct-draft servicing of which some were pulling graders for road work, moving buildings, and pulling an eight-bottom plow for tillage of farm lands.

By the time the 20th century's first score of years was nearing its point of departure, a great deal of interest in mechanical farm power had been and was being aroused in Hamilton township by reason of some farmer acquirements of, and brief experiences with, the then-available tractor-type sources of farm draft power. Consequently, throughout the following 40 years, manufacturers kept those initial principles of farm tractor construction so abreast of pertinent scientific advancements, and consequent farmer favor and patronage that, by the springtime of 1961, practically all of the great amount of farm draft power being used in the township was of tractor-type concept variously modeled for adaptableness. Over most of the township's 20th-century years, tractor fuel, in the aggregate, consisted of several kinds of petroleum derivatives each of which probably had "best-seller" status for at least one period of from one-half to a dozen or more years in length.



Photo from Paul Lefever Internal-combustion tractors gained popularity from about 1915 onward.

Stationary Motor Power

During some of the years in which uses of farm tractors were increasing, farm projects adaptable to stationary motorizations had, in increased numbers, been so served. Following the mid-century advent of the R.E.A. (Rural Electrification Administration) into Hamilton township, electricity as stationary motor power came into considerable favor. Thus there ensued some decline in uses of petroleum products as motor fuels.

The Automobile

When, rather early in the 20th century, the automobile was introduced into Hamilton township, considerable interest in, and enthusiasm about, its high potential for farm family uses, were soon being manifested. Therefore, consequent acquirements of that innovation were of such frequencies that, by the time the middle teen year had arrived, family ownerships of automobiles were considerable in number and, by a not so long later period, practically every family's equipment included at least one automobile.



U.S. Highway 81 about 1918—½ mile N of Nebraska Highway 74.



Photo from Paul Lefever Nora and Paul Lefever cutting oats with a binder.

Agricultural Production

Prior to the year 1961, grains grown throughout Hamilton township's years of political history had been corn, oats, and wheat (spring wheat, until succeeded by the winter variety). Flax, buckwheat, millet, and barley were early-day grains. Individual family productions of garden products sufficient for at least its own needs rated as near-standard procedure for the first 70 or more years of township history. Too, for about that same length of time, considerable importance attached to family goals for producing poultry and dairy products, not only for home uses, but also for desired tradein values and somewhat regular expense incomes even though necessarily variable in amounts.

During most of the township's 19th-century years, prairie pasture and prairie hay were very important farm assets.

During the first half of the 1890's, the growing of alfalfa as a perennial forage was begun and soon became a commonly-grown crop, highly valued for uses in dairying, poultrying, and in the growing and feeding of livestock. Moreover, alfalfa's soil benefits soon made it become very important as a rotation crop. The value of clovers and some other kinds of forages were also being proven.

Early in the 20th century, sugar beets had a trial run and proved financially profitable but required more tedious labor than most farmers could conveniently provide. The growing of potatoes, melons, onions, and popcorn as commercial crops had times of popularity.

Both cattle and hogs were commonly grown for family food uses as well as marketing purposes. Sheep husbandry with emphasis on the wool production and lamb feeding phases was tried, proven worthy, and continued by some.

The production and use of ensilage, begun about the year 1915, soon developed into a veritable boon for the township's livestock interests, particularly for its cattle-feeding phases.

During the 20th century's second quarter, grain sorghums came into popular favor and hybrid corn was a strikingly worthy crop introduction. Hamilton township's only large producers of hybrid seed corn were the J. J. Biegerts of Sec. 17, who engaged in that phase of agriculture during the years 1941-1944 inclusively. Near the middle of the century, hybrid grain sorghums were successfully grown. In Hamilton township seed for hybrid grain sorghums was first produced in the year 1959.

During the herein-referred-to 88 years of Hamilton township agriculture, available equipment for tillage, seeding, and harvesting needs ranged from the first-used simple ox-drawn, manually manipulated, seatless patterns through many stages of technical advancements to the highly mechanized, multi-purpose types of machinery eventually used.

Some "Firsts"

The production of turkeys upon a sizable commercial scale, begun in the year 1933 by the Roy Kempfs of Sec. 7, was a "first" in Hamilton township and, also, in Fillmore County. After the Kempf innovators had operated their turkey business for 15 years on a one-family basis, joint turkey partnership with the Wayne Kempfs of Sec. 6 was effected and the industry straightway expanded until the said co-operating families were, together, annually maturing approximately 5,000 poults all of which were products of their own breeding flocks and hatching facilities. When interviewed in January, 1961, the Roy Kempfs reported the partner families as having consistently maintained the aforesaid proximate of turkey production and, currently, were expecting to likewise achieve in the new year.



Some of Roy Kempf's turkeys in 1959.



Mr. Flory in Atlas Sorgo under irrigation from the first well in Hamilton township (in 1937 or 1938).

Subsequent to the year 1933, township families, other than those of the Kempf partnership, that, in various periods of time and numbers of years, engaged in the growing phases of commercial turkey enterprises, included the Lloyd Troyers of Sec. 21, the August Frenzens of Sec. 26, the Maynard Merrymans of Sec. 5, the E. S. Thomases of Sec. 3, the Lowell Steiders of Sec. 24, and the Jay Kempfs of Sec. 6. The Jay Kempfs, largely by way of the turkey-growing route, earned the 1949 W. G. Skelly Agricultural Achievement Award.

Another "first" in Hamilton township and its county was an irrigation well put down on the Charles Florys' farm on Sec. 20 in the year 1936. In the March 9, 1961, issue of the Nebraska Signal, Conservationist Jim McDowell reported the number of irrigation wells in Hamilton township at that time as being 85. [By July, 1966, the number of wells had risen to 95.]

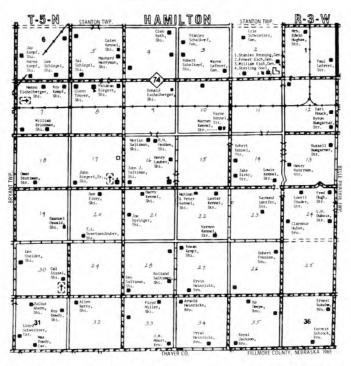
A further highly interesting and exciting addition of precedential significance was made to Hamilton township's agricultural history when, in 1947, certain of the township's field crops and other lands, as a part of a much larger area, were aerially sprayed by Max Biegert of the Sec. 17 J. J. Biegert family.

Adversities versus Benefits

Though agriculture, in Hamilton township aggregate, had, as of April, 1961, been brought through numerous stages and kinds of impressive development, the citizenries so achieving had, nevertheless, concurrently encountered a considerable number of adversities. Specifically, and in the main, the truly serious, more or less generalized, hardships experienced during that 88 years of township history had been hailstorms; grasshopper scourges; hog-cholera epidemics; chinch-bug infestation; blizzards (the chief one probably having been the monstrous visitation of January 12, 1888);



Photo from Mrs. Fern Blanke
Dust Storm in 1937



damages wrought by wildlife; some excessive rainfalls; the June 5, 1908, tornado; the horse disease in the 20th century's early teens; droughts, particularly the one incident to the years 1893-1899 and the one that wrought havoc in the 1930's; and seasons when prices received for agricultural productions had been less than equitable.

Naturally, the adversities had, for the most part, been very trying. However, there had also been much that was highly conducive to the people's happiness and welfare. Some of those constructive phases, things, and situations, other than the previously-specified churches, schools, town hall, and topographical improvements, included: horse-back riding; automobiling; agricultural successes; diets of home-

produced foods; electrification and intercommunity affiliations, adding to family togetherness; opportunities for doing much with little; round-the-calendar outdoor activities; animal, poultry, and songbird pets galore; timely acquirements of conveyances such as lumber wagons, spring wagons, sleighs, buggies, carts, carriages, and bicycles; gradual improvements in housing, household furnishings, lighting and heating facilities; acquisitions of mail delivery and telephone services early in the 20th century, and subsequent to 1937, time-to-time advancement in equipments and techniques for acquirement and distribution of that marvelous "for-free" product, ground water.

An early 1961 comparative analysis of the before-named advers-

An early 1961 comparative analysis of the before-named adversities and benefits along with the settings and significances involved, seemed to conclusively show that Hamilton township's benefits received during the 88 years immediately prior to that time, had far outweighed the contemporary adversities. Thus, it seems timely for the writer, in closing, to say that, in her judgment, Hamilton township history provides abundant reason for all-out, happy, and continuing compliance with the Biblical exhortation: "Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever." (Psalms 106:1.)

SCHOOLS

District No. 56, also known as "Bluff School," from adjacent terrain, was organized in 1872, with Eleazar Phillips as its first director. The schoolhouse was built ½ mile S of the NW corner of Sec. 24. This district was merged with those of Shickley, Strang, and Bruning on April 13, 1953. The last director was Lester Kennel.



Photo from Julius Lentfer, Sr. District No. 56 about 1937. Back row, left to right: Willard Kennel, Norman Ough, Lee Oswald, Alice Lentfer, Ray Eichelberger, Mahlon Kennel, Clayton Eichelberger. Second row: Henry Waterman, Laverda Houck, Junior Lentfer, Vernon Kennel, Harry Waterman. Third row: Edna Kennel, Ardis Kennel, Erhardt Steinman, John Eichelberger, Eddie Lentfer. Front row: Raymond Lentfer, Leroy Kennel, Alvina Steinman.

Year	Teacher	Year	Teacher
1873-74	H. F. Smith	1922-23	Josephine Elwood
1874-75	H. F. Smith	1923-24	Maude Runsey
1875-76	Phoebe Davis	1924-25	Katherine Kuska
1876-78	Della Schelp	1925-26	Jay Kempf
1878-79	Della Schelp	1926-28	No record
1879-80	Mary Downey	1928-29	Leona Dunker
1880-81	Eleanor Matson	1929-30	Leona Dunker
1881-82	Anna Swelt	1930-31	Doris Hafer
1882-88	No record	1931-32	Elizabeth Shurtleff
1888-89	Dora Coombs	1932-33	Carrie Sauer
	Anna Cockrall	1933-34	Darlene Morris
1889-97	No record	1934-35	Darlene Morris
1898-99	J. M. Woods	1935-36	Mildred Ough
1899-00	Nellie Matson	1936-37	No record
1900-01	Athos Wennersten	1937-38	Margaret Bobbit
	Mamie Pinkerton	1938-39	Warren Messman
1901-04	No record	1939-40	Lyla McGinness
1904-05	Frances Logsdon	1940-41	Mildred Stejskal
1905-06	Frances Logsdon	1941-42	Mildred Wagers
1906-07	Annie Beller	1942-43	Mrs. Ervin Lentfer
1907-08	Maude Sherrard	1943-44	Joan Hulse
1908-09	Bertha Mathewson	1944-45	Betty Carl
1909-10	Bertha Mathewson	1945-46	Ardis Kennel
1910-11	Stella White	1946-47	Ardis Kennel
1911-12	No record	1947-48	No record
1912-13	Vinetta Miller	1948-49	Doris Peterson
1913-14	Agnes Sullivan	1949-50	Lorraine Vostrez
1914-15	S. D. Purviance	1950-51	Lorraine Vostrez
1915-16	Leslie Sauer	1951-52	No record
1916-17	Helen Rhoda	1952-53	Edna Kempf
1917-19	No record	School cl	
1919-20	Albert Cumpston		

District No. 57, also known as "Eich School," was organized in 1872; its first director was W. B. Grey. The schoolhouse was built on the NE corner of Sec. 11. On December 19, 1952, District 57 was attached to District 34 (Strang). The last director was Nick Eich.



District No. 57 (also known as "White Temple School") in 1907. Back row, left to right: Pearl Swails (teacher). Hazel South, Bessie Bumgarner, Frank Eich. Front row: Elmer Bell, Henry Noel, Pauline Noel, Ella Bell, Byron Bumgarner, Emma Frantz, Fred Frantz, John Bell.

Year	Teacher	Year	Teacher
1874-75	Walter Thurlow	1914-15	Neva Pumphrey
1875-76	Peter Eggenberger	1915-18	No record
1876-77	No record	1918-19	Rhea Bumgarner
1877-78	Alice Bales	1919-20	Gladys Bueher
1878-79	Mary Blood	1920-21	Carrie Sauer
1879-80	Amy Dyson	1921-22	Carrie Sauer
1880-81	Maggie Stewart	1922-23	Carrie Sauer
1881-82	No record	1923-24	No record
1882-83	Alice Bailor	1924-25	Rose LaPlant
1883-84	Watson Weldon	1925-26	Rose LaPlant
1884-87	No record	1926-27	Carrie Sauer
1887-88	C. C. Spangler	1927-29	No record
	Ella H. Davis	1929-30	Verneda Johnson
1888-89	Mable Strother	1930-31	No record
	Tephrona Stickel	1931-32	Verneda Johnson
	John W. Fries	1932-33	Elma Schelkopf
1889-99	No record	1933-34	No record
1899-1900	Daisy Logsdon	1934-35	Elma Schelkopf
1900 01	A. E. Wattles	1935-36	No record
1901-04	No record	1936-37	Arlene Leimbach
1904-05	Mable Eaton	1937-38	Ruby Thurin
	Effie Tonkinson	1938-39	John K. Wagers
1905-06	Effie Tonkinson	1939-40	LaVerne Philippi
	Effie Tonkinson Brown	1940-41	LaVerne Philippi
1906-07	Lola Craig	1941-42	Frances Smith
1907-08	Pearl Swails		Fern Trapp
1908-09	Ethel Harrington	1942-44	No record
1909-10	Ethel Harrington	1944-45	Elaine Goodwin
1910-11	Opal Walters	1945-52	No record
1911-12	Hattie Evans	School cle	osed
1912-13	Maude Spangler		
1913-14	Maude Spangler		

District No. 58 was organized in 1872; its first director was S. H. Holsinger. The schoolhouse, also known as "Summit School" was built on the SW corner of Sec. 29. The schoolhouse burned down in 1948 and was not replaced. The last director was Glen Birky. District 58 contracted with District 54 (Shickley) and in 1953 merged with that district.



Photo from Mrs. Roy Dowdy District No. 58 ("Summit School") about 1928

1920-21

1921-22

Doris Deane

Angela Schommer

Year	Teacher	Year	Teacher
1874	Frank Smith	1919-20	Nellie Freeman
1874-77	No record	1920-21	Jessie Larsen
1877-78	Minnie Smith	1921-22	No record
1878-79	Maggie Stewart	1922-23	Wilma Yoder
1879-80	Maggie Stewart	1923-24	Malinda Root
	Mary Hart	1924-25	Gladys Schoenholtz
1880-81	Amy Dyson	1925-26	Gladys Schoenholtz
1881-82	Jennie Deselms	1926-27	No record
1882-83	Mary Height	1927-28	Vera White
1883-84	S. A. Orr	1928-29	No record
1884-87	No record	1929-30	Elizabeth Ockerman
1887-88	C. C. Spangler	1930-31	No record
1888-89	C. C. Spangler	1931-32	Elizabeth Ockerman
1000.00	Ella Davis	1932-33	Thelma Voight
1889-99	No record	1933-34	Vesta Ekwall
1899-1900	Mamie Pinkerton	1934-35	Vesta Ekwall
1900-04	No record Minnie Sissel	1935-36	Vesta Ekwall
1904-05	Ethel Graves	1936-37	Leota Graves
1905-06	Ethel Graves	1930-37	Leota Graves Leota Graves
1906-07 1907-08			
200.	Lulu Lichty	1938-39	Pauline Wagers
1908-09	Daisy Sissel	1939-40	Pauline Wagers
1909-10	Daisy Sissel	1940-41	Esther Mueller
1910-11	Margaret Yearnshaw	1941-42	No record
1911-12	Susie Rothrock	1942-43	Ferne Stolzenberg
1912-13	Gertrude Freeman	1943-44	Marilyn B. Pearson
1913-14	Susie Rothrock	1944-45	Dorothy Geikin
1914-15	Emma Renken	1945-46	Rose Stejskal
1915-16	No record	1946-47	M. Luella Wilson
1916-17	Bernice Logsdon	1947-48	Mrs. Lois Achtemier
1917-18	Viola Wilson		Mary Jean Bowman
1918-19	Mary Surber	1948-49	Ardis Kennel

District No. 59, also known as "Schelp School" and "Arganbright School," was organized in 1873, and a schoolhouse was built on the NE corner of the NW ¼ of Sec. 8. The first director was Worthington Coffee. In 1953, District 59 merged with District 54 (Shickley). The last director was Lee Schlegel.



Photo from Mrs. Virgil Eppler

District No. 59—taken at school picnic in 1932. Back row, left to right: Mrs. Ruby Merryman (teacher); Russell DuBois, Nelda Anderson, Kenneth Avers, Roine Kempf, Kenneth Eichelberger, Loretta Troyer. Middle row: Lester Troyer, Wayne Kempf, Bernice Kempf, Doris Anderson, Glen Troyer, Martin Bruhns. Front row: Wanda Avers, Dean DuBois, Eunice Zehr, Bernetta Zehr, Edna Eichelberger, Wilda Eichelberger, James Troyer, Billie Anderson, and Donald Eichelberger.

Year	Teacher	Year	Teacher
1874-75	Eleanor Matson	1908-09	Maude Way
1875-76	Eleanor Matson	1909-10	Maude Way
1876-77	No record	1910-11	Emma McGraw
1877-78	Blanche Warner	1911-12	Clara Diederich
1878-79	Mattie Phels	1912-13	Clara Diederich
1879-80	Flora Lewis	1913-14	Jacob Beller
1880-81	Flora Lewis	1914-15	Jacob Beller
1881-82	Mamie Pinkerton	1915-16	Moneta Logsdon
1882-83	Emma Craig	1916-17	Moneta Logsdon
1883-84	W. J. Davis	1917-18	Rodger Bergquist
1884-87	No record	1918-19	Neva Hoak
1887-88	A. L. Frankenburger	1919-20	Helen Schelkopf
1888-89	A. L. Frankenburger	1920-22	No record
1889-99	No record	1922-23	Belva White
1899-1900	M. Pinkerton	1923-24	Jay Kempf
1900-01	Daisy Logsdon	1924-25	Jay Kempf
1901-04	No record	1925-26	Helen Hedden
1904-05	Stella Lull	1926-27	Lola McPeck
1905-06	Stella Lull	1927-29	No record
1906-07	Mildred Vough	1929-30	Velma Johnson
1907-08	Mildred Vough	1930-31	No record

1931-32	Ruby Merryman	1941-43	No record
1932-33	Ruby Merryman	1943-44	June Hamilton
1933-34	Lucy Fisher	1944-45	Bernetta Zehr
1934-35	Lucy Fisher	1945-46	No record
1935-36	No record	1946-47	Bernetta Zehr
1936-37	Zella Wagers	1947-48	Luella Wilson
1937-38	Betty Wilson	1948-49	Edna Roth
1938-39	Betty Wilson	1949-50	Edna Roth
1939-40	Orfie Bergquist	1950-52	No record
1940-41	Aldene Reeb		

District No. 69 was founded in 1873, with E. Holsinger as its first director. The schoolhouse, built on the NW corner of Sec. 20, was formally named "Union School" at the dedication ceremony; but it was also locally known as the "Shuster," "Biegert," and "Flory" school, for several neighboring families. In 1953, it merged with District 54 (Shickley). The last director was Roy Troyer.



District No. 69 in 1903. First row, left to right: Jesse Saltzman, John Schrock, Jake Saltzman, Willie Saltzman, Lydia Detweiller, Barbara Troyer, Mary Schrock, Cassie Stutzman, Katie Saltzman Nellie Detweiller, Jemima Stutzman. Susie Detweiller. Second row: Jake Birky, Sidney White, John Biegert, Irene Wagers, Katie Troyer, Lydia Birky, Emma Schrock, Martha Troyer, Annie Saltzman, Lillie Biegert. Back row: Abraham Troyer, Wilsie Biegert, Daniel Saltzman, Mary Saltzman, Minnie Sissel (teacher), Stella White.

Year	Teacher	Year	Teacher
1873-74	Emma Harvey	1918-19	Nelle Hilgren
	S. R. Holsinger	1919-20	Nelle Hilgren
1874-75	Emma Harvey	1920-21	Marjorie Johnson
1875-76	Elizabeth Flory	1921-22	Dorothy Jacobson
1876-77	No record	1922-23	Alberta Flory
1877-78	Mary Blood	1923-24	Marshall Ketchum
1878-79	J. A. Williams	1924-25	Louise Thornton
1879-80	Millie Ballard	1925-26	Louise Thornton
1880-81	Amy Dyson	1926-27	Wilma D. Flory
1881-82	No record	1927-28	Velma R. Johnson
1882-83	Samuel Logsdon	1928-29	Jay Kempf
1883-84	James A. Flory	1929-30	Maymie Boo
	Eli Mitchell	1930-31	No record
1884-87	No record	1931-32	Iona Anderson
1887-88	Tephrona Stickel	1932-33	Iona Anderson
1888-99	No record	1933-34	No record
1899-1900	John Johnson	1934-35	Elsie Engel
	Lizzie Allen	1935-36	Elsie Engel
1900-01	Carl A. Johnson	1936-37	Vesta Ekwall
1901-02	No record	1937-38	No record
1902-03	Minnie Sissel	1938-39	Joseph Hoffert
1903-04	No record	1939-40	No record
1904-05	Ellen Venell	1940-41	Elsie Heinrichs
1905-06	Ellen Venell	1941-42	No record
1906-07	Bertha Mathewson	1942-43	Loretta Dowdy
1907-08	Raymond Flory	1943-45	No record
1908-09	Nora Wennersten	1945-46	MaryLou Stejskal
1909-10	Nora Wennersten	1946-47	Mrs. Erva J. Sissel
1910-11	Gertrude Sughrue	1947-48	LeVoy Saltzman
1911-12	Mrs. Cora Foster	1948-49	LeVoy Saltzman
1912-13	No record	1949-50	Betty Troyer
1913-14	Emma Davis	1950-51	Owen Deepe
1914-15	Inez Brammeier	1951-52	Norma Kennel
1915-16	No record	1952-53	Kenneth Steider
1916-17	Ruth Huston		
1917-18	No record		

District No. 77, also known as "Medlar School," was organized in 1876; its first director was E. K. Cobb. The schoolhouse was built on the SE corner of Sec. 28. In 1953, District 77 merged with District 54 (Shickley). The last director was Jay Swartzendruber.



Photo from Mrs. Ernest Heinrichs District No. 77 in 1936-37. The teacher was Wilma Mau (Heinrichs).

Year	Teacher	Year	Teacher
1879-80	Anna Adams	1924-25	Mrs. Maudeline
1880-81	Estella Estabrook		Tonkinson
1881-87	No record	1925-26	Hilda Slaybaugh
1887-88	Bessie Norton	1926-27	Hilda Slaybaugh
1888-99	No record	1927-29	No record
1899-00	Cora Skinner	1929-30	Clara R. Busse
1900-03	No record	1930-31	No record
1903-04	Ethel Wagers	1931-32	Clara R. Busse
1904-05	Annie Gilbert	1932-33	Roma Bryant
1905-06	Annie Gilbert	1933-34	No record
1906-07	Myrtle Nichols	1934-35	Arlene Limbach
1907-08	Myrtle Nichols	1935-36	Arlene Limbach
1908-09	Stella White	1936-37	Wilma Mau
1909-10	Stella White	1937-38	Pauline Wagers
1910-11	Ora Mitchell	1938-39	Annalou Lucht
1911-12	Hugh Garrett	1939-40	No record
1912-13	Bert McCaulley	1940-41	Betty Widler
1913-14	Daisy Strayer	1941-42	No record
1914-15	Elsie Brinegar	1942-43	Evelyn Geiken
1915-16	No record	1943-44	Doris Miller
1916-17	Elsie Brinegar	1944-47	No record
1917-18	Zoe Timmerman	1947-48	Kenneth Steider
1918-19	Lois Ainsworth	1948-49	Luella Wilson
1919-20	Mrs. Gertie Sissel	1949-50	Owen Deepe
1920-21	Delma Maple	1950-51	Norma Kennel
1921-22	Alice Hedden	1951-52	Joan Leff
1922-23	Maurine Flory	1952-53	Delores Detmer
1923-24	Pearl Coltrin		

District No. 82, known as "Monroe" and as "Albrecht" school, was organized in 1885, and a schoolhouse was built on the SW corner of Sec. 25. The first director was C. F. Brabham. On April 13, 1953, District 82 was merged, by petition, with District 94 (Bruning), in Thayer County. The last director was Robert Frenzen.



Photo from Mrs. Royal Jackson District No. 82 in 1917-18—Teacher Estelle Williams at door.

Year	Teacher	Year	Teacher
1886-87	Mary Warthen	1901-02	No record
1887-88	Winnie Delameter	1902-03	Ethel Wagers
1888-99	No record	1903-04	No record
1899-1900	Lucy Robinson	1904-05	Amelia Oberkotter
	Ethelyn Spear	1905-06	Carl Theobald
1900-01	Emma Woods	1906-07	Daisy Sissel

Lula Watson	1921-22	Laura Haak
Lula Watson	1922-23	Esther Bordner
Lula Watson	1923-24	Rose Kamorek
Ira Baker	1924-25	No record
Mable Thomas	1925-26	Marie Eide
Gertrude Freeman	1926-27	Zelma Wills
Raymond Henney	1927-28	Bertha Dunker
Edna Wiley	1928-29	Bertha Dunker
Winifred Lawrence	1929-30	Linda M. Leenerts
Eva Piersol	1930-31	No record
Lois Ainsworth	1931-32	Ruth Schelkopf
Estelle Williams	1932-33	Ruth Schelkopf
Lela Ralston	1933-34	Ruth Schelkopf
Nan Davis	1934-35	Ruth Schelkopf
Albert Cumpston	1935-52	Ruth Schelkopf
	Lula Watson Lula Watson Ira Baker Mable Thomas Gertrude Freeman Raymond Henney Edna Wiley Winifred Lawrence Eva Piersol Lois Ainsworth Estelle Williams Lela Ralston Nan Davis	Lula Watson 1922-23 Lula Watson 1923-24 Ira Baker 1924-25 Mable Thomas 1925-26 Gertrude Freeman 1926-27 Raymond Henney 1927-28 Edna Wiley 1928-29 Winifred Lawrence 1929-30 Eva Piersol 1930-31 Lois Ainsworth 1931-32 Estelle Williams 1932-33 Lela Ralston 1933-34 Nan Davis 1934-35



District No. 93 in 1914. Left to right: Dell Schelgel, Henry Lauber, Ira Tonkinson, Orve Hedden, Wesley Tonkinson, Harold Justice, Marcella Sullivan (teacher), Helen Schelkopf, Claude Tonkinson, Irene Justice, Cynthia Anderson, Lydia Lauber, Elmer Tonkinson, Elmer Lauber, Matilda Schlegel.

District No. 93 was organized in 1891, with Brook McMain as its first director. The schoolhouse was built ½ mile S of the NW corner of Sec. 10. The school was known as "Schelkopf" school and as "Hedden" school, in honor of T. K. Hedden, a board director in District 93 for 29 consecutive years, from 1900 to 1930. On July 7, 1953, District 93 was merged with District 54 (Shickley). The last director was Isaac Schelkopf.

Year	Teacher	Year	Teacher
1899-190	00 Lola Craig	1925-26	Helen McPeck
1900-04	No record	1926-27	No record
1904-05	Sarah Keller	1927-28	Lucy E. Fisher
1905-06	Katharine Seibel	1928-29	Lucy E. Fisher
1906-07	Wardie Nippert	1929-30	No record
1907-08	Margaret M. Seibel	1930-31	No record
1908-09	Margaret M. Seibel	1931-32	Burnice Fussell
1909-10	Margaret M. Seibel	1932-34	No record
	Happy M. Johnson	1934-35	Doris Swenson
1910-11	Esther McDonald	1935-36	Doris Swenson
1911-12	Carrie Maddox	1936-37	No record
1912-13	Alma Rousch	1937-38	John K. Wagers
1913-14	Marcella Sullivan	1938-39	Irene Hilgren
1914-15	No record	1939-40	No record
1915-16	Lela Wilson	1940-41	Irene Hilgren Churchill
1916-17	Fannie Lincoln	1941-42	Ardean Harms
1917-18	Bess Freeman	1942-43	Bernetta Zehr
1918-19	Mrs. Gayle Lauenste	in1943-44	Deloris Richards
1919-20	Gladys Stansberry	1944-45	Luella Wilson
1920-21	Gladys Stansberry	1945-46	Ruth Rosenquist
1921-22	Leslie Huntley	1946-47	Ruth Rosenquist
1922-23	Leslie Huntley	1947-48	Ruth Rosenquist
1923-24	Louise Crawford	1948-52	No record
1924-25	Helen McPeck		

FAMILIES

Theodore Keller Hedden was born May 5, 1859, at Dewitt, Clinton County, Iowa. He was the fourth son of Henry and Eliza Douglas Minor Hedden. His wife, Eva Bell McBeth, was born December 22, 1859, at Pleasant Grove, Iowa, daughter of the Robert McBeths.

Theodore and Eva were married November 13, 1884, at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. They came to Nebraska and bought 80 acres of school land, the N½ of the NE¼ of Section 16, Hamilton township. Here they built a two-room frame house (bedroom and living room). The living room contained the dining table, a set of chairs, a cupboard, and the kitchen stove which heated the house. Heating stoves were unknown. Also a lounge which could be extended to make a bed for two. Other buildings were a corn crib, a granary, stable for four horses, and a hen house.

Mr. and Mrs. Hedden had six sons: Glenn D., Ronzo M., Earl J., Merritt M., Finis R., and Orve K. Hedden. One daughter died at birth.



The Theodore Hedden family. Back row, left to right: Earl, Glenn, Ronzo, Merritt. Front row: J. D. McBeth (brother of Mrs. Hedden), Finis, Mrs. Hedden, Theodore Hedden.

The Heddens battled drought, floods, hail, and windstorms. Their crops were corn and oats, some rye and barley. They raised chickens and some bronze turkeys (the only ones in the vicinity). Later they changed to White Rock chickens, White Holland turkeys, Chester White hogs, and Shorthorn cattle. At one time they had a flock of sheep.

Mr. Hedden leased and broke the prairie on the $N\frac{1}{2}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 15 and helped break the S $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$. He later leased the S $\frac{1}{2}$ and held these leases and farmed the land the rest of his life.

His first reaper was a self-rake, which raked the grain of a 4-foot swath off the platform in bunches about the right size for a sheaf. The sheaves from the self-rake were tied by hand with straw taken from the sheaf. A lost art. Then he got a Plano binder, which tied bundles with twine and kicked them off in a row. That wore out. The next was a Champion—6-foot cut with a bundle carrier. Carried three or four bundles, then was dumped by foot power. Saved a lot of walking for the shockers.

Mrs. Hedden helped with the shocking and cultivating. Father used the walking cultivator and bought the first riding cultivator in the community for Mother to use.

The land was full of rattlesnakes, garter snakes, blue racers, and bull snakes. The rattlers and the garters were the most numerous. Sometimes animals and occasionally a person would be bitten by rattlers, but as a rattler usually sounds a warning, most everything knew the sound and the animals the smell. The snakes were sometimes gathered up in the hay and hauled in.

For fuel, cobs and coal were used, when they were to be had. Also buffalo chips. My brother and I often took the bushel basket and gathered cow chips dried in the pasture, when we were about big enough so the two of us could tote it. Cornstalks were also used. Father bought some trees on the South Blue River and would go down there, starting about 4 a.m., with the wagon running gear, cut a load of poles, and get back after dark. The poles were chopped to stove wood with an ax. Later with a bucksaw. A good bit of this job was for the boys.

The plowing was done with a walking plow with two horses, sometimes three. The sod was broken with a special sod plow, with three or four horses, generally. The corn planted with a walking lister or a corn planter with a checkrow wire. Later a riding two-wheeled lister. A lister took three or four horses. Usually four.

As the family grew, a bed was placed in the attic or upstairs, which was reached by a ladder. The upstairs was unfinished. In a blizzard the snow blew in some. A binder canvas was brought in and spread over the bed and the boys to keep the snow off. Sometimes there were four in the bed. Later another bed was acquired. In the heat of summer the boys slept downstairs on the floor and on the lounge. One hot night came a big wind and hail storm. The corn was in the roasting ear stage. The storm made such a roar we had to shout to be heard. These hail were ragged, flat pieces of ice. Some three inches in diameter. Punctured the weather boards and riddled the windows and screens on the west side. The turkeys roosted on top of the hen house. We found one turkey hen beheaded in the morning. The crops were mowed to the ground. Horses and cattle ran through the fence. Still the folks held on and later, in 1901, purchased the SW1/4 of the NE1/2 of Sec. 16.

When the boys got big enough, Glenn operated the walking plow and the two-wheeled sulky. Later he graduated to the two-bottom gang plow. Before the riding plows, Father



Photo from Paul Lefever Cultivating corn with two-row cultivator (1919)

bought another walker. So that was two walkers. One left hander. Ronzo tackled the new walker. It was a dandy. Would go right down the furrow for a long way without holding on until it struck a hard spot or a root. The team was a pair of gentle sorrel mares (Mamie and Julie). The harness, collars, and hames with inch rope with swivels on the lower end for tugs or traces. The lines ¼" rope with snaps for attaching to the bridles. No back pads or belly bands. We all went barefoot from the first warm weather until cold weather. Whenever the plow rolled a rattler out, one

quickly stepped to the other side. Father had a threshing machine called an Agitator run by horse power, using six teams of horses—that is, 12 horses. The grain was fed in by hand by one man. Another stood by his side to cut the bands on the bundles. The grain ran out at the bottom. A man stood there with two half-bushel measurers to measure the grain. They set in a tally box which tallied each one as it was removed and emptied. Good yielding oats kept the man on his toes. Most of the oats was called Russian. Grew tall and yielded well. It was sown broadcast either by hand or a seeder if one was to be had; if by hand, from a tub on the back of a wagon. The seeder took the place of the endgate and was driven from the wagon wheel. One time the team ran away with the outfit. Sure did buzz. When the hay ran out, oats were mown with the scythe for the horses. Corn fodder was cut with a butcher knife, if you had no corn knife, for the cows. Corn was cut by hand and stood in shocks for winter feed. Later a sled was rigged with knives on the side and drawn by one horse between the rows. A man sat on the sled and caught the stalks until he got an armful, when he stopped and stood the fodder in the shock.

When Father was building the granary, a sudden snowstorm came up. He started for the house but went the wrong way. He ran into his straw stack which set his directions

right, so he got to the house.

They had an apple orchard, and a couple big Richmond cherry trees that were loaded with cherries every year. Also a row of mulberry trees which furnished many a pie and dish of berries. A big garden, nearly always a watermelon patch. Pumpkins were planted with part of the corn.

Father often went to Hebron and bought garden stuff. Generally brought a big watermelon. The road to Hebron went across his pasture before the land was fenced and crop-

ped. The ruts were there for many years.

Bands of Indian shows sometimes came by. Covered wagons going West in spring, back East busted in the fall. They'd stop to water the horses and eat their meal in the shade of the mulberry trees which were beside the road. Progress has removed both the covered wagons and the trees. Roving gypsy horse traders were common. Always begging for sick baby.

Ronzo inherited the riding cultivator as soon as he got big enough to operate it. The seat was and still is adjustable. You guided the shovels with your feet or used the handles with your hand, or both together. The seat could be turned up and you could walk if you liked. A good way to develop

a pair of legs.

A storage cave was built, a hole dug and roofed over with boards and covered with soil. Wooden steps to go down. A ventilator in the roof. The lumber rotted and the roof caved. After a couple of these a Russian cave was dug under the house. Twelve feet to the floor. Six feet of dirt over the top, then a 6-foot arched roof hole 16 feet long. It was dug with a spade and the dirt removed in a box hauled up the stair ramp by a horse and a rope. I don't remember the year, but I was just big enough to lead the horse (Old Fred). The cave stood without walling until the big bombers established a training flight just west of the house, when it had to be reinforced to stand the jar. Cement slabs on the side with brick arch.

The old house had one room added, which stood until 1918, when a large house was moved in and the two united. From then on the family began to scatter. In 1896, a neighbor who did carpentering was hired and a new barn was built with a lean-to. Stalls for 10 horses, built-in grain bin, and an overhead bin for oats in the lean-to. Later an addition

was made to stall 8 more horses and an additional driveway and granary were built.

The dry weather took the orchard, except the mulberry trees.

Theodore Hedden died at his home on March 13, 1934, at the age of 74 years, 10 months, and 13 days. His wife Eva died June 18, 1941, at the age of 82 years, 6 months, and 24 days. The farm has been operated ever since by their son Ronzo.

—Ronzo M. Hedden (80 years of age)

It was in the spring of 1871 that Joseph Jackson, 24, and a younger brother felt the lure of the western world, leaving northern England, county Yorkshire, the land of their nativity. In April, 1871, they sailed from Liverpool, taking three weeks to cross the Atlantic. A few years they spent working on farms near Clinton, Iowa.

Joseph came to Fairmont in 1875. He walked across country to Shickley, later buying out a relinquishment on the

SW1/4 of Sec. 35, Hamilton township.

Tired of bachelorhood, he started corresponding with a young lady from Davenport, Iowa, suggested by a mutual acquaintance. He walked to Carleton and boarded the train for Davenport, where he was married to Julia Alice Whisler in April, 1888. They returned to a one-room home which is still a part of the house where the family of the two daughters, Gertrude and Myrtle, and a son, Royal, grew up.

At the time of Royal's marriage Mother and Father moved into Bruning, where Joseph Jackson died on June 7,

1926, and Mrs. Jackson on July 12, 1947.

Royal and wife continued to live on the farm until February, 1967, when they retired to Bruning. They have two children, Alice Saunders of Lincoln and Donald R. Jackson, M.D., of Omaha.

—Royal Jackson

Daniel M. Lefever was born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, on March 22, 1850. He was one of 14 children. In 1874, Mr. Lefever moved to Illinois, where he lived for six years.



Mr. and Mrs. Daniel M. Lefever

In 1880, he came to Fillmore County, where he purchased 320 acres of railroad land, the E½ of Sec. 1, Hamilton township. He immediately began making improvements on the farm. At one time the Lefever farm was known as one of the most beautiful and best kept farms around. It also had a large orchard.

Mr. Lefever returned to Pennsylvania in 1889 and married Elizabeth Rohrer, born October 5, 1862. They returned to his Fillmore County farm, where they began housekeeping and continued to reside until their deaths. They were the parents of four children: Paul, Maude, Nora, and Ralph.



The Joseph Jackson family about 1890. Left to right: Joseph Jackson, Julia Alice Jackson, Zella May Jackson, Mrs. John Elliott, Kathryn Elliott, Mr. John Elliott holding Colbert Elliott. The Elliotts were neighbors across the road. Jack Riddle, standing by the team and buggy, was the Jaskson's hired man.

Daniel Lefever met with a fatal accident in 1907 and Mrs. Lefever was left to raise her family alone. Mrs. Lefever passed away in 1946.

Paul, the eldest son, still lives on the home place.

Watson Weldon was born in Yorkshire, England, on February 25, 1836. At about 30 years of age, he came to America, where he met and married Martha Fisher, who was born in Knottsville, Missouri, on March 2, 1856. They were married in Wilber, Nebraska, March 2, 1872. Mr. Weldon came to Fillmore County in 1870 and took a homestead on the NE¼ of Sec. 2, Hamilton township. Their closest trading center was Wilber, where Mr. Weldon walked to work, and brought home supplies.

Mrs. Trenary recalls that her mother often told of the Indians walking by and wanting food, but if her mother told them she had none they would walk to the next neighbors

south (the Sauers) and beg.

Mr. Weldon helped dig the first well in Geneva.

Mr. and Mrs. Weldon were the parents of 10 children, of whom two died at an early age. The children were Charley, born in 1873 and passed away at 18 months of age; Jackson, born in 1877 and died in 1948; James, born in 1879 and died in 1957; Peter, born in 1880 and died in 1955; Thomas, born in 1882 and died in 1912; Dan, born in 1884 and died in 1957; Bessie, born in 1885 and died in 1953; Anna, born in 1887 and the only surviving member of her family; Katie, born 1890 and died in 1964. Another infant was born dead and is buried on the homestead.

—Mrs. Anna Trenary

George F. Woods was born in Jefferson County, Indiana. He married Mary L. Elliott, also born in Jefferson County, in January, 1876. They lived in Knox County, Missouri, for nine years. A water shortage in Missouri decided them to go west. In March, 1886, they came to Nebraska to visit the John Elliott family in Thayer County, who were cousins of Mrs. Woods. While visiting, they heard of an 80-acre farm for sale in Fillmore County and purchased it. The farm had a small house, a barn, a granary, and a good well.

Mrs. Woods didn't care for Nebraska because there was lots of wind and dust which she was not used to. Many women put wet rags around the windows and doors to keep out the

dust.

When the Woods family moved to Fillmore County, District 82 was not completely finished, so the children attended Prairie Grove school in Belle Prairie township.

The day of the blizzard of '88 only a little snow fell at first. Later that day the blizzard struck with such force that it rattled the stovepipe. Mr. Woods looked out and saw it was a bad storm, and about 3 p.m. got a horse to go to school to get their son John from Prairie Grove school. They lived about 1½ miles from school. There was a hedge and mulberry trees they could follow to return home. They were fortunate not to lose any livestock during the blizzard. Mr. and Mrs. Woods brought two cows and a calf when they moved to Nebraska.

Mrs. Woods learned to like Nebraska and later when she visited Indiana she was glad to return to Fillmore County.

Mr. and Mrs. Woods had three children; John, Emma (Mrs. Edgar Miller), and James, who was born in Fillmore County. Mrs. Miller is the only surviving member of her family.

Mr. Woods died in 1901 and Mrs. Woods in 1924. They are buried in the Harmony Cemetery. —Mrs. Emma Miller



Cider press, powered by a portable 4-HP gasoline engine (about 1915).



Shelling corn, about 1917, with a Sandwich 4-hole sheller and a 10-HP Water Lou Boy gasoline engine. The man sitting on the engine wheel is Charley Nichols.



Biegert Brothers B-17 spray plane—owned by Virgil, Waldean, John R. (manager), and Max (chief pilot).

INDUSTRY

Biegert Brothers, Inc.—consisting of Max, John, Virgil, and Waldean Biegert—started in the airplane spray business in 1947 with one Stearman biplane. Their first job was spraying weeds in cornfields at Waverly, Nebraska. The first field ever sprayed for pay in Nebraska was on the farm of John Dondlinger, NW of Shickley, for the elimination of a small acreage of bindweed.

We sprayed many thousands of acres of corn and wheat in Kansas in the years 1947-1949. We acquired our first Government contract in Wyoming in 1949. With three light twin-engined Cessna aircraft, we covered 500,000 acres of rangeland with poisoned bran for the control of grasshoppers. On that job, we dispersed more than 5,000,000 pounds of bran. In 1950, for grasshopper control, we covered 600,000 acres of rangeland.

In 1951 and 1952, we covered many thousands of acres of cotton in Arkansas for pest control. In the fall of 1952, we moved our operation—by then we had seven airplanes—to Managua, Nicaragua, to work on cotton there. In the spring of 1953, we purchased a B-17 from the city of Stuttgart, Arkansas. The plane was in their city park as a war memorial and had to be disassembled and moved 300 miles to Springfield, Missouri, for assembly, which was quite a task. As the plane was badly mutilated after seven years in the park, it was almost impossible to assemble and fly it. After six months of constant work—14 hours a day, and 7 days a week—the plane was ready for ferry. At this time the U. S. Government gave us quite a time because of technicalities in the bill of

sale and the titling of the aircraft. After many months of negotiations and two trips to Washington, D.C., with Robert Waring of Geneva, we finally acquired clear title to the plane.

As an airplane of this size and type had never been used for spraying, we were subjected to much ridicule when people learned that was the use we were going to put it to. After a year of outfitting the plane and attempting to get a spray contract, we acquired the job of spraying Lansing, Michigan, for gypsy moth, which is an insect that destroys trees.. The job was such an astounding success that we were soon busy every summer with huge government contracts. In 1955, we sprayed 350,000 acres for gypsy moth control. In 1956, we sprayed 1,400,000 acres of citrus to control the Mediterranean fruit fly. In 1957, we sprayed 750,000 acres for spruce budworm control; also, in the same year, we sprayed 43,000 acres in Fillmore County for grasshoppers. In 1958, again for grasshopper control, we sprayed 800,000 acres in Colorado.

In 1959, we converted the airplane to fire-fighting and did considerable work fighting forest fires in the United States and Canada.

In 1960, we decided to retire from the aircraft application business and sold both airplanes. The original plane, N17W, was sold to a flying company in Arizona and is still flying in this type of business. The second plane. N117W, acquired in 1956, was sold to Bolivia and was later demolished in an accident there.

In their 14 years in the business, the Biegert Brothers sprayed approximately 8,000,000 acres of farm and rangeland.

—Data from Biegert Brothers

Liberty Township

Liberty township, located six miles east of Geneva, is bounded on the north by Exeter, on the west by Madison, and on the south by Glengary townships, and on the east by Saline County. Turkey Creek winds from southwest to northeast through its southeastern corner. This stream has running water the year round, and some of the best bottom lands lie along it. There are 35 irrigation wells in the township, and more coming up. There are also three sandpits which provide gravel for county roads as well as good fishing.

The township is crossed from north to south by Nebraska Highway 76, which follows the first section line east of the Madison township border. The Fairmont-Helvey branch of the Burlington slants diagonally from northwest to south-

east across Secs. 19 to 34.

The main crops are wheat, corn, oats, milo, and alfalfa; alfalfa is raised for both feed and seed. Livestock consists mostly of stock cattle and hogs; feeding cattle is not a major operation in Liberty township. A few sheep are raised. Almost every farm has some poultry; many poultry raisers contract eggs to hatcheries.

A historical marker between Secs. 10 and 16 in Liberty township reminds us of a young mother who passed away and was buried there while they were en route west in a covered wagon. The inscription on the tombstone at the grave site reads:

> Melissa Wife of G. G. Montz

February 21, 1872 Aged 31 years 1 month and 12 days

The first Czechs came to Fillmore County in 1867. They came directly from Europe and settled along Turkey Creek in order to have firewood and water. Usually only one member of the family came; he would work at various jobs until he had money enough to send for another member of the family. It was often a long time before some of the larger families could be united again.

SCHOOLS

District No. 2 was founded on December 4, 1871, when G. W. Gue, county superintendent, set aside Secs. 29, 30, 31, and 32 of Liberty township and Secs. 35 and 36 of Madison township to constitute this district.

Date	Teacher Salary Direc	tor
1872-73	Helen Loghry\$12 mo. for 3 mo.	
10.12	F. A. Calven\$30 mo. for 4 mo.	
1873-74		
1874-75	Shadrack Doty\$30 mo. for 4 moC. H. Ba	assett
1875-76	Sophia Lee\$72 mo. for 3 moC. H. Ba	assett
	William Dyer\$30 mo. for 4 moC. H. Ba	assett
1876-77	L. L. Covell\$28 mo. for 3 moC. H. Ba	assett
	W. R. Wait\$30 mo. for 4 moC, H. Ba	
1877-78	Ellen Burke\$38 mo. for 1½ moC. H. Ba	assett
	Jennie English\$38 mo. for 11/2 moC. H. Ba	assett
1878-79	Samuel	
	Browning\$35 mo. for 5 moC. H. B.	assett
1879-80	W. P. Evans\$25 mo. for 3 moC. H. B.	assett
	S. D. Purviance\$28.33 mo. for 3 moC. H. B.	assett
1880-81	Ella Kinrade\$25 mo. for 3 moO. D. W	ilson
	Eva M. Dawes\$30 mo. for 3 moO. D. W	ilson
1881-82	Samuel	
	Browning \$27.50 mo. for 8 moA. C. T	ucker
1882-83		
1883-84	Anna Kinrade\$28 mo. for 4 moA. C. T	ucker
	Nancy	
	Robertson\$28 mo. for 4 moA. C. T	ucker
1884-85	Nancy	lean
	Robertson\$28 mo. for 5 moA. C. T	ucker
1885-86	James Painton\$40 mo. for 4 moA. C. T	ucker
	Celia B. Grier\$30 mo. for 2 moA. C. T	искег
1886-87	Kithe Putney\$32.50 mo. for 2 moR. B. T	ucker
1000-07	Cyrus J.	
	Trauger	ucker
	M. J. Dwyer	ucker
1007.00		
1887-88	S. D. Purviance\$37,55 mo. for 6 moJohn Kei	medy

There are no records from 1889 to 1919, except of the school directors who were O. D. Wilson in 1896; J. P. Baroch from 1897 to 1900; Charles Ondrak from 1900 to 1903; and James Krejci from 1903 to 1908.

Date	Teacher	Salary	Director
1919-20	Emma Barta.	Salary \$80 mo	Mary Sluka
1920-21	Sylvia Placky	\$100 mo	Mary Sluka
1921-22	Anna Kuska.	\$100 mo	Frank M. Kohler
1922-23	Anna Kuska.	\$100 mo	Frank M. Kohler
1923-24	Alice Kohler.	\$70.00 mo	Frank M. Kohler
1924-25	Rose Chudly.	\$70.00 mo	Frank M. Kohler
1925-26	Lillian Sluka.	\$70.00 mo	Frank M. Kohler
1926-27	Lillian Sluka.	\$80.00 mo	Frank M. Kohler
1927-28	Edna Buck	\$70.00 mo	Frank M. Kohler
1928-29	Helen McPee	ck\$80.00 mo	Frank M. Kohler
		cka\$72.50 mo	
1930-31	Helen Kucera	a\$67.50 mo	Frank M. Kohler
1931-32	Vlasta Krupic	cka\$75.00 mo	Frank M. Kohler
1932-33	Vlasta Krupie	cka\$60.00 mo	Frank M. Kohler
1933-34	Vlasta Krupie	cka\$50.00 mo	Frank M. Kohler
1934-35	Vlasta Krupi	cka\$50.00 mo	Edw. Uldrich, Sr.
1935-36	Vlasta Krupi	cka\$50.00 mo	Edw. Uldrich, Sr.
1936-37	Rose Suda	\$45.00 mo	Edw. Uldrich, Sr.
1937-38	Rose Suda	\$50.00 mo	Edw. Uldrich, Sr.
1938-39	Viola Souku	p\$38.00 mo	Edw. Uldrich, Sr.
1939-40	Irene Bures	\$38.00 mo	Edw. Uldrich, Sr.
1940-41	Irene Bures	\$40.00 mo	Edw. Uldrich, Sr.
1941-42	Rita Votipka	\$40.00 mo	Edw. Uldrich, Sr.
1942-43	Elaine Tesar	\$65.00 mo	Edw. Uldrich, Sr.
1943-44	Maxine Have	l\$75.00 mo	Edw. Uldrich, Sr.
1944-45	Dorothy Bur	es\$100.00 mo	Edw. Uldrich, Sr.
1945-46	Eleanor Kass	sik\$100.00 mo	Edw. Uldrich, Sr.
1946-47	Evelyn		
	Hromadka.		Edw. Uldrich, Sr.
1947-48	Darlene Koc	a\$150.00 mo	Edw. Uldrich, Sr.
1948-49	Vivian Luzur	n\$150.00 mo	Raymond Uldrich
1949-50	Vivian Luzur	n\$175.00 mo	Raymond Uldrich
1950-51	Janet Sladek	\$165.00 mo	Raymond Uldrich
1951-52	Janet Sladek	\$190.00 mo	Raymond Uldrich
1952-53	Janet Sladek	\$235.70 mo	Raymond Uldrich
1953-54	Janet Sladek	\$240.00 mo	Raymond Uldrich
1954-55	Norma Koca	\$225.00 mo	Raymond Uldrich
			Raymond Uldrich
1956-57	Willa Jean		
	Kotas	\$250.00 mo	Raymond Uldrich

District 2 merged with the Milligan school system in

District No. 5 was founded on January 6, 1872. George W. Gue, county superintendent, set aside Secs. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 of Liberty township to constitute this district.



Taken the day after a tornado, on June 14, 1924, destroyed the school house of District No. 5. The school board was going to build a new school and was trying to decide what to do with the old building when the tornado destroyed it.



District No. 6 Schoolhouse (February 22, 1941).

On petition of Peter Youngers, County Superintendent G. W. Gue set aside Secs. 23, 24, 25, 26, 35, and 36 of Liberty township to constitute **District No. 6.** The election of officers took place at the home of D. H. Dillon on January 13, 1872.

Date	Teacher	Salary	Director
		Dyer\$16.60 mo. \$20.00 mo.	for 3 moWilliam Dyer for 3 moWilliam Dyer for 3 moWilliam Dyer
1875-76	William		3 moPeter Youngers
1876-77			
			4 moPeter Youngers
1877-78			3 moPeter Youngers
1878-80		olson\$30 mo. for	r 3 moD. H. Dillon r 6 moD. H. Dillon
1880-83	Mrs. M.		
		\$29.00 mo. \$29.75 mo.	for 3 moD. H. Dillon for 3 moFrank Kucera for 5 moFrank Kucera
1883-84	Viola M		5 moFrank Kucera
1884-85			r 3 moFrank Kucera r 3 moJohn Hromadka
1885-87	B. J. Ry		2 termsJohn Hromadka r 8 moJohn Hromadka
1887-88	Julia Re	id\$30 mo. for	3 moAnton Becwar
1888-89	M. J. D	wyer\$30 mo. for	3 moAnton Becwar
			5 moAnton Becwar
Sept. to Dec.			
1890	Emma S	age\$133 1/3 for	4 moAnton Becwar
March to June		70	
1891		age\$133 ½ for	4 moAnton Becwar

In the summer of 1891, a new schoolhouse was built onehalf mile south of its old location so as to make it more central.

Date	Teacher	Salary	Director
1891-93	Emma Lane	\$130 for 4 mo	Anton Becwar
1891-93	Edmund Lan	e\$33 for 1 mo	Anton Becwar
	Edmund Lan	e\$105 for 3 and	5
		mo. terms	Anton Becwar
1893-94	Kitty Cully	\$280 for 3 and	5
7.000		mo. terms	John Kasak

1895-96	Emma Lane\$32 mo. for 3 and 5
	mo terms John Kasak
1896	Charles Smrha\$64John Kasak
1900-01	A. B. Hromadka8-month termJohn Kasak
(Salar	y not available; 45 students enrolled, ranging
(Balar	y not available; 45 students enrolled, ranging
from 5	to 18 years of age.)
1901-02	E. J. Kotas8-month termJohn Kasak
	(36 pupils enrolled)
1902-04	Lillian SpirkTwo 8-mo. termsMike Becwar
1904-06	Nellye
	HanaberyTwo 8-month terms
	at \$35 Mike Recwar
1906-08	Lillian KotasTwo 8-month terms
	at \$35Mike Becwar
1909-10	Esther
1000 10	McDonald\$40 mo for 9 moFr. F. Lovegrove
1910-15	Emil SoukupStarted at \$50 mo. for
1010-10	9 mo.; raised to \$60
1015 16	and \$65Fr. F. LovegroveRose Brt\$50 mo. for 9 mo. Fr. F. Lovegrove
1016 17	Agnes Verre \$50 mo. for 9 mo. Fr. F. Lovegrove
1017 10	Agnes Vavra\$50 mo. for 9 moFred J. Kucera
1010-10	Valasta Krejci\$50 mo. for 9 moFred J. Kucera
1918-19	Marie Sourezny\$50 mo. for 9 moFred J. Kucera
	Marie Novacek\$75 mo. for 9 moFred J. Kucera
	Lilian Placek\$110 mo. for 9 mo. Fred J. Kucera
1921-22	Effie Peterson\$90 mo. for 9 moFred J. Kucera
1922-24	Alice Laun\$75 mo. for 9 moFred J. Kucera
1924-25	Tena Vavra\$75 mo. for 9 moFred J. Kucera
	Alice Votipka\$80 mo. for 9 moFred J. Kucera
1926-31	Mamie Loukota \$80 mo. for 9 moLouis Vavra
1931-37	Helene Kucera9 mo. receiving \$60
	mo. for 3 years;
	\$50 mo. for 2 years;
	\$55 mo. for 1 yearLouis Vavra
(Enrollr	nent of only 5 students for the past five years.)
1937-42	Anna
	Hromadka\$45 and \$50 mo.
1942-44	for 9 moLouis VavraRita Votipka\$70 and \$100 mo.
1012 11	for 9 moLouis Vavra
1944-45	Darlene Becwar\$95 mo. for 9 moLouis Vavra
	Mrs. Willard
1340-40	Stever\$125 mo. for 9 moEd Vavra
1046.49	Arlana Laun \$125 and \$125 ma
1340-40	for 9 moEd Vavra
1040 40	Lorene Tesar\$130 mo, for 9 moEd Vavra
1948-49	Lorene Tesar\$150 mo. for 9 moEd Vavra
1950-51	Lorene Bedlan\$160 mo. for 9 moEd Vavra
1951-52	Janelle Sladek\$170 mo. for 9 moEd Vavra
1952-53	Betty Slezak\$200 mo. for 9 moEd Vavra
1953-54	Shirley Vavra\$200 mo. for 9 moEd Vavra
1954-55	Miss Merryman. \$200 mo. for 9 moEd Vavra
1955-56	Mrs. Mildred
	Tesar\$225 mo. for
	Tesar\$225 mo. for 9 moEllsworth Maresh
1956-57	Mrs. Mildred
	Tesar\$250 mo. for
	Mrs. Mildred Tesar\$250 mo. for 9 moEllsworth Maresh

District 6 merged with Milligan in 1962.

On March 3, 1872, County Superintendent G. W. Gue set aside Secs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 of Liberty township to constitute District No. 25.



Picture from Lou Vavra

Fiftieth Anniversary Picnic, School District No. 6 (August 17, 1941).



District No. 25 (taken in 1930's) Left to right: Rosemary Erdkamp, Shirley Jansen, Rita Becker, Teacher, Bobby Zeleny, Dick Erdkamp, Francis Biba.

District No. 33 ("Elm School") was founded in March, 1872, when County Superintendent G. W. Gue, by his deputy, G. W. Burrow, set aside Secs. 21, 22, 27, 28, 33, and 34 of Liberty township to constitute this district. The school did not go into operation until 1876.

Date	Teacher	Salary	Director
	Grace Crooker	\$100 for 4 mo	L. W. Clark and
			N. Devel
March 12, 1877	S. Browning	\$90 for 3 mo	L. W. Clark
Dec. 10, 1877	John Beardsley	\$90 for 3 mo	I. W. Clark
March 16, 1878	Sowell May	\$78 for 3 mo	L. W. Clark
April 7 1879	Lou Nicholson		S. O. Hubbard
April 5 1880	Lou Nicholson.		S. O. Hubbard
1880	Sam Browning	\$120 for 4 mo	S. O. Hubbard
April 11, 1881	W. R.	200 0	0.0 11.11.1
1001	Teagarden	\$78 for 3 mo	S. O. Hubbard
1001 1009	Minnie Butier	\$84 for 3 mo	S. O. Hubbard
April 10 1882	Marietta Avery	.\$75 for 3 mo	J. S. Beardsley
1882-1883	Minnie R. Stone	.\$90 for 3 mo	J. S. Beardsley
April 18, 1883, to)		
	Marietta Avery	\$56 for 40 days	J. S. Beardsley
Nov., 1883, to March. 1884	Eva Sheiblev	\$120 for 4 mo	J. S. Beardsley
April. 1884, to			
Aug., 1884	Miss A. L.	007 FO f CO d	. I C Danadalan
April, 1885, to		\$97.50 for 60 day	sJ. S. Beardsley
Aug., 1885	Nancy		
	Robertson	\$90 for 3 mo	J. S. Beardsley
July, 1885, to	T	0100 (00 1	C O Halland
Oct., 1885	Etta Hamilton.	\$120 for 80 days.	S. O. Hubbard
July, 1886, to	Cella B. Grier	\$100 for 00 days.	S. O. Hubbard
Jan. 1, 1887.	Nancy		
Juli. 1, 10011	Robertson	\$80 for 60 days	S. O. Hubbard
Jan. 1, 1887, to			
July, 1887	Nancy	No record	S. O. Hubbard
July, 1887, to	Robertson	No record	5. O. Hubbard
Sept. 30, 1887	7Nancy		
200	Robertson	\$96 for 3 mo	J. L. Jackson
Nov. 21, 1887	P. H. Ryan	\$144 for 4 mo	J. L. Jackson
April 3, 1888	Lillian Donovar	\$90 for 3 mo	Thomas Durkan
1888	B. J. Ryan	\$90 for 2 mo	Thomas Durkan Thomas Durkan
Jan. 21, 1889	B. J. Ryan	\$108 for 3 mo \$20 for 1 mo	Thomas Durkan
March 6, 1889,		\$20 101 1 1110	I nomas Durkun
June 28, 1889	B. J. Ryan	\$132 for 4 mo	Thomas Durkan
July 8 1889	C. L. Tallmadge	\$144 for 4 mo	Thomas Durkan
Feb 17 1890	Ida B Walton	\$90 for 3 mo	Thomas Durkan
July 1, 1890	Ida B. Walton	\$210 for 7 mo	G. Girch
July 20, 1891	Ida B. Walton	\$60 for 2 mo	G. Girch
Aug. 21, 1891	Jennie Hussman	1\$35 for 2 mo	G. Girch
Feb 29 1892	Jennie Hussman	\$60 for 2 mo	G. Girch
Aug. 27, 1892	Jennie Hussman	1\$60 for 2 mo	G. Girch
Dec. 5, 1892, to			
April, 1893	Charles S.	****	0.0:1
		\$140 for 4 mo	G. Girch
April 10, 1893	Charles S.	\$70 for 2 mg	G. Girch
Sent 11 1893	Ida B. Walton	\$60 for 2 mo	Frank Rozanek
Dec. 4. 1893	Ida B. Walton	\$140 for 4 mo	Frank Rozanek
March 7 1894	Mary Janda	\$60 for 2 mo	Frank Rozanek
July 31, 1894	S. L. Bleuvelt	\$130 for 4 mo	Frank Rozanek

Date	Teacher	Salary	Director
Nov. 9, 18	94S. L. Bleuvel	t \$195 for 6 mo	Frank Rozanok
Sept. 27, 18	895, to	emily100 for 0 mo	
Sept. 18	96Charles Smrh	a\$50 for 2 mo	Frank Rozansk
		\$112 for 4 mo	Frank Rozanek
Sept. 6, 18	96, to	7-101 1 mo	Tank Itozanek
	1896Fannie Moti	s\$56 for 2 mo	Frank Rozanek
Jan. 26, 18	897. to	Total a monn	
	1897E. J. Motis	\$150 for 5 mo	Frank Rozanek
Sept., 1897	. to		Tank Itozanek
	1898E. J. Motis	\$240 for 8 mo	Frank Rozanek
Oct. 1, 189			I talk Itozalick
May, 18	399Anna Smrha.	\$240 for 8 mo.	Frank Rozanek
Oct. 11, 18	899, to		min rum rozumen
	1899W. G. William	ns\$140 for 4 mo	Frank Rozanek
Jan., 1899,	to		Tunn Troubling
May 18,	1900 W. G. William	ns\$160 for 4 mo	Frank Rozanek
June 25, 1	1900		Emil Kubicek
	(Information is m	issing from 1900	to 1906.)
Oct. 3 190	06-07Maxie Holm	otz \$140 for 4 mo	10 1000.)
o c o, 10.	oo orminaane monn	\$190 for 5 mo.	
Sept 190	7-08Tom F.	ф150 101 5 1110.	
Sept., 100		v \$360 for 9 mo	James Stetina
Sept. 190	8-09Iva A. Mitch		
Sept., 1909	e to	ιπφ100 Ioi ο mo	bames Stetma
	10Tina D. Ervi	ng \$23.75 for 43/	
Juli, 10	Tomma Tina B. Ervi		James Stetina
Jan., 1910,	to	***************************************	bames Stetma
	1910Iva A. Mitch	ell \$250 for 5 mo	James Stating
Sept., 1910		cipado for o mo.	oames stetina
	911William Bib	a\$450 for 9 mo.	James Stetina



Before Convertibles and Snow Tires. As late as 1940, the teacher in District No. 6 sometimes got to school by this kind of emergency transportation. (Mr. John Hromadka and team.)

Sept., 1912, to
May, 1913Estella Krejci\$450 for 9 moJames Stetin
Sept., 1913, to
May, 1914Edward Chudly\$400 for 8 moJames Sleza
Sept., 1914, to
May, 1915Bessie Selement. \$405 for 9 moJames Sleza
Sept., 1915, to
May, 1916Bessie Selement. \$405 for 9 moJames Sleza
Sept., 1916, to
May, 1917Elizabeth Kelly\$450 for 9 moJames Sleza
Sept., 1917, to
May, 1918Frank Votipka\$495 for 9 moJames Sleza
Sept., 1918, to
May, 1919Mollie (Mrs.
Frank)
Votipka\$495 for 9 moJames Sleza
Sept., 1919, to
May, 1920Agnes Ondrak\$675 for 9 moJames Sleza
Sept., 1920, to
May, 1921Agnes Ondrak\$1,035 for 9 moJames Slezal
Sept., 1921, to
May, 1922Emma Kuska\$900 for 9 moJames Prachei
Sept., 1922, to
May, 1923Katherina
Kuska\$900 for 9 moJames Prachei
Sept., 1923, to
May, 1924Katherina
Kuska\$855 for 9 moJames Prachei
Sept., 1924, to
May, 1925Alice Laun\$585 for 9 moJames Prachei

Date	Teacher	Salary	Director
Sept., 1925, to May, 1926	Frank Tesar.	\$675 for 9 mo	James Pracheil
Sept., 1926, to May, 1927	Alice Vavra	\$630 for 9 mo	James Pracheil
	Alice Vavra	\$720 for 9 mo	James Pracheil
	Milton Prach	neil. \$675 for 9 mo	James Pracheil
Sept., 1929, to May, 1930		\$675 for 9 mo	Stanhan Kayanda
Sept., 1930, to May, 1931			Stephen Kovanda
Sept., 1931, to May, 1932	Dorothy	\$765 for 9 mo	
Sept., 1932, to		\$675 for 9 mo	
Sept., 1933, to			Stephen Kovanda
Sept., 1934, to		lka\$405 for 9 mo	
May, 1935 Sept., 1935, to	Anna Hromad	lka\$405 for 9 mo	Stephen Kovanda
	Anna Hromad	lka\$405 for 9 mo	Stephen Kovanda
May, 1937 Sept., 1937, to	Anna Hromad	lka\$405 for 9 mo	Stephen Kovanda
May, 1938 Sept., 1938, to	Rita Votipka	\$405 for 9 mo	Stephen Kovanda
May, 1939	Rita Votipka	\$495 for 9 mo	Wm. Slezak
	Rita Votipka	\$450 for 9 mo	Wm. Slezak
	Arlene Tesar	\$360 for 9 mo	Wm. Slezak
Sept., 1941, to May, 1942	Arlene Tesar.	\$360 for 9 mo	Wm. Slezak
Sept., 1942, to May, 1943	Dorothy Bur	es\$45 for Sept. ar	nd W. Shark
Sept., 1943, to May, 1944	Dorothy Bur	es\$765 for 9 mo	
Sept., 1944, to May, 1945	Maxine Have	\$6.40 for Inco d\$855 for 9 mo \$8.60 for Inco	Wm. Slezak
Sept., 1945, to May, 1946	Maxine Have	el\$1,035 for 9 mo.	
Sept., 1946, to		\$15.40 for In y\$1,035 for 9 mo.	come Tax
Sept., 1947, to		\$11.60 for In-	come Tax
	Helen Chudl	y\$1,260 for 9 mo \$15.70 for Inc	Raymond Uldrich come Tax
Sept., 1948, to May, 1949	Lorene Buze	k\$1,215 for 9 mo \$13.40 for In	Rex Votipka
Sept., 1949, to May, 1950	Lorene Buze	k\$1,575 for 9 mo \$17.70 for In	
Sept., 1950, to May, 1951	Lorene Buze	k\$1,575 for 9 mo	Rex Votipka
Sept., 1951, to May, 1952	Lorene Buze	\$21.31 for In k\$1,800 for 9 mo Feb.; Emil J.	
Sept., 1952, to		\$24.30 for Inc	come Tax
May, 1953	Delores (Mrs. Leonar	rd)	
	Becwar	\$1,800 for 9 mo \$20.30 for In	
Sept., 1953, to May, 1954	Betty Slezak	\$1,890 for 9 mo \$30.90 for In	
Sept., 1954, to May, 1955	Anna		
May, 1555	(Mrs. Giles Hanson	\$2,250 for 9 mo	Emil J. Filip
		\$35.40 for In	come Tax
Sept., 1955, to			
Sept., 1955, to May, 1956	Anna (Mrs. Gile	s)	
	(Mrs. Giles	s) \$2,250 for 9 mo \$25.40 for In	

It may be interesting to note that a father, mother, and daughter all taught in this school: Mr. and Mrs. Frank Votipka (both deceased) and their daughter Rita. They all graduated from high schools within Fillmore County. Mr. Votipka graduated from the eighth grade in District 33.

District 33 merged with Milligan in 1966.

On March 16, 1875, John A. Dempster, county superintendent, set aside Secs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 of Liberty township to constitute District No. 72.

District No. 95 was founded on November 18, 1893, when County Superintendent J. J. Burke set aside Secs. 1, 2, and 3 of Liberty township and Secs. 34, 35, and 36 of Exeter township to constitute District No. 95.

On July 1, 1953, Districts 5, 25, 72, and 95 consolidated with District 20 of Exeter township.

Districts 2, 6, and 33, as previously noted, consolidated with Milligan.



Photo from James Barbur

District No. 95, about 1913 or 1914. Back row, left to right: Willie Eurich, Tommy Rose, Ruth Horne, Lloyd Steyer, Frank Krejci, Sam Eurich, Johnny Krejci, John Barbur, Mabel Rose, Alvina Eurich, Mildred Dyer, Louise Diekman Downey, teacher. Middle row left to right: Mamie Loukota, Lucile Barbur, Lizzie Eurich, Gladys Dyer, Frank Loukota, Harold Dyer, Emily Horne, Mary Krejci. Seated: Dorothy Horne, Henry Miller, Jimmie Loukota, Ernest Dyer, Ruthie Lane, Vera Miller, Alice Miller, Lillian Miller.

FAMILIES

Mr. and Mrs. John K. Barbur¹ came to Fillmore County in October, 1870, from Woodstock, Illinois, and located in Sec. 3 of Liberty township. They came with a wagon and team; they were five weeks on the road and were laid up one week because of bad weather. Upon recommendation, Mr. Barbur bought a filing without going to see the land. They used a sod shanty near Turkey Creek until their dugout home, dugout barn, and cellar were ready for occupancy in January, 1871.

¹The accounts of the Barbur, Coates, Downey, Dyer, Eberstein, Howarth, McGhie, Murphy, Nolan, Nugent, Ramsdell, Songster, Stephens, and Ziska families are taken, with minor alterations, from *Pioneer Stories*, by G. R. McKeith, of Exeter, Nebraska.



Photo From James Barbur One of the first frame houses in Liberty township.

Liberty Township Homestead Map

Henry Sheldon	William McGhie Samuel H. Abbott			Chester C Stephens	Thomas Powell	James Horne			John Walton	William Downey	Sarah Annie Coates		
Joseph Kolar Alexander McCarthy	Charles Patrick Hole Murphy	Railroad Land		Railroad Land Calvin A. Songeter Na		Pailroad Land Napoleon Wilson		Charles H. Vroman William Ramsdell		Ramedell	Rallroad Land		
Railro	r ad Land	Alfred S. Keller Amass W.Dikens W. Jacobs Jacobs	Joseph S. Thompson	Railro	9 and Land		John Ryan Charles Martha C. Houtz Houtz	John K. Barber	Railr	11 oad Land		John Gensier Henry J Foster Yarker Alexander Parks	Phillip Marquas
			Henry L. Morgan				C. Houtz Houtz	Wakeman Kolar					
	George Nugent	1 Railroi	.7 ad Land	Schoo	lé bl Land		Railre	15 ad Land	Martin Jeffrey John F. Shirley Francis M.	Thomas		Rails	13 oad Land
Levi Butterbaugh William Logan Willard Logan									Francis M. Martin P. Burge Shirley George Isaac				
Railro	. 9 ad Land	Eugene F. Moree Albert G. Ringold	A. O. Francis Morse M. Shirley Patrick Lygne		21 ad Land		Caleb S. Jordan John S. Beardsley R. R. Instrument	Theodore W. Allen		23 oad Land		Otto Ostenberg Wilham John Dyer Ziska	Pospishil H Loveg
	George John W. Stuliz Toomey George W. Stulir Harmon Stuliz	Railroi	.9 ad Land	James Holmes Kennedy Marshali Wilber Deuel	Thomas N	lugent	Railre	27 and Land	reter Pater Youngers Younger Sr. Jr Matthew Youngers	Patrick Nelly, Jr.	Patrick iKelly, Sr. John Karl	Railr	25 oad Land
Railro	31 ad Land	Peter Ferdinand McKenna Sluka William Frank McKenna Kebrille	Sluka Petrik	Railyo	33 ad Land		Solomon O. Hubbard Cotiseb Anton Girmus Vavra	Josef Joseph Sladek Jes Matthias Kubicek Matthias Kate Kubicek Ruzicka	Railr	35 oad Land		Scho	36 ol Land

The Barburs opened their home for religious purposes and had the first preaching service held in Fillmore County. The Rev. Mr. Whiting, a Free Methodist, was the preacher. In the Barbur home was organized the first Sunday School in the county. A Mr. Snowden came from Lincoln for that purpose, bringing with him 20 books to start a library.

The first year of farming was not very encouraging. They had planted sod corn, buckwheat, squash, turnips, and beans. Everything looked very good until a hailstorm struck the farm and dashed everything to pieces except the turnips. Then Mr. Barbur longed for home and wanted to go back, but Mrs. Barbur refused. She believed they could fight it out, and so they remained. In spite of drawbacks, they could at least at one time boast of "high living" in having venison for meat. This was considered so good that some hungry Esau came around when the Barburs were away from home and stole half of the precious deer.

Mr. Barbur killed several antelope and received a share of buffalo meat from Palmer Lancaster. Mr. Lancaster on one occasion secured, with his own gun and Mr. Barbur's shotgun, 13 out of a flock of 14 wild geese. During those early days, the geese and cranes were so plentiful that he paid a man a dollar a day to kill them, or they would have no crops.

The Barburs, like others, suffered from the grasshoppers. A black cloud appeared in the north, and soon grasshoppers

began to fall. A cornfield of 100 acres quickly was nothing but a patch of short stalks.

Mr. Barbur helped to organize Fillmore County, at a meeting in Col. McCalla's dugout, and helped to secure the placing of the county seat in Geneva.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Becwar migrated to the United States from Czechoslovakia by sailing ship in 1868, arriving in November. They came by train as far as Lincoln. There they hired a wagon and driver to bring them and their possessions across the prairies to the Kral homestead north of Milligan (E ½, SE ¼, Sec. 26). After paying their fare to the driver, the family had only 75 cents left.

The Becwars took a homestead on the 80 acres west of the Kral homestead (W $\frac{1}{2}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 26). The family consisted of mother, father, son (Anton, aged 7), and two daughters (Josephine, 4, and Agnes, 2). Later three more children, Barbara, Mike, and Mary, were born to this union. On the homestead they made a dugout, using an animal hide to cover the doorway, for a home.

Mr. Becwar was a cabinet maker. On their way to Liberty township they had stopped in Pleasant Hill, where a mill was being built, and he was promised work the next week. He walked back to Pleasant Hill where he worked for some time at 50 cents a day. He helped build the first William Smith flour mill on Turkey Creek at Pleasant Hill. He walked 25

miles to work, staying during the week and coming home on week ends. At the end of his first week, he walked home on the Saturday night carrying enough lumber for a door for their dugout. On other weekends, he would follow the wellworn path across the prairie carrying groceries, once including

a 50-pound sack of flour.

The first years of living in this country were very hard. Living in the dugout was unpleasant, as it was hard to heat. Beds were made on the floor, and often snakes were to be found living with them. They ground corn by using two stones; cornbread was one of their major items of food. A certain weed that grew along Turkey Creek was gathered to make into a tea, the only beverage available besides water. Their principal meat was prairie chickens, which were plentiful and were usually shot on trips home from work. The following spring they bought a heifer calf with Mr. Becwar's carpenter earnings. They broke the calf to yoke and used it, with a neighbor's horse, to break the sod. They planted corn and watermelons. Melons grew as large as half-bushel baskets.

In 1870-1871, Mr. Becwar was employed building the B. & M. Railroad. The main line was completed through Fillmore County in 1871, after which the towns of Exeter and Fairmont were laid out and grew rapidly. In 1871, Mr. Becwar bought from the railroad the SW ¼ of Sec. 23, Liberty township; this farm was handed down to Mike Becwar, Sr., who in turn gave it to Mike Becwar, Jr., in 1922. At present Leonard Becwar and family live on this farm. As of 1967, this farm has been in the same family for 96 years.

Indians came through occasionally begging for food. Mrs. Becwar usually gave them homemade bread. The Indians, being friendly, would settle for that. However, usually several Indians would come to the place at once, and while one was at the house others would pick up whatever they could get, and the woman of the house would be too scared to do any-

thing about it.

Rustlers were a real problem. They would come through stealing cattle. The Becwars' cow had a calf. The cow was turned out to graze and the calf was tied up at home. Rustlers came and took their cow, along with neighbor Zelenka's cow. During the night the Becwars' cow ran away from the rustlers and returned to her calf, but the Zelenkas never did recover their animal.

The children of the Frank Becwars married and lived in Kansas and Nebraska. Agnes and Josie settled in Kansas; Barbara went to Nelson, Nebraska, and Mary to Sunol, Nebraska. Mike Becwar, Sr., and Anton stayed in Fillmore County.

Anton Becwar, son of Frank and brother of Mike, Sr., was born in Czechoslovakia on June 16, 1861. He came to America with his parents and lived to manhood with them. He was united in marriage to Marie Bures on November 27, 1883. They had 11 children. After their marriage Anton and Marie moved into a new frame house on the parents' homestead. In 1895, they bought the SW ¼ of Sec. 23 for \$10,000. This was a very modern farmstead for its day; the barn, corncrib, and hog house still stand. However, two Becwar children, Charles and Anna, contracted diphtheria on this farm from eating creek ice at a school picnic and both passed away on the same day. Their father, not wanting to live there any longer, sold this farm to Joe Domling. Anton and his wife then bought the NW ¼ of Sec. 19, Liberty township, and lived there the rest of their lives. Anton passed away January 31, 1937, and his wife Marie on October 9, 1933.

Children of this union still living are: Katherine Kuska and Antonia Stofer, of Fairmont, Josephine Menke, of Exeter, and Mamie Miner, of Dorchester.

Mike Becwar, Sr., was born in the family dugout in 1872. He was married in 1897 to Josie Beck. They had eight children: Mike, Jr., Frank, Barbara (Mrs. James Tesar), Mrs. Anna Foster, Mrs. Rose Svec, Mrs. Emma Koca, Mrs. Valasta Moore, and Gus (who passed away during World War II in Cairo, Egypt).

Mike Becwar farmed in Fillmore County until 1923, when he moved near Tobias, Nebraska, where he farmed for 21 more years. He and his wife then moved to Geneva, where they lived four years and were privileged to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary. Then they moved to Milligan to be closer to their children. His wife Josie passed away in 1951; he followed her in 1962. His farming operations included the usual ones: raising cattle, hogs, and chickens, and wheat, oats, and corn. He served for more than 20 years on the school board in District 6.

He recalled his mother's telling them about the cattle rustlers who got, but lost again, their family cow, though the same rustlers took several steers from the near-by Krals. He also remembered her account of the grasshoppers in 1874. They dropped from the sky, eating everything green, includ-

ing his dad's jacket.

District 6 schoolhouse was first located in the northeast corner of the section where it is now. Mike Becwar, Sr., went to this first school on the corner. Mrs. Peter Youngers was his teacher. This schoolhouse was later sold to a Mr. Nichols, and a new one was built ½ mile south of the same farm. The new schoolhouse served for many years, and in 1941 celebrated its 50th year in service.

—Mike Becwar, Jr.

Albert Biba came to America with his parents in 1878 at the age of six years. His future wife, Josie Kovanda, came in 1886 at the age of 18. They were both from Czechoslovakia. They were married August 18, 1890, at Geneva. To this union were born nine children: William, Albert, Anton, James, Edward, Fred, Mrs. Joe Kuska, Mrs. Earl Manning, and Alice.



Albert and Josefa Kovanda Biba — taken on their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1940.

Thomas Coates was a native of Yorkshire, England. His home was near the county line; their nearest important town was Worksop in Nottinghamshire. The district is one of the most interesting and beautiful in England. In this historic and beautiful countryside Thomas Coates was born and raised. In July, 1848, he was married to Sarah Annie Johnson. Up to the time he left England, he worked in the limestone quarries and rented a farm; this was often done by enterprising men.

The Coatses came to this country in 1871, bringing with them a young family of seven children, five boys and two girls. They arrived in Lincoln in May. The B. & M. Railroad was then laid as far as Lincoln. They stayed there until the track was laid as far as Crete; then they made their way west. Mr. Coates bought some railroad land on Sec. 18 near Turkey Creek in Saline County. They lived there until 1873, when he bought the homestead rights of the NE ¼ of Sec. 2, in Liberty township, Fillmore County, where they resided until the time of their deaths. Mr. Coates died in 1888 and Mrs. Coates in 1911.

We are indebted to Joseph Coates, the fourth son in the family, for the following information. He remembered very distinctly the farm home in England as well as experiences of pioneer life on the prairies. When they came to this country there was plenty of wild game. One day he came on a large herd of antelope lying in a ravine. When they saw him they made a rush which seemed to shake the earth. This was the apparent effect caused by that particular kind of animal as it ran. Prairie fires were the terror of their lives. A fire could be seen for three days before it reached their place and could be seen for three days after it had passed. This gave ample time to make fireguards, but these were often jumped.

He would often visit the campfires of the Indians and sit in their circles, watching their mode of life and listening to their warsongs. The Indians always seemed happy as larks. Life seemed a real pleasure, and they made the best of their

conditions.



"Grandma Coates" and her home in Liberty Township.

One day Mr. Coates was out hunting rabbits. Quite unexpectedly an Indian came up to him and took his gun away from him. After looking it over carefully, he handed it back without making any remarks. On another occasion, he went with a party to hunt antelope. They saw a lone antelope, and as soon as the dogs saw it they gave chase, caught it, and killed it. The next day they saw a herd of 14 antelope, but the dogs would not touch them. The hunters were without their guns, and so the antelope herd ran away.

Among the peculiar stories of early years are those about a tornado which completely destroyed the house and farm buildings on the Wadman place near Turkey Creek. When the tornado struck the house, Mrs. John Wadman (nee Mary Coates) and her two children had retired for the night. They were lying on a feather bed which lay on a mattress on the bedstead. They were carried away by the storm and afterward found in a ravine about four rods away. They were lying on the mattress, but the feather bed and bedding had

disappeared.

The brother John and the hired man were also in bed. John was carried and thrown into a large pond four rods from the house. While he was in the water, a roof was pressed down against his neck and back, and then just as suddenly taken away. When found by his brothers, who had come to the rescue, he was clothed in the neckband of his nightshirt.

The hired man was found with a large cut over his eye. To show the power and mysterious force of a tornado, we mention the fact that a bull wheel from a large header, which would have taken some time to be removed from its place by a practical machinist, was instantly removed, without any other damage to the header, and was carried to a spot half a mile away. Mr. Wadman was raising white-faced cattle and had a thoroughbred bull tied to a hitching post in the middle of the yard. The bull was not touched or moved.

Mrs. Coates — "Grandma," as she was usually called — will long be remembered for the great service she rendered to families in the district. She often acted as doctor and nurse. She visited the Old Country three times, and Mr. Coates also

crossed the Atlantic three times.

William Downey, a native of New York State, went with his parents to Michigan, where he grew up to manhood. He came to Nebraska in May, 1871, with Messrs. Ramsdell, Stephens, and Krader, the latter settling in Dodge County. They traveled all the way with wagons and teams and were six weeks on the road.

Mrs. Downey and the children stayed near Lincoln about nine months. Mr. Downey and Mr. Stephens came to this district and sought claims. Mr. Downey homesteaded in July on the W ¼ of the NE ¼ of Sec 2, T7, R1W, but did not go onto the claim until June, 1872. A sod house was built, in which they lived for some time without a floor. Their frame

house was built 15 years later.

On their way to Nebraska, they would camp over Sunday in some suitable place. Mr. Downey was careful not to travel on Sunday. One Saturday they camped near a woods in Iowa, where the women did a washing. They were told it would not be a suitable place to camp in case of storm. In spite of Mr. Downey's protests, they decided to travel on Sunday. After traveling 12 miles, they camped about three o'clock in the afternoon near a large woods just before the coming of a storm, which they could not see coming up because of the trees. A spring wagon in which Mrs. Krader and her twins were riding was placed between two large trees. They had just got out of the wagon when a large limb fell from one of the trees and another tree fell, smashing the wagon. Mr. Krader was able to repair the damage, but the time lost for the repairs, to say nothing of the danger to life and limb, amounted to more than they had tried to gain by their Sunday travel.

Out on the claim, on one occasion a bed had been made on the floor of the sod house. A buffalo robe was placed beneath the bedding. On the following morning, when the bedding was taken up, a rattlesnake was found among the bedclothes. The snake had evidently come into the house through a mouse-hole in the sod wall. During the great blizzard they found it necessary to bring the chickens into the house.

Mr. Downey died on March 30, 1901. Mrs. Downey then made her home with her son Herman, and spent some time with other members of her family, until her death on January 14, 1923.

Old Downey home, last soddy in Fillmore County.

William Dyer was born in Hambridge, Somersetshire, England. He came to America in 1871, bringing with him his wife and child (Robert Dyer, later an implement dealer), and came directly to Exeter. He bought some railroad land in Saline County, but in the fall of 1872 he homesteaded on Sec. 24, Liberty township, where he farmed for several years and taught school in District 6 and other places. Railroad land at that time was worth about \$6 or \$7 an acre. They lived in a dugout until 1880, when he built a frame house; but in that year his wife died, leaving him with their five children.

In the early days, Indians were sometimes seen passing along on their hunting expeditions. The men rode their shaggy mustang ponies, which were fitted up with two long poles reaching behind, on which they carried their camping outfit. What they were unable to load on the ponies was carried by the squaws. One day Mrs. Dyer had just finished bathing the baby and had placed it in the crib when she turned around and saw some Indians standing in the room. They came into the house very quietly. They wanted permission to hunt beaver along the creek and also asked for bacon and rice. It was her first experience with the children of the plains.

On another occasion, while she was busy making bread, she looked around and found three Indians in the room. They wanted bread, which she showed them was not yet baked, but she promised that they would receive some by night. When Mr. Dyer returned home from his school and learned of the Indians' visit, he took them three loaves of bread. It was two

miles east along Turkey Creek to their camp.

During a blizzard the windows and the door of the dugout were completely covered with snow. Mr. Dyer and his family lay in bed until 12 o'clock noon wondering when it would be daylight. They had no idea of how late it was until they noticed a streak of light shining into the stove, the

chimney being a straight one.

Mr. Dyer gave up farming in 1887 and worked for the Home Insurance Company of New York. He located in Exeter, though his insurance interests extended over a very large area. He was recognized as a faithful and industrious worker, doing a large business, including auctioneering and serving in the J. N. Cox store. He was an active worker in the Congregational Church until his death in September, 1901.

Henry Eberstein, who settled here very early but later went to Wichita, Kansas, was born and raised in Kalamazoo, Michigan. In the winter of 1863-1864, he enlisted in the First Michigan Cavalry and served in the Army of the Potomac under Custer and Sheridan until the close of the war. After the Grand Review at Washington, the Michigan Cavalry Brigade was shipped to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and began the march to Salt Lake City. Other parts of the brigade were sent by another route. During this expedition they protected the "Ben Holladay" overland stage line from the Indians, and when winter came they moved to the city.

The Mormons at that time were bitter enemies of the government and never missed an opportunity to insult the soldiers or the Flag. One incident was often recalled. A sermon was preached by Brigham Young, who knew that the colonel of the Brigade, Peter Stagg, was present. So he boldly proclaimed, "Brave boys are they! but a dozen of my women with

broomsticks can put the whole regiment to flight."

It seems that the colonel challenged an attack from the broomstick squadron. The next day he mounted the regiment, strung the column out to a mile in length, and headed toward the city, which was an unusual act. Those who had heard the talk the day before understood and passed the word along the line, and there was fire in the air. They marched and countermarched in the principal streets with colors flying, and for once the rule of "Silence in the ranks" was suspended. There were shouts of "Danger in front," "Danger in the flanks," "There she comes!" "They have got the colonel," "The coward won't fight," etc., etc. Half of the brigade would have surrendered had they come.

On March 16, 1866, the men were discharged and became citizens. They were two thousand miles from home, with nothing but a daily stagecoach for transportation. There were no two-cent fares or cheap lunch counters in those days. Instead, it was 25 cents per mile and "Jump out and push, boys!" on the steep hills. After 13 days and nights, nine passengers landed at Atchison, Kansas, not much worse for the experience, Eberstein among them.

Two years later, Mr. Eberstein returned to Nebraska and on May 30 homesteaded in Glengary township, Fillmore County (NE ¼ of Section 34). The family now consisted of three bachelor brothers who worked and lived together for some time. They built a log house on the claim, rolling the logs up to the place by horse power. Having no funds for glass doors, they hung a blanket over the entrance, and one night a rattlesnake came in without knocking. A sister, Mrs. Ramsdell and her child, were staying there and sleeping on a mattress on the floor.

They broke prairie with five yoke of oxen hitched to a 24-inch plow and often argued as to which of the three could

drive them best.

With the advent of the railroads, other monopolies began to flourish in the West under the protection of the "Big Elephant." The Burlington "swiped" half of the land along its line for 10 miles on either side and wrote a freight schedule that caught poor "Rube" coming and going. To illustrate: An enterprising Grafton farmer who thought to cut out the "Elevator Trust" loaded and shipped a car of wheat direct to Chicago; but with the returns came a claim for \$15 more to balance expense charges.

The price of a pound of coffee at Taylor's pioneer store in Exeter equaled the market value of $3\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of corn. If you were prejudiced against burning corn for fuel, you might swap 150 bushels of corn at Lou Robertson's elevator for a ton of coal; or you could step over with plenty of collateral and warm your family through the banks at 36 per

cent interest.

The Henry Eberstein family spent their last winter in Nebraska mining in the snowbanks. A long horizontal tunnel was dug to the chicken house and a short perpendicular shaft on to the haystack. Theirs was a feat of engineering for a time. They could almost oil the windmill standing on a snowbank, and the apple orchard was out of sight. They decided to leave and picked up and moved to Kansas. Afterward, they read of schoolteachers and children freezing to death on the way from school, and they wondered if it was foresight or providence that led them out of the wilderness.

Both parents of Herbert Howarth came from England. He was born in a dugout in Saline County; his parents also lived for a time in a one-room frame building. Brought to Fillmore County in 1882 at the age of two years, he lived in Liberty township until 1943. He was married in November, 1923, to Nell Pflug of Exeter; they had no children. Before

their marriage his wife taught school for 17 years.

He farmed in northeast Liberty for more than 60 years, raising hogs and cattle, averaging 100 head of cattle and 200 head of hogs yearly. He was a member of the North East District Weed Board of Fillmore County and sprayed weeds for Exeter, Liberty, and Fairmont townships for more than 10 years after moving to Exeter. He was affiliated with the Congregational Church until his death on August 23, 1953.

Walter Howarth came to this district on April 1, 1872, and homesteaded half a mile north of Turkey Creek on the county line. A native of Bolton, Lancashire, England, he came from a densely populated community to live on the lonely

prairie.

When Mr. Howarth landed there was no depot at Exeter or Friend. They were merely flag stations. How different the country looked! Nearly all the settlers lived in dugouts or sod houses. In those days the Indians came up the creek every winter trapping, and often he went in company with other young fellows and would sit in one of their tents in the evening to see their mode of life although not to be edified by their conversation. Only some of their younger boys could speak a little English, and they never spoke unless spoken to; but they made them welcome and gave them a seat by the fire, more especially if they came with a gift of tobacco.

Nearly every time Mr. Howarth met with the Indians, their medicine man, a tall, intelligent-looking Indian, was orating to them. Whatever the story was, it seemed to interest the Indians greatly, for they listened with rapt attention, occasionally breaking into a ripple of smiles. For an hour at a time the medicine man would talk on and on, never stopping except to fill the pipe, as he seemed to have charge of the tobacco and always had the first pull at the pipe before passing it around the circle.

One of the settlers on the creek had lost a number of turkeys with cholera and had thrown them into the bushes, and this same lot of Indians — Omahas and Pawnees — found

the turkeys and ate them.

One night he was sitting in the tent next to a particularly good-looking Indian maiden, when she got hungry. Putting her hand under a pile of buffalo robes on which they were sitting, she pulled out a big cow's liver which someone had given them, and, cutting off two or three slices with a dirty-looking butcher knife, threw them into the fire in the middle of the tent. When they were just barely warmed, she drew them out and began to eat. This, and other things he saw, crushed all the romance for Indian life out of Mr. Howarth: no such cooking for him.

During the time Mr. Howarth was teaching school, one day one of the girls who lived near the schoolhouse (a sod affair) stayed at home to help her mother wash. About the middle of the afternoon, she ran into the schoolhouse, crying as if her heart would break. "Oh, Teacher!" she said. "Will you and the big boys come over? Papa's house is full of Indians!" Of course they went — and found 15 or 20 Indians

in possession.

Houses in those days were wonderfully elastic affairs; and though this house consisted of only one room, yet it held the beds and furniture of an average family, and, in addition, a stock of groceries. The Indians were taking these from the shelves and asking for them. After the rescue party got there, the Indians bought and paid for a few things and soon left; but there was no more school that day. The girl and her mother were in no personal danger; but no doubt, without the men, the Indians wouldn't have left without taking more; and, as one of the Indians was sharpening his hatchet on a little grindstone which stood near the door, poor little Jennie thought her last day had come.

That schoolhouse, crude affair as it was — with sod walls, homemade desks, and planks for seats — turned out two or three pupils who afterward became very successful teachers. They didn't have a little smattering of Latin or algebra or botany but were well grounded in the essentials,

the Three R's.

One spring morning Mr. Howarth was busily at work in the yard. He had finished teaching the week before - here let us say that in the five years he taught, the school term was six months and \$25 per month was the highest salary he received - and had just drawn all his back pay. It was a beautiful morning, the kind of day which makes one glad to be alive, and he was singing, at the top of his voice, "Come where my love lies dreaming," when he happened to turn around, and there stood a six-foot Indian close to him. The moment he saw him the thought of his money came to mind, for he had taken his purse from his pocket and thrown it into the cupboard. The house door was open, and so was the cupboard door. So Mr. Howarth grabbed up his hatchet and ran to the house. He then invited Mr. Indian into the house and had a visit. The Indian couldn't speak much English, but he could beg, and proceeded to do so.

Walter Howarth died on March 22, 1926.

John Hromadka came to the United States in 1876, leaving his family of three brothers, two sisters, and his parents in Austria-Hungary (now Czechoslovakia). His destination was Exeter, Nebraska, then a small railroad town. He came as a laborer, and was met by a Mr. Sluka, whom he had known in the old country, but his trade was that of a black-smith and horticulturist, which he had learned while serving in the Austrian army.

All the neighbors helped him put up a blacksmith shop

and purchase tools. The anvil and hammer are still in use. After he was well established in his shop, located in Sec. 35 of Liberty township (where his grandson John Hromadka now lives), he started, from twigs, many cottonwood trees, which are still standing. There he also made a sod house. Blacksmith work was profitable, as many of his patrons came from miles away. He was able to purchase the land from his father-in-law (Joseph Kral), 80 acres for \$600. Later he bought seven more 80's. He married Anna Kral in 1879, and the couple had seven children.

August Hromadka became a surgeon in Santa Monica, California. He received his early education in Milligan, and went to Iowa and Northwestern College. Before entering medical school, he taught District 6, his home district. During World War I, he served in France as a captain in the Medical Corps. His widow Ethel and his sons still live in Santa Monica. John Hromadka is also a surgeon, practicing in Santa Monica. The other members of the Hromadka family were Julia Zerzan, Frank Hromadka, Jenny Kubicek, Pauline Bures, Mary Capek, and Rose Votipka.

John Hromadka, Sr., was a large raiser of pure-bred stock. He also produced vineyards and orchards. In later years he moved into Milligan. Mrs. Hromadka passed away

in 1922 and Mr. Hromadka in October, 1931.

Frank Hromadka (son of John) married Anna Herynk of near Milligan; they made their home on a farm northeast of Milligan, on Sec. 36 of Liberty township, now farmed by Milo Hromadka. The original homestead is still in the family

and is farmed by John Hromadka.

John Kolar was born in this country in 1881. His parents came from Czechoslovakia to America in 1871 and homesteaded in Sec. 10 of Liberty township. His father was married twice in the old country and had five children, three boys and two girls. John Kolar, whose father died in 1896, began farming in 1904. He was married to Emma Havel in June, 1905. Two daughters were born to this union, Viola and Helen.

He lived on the same place for more than 75 years. Among his prized possessions were two large illustrated Bibles, translated from the Hebrew language into the Bohemian, and a book giving biographical sketches of all of the saints of olden times. He passed away on December 25, 1959.

—Data from John Kolar

Joseph Kral came to the United States (the promised land) in 1860. The trip across the Atlantic took six weeks in a sailing ship. Their first stop in Nebraska was Nebraska City. After they settled near Milligan, the Krals went to

Nebraska City by ox team to do their shopping.

Mr. Kral served in the Union Army before taking a homestead, and then homesteaded the place that is known as the Hromadka place (Secs. 26 and 35 in Liberty township). They had two daughters. One (Mrs. John Jesse) came with them from Austria-Hungary; the other (Mrs. John Hromadka) was born on the homestead.

The settlers' hardships were many. Often their possessions were taken away from them during the night. Rustlers would take their oxen and many other valuable possessions. Wild game — deer, antelope, buffalo, and turkeys — roamed these prairies. Friendly Indians used to camp there near

Turkey Creek.

Mrs. Kral was a midwife for many of the pioneer women in the locality. She also grew her own herbs and made her own medicines and ointments. In her later years she is said to have had a confection shop; but further information about this versatile pioneer woman seems to have been lost with time.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Krejci, Sr., with a family of 10 children, came to Omaha from Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1879. They lived in Omaha until June of that year, when they came to Fillmore County. They purchased the SW 1/4 of Sec. 13 in Liberty township, 5 miles N of Milligan, from the Burlington Railroad for \$4 an acre.

There was nothing but prairie land in all directions when they came. Mr. Krejci bought a yoke of oxen and broke the sod and built a sod house. They experienced all the hard times known by the rest of the first settlers in the country. But after some two or three years times got better.

Frank Krejci, Sr., farmed the place until 1899 when he retired and rented the farm to his son John, who owned and lived on the NW ¼ of the same section. When his wife (Mrs. Frank Krecjci, Sr.) passed away in 1908, he sold the farm to his son James, who then rented it to the James Betka, Sr., family, who farmed it until 1913. Then James' son Edward Krejci farmed it until 1917, when James sold it to his brother John Krejci. In 1939, John Krejci transferred it to his son Fred Krejci, who is the present owner. Fred Krejci became Fillmore County's "native artist;" the Sunday World Herald Magazine used 20 of his pictures for magazine covers between 1951 and 1961.

—John Krejci



Frank Krejci family

John Krejci was born in Czechoslovakia in 1868. His wife, Annie Kucera, was born there also. His parents came to America in 1879, in a ship that was half steamer and half sailing vessel; they were 20 days at sea. They came to Omaha, where they stayed for three months. It was hard for them to get work because they could not speak English. They came to Fillmore County later in 1879.

Mr. Krejci, 11 years old, was put to work tending cattle. The cattle had to be staked out morning and evening. Water for them was drawn from a bored well with a bucket. At 13, he started to work for John Zelanka at \$6 a month. There he had 16 head of cattle and 5 head of horses to water. John Zelanka had 160 acres of wheat; Mr. Krejci shocked the crop at the same rate of pay per month. A man named Lovegrove had 60 acres of wheat which Mr. Krejci and his two sisters shocked in two days; they received \$6 for the whole job.

The parents of John Krejci had 10 children, six boys and four girls. A cousin named John Luksik came with them. He had managed to get out of four years of compulsory military service there by paying the government \$10. The elder Krejci had sold his land in Czechoslovakia for \$4,000. In converting this sum to American money, he had to pay \$2.60 for each \$1 in return; this greatly reduced his cash. In Fillmore County he bought railroad land at \$4 an acre. Then he bought two oxen for \$100 and a cow for \$17 and started farming. He broke 10 acres. Old man Ziska (John Ziska) helped him with meat and corn meal. They lived on this for two years; in the old country they had lived mainly on potatoes.

For four years Mr. Krejci worked for his father, and when work at home was finished he helped others with the harvest, feeding threshing machines. He was married at the age of 26 years, and to this union were born five children, three boys and two girls: Charles, the oldest boy, and Bessie, the oldest girl, and Fred, Louis, and Anna Mae. After he was married, he started farming for himself.

The first year he did not raise anything. It was a dry year, and the family ran out of money. Once his wife asked him to bring home 15 cents' worth of raisins. He did not want to let his wife know how little money he had; he managed to buy the raisins on time, though the grocer was very reluctant to let him have them. On another occasion he was to bring home a sack of flour, and he also asked for this on credit. The grocer said he would let him have two sacks (flour then sold for 85 cents a sack) if he would pay for it soon. He got the sacks and went home and sold a horse for \$2.50 to a man who agreed to pay for it right away. However, he did not; so Mr. Krejci told the man's daughter, who was going to school, that if her father did not send the money for the horse by the next day, he would go down there and take the horse back. He sent the money, and Mr. Krejci paid for his two sacks of flour.

Louis Krejci still has pictures of the sod house that his grandparents lived in when they first came out here, of the oxen and cart which they used, and of an old-time binder. This was not a self-binder but one where two people stood and bound the bundles by hand as the grain was cut.

-John Krejci



Photo from Mrs. Albert Biba Mr. and Mrs. John Krejci, Bessie and Charles.

Anton Kucera came to this country with his parents from Bohemia in 1883, when he was five years of age. His father, like other boys in the old countries, was required to take military training, which took four years. His parents, who farmed in the old country, settled in Liberty township, where they bought railroad land. Mr. Kucera was married to Ebba Gephart in 1907. They have three children: one boy, Charles, and two girls, Edna and Ruth.

Mr. Kucera remembers very well the Pleasant Hill Flour Mill, which was in Saline County, about 19 miles straight east of his place, from which they got their flour. Sometimes they carried it home by the sack. He also remembers vividly his sister Emma's taking a few dozen eggs to Exeter in a small pail and getting 25 cents' worth of sugar and other small articles. Eggs were then 10 cents per dozen. She walked the entire nine miles back and forth. He also remembers that famous Sunday School picnic on Turkey Creek, a never-to-beforgotten event to this day. Some railroad workers, a bunch of toughs and roughnecks, who had also come to this picnic, were celebrating with beer and liquor. For some reason, they got into an argument and then a fight. Shooting followed, and Thomas Rook killed Frank and John Novak. The date, August 21, 1887, marks a grim highlight in the otherwise peaceful and rural annals of Turkey Creek. —John Krejci

William McGhie was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, and worked around the farms on the outskirts of Aberdeen. In the year 1878, he decided to try his fortune in America, and so he set sail with his wife and four children. They made their

way direct to Exeter and bought railroad land from Dr. H. G. Smith about three miles south of town, where they lived for a time; later they moved one mile west. His first experiences were not very encouraging, and he thought of going back to

Scotland, but his wife refused to give up.

One of his first business transactions was the purchase of a team of horses, and for that purpose he returned to Lincoln the day after their arrival in Exeter. A man wishing to show interest in the stranger chided his friend Alexander for encouraging him to go to Lincoln for such a purpose, for, "Depend on it," said he, "the sharpers of Lincoln will skin him if he begins to buy a team there." Mr. Alexander admitted that the caution was not to be despised, but thought that "If the sharpers of this country are sharper than the horsedealers in Aberdeenshire, and their word any less to be relied on, then his friend had a good chance of being skinned." But they did not skin him, for he secured a fine young team for which he paid \$170 — such as some of the young Scotch lairds would fancy for carriage horses. His next experience was tethering them out to grass. This seemed accomplished all right; but the young horses fancied a dance through which they pulled up the stakes and made off like the wind. Fortunately, a party coming along caught one of the horses and Mr. Alexander, mounting one of his own horses, set off over the prairie to try to catch the other. However, the beast had about two miles' head start. But Mr. Alexander continued the chase and was fortunate enough to find him the next morning stabled by a friend.

Six years after their coming, Mr. McGhie's wife died, leaving a young family to care for. He was equal to the task.

His own death occurred on October 8, 1914.

Patrick Murphy came to this country from Dunmanway, County Cork, Ireland, in 1866, landing at Castle Garden, New York City. For four years he lived near Rochester, New York, and learned the nursery business. In April, 1870, he came to Omaha and worked for a time on the telegraph lines. Later in the same year, in company with three other young men, he bought an ox team, a covered wagon and batching outfit, and some tools and set out to look for homesteads. They journeyed to Lincoln, then to Beatrice, and along the Little Blue to Spring Ranch and Red Cloud on the Republican River. Not being satisfied with the country in those parts, they returned to the edge of Saline County and camped near Turkey Creek. Two were then appointed to stay by the goods while the other two went and sought out claims. Having obtained the numbers of vacant claims, they then went to Beatrice for their mail. The other three young men received letters from their railroad employers saying that their jobs were still open to them if they would return. This temptation was sufficient; they decided they had seen enough land, and returned.

Mr. Murphy had enough money to buy their interests in the outfit. He drove them to Lincoln, where they said goodbye, and that was the last he saw of them. Mr. Murphy was now on his own. He laid in a supply of flour, lard, and lumber and started out for his homestead. He reached his destination on December 1, 1870, and within a week had a dugout ready for occupancy. The roof was made of poles from Turkey Creek, slough grass, and dirt, with an upper layer of sod.

During those early days, he went 16 miles for a load of hay, and had to cross the creek twice to bring it home. There were no bridges west of Crete. He would also go to Beaver Crossing, a distance of 16 miles, carrying a sack of meal and

flour.

He worked on the railroad from Fairmont to Hastings before Fairmont was a town. He saw the erection of the first house. During the winter of 1870-1871, Indians were camped along the Little Blue and many white settlers were scared because of their presence. There was no stove in his dugout; he did his cooking in a fireplace and his baking in a dutch oven. One night during the visit of these Indians, Mr. Murphy, lying in bed, heard the sods of his chimney falling into the fireplace. He was soon up and dressed. Securing his loaded rifle, he carefully opened the door and peeked out to

look for the enemy. To his surprise and relief, he found it was his ox, on the bank side just in reach of the chimney, hooking away the sods with his horns.

Mr. Murphy grafted the first trees at the Crete Nursery and planted most of the trees in the Exeter Cemetery.

Ten years after homesteading, he married; 10 children were born to the couple.

This worthy pioneer from the Emerald Isle represented Fillmore County in the State Legislature during two terms, 1907 and 1909, on the Democratic ticket.



Photo from Mrs. George Lovegrove Picture of Robert H. Lovegrove and family (1907). This farm (E ½ of NE ¼ Sec. 24 Twp. 7) was homesteaded by his father, Thomas H. Lovegrove, in 1872.

Mr. and Mrs. James Nolan, later of Cambridge, Nebraska, were among the pioneer settlers of Fillmore County. They came by wagon from Iowa and settled on a homestead 6 miles S of Exeter on June 12, 1871. They brought along with them nine head of cattle and four horses. They were fortunate in having a good supply of meat and provisions, which lasted them until fall. After landing on the prairie, they took off the wagon covers and used them to sleep under. They cooked their food by campfire and hauled all their water from Turkey Creek, a distance of two miles. Mrs. Nolan made her first butter out on the prairie and sold it to Dr. Smith of Exeter.

Their house consisted of one room made out of logs, sod, and grass, and had one window and one door. The lumber to build the house had to be hauled all the way from Lincoln. Their well was dug with a spade. During the time they were digging the well, Mrs. Nolan's mother, 75 years old, who made her home with them, broke her leg. Their furniture had not yet come, and so a bed had to be made of logs and boards and a doctor called from Crete. One day after her bed had come, a little house dog insisted on barking and making a big fuss over something he saw under the bed. On investigation, they found that a large rattlesnake was coiled up on the floor. They knew it must be got out without letting the mother know. So some of them gathered around the bed and her son took it out with a pitchfork.

Fifteen acres were all that was broken up the first year, but each year more land was farmed and some trees and shrubs set out. Then a new sod house with a shingle roof was

built

One day in August, when Mr. Nolan was away from home, his wife saw a great prairie fire about a mile west, and, fearful for her mother lying helpless in the house, she went out to fight the fire. She worked hard all day. Then, when she reached home at sundown, she saw another fire close to the house, coming from the east. But by this time Mr. Nolan was home. He plowed a fireguard which saved them from harm.

The first snow came at night and sifted in all around the house and open spaces, so that when they awakened in the morning they found themselves covered with a blanket of snow.

Their first Christmas morning on the homestead found everything covered with about two feet of snow and not an ounce of flour in the house. Mr. Nolan had to go after provisions on horseback. It was his custom to place a lantern on a pole in front of the house so that when he had to come home after dark his wife could light the lantern and he could find his way. At that time there were no roads.

The second year, they had 15 acres of wheat all ripe and ready to cut, and so Mr. Nolan went to Fairmont to buy a harvester. That night there came a heavy rain and hailstorm, and in the morning no harvester was needed, as all the grain was living flot on the grayed.

was lying flat on the ground.

In the year of the grasshoppers, Mr. Nolan was fortunate in having his wheat in the shock; but his corn and the contents of a small garden were eaten in about an hour. Only stumps of cabbages remained. Mrs. Nolan's brother, George Nugent, had a small patch of tobacco, and they took it all.

The first schoolhouse in the township was built on the southeast corner of their claim. It was used as a school, a

church, and a place for public gatherings.

At that time, the Indians were roving over the plains. One day just at noon one of them came to the door and wanted his dinner, and so they gave him bread, butter, and coffee.

During the blizzard of 1873, they had in the house a calf, a colt, and two dozen chickens. The fuel got scarce and they chopped up the bed and other furniture to keep warm. Three times the Angel of Death visited their home and carried away their loved ones, but never did they think of leaving the place they called home.

Thomas Nugent came from County Galway, Ireland, in 1866, to Scott County, Iowa. In the spring of 1871, he settled on a homestead south of Exeter in Liberty township. When he came to Nebraska, he drove a horse team and wagon and brought some cattle. Money and employment were scarce when he came to the community, and so he walked for miles to such places as Beatrice and Lincoln looking for work. He worked for the B. & M. Railroad for some time, grading where the town of Fairmont in now located. He would at times seek work in the West, thus using up the time allowed off his claim.

During those trips he experienced some thrilling adventures. On one occasion, when returning over the prairies, his mate and he took turns driving the team, or sleeping in the bottom of the wagon. Once they were surrounded by a band of 300 or 400 Indians. He knew that two could do little in self-defense and thought that his end had surely come. To their great relief, one of the Indians rode up and presented a piece of paper by which they made it known that they were friendly Indians. They were begging, however, and would not accept buffalo meat; they could kill that for themselves. "Give us bacon," was their request. It was no uncommon experience to meet with large herds of buffalo, from 500 to 1,000 strong. Mr. Nugent declared that it was a great shame the way these animals were killed off; the dead animals were seldom put to any practical use.

Mr. Nugent was caught out in the great blizzard of 1873 and had to take shelter for three days in a windowless and doorless dugout. It was simply impossible to get home through the storm.

William Ramsdell was a native of Michigan. His first visit to Nebraska was in 1865, when he came as a soldier assigned to deal with Indian depredations. He, with his company, arrived in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, on June 17. From there they went to Fort Kearney, Nebraska, and then crossed the state to Fort Laramie, Wyoming. As soon as the Indians knew of the presence of the government soldiers, they wanted peace. It will be remembered that the Sioux Indians had taken advantage of the lack of soldiers in the West. They tried to drive out the white people and secure their ancient hunting grounds.

Peace was restored, and Mr. Ramsdell was soon able to return to Michigan, arriving there in December of the same year. While journeying from June to November they did not have enough rain to wet their shirt sleeves. In March, 1871, he returned to Nebraska, inspected land, and decided to settle here. There had been many changes during the five years

since his first visit. He went back for his family and returned in July.

They lived near Walnut Creek until November. He secured a claim in Liberty township to the SE ¼ of Sec. 2, T7, R1W. This is 3 miles S of Exeter and 3 miles E of Exeter. On November 14, 1871, he went up to his claim to build and make ready for settlement. Mrs. Ramsdell did not go until later. She was living in a log house that was "chinked" but not mudded or plastered. The evening of that day saw a change of weather. It began to snow and snowed all the next day and next night. The snow drifted into the house and covered Mrs. Ramsdell, as she lay in bed, with a 16-inch blanket. She was finally liberated by her brother.

The cost of boring a well was one dollar per foot. If it had cost only 10 cents a foot, the Ramsdells could not have undertaken it, as they had no money. They got their water from Turkey Creek, a distance of two miles. They went 14

miles for firewood.

The Ramsdells had two sons. Dayo, the eldest, was in the first class graduating from the Exeter High School. He became a physician in Kansas City, Missouri. Glen became an optician in Moline, Illinois. The daughter, Gertrude, born January 8, 1872, was the third white child born in Fillmore County.

On July 26, 1876, **Joseph Rozanek** and his wife Mary purchased the W ½, SW ¼, Sec. 27, Liberty township, from the B & M Railroad. On this land they built their home, a

dugout.

On March 24, 1884, they purchased the adjoining 80 to the north. After the death of Joseph Rozanek in 1889 the title passed to his widow, Mary. In 1891 the farm was deeded to their son Frank. Since the death of Frank Rozanek the farm has belonged to his daughter Stella Hospodsky.



The Joseph Rozanek Farm in 1880.

C. A. Songster came from near the town of Centerville, Appanoose County, Iowa, in 1871, and settled on a farm $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles S of Exeter. He brought with him his wife and two children, a girl and a boy. We are indebted to this son, Mr. A. A. (Bert) Songster, for the information recorded here. The father died April 8, 1898, and is buried in the Exeter Cemetery.

Bert Songster was about four years old when they came to Nebraska. He remembers with interest their crossing the Missouri River in a ferryboat to Nebraska City. After they arrived on the claim, they lived in a tent until a dugout was made. Later a sod house was built, which proved to be a very comfortable home. It was plastered throughout and was warm

in winter and cool in summer.

The first school of the district was held in the Songster home. At that time the cattle roamed the prairies at will, and grass known as bluestem grew as high as a horse's back, which made it dangerous for children if they strayed from home. The chief bird music was the mournful tones of the prairie chickens, heard usually in the early mornings. These are about extinct and, like the antelope and deer, may soon be a thing of the past. Palmer Lancaster had a blacksmith shop south of the Songster place and kept a pet antelope

which was of special interest to the children of the neighborhood. It would follow him to town, where it was sometimes frightened by the dogs and would run off at a lively rate and make its way home.

Mr. Songster hauled from Lincoln the lumber for the first house and store in Exeter, owned by Dr. H. G. Smith. A little girl of the Songster family was one of the first children to die in the area; she was buried in the Exeter Cemetery.

Chester C. Stephens, brother of Mrs. William Downey, was born in Pennsylvania but lived for some time in Michigan. He came to Nebraska in 1871 and located on the NW ½ of Sec. 4, T7, R1W. His first home was a dugout 10′ x 12′ square where he later built his house. Its construction was such that he might reasonably be called one of Nebraska's early cave-dwellers. Before he made this cave, he used his wagon cover as a tent. One warm night he lay sleeping with the cover up, thoroughly enjoying the prairie air, when he felt something cold against his face. He discovered a prairie wolf with its paws upon his bed while another wolf was sitting on her haunches a short distance away. He reached for his revolver, but before he could fire a shot the unwelcome visitors had made their escape.

About two months after he came to the county, he had been busy at the Ramsdell home, and the return help was to be given at his place. Mr. Ramsdell had gone to secure the services of J. K. Barbur, and Mr. Stephens was coming home with Uncle Jim Horne and were traveling homeward in a northwesterly direction when they saw a herd of 12 deer coming in a northeasterly direction. Neither men nor deer changed their course, with the result that they came within 12 feet of each other. The deer seemed quite tame, and, as the men made no attempt to interfere with them, they walked quietly away. This was one of the most pleasing and interesting experiences of their prairie life. In these days the Ramsdells were living in the Henry Eberstein house. On one occasion in the springtime, they found a large rattlesnake under the bed. It was soon killed.

One of the worst windstorms ever experienced by Mr. Stephens was when he was trying to make his way from Camden to a place near Crete where he had previously camped. He failed to reach the place and had just crossed the railroad and unhitched his team when the storm came up. The wind was so strong that he had to use lariat ropes and chains to keep his wagon in place.



Photo from Mrs. Ray Ainsworth Frank Lovegrove family when they resided on the Younger's Homestead in Liberty Twp. (1905). Baby—Ruth, Mrs. Lovegrove, Edith, Peter, Marion, Nellie, and Frank.

Joseph Vavra, son of Mr. and Mrs. Anton Vavra, was born in Czechoslovakia on August 27, 1864. He came to this country with his parents, one brother, and two sisters in 1872, at the age of eight.

In November, 1877, he was married to Katie Kontensky, who had been born in Czechoslovakia in August, 1861, and



Photo from Lou Vavra Haymaking on the Vavra Farm in 1925. Joe Vavra (by team), Jim Soukup (on stack), Ora Miner (holding Melvin), Joe Sobotka (on

came to this country in 1877 at the age of 16. They became the parents of 11 children: Mary Soukup (deceased); Anna Matejka; Joseph Vavra, Jr.; Agnes Goodding; James Vavra; Louis Vavra; Fred Vavra; Tena Kreener; and Edward Vavra, who lives on the home place. Two children died in infancy. The farm has been in the family for more than 80 years.

Joseph Vavra purchased 160 acres of railroad land in Sec. 35 of Liberty township at \$11 per acre. They lived in a dugout in the north bank of Turkey Creek, which cuts to the south edge of the land, for about five years. Then they built a two-room frame house.

In the early days, the eldest son Joe recalled, Indians had a camp on the same section. They used to come to the farm home to beg for food. They would pack dead hens and even eat dog meat if they could get it. In fact, they would eat anything they could lay their hands on. He also recalled the grasshoppers destroying everything, and the drouth of the 1890's.

They worked with oxen for several years when they started farming, breaking all sod. Eventually they purchased two horses to replace the oxen. Their first harrow was made in a V-shape out of trees, with spikes driven in for harrow teeth. Binders were hand-tie, drawn by two or three horses. They made a five-foot cut, with two men tying. Bundles were tied with straw. Threshing machines were horse drawn and fed by hand. The straw had to be pitched away, since the thresher had no blower. Six teams of horses were used for the one machine.

—Lou Vavra

John Walton homesteaded the NW ¼ of Sec. 2 in Liberty township in June, 1872. His daughter Ida was born on the homestead in September, 1872. Ida Walton Stephens lived in Fillmore County from 1872 to 1950. Possibly the oldest living person born in this county, she made her home after 1950 with her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Allen Blakeslee of Rochester, Minnesota. She died there on June 2, 1962.

John Ziska, born in 1812, came from Bohemia in 1853, bringing with him his wife and family. In the old country he had been a coachman for a baron who, in appreciation of his faithful service, promoted him to a position of overseer over the serfs on his estate. Owing to the doing away with serf labor and the unsettled condition of things in Bohemia, he decided to come to America. After a six-week sea voyage they arrived safely in this country. He then made his way to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. While he was looking around for a location and something to do, a Jew who was known to Mr. Ziska advised him to buy some swamp land near Milwaukee. He could then cut the wood and sell it for a living. The suggestion was anything but acceptable at that time and was therefore declined. But that land is now the center of the city of Milwaukee.

Instead, he bought 120 acres of land about 30 miles south of Milwaukee, on the Fox River in Racine County, and farmed it for 10 years. At that time some friends from the St. Louis coal fields visited the Ziska farm. Their reports regarding the work and the wages there seemed so much of an

improvement on farming that he decided to sell his farm, stock, and implements and try mining. He made his way to the coal fields, where he worked for seven years. But at the end of this time he had made no progress; in fact, he was financially poorer as a result of his venture.

In the spring of 1869, he came up the Missouri River on a steamboat to Nebraska City and was nine days on the trip. He then bought two yoke of oxen, an old government wagon, and some other things, and started out West. He had met a fellow countryman in Nebraska City who gave him information about the country. He left his family near the Blue River and then made his way west on foot and secured some land on the county line, in Fillmore County.

Mr. Ziska returned for his family, and they came to the new location on May 10, 1869. They rented an old dugout in Saline County until their own dugout was ready. He soon began breaking sod and had 25 acres ready for sowing. When he went to Lincoln for provisions he filed a claim for his 80 acres on Sec. 24, T7, R1W. They moved onto the claim in September, and on their first night in the new home there was a great flood. Turkey Creek became 11/2 miles wide, causing the loss of much property and many cattle. One poor woman lost her cow and calf, which were all she possessed, and so the Ziskas and other neighbors helped her out. Two years later, this same woman, whose husband was a carpenter and working in Nebraska City, had her cow stolen and was again helped by these friends. There was another neighbor for whom Mr. Ziska plowed some land and mowed the wheat without making any charge, so as to help him along. Later, when Mr. Ziska needed the loan of a plow, this neighbor refused, saying he did not wish to have his plow dulled. How often it is that people fail to learn that "One good turn deserves another.

The last buffalo killed in Fillmore County was in 1868. Two Indians followed it down Turkey Creek and killed it—on the spot that afterward became the Ziska homestead. When they came, Dan Dillon, who homesteaded in 1868 on the same section, was the only white man they knew in Fillmore County.

Mr. Ziska had put in 15 acres of buckwheat. He then went to Lincoln, leaving Fred at home to drag the land. Dan Dillon had a pair of Texas cattle and two other large oxen which came over and hooked the Ziska cattle very badly. Mrs. Ziska was advised by the neighbors to get some turpentine to put on the injured oxen. So she sent Fred on a journey of 18 miles on foot to get 25 cents' worth of turpentine. He reached home again about nine o'clock that night and was so stiff and sore that he could not get out of bed the next morning. Fred never forgot the time when he was 14 years old and his mother needed turpentine for the oxen. John Ziska died in 1896 at the age of 84.



Photo from Mrs. Mike Becwar Jr.
The wedding picture of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Becwar, married in
Czechoslovakia.

LODGES

The Z C B J Lodge was organized in 1902. The first officers were Vaclav Krejci, Jim Matejka, Jim Svoboda, and James Stetina. Members from Rad Rabie in Milligan transferred to Z C B J to start the lodge in Liberty township.

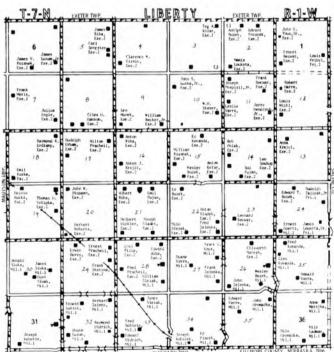
The first members besides the officers were John Krejci, John Kuska, Sr., Albert Biba, Sr., Joseph Zeleny, Joseph Krejdl, V. J. Loukota, Anton Votipka, and Henry Kolar.

The officers at present (1967) are Ed Krejci, president; Ed Biba, financial secretary; John Kuska, recording secretary; and Albert Biba, Jr., treasurer.

This lodge was organized and still meets in the hall in Liberty township.



Photo from Mae Krejci ZCBJ Lodge hall in Liberty township in 1914.



Madison Township

Madison township, in the central part of Fillmore County, is bounded on the north by Fairmont, one the east by Liberty, on the south by Chelsea, and on the west by Geneva townships. Its western boundary is marked by U. S. 81. Turkey Creek flows from west to east across its southern half. The Fremont-Superior line of the Northwestern R.R. runs diagonally from near its northeast to near its southwest corner. The Fairmont-Helvey branch of the Burlington runs diagonally from the midpoint of its northern boundary to the midpoint of its eastern side. The two lines cross at Sawyer, once a town site, now no more than a place name. Most of the land is gently rolling. The principal industry is farming. The drouths of the 1930's and 1950's brought a considerable interest in deep-well irrigation. By the end of 1966, there were 39 irrigation wells registered in Madison township.

Madison township was named for James Madison, the fourth President of the United States, who had represented Virginia at the National Constitutional Convention and was one of the chief framers of the Constitution. When Fillmore County was organized, the election was held on the NE ¼ of Sec. 30, Madison township, on April 21, 1871. At that time, William H. James was acting governor of Nebraska. The county officers elected were: Elisha L. Martin, C. H. Bassett, and Jesse Lee, commissioners; H. L. Badger, Wilbur Deuel, treasurer; J. F. Snow, sheriff; W. H. Blain, judge; H. L. Badger, surveyor; G. R. Wolf, county superintendent; and T. E. Barnett, coroner.

Burress

The following account of early-day Burress was provided by the late Fred Wolter:

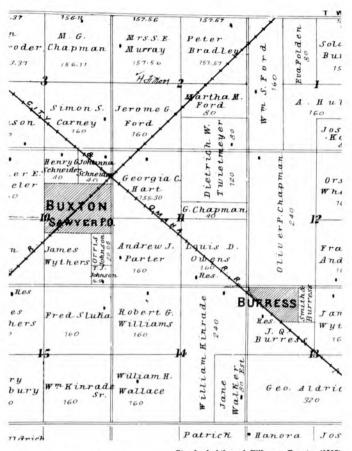
The first railroad was built into the township in 1887 by the St. Joseph & Grand Island R.R. This branch was known for a few years as the Endicott and Stromsburg line, and then for a few more years was known as the Kansas City & Omaha R.R. Since the late nineties, it has been part of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy system.

At the coming of the railroad, the Burress town site was surveyed on land owned by James Q. Burress, and a post office was established in his name. The first postmaster was John McLeese. The railroad property consisted of a nice depot, section house, and stockyards. The first station agent was Arthur Boyd. L. E. Davis & Co., of St. Joseph, Missouri, built what was called a scoop house on the siding for storing grain, from which the grain was later scooped into railroad cars for shipment. Boyd Davis was the first grain dealer.

There were three early business establishments. J. L. Davis kept a grocery store which also contained the post office. O. T. Wheeler, who was the country carpenter, put up a store building which was mostly used as a public dance room and for public meetings. Mr. and Mrs. John William Owens conducted a restaurant and boarding house. Living quarters were in the rear of the Davis and Owens places. The depot was the bachelor quarters for the single inhabitants. There were two residences in Burress, those of the J. Q. Burress family and of the section foreman, Hans Striggow.

In the spring of 1888, William H. Wolter, a young man from Illinois, built a small blacksmith shop, which in later years was enlarged as business demanded. Mr. Wolter was an efficient mechanic and his trade was in demand over a large territory. He was one of the first auto mechanics in the county. His death occurred at his home in Great Falls, Montana in 1936

About 1890, a grain firm from Tobias — Sutfin, Marsh, & Fisher — built a steam-powered grain elevator in Burress, which proved to be a boon to the community. George Coe, who came from Iowa, was the manager. A few years later, his



Standard Atlas of Fillmore County (1905) Crossing point of the Kansas City & Omaha and the Northwestern Railroads in Madison township, with adjacent towns.

brother, Charles Coe, joined him in the grain business, and they added a lumber yard to the firm.

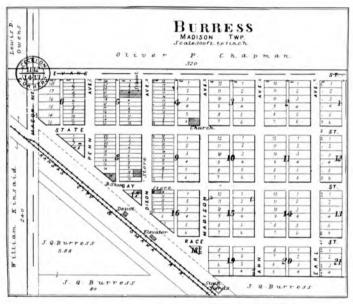
During the prosperous early nineties, six or seven new homes were built in the eastern part of Burress. A Methodist church was also built. Among those serving as pastors were the Rev. John Hull and the Rev. Robert Thompson, young men of the community. The Rev. Thompson later served the Geneva Methodist Church as pastor for many years. Pliny Aldrich built a two-story building for a store and living quarters and post office. His young granddaughter, Sadie Aldrich, made her home with him and attended school. The mercantile business and the building were later sold to John Shade.

During the lean years of the late nineties, the stores discontinued business and the post office was also discontinued for a short period. However, the patrons immediately petitioned the Post Office Department to re-establish the office, and William Wolter was appointed postmaster. A portion of the blacksmith shop was used as the post office until better crop years came, when the W. H. Cooksey family moved in with a stock of drugs and groceries. Tom Harvey had a grocery store south of Cooksey's. Don Dutcher also came in with a stock of groceries.

As more prosperous conditions prevailed, Mr. Wolter enlarged his building and installed much heavy machine equipment. His younger brother, Fred Wolter, learned the trade with him and then started a shop in Bruning in 1908. He was in business there for 11 years and later spent three years in Ohiowa. [Fred Wolter passed away on April 15, 1963.]



Burlington depot at Burress in 1905—Earl Cooksey and his wife Lillie on the platform. In the building at left of depot Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Cooksey had a store. The John Shades lived upstairs. At extreme left is a portion of the Methodist Church.



Standard Atlas of Fillmore County (1905)
Map of Burress in 1905

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Standard Atlas of Fillmore County (1905) Map of Buxton (Sawyer) in 1905

The Burress schoolhouse is now located in Chelsea township on the Wayne Garrison farm, 8 miles S of Burress. At one time, two teachers were employed in the Burress school. The Burress depot is now the Manning Grain Company.

This account of present-day Burress, by Dean Terrill of the Southeast Nebraska Bureau of the Lincoln Star, appeared in that paper in March 1965:

Burress isn't exactly long on people (20), but its three houses rate better, best, and bestest. Every square foot smacks of prosperity: 15 grain-storage buildings, a grocery-service station, a cash register alternately ringing from feed and fertilizer and on-off sale beer.

"Yes, I suppose the investment here now is the biggest in the spot's history," said owner Earl Manning as matter-of-factly as his cigar would allow. In his 41-year manorship he has also learned to shrug off salesmen's "Manningsville" title to his town.

In reality Burress is also the Sawyer ("had about five people") which was consolidated into the Manning Grain Co. in the '20's. Burress had once bustled as a trade center of 75, but "hasn't shrunk a bit as long as I can remember."

The present populace is mostly Manning, son Tom storekeeping with his father and Dick farming the town's "outskirts." Employee Don Samson occupies the third house with his family, and Earl would have to be classified a commuter since moving to Exeter in 1952.

Although the grocery is housed intriguingly in the old Burlington depot, it is the site's former dance hall that sets Manning's memories in real motion. Only bags of fertilizer nudge one another now on the big floor that "used to pack in 1,000 to 1,200 persons per night."



Photos from Earl Manning The Sawyer elevator in 1926.



R. W. Wirz repair shop at Sawyer (1926)



Northwestern depot at Sawyer and the Manning residence (1926)



Last passenger train through Sawyer—around 1930.

"The bands got too big and high-priced, though, and a local era ended when we threw the last dance on the Fourth of July, 1949," Earl recalled. "We started filling the hall with grain the next day and found out it held 28,000 bushels."

Counting the mere 21 neighbors now scattered through 28 of Fillmore County's sections, Manning figures little Burress has fared pretty well over-all. Its one big blight is a long-vacant house, picturesque but crumbling, at the hamlet's edge.

"That belonged to the son of the Burress we were named after," apologized the unofficial lord mayor. "Doesn't look so good, but of course it's really sort of a suburb."

SCHOOLS

The first school district organized in Madison township was District No. 3, also called at a later date the Brick Schoolhouse. It was organized on December 8, 1871, at a meeting of qualified electors called by the county superintendent of Fillmore County for the purpose of electing officers, locating a site for a schoolhouse, and transacting such other business as might legally come before the meeting. The school board officers elected then were: William H. Blain, moderator; A. J. Beals, director; and B. F. Tibbitt, treasurer.

The site chosen was on the SE corner of the NE ¼ of Sec. 30, T7, R2W, on land donated by Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Compher. It was decided to build a sod schoolhouse, and sufficient funds were levied to finish this. The first teacher was Robert S. Dye, who taught from 1872 to 1873 for \$20 a month.

Later, after heated arguments, the schoolhouse was relocated on Sec. 28, T7, where a frame building not to exceed \$800 in cost was built. School was to be held for seven months, four months in the summer and three in the winter. The board decided to get a "femail" to teach the summer school and a "mail" to teach the winter. Later they voted to have only three months of summer schooling, commencing the first Monday in May. The three winter school months were to begin in December. They also decided not to allow



District No. 3 about 1890. Left to right: Unidentified man; William Garrett; Henry Heiderstadt, treasurer; Stewart Heiderstadt; John Kennard, moderator; David E. Garrett, director; Charles Smrha, county superintendent.



Photo from Joy Case only brick schoolhouse

District No. 3 in February, 1954. This was the only brick schoolhouse in the rural districts.

the schoolhouse to be used for anything but school, Sabbath, or religious meetings.

In April, 1876, the board agreed to have six months of school commencing the first of August. They voted to hire a woman teacher because she could be gotten cheaper than a man. In 1878, an agreement was drawn up employing Ella Kinrade for \$75—\$25 a month for a three-month term—in 1879 (unless she violated her contract by being immoral or by committing other gross misdemeanors). In 1886, there were 29 boys and 19 girls attending the school. District 3 was dissolved into District 75 on May 17, 1961.

District No. 17 was organized January 3, 1872, near what is now the Fairmont Air Base. The first teacher on record was Miss C. C. Morgan, who taught from 1872 to 1873 for \$20 a month. This district dissolved June 10, 1943.



Photo from Gesine Luethke District No. 17 in the 1930's



Photo from Joy Case District No. 21 (Burress School) in 1954

District No. 21, the Burress school, was organized on February 7, 1872. The first teacher on record was Anna Williams, who taught from 1872 to 1873 for \$10 a month. The Manning Grain Company of Burress purchased the land formerly used by District 21 and has erected two large grain-storage buildings there.

Arbor Day, April 22, 1896, was a gala day celebrated in the Burress school, District 21, by the 16 pupils, 11 girls and 5 boys, with Miss Margaret Haughawout as teacher.

Each pupil signed his name on a sheet of paper as follows: Maggie E. Haughawout (X-boss), Joy Hart, Blanche Chapman, Nettie Ellis, Anna Coe, Florence Burress, Ralph Owens, Ben Tice, Frank Clifford Andrews, Bessie Burress, Mildred Porter, Mabel Wythers, Edna Wythers, Tom Durkan, Mamie Durkan, Lela Burress, and Henry Burress.

On the back of the sheet in the teacher's writing was

the following:

A is for Anna who wears red dresses,

B is for Bessie who has brown tresses.

is for Clifford, who wears long breeches,

E is for Edna whose hair is her riches.

F is for Florence, who is so good,

H is for Henry, who's no time for food.

J is for Joy, who was Zaring's pet,

L is for Lela, who studies you bet.

M is for Maggie, Mildred, Mamie, and Mabel.

K is for Katie who sat on the table.

N is for Nettie, who knows about the North Pole.

P is for Pete, who reaches the goal.

R is for Ralph, whom we call Pete.

T is for Tom who changed his seat.

B is for Bessie, who is a sweet girl,

Things around her are kept in a whirl.

It is also for Ben, with a dimple in his chin;

He's a good boy, so he never stays in.

This was made up by the "X-boss" and pupils of the Burress city school.

This piece of paper was put in an empty red-ink bottle and was placed at the root of a tree that was planted that day with an elaborate Arbor Day program. The tree did not withstand so much publicity and the bottle was exhumed the following year. The original paper is still in the possession of one of the pupils.

District No. 68, the Domling school, was organized June 9, 1873. Located 2 miles S and ¾ mile W of Burress, it was annexed to Districts 75, 20, and 19 on August 19, 1961. Sopha Lee, the first teacher from 1873 to 1874, received \$20 a month. In most of these schools there was only a three-month term.



District No. 68 in 1920-21

Top row, left to right: Irene Wilson, Alice Votipka, Reuben Voigtlander, Charles Schmidt, Clarence Delaney, Les Stewart. Middle row: Opal Wilson, Mildred Uldrich, Leslie Wilson, Milton Stewart, Lloyd Voigtlander, Bob Dwyer, Fred Votipka. Front row: Mary Dwyer, Lois Wilson, Edna Voigtlander, Clyde Domling, John Votipka, Frank Bures, Ed Votipka, Frank Domling, Howard Voigtlander.
The teacher (not in picture) was Tilly Theobald (later Mrs. Harry Brower).

District No. 85, the Sawyer school, was organized September 28, 1886. The first teacher of record was R. J. Sloan (1888), who taught for \$33 a month. This school was annexed to Districts 19 and 68 on March 17, 1953. Frank Betka purchased the school building and moved it to his farm 3/4 mile W of Burress.



Photo from Joy Co District No. 85 (Sawyer School) in July, 1953

District No. 94 was organized in 1884. It was dissolved and annexed to District 20 on January 15, 1953.

Some of the early teachers in Madison township were: Miss Nellie Field, later Mrs. John Shickley of Lincoln; Miss Nellie Fitch, later Mrs. Stephen Ambler of Weeping Water; Miss Eulala North, a Southern girl; Miss Clara Martin, later Mrs. T. C. McCleery of Exeter; Simon Stuckey; B. W. Postlewaite; Annie L. Jackson of Fairmont; Mary E. Burnett of Geneva, later Mrs. Will L. Coleman of Geneva; Miss Eva Williams of Burress, later Mrs. Sherman Moss of Grand Junction, Colorado; Miss Flora Carney of Fairmont, later Mrs. Beebe; Clarence A. Zaring of Geneva, later of Basin, Wyoming; Miss Rose Owens of Burress, later Mrs. Robert J. Sloan; Robert J. Sloan of Geneva; Miss Cora Owens of Burress, later Mrs. J. E. Jones of Exeter; and Miss Grace Porter, of Sawyer, later Mrs. Harvey M. Miller of Seward.

FAMILIES

Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Abbott came from Lebanon, Nebraska, to Madison township in 1912 and purchased 80 acres on Sec. 4. The late S. E. Ralston, then postmaster at Geneva, a longtime friend, was instrumental in their making this decision. They resided on this farm until failing health caused them to move to Fairmont, where Mr. Abbott died in 1939. Mrs. Abbott passed away on January 7, 1948. They had one son, Floyd, and a granddaughter, Betty, now Mrs. Robert Schelkopf.

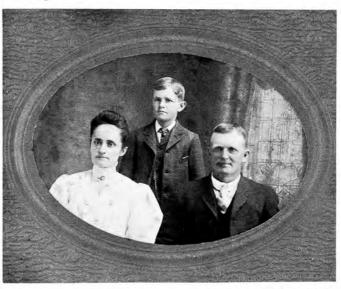


Photo from Mrs. Robert Schelkopf A. C. Abbott, son Floyd H., and wife, Elizabeth Abbott.

Dr. Chauncey W. Amy and his wife, Dr. Harriette Bottsford Amy, after practicing in Cook County Hospital in Chicago, made their home in Decorah, Iowa. In 1886, the Drs. Amy, with John Williams, a brother-in-law, and John's son Clifton, went to Milligan, where the Williamses opened a drugstore and the Drs. Amy opened an office. Two years later, the Williams family moved to Syracuse, Nebraska. The Amys and their small daughter Abby Louise moved to Burress. Accompanying them was Margaret Dawley.

At Burress they rented the John Owens property and opened a drugstore in addition to their medical practice. Mrs. Amy taught in the Burress school for a time and later in the Sawyer school (District 85). In the spring of 1895, the Amys moved back to Decorah, Iowa, where they resumed their medical practice. Their daughter Abby Louise went to Cleveland, Ohio, where she graduated from Western Reserve University. Later she taught in the Cleveland public schools until her retirement, when she went to Whittier, California.

In the fall of 1893, Mrs. Amy, Abby Louise, and Miss Dawley went to Chicago with Mrs. A. L. Hart and her daughters Carrie and Joy to visit the Columbian Exposition, where one memorable event was riding on the famous original Ferris Wheel.

Ernest Fricke and his wife Anna Klusman were both born in the province of Hanover, Germany, on the same date, March 16, 1860. Ernest emigrated to America in 1874 at the age of 14 years, with an uncle, who located at Waukegan, Illinois. He went to school in the winter and worked in a dairy which delivered milk daily to Chicago. He returned to Germany at the age of 19, but came back to America after staying there one year. While there, he became interested in Anna Klusman, who came to America in 1882, locating at Elgin, Illinois. They were married on March 22, 1885, and left immediately for Nebraska, where they settled 4 miles S of Fairmont, and became the parents of two daughters and four sons.

Mr. Fricke was very proud of his American citizenship, having attained it in 1879. He passed away in Fairmont on November 21, 1924. Mrs. Fricke followed him in death on March 28, 1936.

-Caroline E. Plock



The Harvey Garrett family, about 1920. On the right: Harvey and Ida (Theobald) Garrett. On the left: Vernon Gaffney (cousin) and his wife Minnie. The children are Kathleen and Harlan Garrett.

Georgia Compher Hart was born near Rainsburg, Bedford County, Pennsylvania, December 18, 1852. She was the second daughter in a family of four daughters and two sons born to Alexander and Barbara Ann Compher. She attended school in a stone schoolhouse in Rainsburg and later at the Alleghany Male and Female Seminary in Rainsburg.

On December 25, 1868, she married in the Masonic Hall at Hollidaysburg to Alex L. Hart of Duncansville, Pennsylvania. The couple lived in Altoona, Pennsylvania, where Mr. Hart was a station agent, and later a clerk in the record offices, of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. When Mr. Hart's doctor recommended that he take up outdoor work, he left this position and came West. In the spring of 1878, he bought railroad land in Madison township, the NW ¼ of Sec. 11, T3, R2W, and settled on the farm where they lived continuously for 62 years.

As soon as their house was built, the family moved in. They put in a small stock of groceries and for a time conducted a store. The stock included McLaughlin coffee, chicory (a coffee substitute), Clark's O.N.T. and Willimantic spool cotton, Fairbanks soap, Ayer's Sarsaparilla, Hoyt's German Cologne, blackstrap molasses, etc. When funds got low and payments on the farm became due, Mr. Hart obtained work at the Charlie Miller bank in Fairmont, making daily two sixmile trips on horseback. He frequently carried two, and sometimes three, neighbor children with him to attend the Fairmont school.

Mr. and Mrs. Hart lived on this farm for 62 years, until his death on October 27, 1940, at the age of 91½ years. Mrs. Hart remained there until the fall of 1941, when she moved to Geneva to make her home with her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Guy Case.

Mrs. Hart was a charter member of the Sawyer Presbyterian Church, which was organized by the Rev. J. D. Harvey of Fairmont in 1889. She later transferred to the Fairmont Presbyterian Church, and still later joined the Congregational Church at Geneva. She was a member of the Geneva Tent of Daughters of Veterans of the Civil War, which she joined in 1930. She was also a member of the Geneva Woman's Club and its Nature Study Department, and of the O. K. Kensington of the Order of the Eastern Star.

Mrs. Hart saw the coming of two railroads across the home farm, the Burlington and the Northwestern. In the early years, the railroads created a great fire hazard by not having spark screens in the smokestacks of the engines.

A skating pond, a pony named Boxer, a black-and-tan terrier called Pansy, a tricycle and later a bicycle, and a shiny black Bantam hen and rooster were among the recreational assets of the Hart children and their neighbors. Gingerbread was a popular climax for the skating parties and sleigh rides.

Mrs. Hart celebrated her 100th birthday with a community-wide party at the Congregational Church on December 18, 1952. Her death occurred on February 21, 1953.

The Harts had two daughters, Carrie Esther (Mrs. James Banton), who died August 2, 1926, and Joy (Mrs. Guy Case). The home farm is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Guy Case of Geneva.

Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Perry Chapman came to Fillmore County in 1871 and settled on a tree claim, the NW 80 of Sec. 12, T7, R2W. Lewis Dudley Owens, John M. Hiskey, and James Hill came together by covered wagons from Jasper County, Iowa, in November, 1873. Mr. Owens bought a relinquishment on the 80 east of O. P. Chapman. Mr. Hiskey settled on S. E. ¼ of Sec. 10. James Hill located on Sec. 34, T8, R2W.

The three men built sod houses on their claims, and on March 12, 1874, Mrs. L. D. Owens, Mrs. J. M. Hiskey, and Mrs. James Hill reached Exeter by Burlington train. At that time the Burlington ran no farther west than Grafton. They reached Exeter about 5 P.M. It was a lovely day and their husbands were there to meet them with wagons. They rode southwest across the prairie on a diagonal road, right into a gloriously beautiful sunset. They all liked the country. They stayed.

In 1881, O. P. Chapman and L. D. Owens bought the SE ¼ of Sec. 11, T7, R2W of the Burlington's land. L. D. Owens traded his 80 adjoining Mr. Chapman's for the Chapman 80 of railroad land and moved to the SE ¼ of Sec. 11, T7, R2W.

Mrs. L. D. Owens's brother, William Totten, home-steaded the Charlie Watson west 80. Their little son Charlie was creeping toward a rattlesnake in the corner of their one-room house, when his mother saw and hastily rescued him. That finished their homesteading; they went back to Iowa. Mr. Owens killed a rattlesnake behind the flour barrel in their one-room sod house. Two of the Owens children were born in the sod house: Claire, born January 31, 1876, and Al, born October 9, 1879. The other children were Frank, Cora (later Mrs. L. E. Jones), and Ralph (nicknamed "Pete").

Mrs. L. D. (Harriet) Owens resided on the farm until 1907, when they moved to Geneva. After the death of her husband, on April 10, 1918, she moved to Exeter in 1923 and made her home with her daughter Claire. Harriet was one of Fillmore County's oldest citizens; she observed her 97th birthday on December 19, 1945. She always enjoyed reading and kept well posted on national, state, and county affairs. She was active around the house until just before her 97th birthday. She passed away on May 6, 1946.

Dr. Claire Estelle Owens and her sister and three brothers attended District 21 near Burress. Claire lost her sight at the age of eight; but, fortunately, the blindness came on so gradually that Mr. and Mrs. Owens could point out colors and the things that would benefit her most after her sight would be gone completely. She was unable to attend school until she enrolled in the School for the Blind at Nebraska City at the age of 16. There she completed her grade-school



Picture from the Nebraska Signa Dr. Claire Owens (Nov. 28, 1963)

work in two years and high school in four. Music was included throughout the six years. In May, 1898, Claire graduated at the age of 22.

In September, 1898, Claire started teaching music in the Exeter public school and taught there for five years; for three of those years she taught in Fairmont as well. In 1903, she started to study pipe organ at the Nebraska School for the Blind. In 1904, she went to Carson, Iowa, and taught music in four neighboring schools. In 1907, her parents moved from Exeter to Geneva, and Miss Owens then taught music in Geneva and Exeter for five years, commuting by train each day.

In 1917, Miss Owens felt that she should further her education in order to remain self-supporting. In the fall of 1917, she entered the Des Moines (Iowa) School of Osteopathy. She graduated in 1921 and for the next two years practiced osteopathy in Geneva. She then moved to Exeter, where she bought a home. Her brother Al made his home with her.

In 1932, Dr. Owens, an active Democrat, was elected a representative to the Nebraska Legislature and re-elected in 1934, serving in two of the last sessions of the two-house legislature. She had the distinction of being the only blind woman to have served in any state legislature in the United States.

Dr. Owens visited 42 of the 50 states and visited Canada five times. She attended 18 national osteopathy conventions, making the trips alone. At various times she held every office of the American Association of the Workers for the Blind in the Nebraska state association and served for 10 years on the board of the national association. She also served on the school boards of Exeter and Geneva. She was selected for the "Pioneer Woman" of the Fourth District of the Federated Woman's Clubs of Nebraska.

Dr. Owens was the first blind teacher to teach in any public school in the nation. She played the piano for the Sunday School of the Congregational Church at Exeter for many years. Until shortly before her death, she continued to practice osteopathy in her home in Exeter and treated several patients a day. Still active in civic affairs and attending church every Sunday, she celebrated her 90th birthday in January, 1966. She passed away on November 9, 1966.

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Cooksey and their daughters, Lulu and Maude, arrived by train in Fairmont on April 6, 1880, having come from Dean, Iowa. As soon as possible, they got a team and started for Geneva, which at that time had a population of about 300.





Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Cooksey in 1912

Mr. Cooksey was an active man in the business circles of Geneva. He was admitted to the bar as an attorney and was a member of one of the oldest law firms of Geneva, known as Cooksey & Jensen. He was, for nearly six years, postmaster at Geneva, having been first appointed in 1885. His certificate of nomination and appointment, with the post office seal depicting the Pony Express, was signed by President Grover Cleveland, dated February 7, 1888.

Mr. Cooksey was also engaged in the drug business. He also helped to organize the Geneva Iron & Windmill Comapny and was elected its scorptory transport

and was elected its secretary-treasurer.

The Cookseys moved to Burress in the summer of 1897, where Mr. Cooksey was in the general-merchandise business for nine years. Tom Harvey had a grocery store south of Cooksey's store. Because Mr. Cooksey's health failed, they moved back to Geneva in 1907.

Mr. Cooksey served a term in the Nebraska state Senate, beginning in 1900, and was township assessor at Burress. When his health permitted him to work, he helped Sisler & Hourigan in their store in Geneva. He was a member of the Odd Fellows and the A.O.U.W He was also a commissary sergeant of Company "G," First Regiment, Nebraska National Guard.

Nine children were born to the Cookseys: Lulu, Maude, Sperry, Earl, Addie, Loren, Grace, Ruth, and Ralph. All but three of the children were born in Geneva. Ruth and Ralph died of diphtheria and scarlet fever in 1904. W. H. Cooksey passed away on March 28, 1912, and his wife followed him in death on July 15, 1933.

Oscar Alfred Ellison, born at Gothenburg, Sweden, January 17, 1847, came to America at the age of 21 and made his home near Chicago. Eliza Jane Iddings was born October 9, 1857, at Fairfield, Illinois. On January 22, 1880, Eliza married Oscar Ellison in Iroquois County, Illinois. While they still lived in Illinois, two children were born to them; in 1883, they moved to Ulysses, Nebraska, where the rest of their children were born. In 1903, they mover to a farm 5 miles NE of Geneva, which they bought from Joe Roesler. Mr. Ellison died on May 13, 1925; his wife Eliza passed away on January 17, 1948. Both were laid to rest in the Geneva cemetery. One of their sons, Roy, died in 1909, and their son Otto and their daughter Nellie passed away in 1958. Another daughter died in infancy. The remaining children were Alfred, Ernest, Mabel, and Melvin.

Ernest and his family moved to the Oscar Ellison farm after Melvin and his family moved to Geneva in 1926. Later, Ernest also moved to Geneva, and his son Ralph and his wife Elsie (Worley) moved to the farm, where they remained until 1948, when they moved to York County.

Roscoe Schlecty and his wife Mabel (Ellison) Schlecty, with their family, came from Lincoln, Nebraska, to take over the Geneva General Hospital in 1942. They operated the



Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Ellison, their home, and their dog "Buster" in the spring of 1917.

hospital until 1946, when they moved to Kansas. While in Geneva, the Schlectys set out the pin oak trees along the sidewalk leading from the street to the hospital.

Melvin Ellison and Bessie Kennard were married in 1915. Both were pupils in District 3 school, northeast of Geneva, in 1904 and 1905. Melvin and Bessie lived on the home farm until 1926, when they bought a house and lot from Mr. and Mrs. Lang in Geneva, on what is now the corner of U. S. 81 and G Street. Melvin moved the house to the back of the lot and built a garage and filling station, which he operated for more than 30 years until his son Orval took over.

David E. Garrett was born in Shelby County, Indiana, March 1, 1862. While he was still a small boy, his parents moved to Michigan, where he attended school near Dailey, Michigan.

In 1880, David Garrett, with his father and his brother Sam, came to Fillmore County and bought railroad land located on the SW corner of Sec. 19, Madison township. Their land adjoined that of William Garrett, a brother of Dave, who had come out in 1875. After purchasing their land in 1880, they built a house and lived there until 1885, when they returned to Michigan.

On September 3, 1886, David Garrett married Sarah McPherson in Niles, Michigan. Mr. Garrett then operated a



Photo from Mrs. Warren Lefever Five generations of the David Garrett family (1960). Kathleen (Mrs. Jesse) Richards, daughter of Harvey Garrett, holding Steven, son of Gary Richards (at left), David E. Garrett, and son Harvey B. Garrett.

grist mill near Dailey until 1891, when he and his wife, with their two sons Harvey and Hugh, returned to Fillmore County. Here they purchased land on the NE corner of Sec. 19 and built their home and made improvements on their farm. Their youngest son, John, was born in Fillmore County.

Mr. and Mrs. Garrett left the farm in 1916 and moved to Geneva, where they lived the remainder of their lives. Sarah Garrett died April 23, 1956, at the age of 92; David Garrett passed away on January 6, 1961, at the age of 98 years.

David Garrett was known as a kind and patient man, never too busy to lend a helping hand. He was always active in community affairs. While on the farm, he served on the rural school board, and after moving to Geneva, he served on the city council and as township assessor. He was one of the founders of the local telephone company.

Extract from the minutes of the Elm Street Telephone

Company:

"Geneva, Nebraska, November 1, 1907, at a called meeting, held at the residence of D. E. Garrett for the purpose of organizing a telephone company, F. C. Tatro was elected temporary chairman and D. E. Garrett temporary secretary.

"On motion, the following officers were elected by acclamation: F. C. Tatro, president; W. H. Garrett, vice-president; L. P. Loghry, treasurer; and D. E. Garrett, secretary.

"The bylaws were then read and adopted as read; moved and carried that this company be known as the Elm Street Telephone Company.

"On motion, the meeting was adjourned subject to call of secretary.

"D. E. Garrett, secretary"

William H. Garrett, son of Mr. and Mrs. H. P. Garrett, was born September 19, 1852, in Franklin County, Indiana. While he was young, his parents moved from Indiana to Cass County, Michigan. His mother passed away in 1874, and after her death William went to Chicago, where he spent the winter working in a wagon factory.

In the spring of 1875, William came to Fillmore County, where he purchased 160 acres of railroad land for \$8 an acre. This farm was the SE ¼ of Sec. 19, T7, R2W, Madison. While building a two-room house and making other improvements, he boarded with the James Loghrys. There he met his future wife, Louisa Loghry; they were married on October 28, 1877.



Photo from Mrs. Hazel Crom

The William Garrett family (November 2, 1905).

Front row, left to right: William Garrett (age 6), Edward James (age 5). Second row: William H. Crawford, William H. Garrett, Louisa (Mrs. William) Garrett, Julia (Mrs. William) Crawford with daughter Louise. Third row: John W. James, Dora Garrett James, Harry Garrett, Thirza (Mrs. Harry) Garrett, John Voigtlander, Ada (Mrs. John) Voigtlander. Back row: Hazel Garrett (Crom), Helen Garrett (McMahan), Amy Garrett (Barnes).

William and Louisa Garrett experienced the usual hardships of all the pioneers, including blizzards, grasshoppers, droughts, etc. His first farming was done with oxen. In 1886, he added a room to the original two-room house; later, he added four more rooms, two downstairs and two up.

Mr. Garrett farmed and raised cattle and hogs. When his eldest son, Harry, married in 1905, Mr. Garrett built a house just west of the home place and he and Harry farmed together. Mr. and Mrs. Garrett were the parents of eight children: Julia, Dora, Harry, Ada, Nellie, Amy, Hazel, and William ("Pete").

Mr. and Mrs. Garrett remained on this farm all their married life. Louisa Garrett died November 5, 1918, and William on November 23, 1926.

Adam Huston was born at Richland Center, Indiana, October 9, 1851, to William and Nancy (Gables) Huston. He came to Nebraska in the spring of 1871 with the Vanslyke families. He took an 80-acre homestead 3 miles N of Geneva (SW $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 18, T7, R2W) in 1872. Adam could homestead only 80 acres because he and Daniel Vanslyke took jointly an 80-acre tree claim; the tree claim was the N $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 24, T7, R3W.

He hauled lumber from Lincoln by team and wagon to build his home and his farm buildings. On October 5, 1875, he was married to Helen Loghry at the home of the bride's

parents by Judge William Blain.



Photo from Vera Lovegrove Wedding picture of Adam Huston and Helen (Loghry) (Oct. 5, 1873)

Helen Loghry was a pioneer schoolteacher, having taught in District 2, Fillmore County for two terms. She taught a three-month term (April, May, and June) in 1872 and a three-month term in 1873, at a salary of \$12 a month. The following comment appears in the records of the county superintendent:

"Friday, June 28, A.M. 1872 "Visited school in District No. 2. Taught by Miss

Helen Loghry in a dugout. Twelve pupils present. School doing first rate.

John A. Dempster, County Superintendent."
Mr. and Mrs. Adam Huston lived on this homestead all of their married life and were the parents of seven children: Hugh, Jan.es, A. D., Ella (Mrs. Charles Pittard), Hattie (Mrs. Sam Lash), Pearl (Mrs. Prentice Murr), and Frank Loghry. They also raised a nephew, Clarence Loghry, from infancy.

They endured the many hardships and experiences of the pioneers of their day. Helen told of the many times she fed roving Indians, dealt with wandering gypsies, and kept many a traveler overnight in her home. She was a beautiful seamstress and, like all the pioneer women, did all the sewing for her family as well as piecing many lovely quilts. All who knew her can remember the flower bed south and west of the house, which was her pride and joy. During the garden season, she never failed to pick a bouquet of flowers for her visitors.

Adam Huston passed away at his home on June 21, 1923, at the age of 71 years. His wife Helen continued to live on the farm and rounded out 64 years there. In her later years, she spent the winters with her children. In 1938, she finally closed her home and went to live with her daughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Pittard, in Geneva township. She passed away there on January 6, 1940, at the age of 85 years.

The Huston farm is presently owned by Miss Anna Renken.

John S. Kennard was born in 1850 in Huron County, Ontario, Canada, near Toronto. When he was 10, his parents moved to Sterling, Illinois, and in 1878, to Exeter, Nebraska. In 1880, he was married to Elizabeth C. Given at Fairmont. Elizabeth was born in 1858 in West Virginia and moved with her parents to Morrison, Illinois, and later to Exeter, Nebraska. John and Elizabeth met after their parents settled near Exeter — Elizabeth's family, just west of Exeter, and John's 6 miles SE of Exeter, in Liberty township. After they were married, they settled on a farm adjoining that of John's father.

Money was scarce and there was much work to be done. Sod was used for their house and they used boards for the floor and roof. The walls were whitewashed on the inside. Later, they built a frame summer kitchen across one end of the house, and put up a partition to separate the kitchen and living room from the bedroom. A frame barn was built and a well was dug. A windmill near the well once had its mill wheel blown off during a windstorm. It was found within a few feet of the sod wall, resting on a wash boiler



John S. Kennard and family, about 1902. Front row, left to right: Elizabeth (Mrs. John) Kennard, Bessie, J. S. Kennard, and Maude. Back row: Arthur, Effie.

that had been standing under the eaves to catch rain water. On one occasion, a cow broke out of the pasture during the night, came to the house, looked in through the low glass window, and decided that the corner of the sod shanty would be a good place to rub her neck. Around and around that corner she rubbed until the family awakened and drove her away.

Five children were born in the sod house. Twin girls were born in the frame house, built in 1891.

Mr. Kennard passed away December 12, 1934, in Seward, Nebraska. Mrs. Kennard passed away April 24, 1947. Both were laid to rest in the Exeter cemetery.

Mr. and Mrs. William Kinrade were both natives of the Isle of Man. Mrs. Kinrade was 14 when her people brought her to America; they were seven weeks crossing the ocean. When the wind waved the tall bluestem grass that covered the prairies in the late seventies, Mrs. Kinrade would lie down and cover her eyes. The sight made her seasick; she said that she had nearly died of seasickness when they crossed the ocean.

The Kinrades came here from Kewanee, Illinois. William Kinrade was born in 1835 and died in 1913; his wife, Margaret, was born in 1842 and died in 1927. Their family consisted of two sons, Henry (1869-1904) and William (1867-1948), and three daughters; Ella Kinrade married Joseph McDonald, who died July 16, 1916; she survived him and died on June 13, 1947. Anna Kinrade married Hezekiah Dennis, she passed away in 1951: Ida Kinrade married Bert Tice; she died in October, 1943.

Hiram Lathrop, a Civil War veteran, took a homestead on Sec. 26. While serving in Company "F," Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, he was wounded and his mind was affected. He lived the life of a hermit in a dugout in a secluded spot at the corner about ¼ mile N of what is now known as the Henry Schmidt farm. Once in a while he would sell a load of sand. He was born on October 24, 1839, and died on February 4, 1896.

Le Roy P. Loghry was born in Branch County, Michigan, December 17, 1856, and came to Fillmore County in 1871. His father, James F. Loghry, a Civil War veteran, in 1870 had homesteaded 2 miles N of Geneva on the SE ¼ of Sec. 13, later known as the John Larson place. Ida Platt, who became Mrs. Loghry, was born in Williams County, Ohio, July 28, 1859; she and her parents came to Nebraska in 1874. Older residents of Geneva will remember the Platt House, one of the first hotels in Geneva, owned by her father, J. T. Platt, and located on the west side of the courthouse square.

Mr. Loghry and Miss Platt were married at York on February 25, 1880. In November of the same year, they drove to Furnas County in a lumber wagon and settled on a homestead. They returned to Fillmore County in 1886 and lived on the Platt farm 3½ miles NE of Geneva; after the death of



Photo from Mrs. Warren Lefever Mr. and Mrs. L. P. Loghry (about 1904)

Mrs. Loghry's parents, the farm was purchased by Mr. Loghry. This place was their home until 1916, when they moved into Geneva.

On February 25, 1935, Mr. and Mrs. Loghry were surprised by a group of their neighbors who came to help them celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary. At the same time, Jacob Kirst celebrated his 86th birthday. Those present were Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Kirst, Mr. and Mrs. John Stephenson, Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Russell, Mr. and Mrs. F. M. Bradley, and Mr. and Mrs. David E. Garrett.

Mr. and Mrs. Loghry continued to reside in Geneva until the combined forces of age and increasing illness impelled them to end their lives together (as they had lived for 59 years) on June 8, 1939.

Mrs. Minnie Evans, formerly Minnie Platt, Mrs. Loghry's twin sister, was accidentally killed by a Northwestern train near the Loghry home. The Signal for April 30, 1895, reported:

Tuesday afternoon about 20 minutes past 4 o'clock, the regular eastbound Elkhorn freight train, when about 2 miles from town, ran over and killed Mrs. Minnie Evans, a deaf lady who was walking on the track from town towards home. The engineer noticed her when about ¾ of a mile from her and when about ¼ of a mile from her gave the alarm whistle, and, she not seeming to notice this, he immediately gave the danger whistle, at the same time reversing his engine and applying the air brakes.

He sounded the danger whistle continuously, but the lady being absolutely deaf the warning was in vain and as the train had been running at about the rate of 35 miles an hour it was impossible to stop it until the engine and five cars had passed over her body.

When struck by the train, Mrs. Evans was within a short distance of her home, and her brother-in-law, L. P. Loghry, with whom she resided, heard the whistle and observed her danger but too late to give her any warning and he was an eye-witness to the frightful accident.

Nathaniel McCalla, a son of James N. and Sarah (Mothershead) McCalla, was born in Scott County, Kentucky, in 1827. After James died there, about 1834, Sarah McCalla and her children—Joseph, Nathaniel, and Nancy—moved to Marion County, Indiana. There Sarah later married John Chinn (the Chinn family was related to Mary Todd Lincoln). After John Chinn's death, Sarah came West with her daughter Nancy and her son-in-law William H. Rhea (see Ray).

Nathaniel married Martha J. Smith at Indianapolis on August 9, 1848, and settled for some time in Iowa. He entered the Union Army from Johnson County, Iowa, and served as a captain¹ in the Civil War, later returning to Polk County, Iowa. Some time before 1871, Nathaniel brought his family to Fillmore County and homesteaded on the NE½ of Sec. 30, T7N, R3W. As related elsewhere (see Early History), it was in his dugout that the first election in the county was held, and his teen-age daughter, Emma, was responsible for the naming of Geneva, after one of their former places of residence, Geneva, Illinois.

Nathaniel later lived for a time in Clay County, and died on April 30, 1887, in Pueblo County, Colorado.

—Mrs. Clyde L. Davis

John and Caroline Niehaus — "Grandpa" and "Grandma" to everybody — came from Wisconsin in 1882. They lived a mile north of the Simon Carney family. They had four sons, Will, John, Lewis, and George. Will was grain buyer at Sawyer, John was postmaster there, and Lewis and George were farmers. According to the Nebraska Signal:

On Thursday, December 19, 1882, the friends of Mr. and Mrs. K. Tutty, numbering about 60, met together at their residence to witness the marriage of their daughter Aggie to Mr. Lewis Niehaus. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. R. G. Adams at 12 o'clock, after which they retired to the table, which was supplied with all the delicacies of the season and to which all did ample justice.

A partial list of the presents received by the couple may perhaps be taken as typical for weddings of the time: "Linen tablecloth and towels, bedspread, caster and set of tumblers, glass set, vase, goblets, silver butter knife, silver knife and sugar shell, silver card receiver, dinner caster, lamps, silver tablespoons, work box, and rug."

¹All the early Fillmore County sources refer to him consistently as "Colonel" McCalla; there is no way of telling whether this title may have come from a battlefield promotion or whether it represents the kind of "honorary" upgrading not uncommon among early settlers.

Madison Township Homestead Map

James H. Little	Robert H. Alvi Woodward Adki	n na		John C. Eldredge	Elind Taylor			Will)am H. Simpton	Hianus Kauth		
C. C. Chapin	James S. Harris			William H. Groves et al	Alonzo R. Gleason	-		Simon Carney	Alfred Corp	**********	
					-				Diedrich Twitmeyer		
		Seth Woodward	Charles Stare			Christian Walgamiosi	John W. Juhanna Rigga Schneide	r		Oliver P. Lewis D. Chapman, Owens	Ozro T. Wheeler
		Thomas Morgan	7			Wm. Wm. Tottern Waite, Jr	John M. Hiskey		- 4	Edward Cornwell	Frank E. Andrews
			George W. Jackson							Polly S. Wheeler	
David F. T. W. Karr Grist	John R. Ballard							Robert G. Williams	Samuel Arnold		
John Merrill	Thomas H. Earl		17	Scl	tool Land		15	William B. Shanklin	William William G.Hannes H.Walker	••••	3
Adam Huston	Edward A. Mercer	-									
		Clark B. Green	Adolph Fullgrabe			John Burnett H. F. Tallmadge	Donald T. McCall			Edmund D. Place	Giles McGlaflin
	9	William Merrill	Timothy William H		21	William D Barnes	Titus Drake		23	Warren C. Massey	John John Wangelin Shad
							Linus G. Stewart				
Jason J. James F. Morrill Morrill	Nathaniel McCalla			Orlando Porter	Andrew Burnett			Hiram Lathrop	Robert George Sommers Walker		
Adoniram J. Beals	Asael S. Glass			Noah Brittenham	Peter Tom Pearson Lancast		 	George L. Purdy	Edmund D. Place		5
		B. F. Sibbitt	Nancy Ray			Fanny S. Julius Krieg Voigt-	Frederick Elld				
		Sibbit	Nancy Aaron M.			lander	Jacob				
3	1	Mary Day	Albert T. Johnson			Theodore Voigtlander	Kirst Major D. Williams		- 35	John School	
		Day	Johnson		1	Voigtlander	Williams				

Lewis Niehaus died on March 6, 1911; his widow Aggie passed away on February 11, 1960.

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew J. Porter and their children — Grace, George, Harry, and Ethel — came in a covered wagon from Dawson County, Nebraska, to Madison township in the late summer of 1876. They were originally from Pennsylvania. They lived the first year on the Stuckey farm ½ mile N of the Simon Carney farm. (The Carney home was where you got the big red Jonathan apples and the girls made chocolate fudge in big, oven-sized pans.) During that year Mr. Porter bought railroad land for the farm which became their home for many years and where their youngest child, Mildred, was born in July, 1888. In 1878, diptheria took the lives of Harry and Ethel Porter, Lottie Williams, and Louie Stuckey, a son of Joe and Lizzie Stuckey.

Mr. Porter taught school for one winter in the Thompson district north of Madison township for \$35 a month, a sum which kept his family from starving. Mr. Porter and Mr. Stuckey felt the need for religious life in the community and

organized a Sunday school in the schoolhouse across the road northeast of Mrs. Schneider's home. Sometimes itinerant preachers came along and held services. Once, two came at the same time. One couldn't read, and one couldn't preach, so they took turns. Sometimes preachers from other towns came. Mr. Porter served for many years as postmaster at Sawyer. He passed away in 1917, and Mrs. Porter in 1938.

About 1890, the Sawyer church was built from donations and for a number of years was the center of religious life. Mr. Porter was superintendent of the Sunday school and Joy Hart was secretary. On December 11, 1892, the members of the congregation were surprised when, at the close of the sermon, the minister announced that all were invited to remain seated and witness a wedding. The organist, Mrs. B. A. Merritt, played "Here Comes the Bride" as the bridal couple — Frank M. Owens, son of Mr. and Mrs. L. D. Owens, and Miss Eleanor Holmes, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Holmes — marched up the aisle and took their vows.

The Sawyer church was Presbyterian and the Burress

church was Methodist; but that made little difference, because all who could attended Christian Endeavor in the afternoon at Sawyer, and Epworth League in the evening at Burress.

Helmuth F. Putlitz was an old and honored citizen of Madison township. For two terms (1891-1899) he was clerk of the district court. He lived at Geneva and his circle of acquaintances included most of the county. Those who knew him well had profound respect for his high personal character and acknowledged integrity.

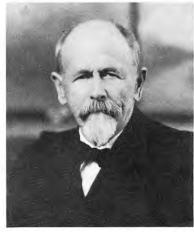


Photo from Mrs. Charles F. Tous H. F. Putlitz

Mr. Putlitz was born on March 8, 1852, in the Prussian province of Silesia. His parents, Franz and Augusta O. (Mast) von Putlitz, were also Silesian born and reared. His father, a member of the German nobility, served for many years in the Prussian army and rose from a subordinate position to the rank of major. Finally placed on the retired list, he spent his last years as an honored veteran of the struggles that raised his own country to the front rank among the German states.

Helmuth Putlitz spent his childhood and youth in his native town, where he was liberally educated, both in the village school and in a military establishment, where he was prepared for the life of a soldier. But his tastes did not lie in that direction, and at the age of 19, he shipped aboard a merchant vessel, "before the mast," and went to sea as an able-bodied seaman. His first voyage was a long and disastrous one, which took him to the Sandwich Islands. While rounding Cape Horn, the ship encountered such cold weather as to cause injury to many of the sailors. Mr. Putlitz froze one of his hands so seriously that he never recovered its perfect use. This misfortune was enough to convince him that seafaring was far from the ideal life; and when a later voyage brought him to New York City, his long-cherished desire to settle in America induced him to abandon his ship.

He remained in New York for about a year, experiencing considerable amounts of privation and hardship. As soon as he could do so, he moved on westward as far as Monmouth, Illinois, and spent two years working for farmers around there. By diligence and thrift, he reached a position where he could think about a farm for himself. He came on West, and found a desirable location in Fillmore County. He made his preliminary exploration in the fall of 1874, and in the following year he settled permanently on a quarter-section of railroad land in Madison township. Although this was wild prairie when it came into his hands, years of unflagging labor turned it into a beautiful and well-kept farm with solid and substantial improvements.

In 1875, he married Miss Wilhelmina Heiderstadt, the daughter of Frederick and Martha (McClintock) Heiderstadt. She was born in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, where her parents lived for a number of years before becoming early settlers of Fillmore County. Her father was of German extraction; her mother had been born in Carew, Ireland. Mr. and Mrs. Putlitz had five children: Francis F., Helmuth W., Martha, Harry, and Venda.

Mr. Putlitz was for many years a prominent Democrat

and influential in the party's councils in the county; but in later years he embraced and strongly supported the principles of the Populist party. In 1886, he was a candidate for representative in the Nebraska legislature; after a spirited contest, he was defeated, though his vote exceeded that of any other candidate on his ticket. In 1891, he was nominated by the Populists for clerk of the district court, and was endorsed by the Democrats. He was elected by a majority of 125 in a county which up to then had been largely Republican. In 1895, he was renominated and re-elected to the same position, this time by a considerably larger majority, and served until 1899.

He was a member of the Knights of Pythias and the Ancient Order of United Workmen. He and his wife were regular attendants of the Episcopal church, of which she was a member. They held a good place in the affairs of the community and took a full share in its social and benevolent activities.

The Nebraska Signal for December 10, 1925, reported:

On November 28, 1875, on a farm three miles east of Geneva, occurred the double wedding of Charles Meyer and H. F. Putlitz, the brides being the Misses Martha and Wilhelmina Heiderstadt. The Meyer and Putlitz families made their homes in Fillmore County continuously since that time, with the exception of about a year, when Mr. and Mrs. Putlitz lived in South Omaha.

On Thanksgiving Day, the double Golden Wedding anniversary was celebrated at the spacious and well-appointed home of Mr. and Mrs. Francis Putlitz in Fairmont, with a dinner in every way appropriate to the occasion. The event was a most happy one. A wide circle of friends in Fillmore County and elsewhere extend sincere congratulations to the honored couples.

William H. Ray (originally spelled Rhea) was born near Knoxville, Tennessee, on April 17, 1820. On June 21, 1846, at Indianapolis, he married Nancy McCalla (born January 31, 1829, in Scott County, Kentucky). William, along with an older brother, was apprenticed to a tanner in Tennessee and followed this trade through his lifetime, as well as being a farmer.









Photos from Marie Ray Davis

Sarah Mothershead McCalla Chinn, mother of Nancy, Nathaniel, and Joseph McCalla; Nancy McCalla Ray Blain; William Bane Ray; Leticia Leora Layton, wife of William Bane Ray.

William Ray brought his wife and his mother-in-law, Sarah McCalla, to Fillmore County in 1872 and made his application for a land patent northeast of Geneva—the N½ of the NE¼ of Sec. 32—on March 6, 1872. The house they erected on this homestead was of sod, 14'x24', with one door and three windows. They had four children: Nathaniel, John Peter, George, and William Bane Ray. William Bane Ray married Leticia Layton, daughter of William and Phoebe Merrill Layton. Their children were: Charlotte Ray Mitchel, Oregon; Von Rob (died when about 9 months old); Betty Ray Davis, Oregon; and Bernice Ray Lincoln Hamilton.

William Ray died on July 30, 1875, and is said to have been the first man buried in the Geneva cemetery. Family tradition reports that he was a very large man, and his casket was so large that they had to remove window casings to take his body from the house. Sarah McCalla died at Geneva on December 19, 1876, and is buried near William Ray.

Nancy McCalla married Judge William H. Blain on November 27, 1879. She died on August 7, 1911, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and is buried in Geneva beside the judge.

-Mrs. Clyde L. Davis

John H. B. Renken, born in 1854, migrated from Aurich, Hanover, Germany, to Woodford County, Illinois, just as did Kate Vossler, born in 1866. In 1882, both families moved to Kramer, Nebraska. After John and Kate's marriage on February 24, 1888, they lived on a farm near Dorchester. In 1901, they moved to District 17, Madison township (N ½ of SW ¼, Sec. 18).



Wedding picture of John and Kate Renken, February, 24, 1888.

In 1936, Mr. Renken passed away on this farm, and Mrs. Renken passed away in Geneva in 1954. Their three daughters—Anna, Tena, and Emma— remained in Fillmore County and still own the original farmstead purchased in 1901.

Simeon Sawyer was born in Lacon, Illinois, on January 27, 1845. Frances Josephine Devalon was born in Henry, Illinois, on February 28, 1854. Mr. Sawyer, a farmer, and Miss Devalon, a schoolteacher, were married April 7, 1874. On April 12, they left for Nebraska and settled on a farm 3½ miles SE of Fairmont. For several years, Mr. Sawyer farmed and raised stock. He then moved to Fairmont to serve as postmaster. After two years, he was succeeded by John Welch of Fillmore Mills. Mr. Sawyer then went into the implement business with Elmer J. Miller, formerly of Illinois. After that, he decided to take up a homestead and moved to the Sand Hills of Wheeler County, near Bartlett, Nebraska, where he farmed and raised stock. Upon retiring, the Sawyers moved to Lincoln, Nebraska, in April, 1917. The Sawyers celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary at the home of their daughter Eliza (Mrs. William Dumond) on April 7. 1929. Mr. Sawyer passed away at 1625 South Street, Lincoln, on April 12, 1930; Mrs. Sawyer died November 13, 1948.

Seven children were born to the Sawyers: Lucy Eva (Mrs. Le Clare Searles), Frances Elizabeth, Eliza Josephine (Mrs. William Dumond), Mary Margaret (Mrs. William Douglas), Harlan Lemuel, Jennie Gail (who died in infancy), and Russell Devalon Sawyer.

The village of Sawyer was named for Simeon Sawyer.



Simeon Sawyer and family, about 1900. Back row, left to right: Lucy Sawyer (Searles), Frances Sawyer, Eliza Sawyer (Dumond), Mary Sawyer (Brown). Front row: Simeon Sawyer, Harlan, Russell, Frances Devalon Sawyer

Mrs. Etta Schroder came to Nebraska in the early 1870's, at the age of 14, with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Schneider, from Buffalo, Iowa. They came in a covered wagon and stopped to camp for the night with some former friends who had already settled here. They intended to go on to Clay Center, but these friends—four or five families—persuaded them to stop and settle in Fillmore County.

There were families all around them, many from Pennsylvania—named Simpson, Riggs, Hiskey—mostly men who had taken up homestead claims after the Civil War. They found the families that had come on ahead of them so hospitable and so willing to lend a helping hand that they decided to settle here.

In 1872, Henry Schneider homesteaded a piece of land 4½ miles SE of Fairmont. He bought the crop—corn, oats, etc.—and the right for \$90. Mr. Schneider and another neighbor, who had also homesteaded and had built a sod stable for his horses but no house for himself, traveled with several others to Lincoln to record the deed.

The land upon which the town of Sawyer was later built was given by the Schneiders. The post office was then called Sawyer after Simeon Sawyer, the Fairmont postmaster. When the Northwestern R.R. came through, the station was named Buckston. Mr. Schneider built a store with living quarters overhead. The town also had a grain elevator, a railroad depot station house, a schoolhouse, a coal business, a blacksmith shop, and cattle-loading facilities. The Sawyer (Buckston) railway station was later purchased by the Geneva Milling Company, which moved it to Geneva, where it is still used as a warehouse.

Sunday School and church were held in the schoolhouse. In fact, the early settlers' first projects were planting trees and building schoolhouses, for the land was barren except for a few scattered rose bushes—wild, of course. Later, a church (Presbyterian) was built from donations and supplied by a minister from Fairmont, the nearest town. Services were always well attended.

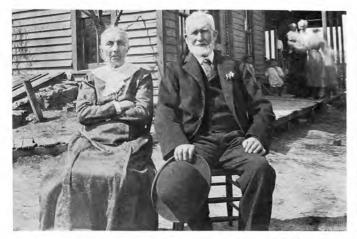
The Burlington Railroad was completed as far west as Fairmont in 1871. Etta Schneider, as a young girl, became a waitress at the Gaylord Hotel, located one block south of the present depot, where it was not unusual to feed as many as 60 persons at one meal.

In 1874, William Schroder came from Illinois and bought railroad land, being given 10 years to pay up on it. It was barren land, with only one wild rose bush on it. It took him an entire year to turn the sod on 80 acres. Later, he married Etta Schneider (December 31, 1875), and they established their home here. The farm is now tenanted by Leo Bures. All the buildings on this farm were built by Mr. and Mrs. Schroder and are still in use, though they have been modernized.

The schoolhouse, which stood near the Schneider home, was later moved to Burress, which was named for J. Q. Burress, who owned the land when the town site was located. The old town house of Madison township was located in the NE corner of Sec. 21, later known as the Oscar Ellison home. The Sawyer church was moved to District 17, located one mile E and 2½ miles S of Fairmont, practically in the middle of what later became the Fairmont Air Base. When the Air Base took over the land, the structure was moved to Friend, where it was again used as a church. The Air Base took out approximately 2,000 acres of Madison township land. Now, although deactivated as a U.S. Air Force base, its remaining facilities, including a total of 160 acres in concrete runways and aprons, remain in use, under the control of the Nebraska State Department of Aeronautics.

William Schroder passed away on June 28, 1917. Mrs. Etta Schroder died on February 6, 1957, at the age of 98 years, 2 months, and 27 days. At the time of her death she was Geneva's oldest citizen.

John Shade was born in Germany in 1831; his wife, Sophia Wangelin, was born there in 1837. Both came to America in 1861. They were united in marriage at Princeton, Illinois, May 28, 1863. In 1872, they came to Nebraska and took a homestead in Madison township, (E½ of SE ¼, Sec.



Golden wedding observance of Mr. and Mrs. John Shade, taken April 27, 1913, in Burress. Lady in background is Mrs. Jacob Kirst.

24). Twelve children were born to them. About 1893, they sold their farm and moved to Burress, where they kept a store and the post office for several years.

On Sunday, April 27, 1913, Mr. and Mrs. Shade celebrated their golden wedding anniversary at their home in Burress. Old friends and neighbors to the number of 81 sat down to dinner with them. They were presented with a purse of \$23 as a token of esteem.

Mrs. Shade died in 1914 and her husband in 1917. Of their 12 children, six are buried next to their parents, all having died at an early age in the year 1879, apparently in a diphtheria epidemic.

This account is taken from a letter written to Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Russell of Geneva on February 28, 1929, by L. G. Stewart, then a resident of Tujunga, California.

"A poor kid 23 years of age living in Chicago lost his father. Having no home, and having his mother to provide for, he took Horace Greeley's advice to come West.

"I put a cover on my wagon and on the 16th day of February, 1870, I started. All I knew was to keep the feed box on the east end of the wagon. I crossed the Mississippi on ice and the Missouri on a ferry boat I arrived on Turkey Creek April 1, 1870.

ferry boat. I arrived on Turkey Creek April 1, 1870.

"I built a dugout and wrote my mother to leave Chicago the 9th of May. I met her at Ashland, then the end of the Burlington & Missouri Railroad track. My brother Dwight came with her. He was not old enough then to take a claim, but in 1872, we went buffalo hunting and he took a claim on Prairie Dog Creek in Harlan County.

"My brother had brought me half a bushel of walnuts. I planted them and when the trees were about 15 years old I cut out forks and made two chairs. The first chairs mother had in the dugout were made of blocks sawed from cottonwood logs with pegs driven in them for legs. Bedsteads were made of small poles set on forks and we filled the ticks with last year's grass. All I bought was stock boards for table and door and two-by-sixes for door and window frames.

"In regard to Madison township, I took the first claim and built the first house. Beaver Crossing was the post office and the nearest store, and 14 miles north to the Blue River was the nearest blacksmith

"On my way out, I always got my team in a barn and slept in the wagon except for two nights when I got a warm breakfast. I ate frozen chuck out of the grub box because I did not have the price of warm meals.

"I am glad I did not have to witness the sale of our things after being the first settler within 10 miles of where Geneva now is. It was a hard blow on this old pioneer."

Mr. and Mrs. Frank C. Tatro came to Madison township from Clay Center, where Mr. Tatro had been working nights for the Orr Brothers Flour Mill. They decided that they would like to make their home on a farm; and in the county paper they found advertised for sale 40 acres, owned by F. B. Donisthorpe, 3 miles N and one mile E of Geneva. Mr. and Mrs. Tatro came over and bought the 40 acres on February 11, 1900. The buildings were in poor shape but could be repaired. They moved here on February 26, 1900. The roads were frozen and rough. The sun shone and made the going worse. There were not many homes on the road to their new place. A good neighbor with a team and wagon brought their household goods. They got to the place at 8:30 P.M. and found the kitchen door open and snow inside.



Mr. and Mrs. Frank C. Tatro and family (taken December 25, 1930). Back row, left to right: Duane, Donna, Donald, Dorothy, and Rozella.

They built their one-story house in May, 1900. They had good years and bad ones, drouths and windstorms. They bought the W 40 of their quarter on April 16, 1908, and the N 80 on September 1, 1916. They had the first telephone in the community, which was installed on December 20, 1923.

As the years went by, Mr. Tatro became successful in raising pure-bred hogs, attending State Fairs and winning his share of prizes and several silver trophies. He was one of the first farmers to substitute alfalfa for the red clover and timothy of that day. He seeded his first field of alfalfa in the spring of 1908. It proved to be a crop relished by practically every creature on the farm—cattle, horses, hogs, sheep, and even chickens—and produced good returns. Eventually it came to be widely sown and under right conditions produced three crops of hay and feed through the growing season. It also proved to be a crop that restored fertility to land that had been long used for producing grain crops. Further, it enabled the farmer to care for a more diversified line of livestock and made the dairy business more worth while for those who raised or milked cows.

On September 23, 1933, Mr. and Mrs. Tatro bought the David Garrett farm adjoining their farm on the south in Sec. 19. This place is now owned by Duane Tatro, the older son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank C. Tatro. Duane and his wife built a modern house and made many other improvements. A beautiful yard, surrounded by a white fence, contains many varieties of shrubs and flowers.

The schoolhouse, known as District 17, was at first very small. As more room was needed, about 1907 or 1908, the Sawyer church building was bought and moved to this location, where they also held Sunday School. Then a well was dug, and it was no longer necessary for the pupils to carry water from the homes of neighbors. Then, in 1942, the Fairmont Air Base took over, and that was the end of this country school.

Frank Tatro was the victim of a fatal accident on June 21, 1938, while he was cultivating corn. His team became frightened, apparently because of a broken singletree. He was found in the wreckage by his son Duane, who was working in an adjoining field. He was taken at once to St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Lincoln, where he was found to have a broken back, a broken ankle, and internal injuries. He died about 40 minutes after reaching the hospital.

Diedrich W. Twitmeyer came to Nebraska from Jacksonville, Illinois, in the spring of 1882. He homesteaded the S 80 acres and bought the N 80 of SE ½ of Sec. 2, Madison township. Six years later, he and Dudley Owens purchased 80 acres that lay between their farms, of which each took 40 acres.

Mr. and Mrs. Twitmeyer are deceased. They were survived by their son John and their daughter Elizabeth (Mrs. Gaston).

Grandfather **Thomas Wheeler** homesteaded the SW 80 of Sec. 12 in Madison township and made a pre-emption claim for Ozro Wheeler for him to homestead when he reached the age of 21. Ozro was about 19 when his parents came to Nebraska. Frank Andrews homesteaded east of the Wheeler homestead on the SE ¼ of Sec. 12. Frank Andrews and Ozro Wheeler were half-brothers.

Robert G. Williams was born June 21, 1827, and served with the Union forces in the Civil War. Isabella Hollingshead was born in Zanesville, Ohio, March 1, 1844. Her father died while she was an infant and her mother passed away when she was a very small child. Her grandmother took the little girl and brought her to womanhood. The grandmother moved with her family from Zanesville into Kentucky and later went to Stark County, Illinois. On April 1, 1861, Isabella was married to Robert G. Williams in Toulon, Illinois, and they immediately removed to Henry County, Illinois. Seven children were born to this union: three daughters—Eva (Mrs. Sherman Moss), Anne (Mrs. Dennis), and Chilotta Jane, who died at the age of ten; and four sons—Edward P., Robert Jr., William T., and Frank C. Williams.

In 1870, the family came to Nebraska, homesteading on the NW ¼ of Sec. 14, Madison township. This homestead has never passed from the family's possession. Mr. Williams was reared as an Episcopalian and Mrs. Williams as a Methodist. They both joined the Fairmont Methodist Church in 1872, a few months after its organization. Mrs. Williams was a faithful worker in the local Red Cross chapter and spent many hours knitting for the soldiers of World War I. In the latter years of her life, she enjoyed relating tales of the relief work she had helped with while her husband was away fighting in the years from 1861 to 1865.

Mr. Williams passed away at his home in Fairmont on June 22, 1908. Mrs. Williams died at the age of 74 during the 1918 influenza epidemic.

One of the earliest settlers in Fillmore County was Human Wythers, who had been born in England on December 5, 1830. With his wife Rebekah (born March 3, 1834), he left England on June 26, 1867, and landed in New York City on July 10. They came on west to Morrison, Illinois, February 18, 1879, and arrived at Exeter, Nebraska, on February 22, 1879. They settled on a farm owned by George Sampson of Peoria, Illinois, located ½ mile E of what is now Burress. There were seven children in the family: Mary Ann



Photo from Mrs. Fred Slepicka Human and Rebekah (Fletcher) Wythers (photographed in Fairmont about 1890)

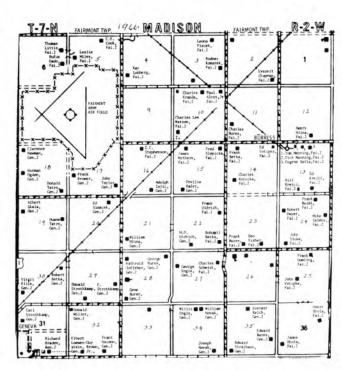
(Mrs. Sam Russell), James, Sophia (Mrs. Thomas Pester), Hugh, Sarah (Mrs. Joseph Bradley), William, and Anne (Mrs Ira Andrew). In February, 1886, Human Wythers bought a piece of railroad land, the SE ¼ of Sec. 1, Chelsea township, and moved there when his son Hugh married Nellie Pester. Human Wythers died on December 5, 1907, and his wife Rebekah on March 23, 1912.

Hugh and Nellie Wythers started housekeeping on the home farm east of Burress. They lived there for 19 years, and then moved to the Chelsea farm, which Hugh bought from his father. Nellie Pester Wythers often got so homesick to see her people that she walked six miles to spend the day with them on Turkey Creek. Hugh had only enough horses to carry on his farm work, and so there were none to drive. Hugh was born May 3, 1862, and died February 18, 1936; Nellie Pester Wythers, born April 12, 1865, died March 18, 1928.

Of the six children of Hugh Wythers, two still live in Fillmore County. Mabel (Mrs. Henry Foster), who attended the Lincoln Business College after finishing high school in Exeter, was a secretary in the office of Deputy Superintendent E. C. Bishop when he started Boys' and Girls' Clubs, a forerunner of 4-H Clubs. Mr. Bishop was enthusiastic about corn growing for boys and cooking and sewing for girls. When Mabel was about eight years old, she lived near Burress and took music lessons from her neighbors, Miss Alta M. Andrews and Miss Claire Owens. When the Burress Methodist Church was built, she served as organist. Her work was quite satisfactory despite the fact that occasionally the minister, at the close of his sermon, would announce: "We will sing the closing hymn without music." When this happened, it was because the young organist was asleep behind the organ.

Edna (Mrs. H. H. Roberts) also lives in Fillmore County. A graduate of Exeter High School, she too attended the Lincoln Business College. She was employed in Lincoln for several years by the Armstrong Clothing Company as Mr. Armstrong's private stenographer. She also worked for the Lincoln Telephone and Telegraph Company.

James Wythers (born July 29, 1855) married Belle Alexander of Ohio and settled on the farm he bought near Sawyer, the NW ¼ of Sec. 15. The family lived there until they retired (February 22, 1906) and built a home in Geneva. In 1915, James' son Loyd married and lived on the place. It is now owned and occupied by a grandson, James Wythers, representing the third generation. James Wythers the elder died on December 11, 1942; his wife Belle (born December 29, 1867) had preceded him on August 9, 1937.



Momence Township

Momence township,¹ in the southwestern quarter of the county, is bounded on the north by Bennett, on the east by Stanton, and on the south by Bryant townships, and on the west by Clay County. Its northern boundary is marked by Nebraska Highway 41. The land is generally level, with a few trees along Turkey Creek, which zigzags from west to east through the center of the township. It is also broken up by a few widely scattered ponds. These are the Big Pond (also known as the Shickley Pond), in Secs. 33, 34, and 35, the Weis Pond in Sec. 26, the Post Pond in Sec. 20, and the Pete Larsen Pond in Sec. 31. Surface water supplies are augmented by a total (in 1966) of 61 irrigation wells.

The township must have been organized shortly after the organization of Fillmore County in 1871. It was named for a town in Illinois, the former home of C. A. Combs, one of

the early auctioneers in the county.

Many of the early settlers lived in dugouts and sod houses. They broke out pieces of prairie here and there, with oxen and cows, for gardens. Their first problem was that of getting water for themselves and their stock. The first wells were dug wells, which were hard and often dangerous to dig. They were dug by hand with short spades, and the earth was hoisted to the surface. Some wells were 100 feet deep; several families would club together to accomplish the task and use the same well.

Then came bored wells. These were bored by hand, with an auger shaped like a carpenter's bit, but much larger. Two men, one on each side of the auger, pushed against handles projecting from each side of it. When the auger was full of dirt, it was hoisted up and cleaned. Another section was then added and cleaned like the first. When water was reached, the hole was cased with wooden tubing. A long cylindrical bucket

Much of the information about Momence township, and many of the family stories, were supplied by Mr. John Johnson (now deceased); it is now not possible to identify his contributions in detail—Editor.

Momence Township Homestead Map

				V		-1.00							
William H. Combs	Russell G. Furgeson			Joseph Alkire		Brother	tun			Neilie F. Townsend	Garrett B. Clawson		
heotiere Ira D. Combs Darling						Lewis Pratt					Willis Davis		
George W.	Sarah A. Furgeson	s		Harry F. Linda	Nelson Washburn	Giles S Thomas			3				,
		William P Alenze B., McClaim Tarbix	George David					John R. Elliott	Perley Reed			John T- Willey	Jame* Oles
7		Frederick, John Keiber Ayton	George W. DeWolf					Juseph Erra G Reinsch Harring- ton	Marcellus Morgan		it.	Charles Ward	John B. Schommer
													William H. Schreifler
Joseph B. Grotto	Heinrich Vauck									John Zimmerman	Peter Weis		
William C Gosch	William D. Myers	- 17			School Land			15		John John J. Weis Weis			13
	Pairview Cemetery												
		Warren J. Post	Andrew J. Post					Samuel W Mersyman	Nicholas Guelf			Randulph B. Campbell	
19		Henry R. Swartz	Benjamin Parke		2	1		John J. Koch	John Merryman		В	Hans Koch	Detlef Koch
Henry P. Krause	Henry Hauffman			George	e W	Nelsan D Peck	Peter Gergen			Thumas M. Howard	Joseph C. Howard		
Jesse John Kollison Kreger	Johan Judy Kreger Portwood		9	Amos Taylor		Myron Tower			27	Daniel M Borland	Petar D. Weis		25
i		Jun A. Parish	Sod-Town School S. Dist. 50 Edwin Tepier					S. R. Hughes Edward E. Price	S. R. Antan Hughes Herker			Arel Lumberg	John Gustafson
3	31	Alexander H Mc Manie	Ambrose H. Parish			33		John W John W Morrison Price			15	Swan Johnson	Frank

3 or 4 feet long, with a check valve in the lower end, was lowered with a rope and then drawn to the top; the rope passed over a pulley and was attached to a cylindrical drum with a crank at one end.

The invention of pumps was a great boon to the farm woman. At first she carried water from a spring or a water barrel. Later, when a well was dug, a pulley with a bucket on the end of a rope, or a pulley with a chain and a bucket on each end, simplified matters somewhat; but the invention of the pump was the greatest boon to the farm wife. The next major improvement was the invention of the windmill, for it transferred the drudgery of daily pumping to the eternal winds of the plains. The windmill tower was described as "the unmistakable sign of human habitation throughout the Great Plains."

The settlers' early farm implements consisted of a plow, harrow, corn planter, and some simple harvester. Their first corn planters were of the hand check variety. They plowed the ground, harrowed it, and marked it. The marker was made of four or five 4" x 4s nailed together about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet apart. This was dragged over the ground crosswise to the direction of planting. Then the man checking the corn dropped the corn on these marks. This was done to provide for cross-cultivation. Later, the check rower and wire was introduced, and this inconvenience was eliminated.

Grain was harvested mostly by headers. The header made a 10 or 12 foot cut, and was pushed rather than pulled. The cutter was pushed by a long beam attached to its back side, with a team of horses on each side. The man running the header stood on a little platform behind the horses and steered it. The cut grain was elevated into header boxes and

hauled away and piled into rick stacks.

The McCormick Reaper made a cut of 5 or 6 feet and had a reel that looked very much like a Dutch windmill. The reel slats, of which there were four, had tines or teeth on them. Three of these reel slats knocked the cut grain down onto the triangular platform, and the fourth was so geared as to brush it off. This left the cut grain in bunches which

were later bound by hand with straw, picked up, and hauled away. This was called a self-rake.

Some of the early settlers also used a machine known as a Marsh harvester, which superseded the McCormick Reaper or self-rake. This machine elevated the grain and dropped it onto what was called a table or platform. Two people rode on the machine, standing on a lower platform. Each of these grabbed a handful of straw, divided it so as to make a double-length band, and tied a small armfull of grain into a bundle. The bundles were then thrown or dropped to the ground, and were later picked up and hauled away.



Photo from William Ruhl Henry Kolar & Co. threshing crew (of Exeter) with horse-powered thresher.

The stacks of grain were later threshed by the old horse-powered threshing machines. Power was furnished by six or eight teams and conveyed to the thresher by means of tumbling rods. The horse power was staked down by heavy poles. A beam or sweep—one for each team—was socketed into the master wheel and braced. The horses did not pull from the ends of the sweeps, as there were pulleys in the end of each sweep. A chain passed through these pulleys, one of which was fastened to the doubletrees to which the horses pulled and the other end was hooked back into equalizing rods. The purpose of these equalizing rods, which lay loose in a circle upon the sweeps, was to distribute the pull evenly among

the teams. The man standing on the horse power kept the teams going, and the "kids" kept the straw away from behind the separator, a very dusty and dirty job.

CHURCHES

The Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church had its origin 1882, when the first regular services received by the Lutherans of Momence township were provided by the Rev. John Meyer, who came from Kiowa and conducted services every fourth Sunday. He drove his ponies over the roadless prairies, through the waters of the Blue River and Old Sandy Creek. In the summer of 1883, the congregation formally organized and, under his guidance, decided to build their first church. The site-the SE corner of the farm of Detlef Koch, in the SE1/4 of Sec. 24—was donated by Mr. Koch. The church building, which cost \$538 and was completed with no debts against it, was dedicated to God on Pentecost Day, June 1, 1884, by the Rev. John Meyer. Pictures pertaining to the history of the church are in the files of the Signal and were used in a historical booklet compiled by the church for its 50th anniversary in 1934.

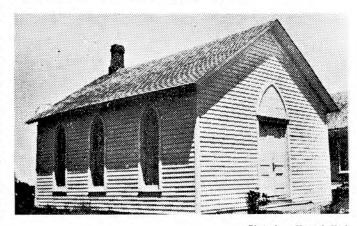


Photo from Kenneth Koch First Zion Church building, dedicated in 1884.

Among the first members of the Zion congregation were Claus Franzen, president, trustee, and collector; Frank Otte, secretary; Chris Gratopp, trustee; Charles Gratopp, collector; Fritz Busse; Will Gehrke; Carl Gehrke; Pete D. Koch, collector; Ed Misch, treasurer and trustee; W. Engel; Ed Ohnesorge; B. Tobiassen; William Steinke; Henry Frenzen; Chris Broderson, Sr.; William Schmock; John Koch; Claus Roweder; Gus Ohnesorge; and Herman Gehrke.

Soon after the dedication of the church, the Rev. S. Meeske of Tobias took charge of this flock for somewhat over a year. During this time, for reasons which are by now obscure, a division arose in the congregation. The majority of members, retaining the use of the church, called a pastor of the Lutheran General Synod and incorporated themselves as the German Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Momence. This group was served in the following years first by the Rev. William Thole of Ohiowa, and later by the Revs. J. Bond, C. Huber, and J. Buechsenstein. The minority group, meeting in private homes, was again served by the Rev. John Meyer of Kiowa and later by the Rev. Maak of Grafton, who were members of the Missouri Synod.

The two factions were reunited on January 10, 1889, and decided to drop membership in their respective synods and join the Wisconsin Synod. In the early spring of that year, the Rev. Michael Wolff of the Wisconsin Synod was installed as pastor. Since Pastor Wolff also served another congregation near Grafton, services at Zion were conducted only in alternate weeks. A modest parsonage was erected, just west of the cemetery adjoining the church, in 1889. Pastor Wolff served the congregation until 1891, when he resigned. Candidate of Theology C. G. Kleinlein was then called, and he served both congregations until March, 1896, when he accepted a call to East Farmington, Wisconsin.

The Rev. C. W. Siegler was then installed as pastor of both congregations in the summer of 1896, and served until September 30, 1900. The Rev. Kluge of Grafton served the congregation until the newly called pastor, the Rev. George

Kirschke, was installed early in 1901.

In 1901, during the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. Kirschke, the congregation decided to move into the town of Shickley. Six lots were purchased in the northwestern part of the town and a new and larger frame church was built on the east lots of the site. The new church—34′ x 56′ and with a steeple—was erected for a total cost of \$3,181.56. The members of the building committee were H. Wittmack, Charles Gratopp, and Fred Hesse.

The parsonage was moved into town, enlarged a bit and repaired, and put on the west lots of the church site. The first church was also brought into town and placed near the new church, where it served as a schoolhouse and parish hall until it was replaced by a new educational unit and parish

hall, dedicated on October 22, 1950.

The new frame church, which had been dedicated in September, 1901, was totally destroyed by a lightning-started fire on May 21, 1918. Although the members were stricken, they were not dismayed. They soon decided to build a new brick church on the old site. The members did much of the work themselves. The brick church was dedicated in the fall of 1918. Although the building was valued at \$10,000, the actual cash cost was only \$6,500. It was only a few years until the whole church was free of debt. During the winters of 1922 and 1923, the congregation built the present parsonage, at a cost of \$5,500.

At the time of their Golden Jubilee in 1934, the Zion congregation numbered about 190 souls, including about 130 communicants and 47 voting members. The highest and most intimate connection with the congregation is the communicant membership. This is granted to confirmed men, women, and children of about age 13 and upward. The Zion congregation, still a vital force in Shickley, has reason to rejoice; and they voice it in the words: "The Lord had done great things for us, whereof we are glad," and "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits."

The pastors who have served the Zion church have been:

John Meyer
S. Meeske
William Thole
J. Bond
C. Huber
J. Buechsenstein
— Maak
Michael Wolff
C. G. Kleinlein
W. C. Siegler
George Kirschke
H. Zimmermann
F. L. Brenner

A. B. Korn
William F. Wietzke
D. Luebke (temporary)
John Raabe
Henry Ellwein
L. E. Vogel (temporary)
K. Schaaf (temporary)
Laurence E. Wachholz
Corliss Stokamp (temporary)
Otto H. Wittig
Enno Budde
Norman F. Seebach (1962-)

The German Evangelical Lutheran Church was founded largely because many of the Zion members found it difficult to travel to the Zion Church. A local Free Will Baptist congregation had merged with their brethren in Geneva; and so the new group purchased the superseded church building in 1894 from off the farm of Ed Role's father in Stanton township and moved it to the NW corner of the SW ¼ of Sec. 1, T6N, R4W. The building was duly dedicated, and a parsonage was erected beside it. Its work and services continued until 1917, when it was forced to disband on account of limited membership. Some of the members of this congregation were Claus Franzen, William Gosch, Charles Gehrke, and Mike Gehrke. After the congregation disbanded, the church building was sold to William Loghry and converted into a house, still standing, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles W of Geneva (NE corner of the SE ¼ of Sec. 6, Stanton township).

St. Mary's Church (Turkey Creek) started from small beginnings. Shortly after the coming of the Burlington R.R. to the county in 1871, 10 families from Wisconsin located in the west-central part of the county, most of them in Momence

precinct. Many at first lived in dugouts and sod houses, had large families, and were buffeted by the hardships and adversities of pioneer life.

Being staunch Catholics, their first concern was for the ministrations of their religion and the welfare of their children; but for a time there was no possibility of obtaining a resident priest. There was no Catholic church nearer than Crete. The priest in charge there, Father Lechleitner, was already overburdened, having charge of all the missions from Crete west to Kearney. Mass was offered once a month in one of the homes southwest of Sutton. Many of the settlers made the round trip of 30 or more miles on foot or in open farm wagons—a long journey, especially in midwinter. Finally, in 1875, the first Mass in what is now St. Mary's Parish, Turkey Creek, was celebrated by Father F. Lechleitner.



Photo from Father Paul Ulenberg St. Mary's Catholic Church in late 1940's

The first church edifice was built in 1879, a small building put up by parishioners Peter Gergen and John Marson. As more settlers came in, and as families grew, this became too small and was replaced by a larger building about 1892.

In 1916, Turkey Creek was made a parish and the present commodious rectory was built. The Rev. A. J. Lutz, appointed the first resident pastor, served here for nearly 20 years. He was succeeded in 1935 by the Rev. Paul Ulenberg. Under his administration, a barracks building was bought from the deactivated Fairmont Army Air Base and made into a parish hall on its present site. Since 1947 this recreational hall has added much to the social life of the parish and to the welfare of its young people.

Also during the administration of Father Ulenberg, the Rev. Charles L. Gergen, a grandson of Peter Gergen who had built the first church, was ordained in St. Mary's Church on April 14, 1948. His sister, Gladys M. Gergen, had entered the teaching Sisters of St. Frances in September, 1940, her name in religion being Sister Marionita. Sister M. Jane Frances, daughter of early settler Peter Weis, joined the Poor Sisters of St. Francis Seraph, who work amongst the



Photo from Mrs. Sylvia Stoldorf District No. 48 schoolhouse about 1920—Charles Lightbody by pump.

poor and lowly. She is presently a pharmacist in a hospital in Colorado Springs.

Father Ulenberg was succeeded by Father Francis Pluta,

who was in turn succeeded by the Rev. John Kozlik.

Better roads and larger farms have brought to St. Mary's Parish the same fate as that suffered by many another rural parish. As late as the middle 1940's there were 75 families in the parish; by 1967, the growing trend toward larger farms had reduced the number to 45 families.

SCHOOLS

District No. 48 was formed on September 13, 1872, when County Superintendent John A. Dempster set aside Secs. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 of Momence township to constitute that district.



Photo from Ernest Reinsch

School District No. 49 (about 1909). Front row, left to right: Lydia Frieden, Mary Gratopp, Anna Nittler, Elnore Nittler, Helen Carl, Elizabeth Volz, Florence Jacque, Anna McCluskey, Elizabeth Nittler, Mary Hesse, Minnie Franz, Lydia Gratopp, Walter Hesse. Back row: Adolph Carl, Ed McCluskey, Billy Bucklemun, Fred Volz, Nick Weis, Pete Marson, Tony Schommer, Carl Gratopp, Lou Gratopp, Johnny Weis, Joe McCluskey, Anna Sughrue (teacher), Rose Gratopp, Helen Nittler, Mary Franz, Katie Volz, Louise Nittler.

District No. 49 was organized on September 13, 1872, when Superintendent Dempster set apart for it Secs. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, and 36. By a special election on July 17, 1953, District 49 was attached to the reorganized District 54 (Shickley).

On the same date, **District No. 50** was designated as consisting of Secs. 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33. From the many sod houses surrounding it, District 50 came to be known as the Sod Town (or Sodtown) school.



Photo from Mrs. Rena Kamler

School District No. 50 during 1913-1914 term. 1—Teacher, Helen Nittler, 2—Hiney Alfs, 3—Alois Weber, 4—Rena Weber, 5—Floyd Peterson, 6—Carl Schriefer, 7—Emil Krause, 8—Otto Erthum, 9—Lawrence Weber, 10—Clinton Peterson, 11—Harold Weber, 12—George Krause, 13—Hattie Portwood, 14—Leonard Lawson, 15—Charlie Broderson, 16—Ervin Nelson, 17—Ruben Lawson, 18—Edwin Nelson, 19—Betsy Anderson, 20—Cecilia Carl, 21—Anna Belle Portwood, 22—Millie Portwood, 23—Sophia Broderson, 24—Alius Erthum, 25—Edna Broderson, 26—Selma Nelson, 27—Violet Peterson, 28—Eda Sanburg, 29—George Erthum, 30—Alice Schriefer, 31—Clara Weber, 32—Hilda Krause, 33—Clarence Krause, 34—Genevieve Erthum, 35—Frank Carl, 36—Lulu Sanburg, 37—Frances Carl, 38—Mamie Nelson, 39—Oscar Mueller, 40—Sophia Krause.

On February 18, 1873, Secs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, and 18 were set aside by the then acting county superintendent to constitute **District No. 60**, which came to be known as the Fairview or Combs school. Here Ella Oblinger attended after her first year in District 63, and the three Oblinger girls attended after their return to Fillmore County in 1883.



Photo from Mrs. Ed Isley

School District No. 60 (May 1, 1914). Front row, left to right: Arthur Hatcliff, Lester Hatcliff, Luella Goesch, Lillie Goesch (twins), Nellie Kalberg, Vera Johnson, Elda Johnson, Nels Kalberg. Back row: Elsie Goesch, Harry Robinson, Alice Hatcliff, Willie Robinson, Florence Hatcliff, Elsie Hatcliff, Christine Bermaster (teacher). Leonard Fenske, Esther Goesch, Oscar Hatcliff.

District No. 79 was formed on January 15, 1880, by detaching Secs. 3, 10, and 15 from District 48 and Secs. 4, 9, and 16 from District 60.



Photo from Ernest Reinsch

Pupils in School District No. 79 in 1913. Back row, left to right: Anton Weis, Walter Schafer, Ernest Reinsch, Marie Weis, Norma Walter, Minnie Schneider (teacher). Front row: Cecila Weis, Marie Kamler, Loretta Walter, Vincent Weis.



Photo from Mrs. Mary McLaughlin

School District No 92. in 1932. Front row, left to right: Elmer Reinsch, Victoria Marson, Francis Marson, Nadine Richardson, Mary Grote, Linus Kamler. Second row: Bertha Gergen, Delores Stengel, Wilma Marson, Wilmetta Marson, Mabel Reinsch, Margaret Grote, Kathryn Marson. Third row: Teacher Mary Yetman, Virgil Richardson, Doris Marson, Vione Schafer, Doris Richardson, Eleanor Grote, Herb Donlinger. Back row: Bernard Grote, Alfred Gergen, Robert Reinsch, Gerald Kamler, Kenneth Richardson, John Stengel, Bob Donlinger.

On March 12, 1889, **District No. 92**, known also as Sanburg school and Turkey Creek school, was formed by detaching lands from Districts 50 and 60. Many such detachments were made in the various districts and added to other districts, from time to time, to give children the advantage of schools closer to their homes.

FAMILIES

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Alkire settled on a homestead 9 miles W of Geneva in the spring of 1872, with three sons and one daughter. Their homestead was on what is now the Clay Center and Geneva highway (Nebraska 41). In 1872 there were no roads. Mr. Alkire plowed a furrow for the children to follow to school, which was held in a room of a neighbor's house.

They lived in a sod house for a few years, building a new frame house just before Agnes was born in 1879. Mrs. Alkire's maiden name was Nancy Ellen Jordan. Years later the grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Jordan, moved to Nebraska from Kansas and lived ¼ mile from the Alkires. Later more of the relatives settled in Nebraska. The roads were worn down deep where horses traveled, not much like the highways now.

I remember hearing my folks tell about the bad storm of 1873. My father had left fuel to last until his return (he had to go a long way to work to make a living until the homestead was in shape to raise crops). A family in the neighborhood was leaving, and they came to the Alkire home to wash, iron, bake bread, etc. They used up the fuel and did not chop more wood for Mrs. Alkire. The wood had to be hauled from down on the river south of us. It took three days for each trip they made.

Mr. Alkire used to walk to Sutton or Geneva for necessities. He took a grain sack. We had horses, but he let them rest and he made trips on foot. The children did not see much of town only at Christmas time, Fourth of July, or some such time.

In busy summertime they walked two miles to Sunday School, and later "Free Will Baptist" had services at a schoolhouse. The Alkires were always steadfast Christians and always strict with the children. There were three schoolhouses within two miles. When they needed shoes, Mr. Alkire got some twigs of lilac or something, measured the size by fitting one just as long as the old shoe, then another a little longer, which was taken for shoe size.

I remember the snowstorm of 1888 quite well. For some reason the folks would not let me go to school that day, but my two brothers, Jim and Frank, went. They had to face that storm for two miles home; but they arrived safely, with only frosted ears. After the storm, the drifts were almost like rock in our yard. All our wagons with side boards and our windlass well had to be tunneled out, with a bare space close to the house. I remember how I enjoyed hauling my brother Walter on his sled. He was two years old at this time.

I can remember how well off we felt when we got a pump to pump water instead of using a windlass well. I can remember how the men folks pumped water for horses and 20 head of cattle.

The Joseph Alkires lived on the NW ¼ of Sec. 4, T6N, R4W, Momence. They had 10 children (two of whom died in infancy). There were five older and four younger than myself.

— Agnes (Alkire) Smock

C. N. Broderson was born on November 12, 1834, in Schleswigz Hulstein, then a part of Denmark but later part of Germany. In the old country, he took military training and fought in the war between Denmark and Germany (1866). He was a cooper by trade, and followed this trade until he came to Nebraska. As a young man, he had many and varied occupations, including those of sailor and whaler. On one whaling trip he visited Greenland, of which he reported that it was so cold that when he spat, the spit would freeze into ice before hitting the ground. He came here in the fall of



Photo from Mrs. Pearl Everts Mr. and Mrs. C. N. Broderson in 1912

1885 and bought his land, the SE ¼ of Sec. 28 in Momence township, of a man named Tower. Several of his first children died when quite young; two of them are buried on the place he farmed. His surviving children were Mrs. Jacob Frantz, Christian M., Lewis P., and Henry J. The first three are deceased, but Dr. Henry J. Broderson lives in Menlo Park, California. Mr. Broderson passed away in 1918 at the age of 84.

Miles Brotherton was born in New York State in 1840. He fought in the War of the Rebellion on the side of the Union, serving from the beginning to the end of the war, and was with General W. T. Sherman on his famous "March to the Sea." He was married to Louisa MacBeth in 1868. To this union were born five children: May, James, Ed, Edith, and Anna.

Mr. Brotherton came to Fillmore County in 1871 and homesteaded in Sec. 4 of Momence township. He went through many typical experiences of the early settlers of the county. He experienced not only the blizzard of 1888 but also that of 1873. In 1873, Mr. Brotherton and another man named Russel Ferguson, leaving the women at home, had gone to Davenport and were caught in that fearful storm. They had to make their way home afterward through heavy drifts and difficult roads. In the next year (1874), they suffered from the grasshoppers which ate every green thing, and also ate the end out of an old cultivator tongue, because it had some particles of sweat on it from the horses which had been hitched to it.

Mr. Brotherton lived in a sod house for many years, and his older children were born in it. He lived on this farm all his life until he passed away on February 7, 1925.



Photo from John Carl Mr. and Mrs. Peter Carl about 1889

Peter Carl was born in Sinz, Rhein Province, Germany, on July 31, 1864. He was married on March 28, 1889, to Anna M. Nittler in Sinz. They came to America for their honeymoon and settled in Momence township. They lived in Nebraska all their married life except for one year spent in California. Mr. and Mrs. Carl retired from the farm in 1925 and made their home in Geneva. Mrs. Carl passed away in 1940 and Mr. Carl in 1956. They were the parents of 10 children. Two sons passed away in infancy. The other children were: John M., of Geneva; Otto M., of Sutton; Adolph A., of Omaha; Frank P., of Turlock, California; Mrs. Helen Dirkson, of North Hollywood, California; Cecilia (Mrs. William Kenny), of Savannah, Missouri; Mrs. Frances Donn, of Westville, Indiana; and Ann (Mrs. Le Ray Shickly), of Van Nuys, California.

William Fenske and his wife Amelia came to the United States in 1867 with their three sons, Otto, Emil, and William, from the province of Brandenburg, Germany, when William was six years old. They lived for a short time near Martland and for a year near Superior, and then bought a farm in

Momence township.

The younger William Fenske married Caroline Simmons in 1901. They had one son, Leonard; but, shortly thereafter, Caroline Fenske passed away. In 1914, William married Christine Burmeister of Grafton. To this union were born three daughters: Beatrice (Mrs. Reuben Burbach), Gretchen (Mrs. Albert Heidtbrink), and Doris (Mrs. Leslie Miles of Fairmont). All three daughters followed their mother's profession of teacher.

In 1920, the Fenskes moved to Sutton, but William Fenske and his son Leonard still farmed the home place, where Leonard still lives in 1967. For many years William was employed as a mechanic by the late William Sheridan and sons of Sutton. It was said that William could fix anything from a lady's tiny watch to a large locomotive, and that "where others failed, Billy succeeded." William Fenske died October 28, 1960.



Photo from Mrs. William Fenske Mr. and Mrs. William Fenske on their 40th wedding anniversary (Sept. 8, 1954).

Claus Franzen came to Momence township in the fall of 1877. He purchased 80 acres, the W ½ of the SE ¼ of Sec. 2, for \$350. His son, Henry Franzen, was born on December 27 of that year. Claus returned to Vermont, Illinois, where he lived for 2 years. On coming back to Fillmore County, he bought back the same piece of land for \$700. He took an active part in organizing and founding the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sec. 24 and also in organizing the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sec. 1. He was also active in many civic duties and affairs of the township.

Peter Gergen was brought to America by his parents when he was about two years old. At the age of 20, he enlisted in the Union Army. He went through many skirmishes but suffered no more damage than a bullet hole in the end of his coat. After the Civil War he was honorably discharged; as a veteran, he was entitled to a pension, which he declined.

A few years later, he married Mary Lorge, in Wisconsin. To this union were born seven children: Nick, Mary, J. P. ("Champy"), Barbara, Joe, Mike, and Willie. The family came to Fillmore County in 1875 and located on the E 1/2 of the NE 1/4 of Sec. 28, Momence township, where they lived in a dugout for two years. He later acquired more land, the W 1/2



Photo from Norbert Gergen The Peter Gergen family about 1888. Front row, left to right: Dulcissima, Mrs. Gergen with William (on lap), Peter Gergen, Mike and Joe. Back row: Mary Gergen (Engelbert), Nick, and John P. Gergen.

of the W ½ of Sec. 13, where he built a home. In 1879, he and his brother-in-law, John Marson, built the first Catholic church (St. Mary's). Later, in 1892, a larger edifice was built, in which he was also much interested.

Mark Hatcliff, born in England, married Jennie Christian of Crete, Nebraska. They settled on a farm in Momence township in 1897. Their children were three boys - Oscar, Lester, and Arthur — and four girls — Hattie, Alice, Elsie, and Florence. All the children attended school in District 60. None other than Hatcliffs have owned or lived on their farm in Sec. 7, which they have occupied continuously. Mr. Hatcliff passed away in 1931 and Mrs. Hatcliff in 1951. Lester and Arthur "batch" and live on the home place, which they farm and keep in neat repair.



Photo from Mrs. Ed Isley

The Mark Hatcliff family (Jan. 30, 1925). Front row, left to right: Lester, Mark Hatcliff, Jennie Hatcliff, Arthur. Back row: Florence, Oscar, Alice, Hattie, Elsie,

John Hokom was born in Sweden in 1839. He got only a meager education in the public schools, was confirmed in the Lutheran Church of Sweden at 15, and served for two years in the Swedish army. In the hope of bettering his financial condition, he emigrated to America at the age of 29. On landing in New York, he went at once to Knox County, Illinois. Later he spent a short time in Wisconsin but returned to Knox County, where he spent six years in farming, at first working for others by the month. While living there, Mr. Hokom was married to Olivia Anderson in 1872; they had five children: Martin, Henry, Hattie, John, and Ida.

On leaving Galesburg (Knox County), he came directly to Fillmore County. In Bryant township, he purchased 160 acres south of Shickley for \$6 an acre; but the family had to endure many hardships during their early residence here, and he at one time offered to trade the entire tract for a horse, as he had become very discouraged. However, a year later he sold this place for \$1,800. In 1883, he bought his farm of 240 acres in Sec. 19, Momence township for \$3,200. In time, this became one of the show places of the locality; all the improvements on it were put there by himself and his family.

John Katheiser, Sr., was born in Luxemburg on August 19, 1883. His mother had been born on the border between Luxemburg and Germany. He came to the United States shortly before the Civil War and served for three years in the Union army. Besides being in many battles, he was in the big explosion at Memphis and was in the hospital there for more than a year. He was in the battle of Mobile, August 5, 1864, where his regiment was so far wiped out that only 13 men survived. Here, too, he underwent his worst military hardships because supplies were cut off and for three days they had only a few crackers and a little water until help came. His brother Nick, who also fought in the Civil War, died in it.

After getting out of the army, he went back to Luxemburg and married Katherine Steiner. This union later produced eight children, six boys and two girls: William, Peter, Annie, Anthony, John, Jake, Mike, and Mary. Shortly after their marriage, they came to the United States on a ship that

took 90 days in crossing the Atlantic.

They settled for a few years in Lockport, Illinois, where his two brothers were; their three older children were born there. On coming to Nebraska, they bought railroad land in Sec. 11, Momence township. Here Mr. Katheiser built a frame house, 12' x 16'; in the same year, he built a sod house onto the frame house and plastered the entire house. He farmed with a team of oxen the first year. He was justice of the peace and also kept the post office (known as Turkey Creek P. O.) in their home. He hired a teacher and had a three-month school for the surrounding families. The mail was brought from Fairmont on horseback twice a month. Their hardships and troubles were many and various. At one time they ran out of flour to bake bread. Not being able to drive the oxen the 18 miles to Fairmont, he took a basket of eggs and a roll of butter, walked to Fairmont, and returned with a 50-pound sack of flour on his back. Their best way of getting flour in those days was for the neighbors to go together and take a load of wheat to the Fillmore Mill north of Grafton and come back with a load of flour to divide up among them.

John Katheiser died on December 8, 1900.



Photo from Elvin Krause Albert and Emma Krause in 1946

Albert Carl Krause, son of Henry and Louise Krause, was born in Germany on December 13, 1868. When he was six months old, his parents brought him to America; they settled in Henry County, Illinois. In 1872, they came to Nebraska and homesteaded in the western part of Fillmore County near Shickley (NW 1/4, Sec. 30, T6, R4W), where Albert grew up.

On September 26, 1895, he married Margaret Schnuerle. To this union were born three children, Ed, George, and Sophia. Mrs. Krause passed away on October 22, 1902, leaving Mr. Krause with three small children. He married Emma Rachow on June 17, 1903. They had four children: Clarence, Emil, Hilda, and Elvin. Mr. and Mrs. Krause continued to live northwest of Shickley for many years while their children grew to adulthood. While he continued his farming operations, he also served the community in various township offices which he performed faithfully and with exactness.

Mr. Krause was baptized and confirmed in the faith of the Zion Lutheran Church when but a young man. In 1928, Mr. and Mrs. Krause moved from the farm to Geneva, where they made their home until his passing on July 22, 1951.



Photo from Mrs. Sylvia Stoldorf The J. J. Lightbody family (some time before 1891). Front row, right to left: J. J. Lightbody, wife Lovina, Lizzie. Back row, left to right: Isaac, Charles, Anna.

J. J. Lightbody was born on January 3, 1849, at Plainfield, Coshocton County, Ohio. After marrying Lovina M. Saylor on July 29, 1869, he moved in 1869 to Iowa, where they lived for a year. In 1871, they homesteaded on Sec. 1, Momence township, and had a piece of land across the road in Stanton township. At first they lived in a sod house in Stanton, while he built a frame house in Momence, to which they later moved. They had five children: Lizzie, Annie, Charles, Isaac, and a girl who died in infancy.

By hard work and by such sacrifices as those of many other pioneers, he accumulated a substantial amount of property and at the time of his death (April 12, 1874) was one of the largest landholders in Fillmore County. He truly saw the whole change from barren prairies to fertile fields dotted with villages and cities. Besides his extensive farming operations, he built several homes and brick buildings in the west side of Geneva. He was always generous and kind, as well as keen and alert and ready to assist in any way toward the

betterment of his community and his town.

John Mansfield was born in Sweden on February 4, 1829. Educated in the Swedish public schools and confirmed in the Lutheran Church, he served in the Swedish army for 26 years. At the age of 23, he was married to Sarah Johnson; they had 10 children, all born in Sweden, but only five then living were brought to America: William, Annie, Elsie, Julius, and Emil. In 1879, at the age of 50, Mr. Mansfield emigrated to America. After landing in New York City, they went to Portland, Connecticut, and then later to Omaha, where they lived for two and a half years before coming to Fillmore County in the spring of 1883. The year before, he had purchased 160 acres in Momence township, Sec. 19, for \$1,200; when he came, the land was entirely unimproved. Although he had but \$1.50 when he located upon the place, he prospered from year to year and was able to lay aside business cares and enjoy the fruits of his toil. He served for 10 years as school treasurer in his district. He died on November 20, 1911.

David Myers (William D. Myers) was another old settler of Momence township and, like Miles Brotherton, had fought for the Union in the Civil War. He may have been with General Sherman on his march "from Atlanta to the sea"; but little is known of this old soldier. After the war, he traveled as far west as Colorado before homesteading on the SE ¼ of Sec. 18 in Momence. He made a gift of one acre in the SW corner of his homestead for a burial ground, known as Fairview Cemetery. David Myers, his wife, and three children — Annie, Irvin, and Charlie — are all buried there.

Born in the East on January 1, 1845, he died in Fillmore County on May 9, 1915.

The following account of John Portwood was written by

his daughter, Mrs. Eva Portwood Dodge:

I have been asked to write all I know about my father John Portwood's father's family, also John Portwood's own family, and the District 50 school, called the Sodtown school, and how it got its name.

To start with, my father, John Portwood, was born in Troy, Indiana, in the year 1862, the oldest in his family. When John was a boy of 12, in 1874, his father's family, together with two other families, came to Fillmore County to take homestead claims. One of those families was Mr. and Mrs. Amos Taylor, John's aunt and uncle (SW 1/4, Sec. 28, T6N, R4W). I don't know the other family's name. They came by covered wagons and oxen teams. I think most of those homesteaders built sod houses and lived in them many years and later built frame houses. Soon many more families came and settled in the Sodtown district. These people came from several different states and all took homesteads, so of course there had to be a schoolhouse built.

There were four families (Joe and Ambrose Parish, Edwin TePier, and Alex McManus) living on homesteads 1/4 mile S of this schoolhouse. Each built a sod house on their own quarter section of land, making all four sod houses right close together like a small town. They dug a bored well, and all used the same well, drawing the water by bucket, thus giving this District 50 school the name of Sodtown. My grandfather Portwood's family were all sent to the Sodtown school, together with the other families that had taken homesteads. The names of a few living close by were Minnesota Carlson, Olaf Berquist, Gene Jackman, August Bengston, Oliver Warthen, the Post brothers, and Ambrose and Jim Parish (SE 1/4, Sec. 32, T6, R4 and NW 1/4, Sec. 32). The Post brothers (NW ¼, Sec. 20, T6, R4 and NE ¼, Sec. 20) set out a tree claim of about 80 acres. I well remember those trees. Those early pioneer homesteaders met with many hardships in those days.

Their closest doctor was Dr. Charles Snowden of Davenport. They had to prepare their eats to last nearly a week and also for their oxen teams and go to the South Blue River and cut down trees for their winter fuel. They hauled the wood by taking off their wagon boxes and loading the wood on the running gears of their wagons. I remember my father saying that while on one of those trips for wood, together with some of their neighbors, there was a total eclipse of the sun. It became as dark as night in the middle of the afternoon. This lasted about one hour, then began to pass off and looked like dawn. The roosters all began crowing just like at dawn today.

To continue my story: All this homestead land was soon taken up. One man by the name of Isaac Frey, and his son Elam Frey and a granddaughter, Hattie Herbold, took a homestead a few miles west of my grandfather's homestead, the Portwood place. This Frey family was from Erie, Pennsylvania. In the year 1886, my father, John Portwood, and Hattie Herbold were married and built a house and barn and lived a short time on the corner of his uncle's (Captain George Anderson's) place. During this time, I was born. I wasn't quite a year old at the time of the bad blizzard of 1888 which I heard my folks and many of the old-timers tell about. During the fall of '88, my folks and I and my great-grandfather, Isaac Frey, went to the state of Arkansas to buy land, going by covered wagons, driving horses. They located near a town called Rosebud, a small town. They had lots of hard work clearing trees, stumps, and rocks from their land. There were many nice things there, nice warm climate, nice neighbors, lots of all kinds of fruit and lots of wild game, such as wild turkeys, deer, wild dogs, squirrels, coon, and opossum.

Most of our friends in Arkansas were very religious people, going to church on Sunday and having what they called "Singing School" one evening during the week, everyone learning to sing the hymns by rote. In early fall every year they would all attend a large camp meeting that lasted two weeks. We would call it a convention today. My folks and their neighbors would cook and bake up a lot of food and stay for several days, driving there by horses and wagons. Lots of ministers and folks would attend this big camp meeting for miles around, hearing many good sermons and joining in singing the old-time hymns.

The John Portwood family only lived in Arkansas four years and then decided to go back to Nebraska, as there was beginning to be so much malaria fever there. My folks wanted to get back to Nebraska before we got it. On our way back my sister next to me got the malaria when they had gotten as near as Goodwin, Kansas. They rented a house and had a doctor every day, but they couldn't save her. She died. I was five years old when we came back to Nebraska. A few things I remember about Arkansas, the most outstanding being their nice fields of cotton, and going along with my daddy when he was picking his cotton.

After coming back to Nebraska, my father worked at anything he could get to do and soon rented his uncle's (Captain George Anderson's) farm just 1/4 mile E from the Sodtown schoolhouse. Mr. and Mrs. Anderson retired and moved to Shickley. On this rented farm most of John Portwood's family was born and went to the Sodtown school. In 1901, my folks bought and moved to a farm 1½ miles E of the Anderson place, and there the family finished growing up, and all married. Mr. and Mrs. Portwood continued living on this farm until they died. Mother died in May, 1929, and Father the same year, in November, 1929.

At the homestead place, one mile S and 1/2 mile E of the Portwood place, known as the Price place and post office, the mail was brought once a week by horseback, star route, from Fairmont. Everyone from far around came there for their mail. I imagine this was in the 1870's, before there was a Shickley.

Warren J. Post was born in Vermont, where his parents farmed, on March 14, 1853. The family later moved to Illinois, where they continued farming until they moved to Nebraska in 1874 and took up homesteads in Sec. 20 of Momence township. For about nine years they lived in a sod house and underwent all the privations and hardships incident to life on the frontier. Their crops were destroyed sometimes by grasshoppers, sometimes by drought and hail, which caused hard times. By strict economy and untiring labor, they overcame all obstacles, and success at length crowned their efforts. Their nearest market was Sutton, 13 miles away; Geneva was just starting, and Shickley was not yet thought of.

The following "Reminiscences of Nebraska Pioneer

Days" were supplied by Warren J. Post in 1899:

My parents were born in Vermont. After they were married they moved to Green County, Illinois, in 1856. They went to a farm that was nearly all timber. They cleared the ground in order to raise a crop. The second year the army worm destroyed all the small grain. They stayed there four years. Then they moved to Woodford County, Illinois, and bought a farm, all prairie. The estate of my grandfather was not settled until the war broke out. Then the administrator enlisted and was killed. His bond was worthless and everything was then lost. So in September of 1873 we emigrated to Nebraska. It took five long weeks. We landed in Beatrice which was then a small town but lively all the same. When we came on our land, father and I had \$4.60 between us. We put in 10 acres of wheat and 25 acres of corn. The grasshoppers ate up the corn and I heard at the time that the neighbors lost some of their plowshares and grindstones, but ours were covered up and we did not lose them. We got our fuel from the South Blue River. Had 20 miles to haul it.

In the autum of 1874, L. D. Phillips, P. L. Lancaster, and myself went buffalo hunting, as neither we nor any of the neighbors had any meat of any kind and no money to buy any. We started from home with 2 wagons and 8 large barrels for the meat. We went by way of Hastings, a town of only about 20 houses at that time, and from there to Kearney. It contained about 100 houses and was a pretty tough place. There were Mexicans and cowboys. They ran the town almost as they pleased. We stayed there two days and bought our supplies. There was a man killed while we were there.

Next we went to North Platte. It was a very lively town, too. We got 2 antelope while crossing the Platte valley. We went south to the Republican River. In crossing the river, we got mired down in quicksand. We had to unload and carry everything out. The water was 31/2 feet deep. There was a gentle Nebraska breeze blowing from the north, and so we had to build a fire and dry our clothes. We started on to the Red Willow. Then our eyes began to get larger, for we could see herds of buffalo in all directions. We camped on Red Willow at noon. We were very anxious for some buffalo meat,

so after dinner we started moving out to see what we could do with them. They looked like sod houses moving towards us. We agreed to kill only animals one and two years old, so we would have nice, tender meat. We got 2 that afternoon. While going to camp, we got one wolf and one wildcat. To make a long story short, we got our barrels filled with nice, tender meat. I killed my first buffalo with my first shot. I have some very nice buffalo horns now and think a great deal of them as old relics. We were with the buffaloes two weeks.

Just one mile from camp there was an Indian buried in a tree. It was wrapped in a blanket and was laid on poles laid across the limbs of the tree. Articles such as beads and wristlets were also with it. All rivers and small streams were full of beaver and otter. There were many elk, deer, antelope, and wolves. We saw herds of buffalo that were 3 miles long and from ½ mile to 2 miles wide. We thought at the time there were 30,000 head in some herds. This may seem large, but it is all true. We killed 40 buffaloes, 4 elk, several deer and antelope. We saw where Indians had killed from 25 to 100 buffaloes in one place that did not even cover 15 acres of ground. We got arrows that laid where the remains were left.

Remember, we spent all our money at Kearney to buy our supplies. So when we started back we didn't have any flour or tobacco when we reached Kearney. We had to hunt antelope and sell them to get provisions. It was straight meat three times a day for one week. Next, we concluded to ship our barrels of meat home from Kearney to Edgar. Father and the neighbors went and got it. They were very much pleased. Each barrel weighed over 400 pounds. We stayed in Kearney for two weeks and sold \$40 worth of antelope and deer. We came home when winter had commenced. That winter was a hard one. My brother Harvey and myself killed 80 jack rabbits that winter. We shipped them to Omaha and got as much as 50 cents apiece for them. Then I went to Illinois and worked until it was time for me to be back on the homestead.

In 1938, Harvey Post set up a trust fund of \$1,000 in the First National Bank of Greencastle, Pennsylvania, the interest to be used by the Fairview Cemetery Board for upkeep of the cemetery. Harvey Post died at Greencastle in 1948.

The parents of Warren J. Post and Harvey Post and their granddaughter Savilla Post sleep in Fairview Cemetery, Momence township.

Lewis Pratt came from Taylor County, Iowa, to Fillmore County in 1884 and purchased a relinquishment of a timber claim from John and Tom Ackland, in Sec. 4 of Momence township. He was married in Taylor County in 1880; he and his wife had 3 girls, Sylvia, Winifred, and Elva. He decided that the best way he could help them through life would be to give them an education, in spite of the fact that they had to go a long distance to school. Sylvia, the eldest, had the distinction of being the first girl in the county to take the eighth-grade examinations. A good part of the time, they had 9 miles to drive to school. Sylvia graduated from the Shickley High School in 1902 and taught school for 3 years in District 63 (Mann school), one in District 50 (Sodtown), and 3 months in District 44 in Milligan, Mr. Pratt farmed all his life. He passed away in February, 1908, at the age of 57.

John W. Price was, in all probability, the first settler in Momence township. He was born in Ontario County, New York, in 1831, of Irish and Welsh parents. His parents took him back to Europe with them, but returned to America in 1845 and lived in Ohio. He enlisted in the U. S. Army and was sent to Texas, where he was promoted to sergeant and spent 3 years skirmishing in the region. He was then sent to Florida on an expedition against the Seminole Indians. He was mustered out in May, 1858, but re-enlisted on the breaking out of the War of the Rebellion. He took part in the battles of Perryville, Corinth, Stone River, Hoover's Gap, Chickamauga, and Mission Ridge, and was discharged on the expiration of his enlistment, August 14, 1864. In 1866, he married Orinda M. Barrows of Madison County, Ohio. They moved to Iroquois County, Illinois, where they farmed until they came to Nebraska and located in Fillmore County on

April 18, 1872, on Sec. 3, Momence township.

A native of Sweden, Charles Sanburg was born on February 21, 1845, and at 15 was confirmed in the Swedish Lutheran Church. For 12 years he worked for a farmer in Sweden at a wage of \$9 a month, and served 2 years in the Swedish army. He married Edith Peterson in 1873. Eight children were born to this union: Carl (who married Mollie Spurling), Emma (wife of August Pearson), Anna, Ella, Oscar, Minnie, Grant, and Lena. The family came to Fillmore County in 1885 and purchased 160 acres in Momence township, Sec. 17, for \$2,600 and an adjoining tract for \$1,600. He was interested in raising stock of various kinds. He also served as justice of the peace for 2 terms and as school director for 13 years. He and his family belonged to the Swedish Lutheran Church of Stockholm. He died on October 29, 1916.



Photo from Mrs. Henry Reinsch The John Bernard Schommer family in 1922. Back row, left to right: Ben, Joe, John, Bill, Tony. Front row: Mary, Rose, Maggie, Angela, Annie. Inset: Mr. and Mrs. John Schommer.

John B. Schommer was born north of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His wife, Katherine, was also born in that vicinity. They were married on May 1, 1877, at Holy Cross, Wisconsin, 30 miles south of Milwaukee. Thirteen children were born to this union: Casper, John, Joe, Katherine, Mary, Margaret, Ben, Jake, Annie, Rose, William, Anthony, and Angela. All were born in February except Casper, the oldest.

The Schommers came to Nebraska in the spring of 1878. When they arrived at Fairmont, a neighbor met them with a team and wagon. Because there were no roads, they drove across the prairie. As they crossed Turkey Creek, the water was so high that the horses started to swim and the wagon box started to float off the bolsters, so that the men had to hold it down. Mother often said that she was really afraid they would drown. It was quite an experience for her.

Mr. Schommer pre-empted the SE ¼ of Sec. 12 in Momence township in 1878. Later, John Gergen, a brother of Peter Gergen, took up the NE ¼ of Sec. 12 and they built their houses with only the line fence between them, and a footpath connecting the houses. Later, in 1884, Mr. Schommer bought the SE ¼ of Sec. 13, a piece of railroad land, on which he built a 5-room house. As the family was becoming larger, they needed more room in which to live as well as more acres to farm.

Mr. Schommer was an architect and builder, and he, Peter Gergen, and John Marson built the first St. Mary's Church in 1879. The larger structure was built in 1894 and dedicated in the fall of that year. Some time later Mr. Schommer's sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Lecher, came from Wisconsin and Mr. Schommer leased an acre of land from Hans Weis, across the road south of the church, and built a general-merchandise store with living quarters in the back. The Lechers ran the store. Then the post office, known as the Turkey Creek P. O., which had been in the Katheiser home, was moved to this store.

About this same time, the Chicago & Northwestern R.R. had planned to run through Fillmore County and had surveyed and set stakes past the Turkey Creek Church. It was expected that a station might be established there and that

a town might grow around it; but for some reason the line was changed and built 4 miles to the east, through Martland and Shickley instead.

Schommer and Lecher sold the store to John Arendt of Le Mars, Iowa. Then John P. Thoma came from Le Mars and the two formed a partnership. The store was moved to Shickley and became known as the Thoma & Arendt store.

Mr. Schommer experienced the hardships and anxieties incident to pioneer life. One October morning he set out for Kansas to get his wood for the winter. When he woke up the next morning, it was snowing, and so he hurried back lest he be caught in a blizzard. In the meantime his wife and children spent many anxious hours praying and awaiting his return. Also, in those days, in case of sickness they had to go a long way for a doctor, and the trip had to be made by team.

In 1887, Mr. Schommer and his family moved to Humphrey, Nebraska, where his children had the advantage of a nine-month school. While there, Mr. Schommer built a number of large churches and schools in Platte and near-by counties. With the depression of the nineties, he came back to Fillmore County and shared with his fellow pioneers there the rough times of blizzards, hail, and grasshoppers.

- Mary (Schommer) Katheiser



Mr. and Mrs. August Stoldorf at their golden wedding celebration (1929).

August Stoldorf was born in Germany in 1856 and came to America in 1865. He had no schooling and was a self-educated as well as self-made man. He married Minnie Goesch on December 18, 1879, a native of Germany who had been confirmed in the Lutheran Church there; her husband was confirmed in this country. He rented land for some time in Bennett township before buying land in Momence, in Sec. 8. Mr. and Mrs. Stoldorf had seven children: John, Annie, Will, Lena, Emma, Louis, and Mary. He passed away on August 9, 1934.

Giles Thomas, son of William Paul and Margaret Thomas, was born in Cass County, Indiana, on December 16, 1840. He and his twin brother Sam were the oldest of a family of 10 children. He enlisted in the Union army at Logansport on August 12, 1862, and served as a corporal in Co. K, 99th Indiana Infantry, and in the 20th Company, 2nd Battalion, Veteran Reserve Corps. As color guard of his regiment, he was wounded on July 24, 1864, at Atlanta, Georgia, when the colors were shot from his hands. The staff was cut in two and the bullet entered his right hand. He was honorably discharged on November 14, 1865. He came to Nebraska in 1872 and underwent both the hardships and the joys of the pioneer. He passed away at his home in Geneva on February 16, 1929, at the age of 88 years and 2 months.

— Nellie and Annie Sheridan

Heinrich Vauck was born on December 8, 1835, in Mecklenburg, Germany, and arrived in the United States on May 22, 1867. After living for several years in east-central Illinois, he came to Momence township in 1873 and timber-claimed the NE ¼ of Sec. 18. His wife, Ernestine Lange, was born near Stettin, Germany, on June 16, 1847. They were married on January 21, 1875, and had two sons. One son, Henry, grew to manhood and lived in Sutton. Heinrich Vauck died on July 14, 1883, and his wife on February 17,

1898. They and the oldest son, August, are buried in Fairview Cemetery.

— Henry Vauch

Henry Vauck, son of Mr. and Mrs. Heinrich Vauck, was born on November 22, 1876, in Momence township, thus gaining the distinction of being one of the first children born there. While yet a small boy, he had an accident which seriously crippled him. But in spite of his handicap he had the grit and determination to make the best of life.

He entered the ninth grade of Sutton High School in 1892, taught a two-month term in 1894, and graduated from Sutton's 12th grade in 1895. After teaching another year, he attended the Rohrbaugh Business College in Omaha until October, 1897. He then taught in the rural schools of Fillmore and adjoining counties for four years. As a teacher, he won the love and admiration of his pupils, their parents, and the school patrons, and was soon called upon to assume greater responsibilities. He taught one year in Shickley, attended the Peru Normal School, and was elected county superintendent of Fillmore County in 1904, a position which he held until 1910.

Henry Vauck married Alice Oakley on March 12, 1902. To this union were born four children: Edward L., Earl A., Burnett E., and Bernice E. (Mrs. Orren L. Graves). The oldest son, Edward, became an expert for the Nebraska State Railway Commission; the second, Earl, a farmer near Sutton; and the third, Burnett, superintendent of schools at Duncan. The daughter's husband became a member of the police force at Lincoln. All four children were graduated from Sutton High School and all attended the University of Nebraska.

Henry Vauck became county judge of Clay County on January 3, 1929, and served in this position with marked ability for 12 years. He also had the honor and distinction of serving as postmaster of the Nebraska Legislature in 1941.

In 1938 he published a book called *Blizzards*, commemorating the blizzard of January 12, 1888, and the reunion at Fairview School (District 60) in Fillmore County, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the blizzard, a reunion of the pupils and teacher who had seen that terrible day. This celebration and reunion soon grew to greater proportions than first anticipated, and extra arrangements had to be made to accommodate the crowd. The anniversary proved to be a fair day instead of foul, and the many and varied reminiscences of past experience brought a good deal of cheer to all those present.

Henry Vauck and his wife Alice were killed in an automobile-train collision at a railroad crossing in Sutton on November 11, 1957.

Peter Weis, Sr., born in 1811, came with his wife, Katherine (Smith) Weis, and their children, from Burmeingen, Luxemburg, to America in 1867. They first located in Lasalle County, Illinois, where they farmed until 1871, when they came to Fillmore County. Here they homesteaded the SW ¼ of Sec. 14 in Momence township, and lived for their first two years in a dugout. He prospered by hard work and the diligence of his sons, and was able to assist each of them in setting up their own farms. He died on March 28, 1891.

John Weis, Sr., a son of Peter Weis, Sr., was born in Burmeingen on March 15, 1846, and came to America and Nebraska with his parents. His wife, Helen Magdalen Frick, was born in Belgium, Wisconsin, March 19, 1856. They were united in marriage on February 12, 1878, at Lake Church, Belgium, Wisconsin. To this union were born eight children: Kate, John, Nick, Clara, Peter, Joe, Ann. and Leo.

Like many of the early settlers, John Weis made his way by many years of hard work, patience, perseverance, and sacrifice. He became one of the largest landholders of Fillmore County. At some time before acquiring these lands, he went to Kansas and purchased 200 head of cattle which were driven on the hoof to Nebraska, where they were later divided up amongst himself and his three brothers.

John Weis also conducted a general-merchandise store just south of St. Mary's Church for several years. In 1910, he moved into Geneva to spend his declining years, and died there on February 20, 1929.



Photo from Reno Weis Mr. and Mrs. Peter Weis, Sr. (about 1885)

John J. (Hans) Weis, another son of Peter Weis, Sr., was born in Luxemburg in 1847. Coming to Nebraska with his parents in 1871, he homesteaded the SE ¼ of Sec. 14. He was married to Elizabeth Mertz in Holy Cross, Wisconsin, in 1878. To this union were born four children: Mary, Lena, John, and Nick. He died here in 1925.

Jacob Weis, another son of Peter Weis, Sr., was born in Luxemburg on August 11, 1856. Jacob was about 15 years old when he came to Fillmore County. After his arrival in Nebraska, he worked on the railroad for two years, assisting in the construction of the main line of the Burlington and also the branch line from Crete to Beatrice. He later purchased 160 acres in Sec. 14 of Momence township and, by earnest farming, became one of the well-to-do in the county.

Jacob Weis married Clara Sampont on March 24, 1881. To this union were born six children: Anna, Rosa, Agnes, Walter and Florence (twins), and Reno. In the fall of 1897, he was nominated by the Democratic party for county treasurer and was endorsed by the Populists. He won the election by a majority of 250 votes.

Peter D. Weis, another son of Peter Weis, Sr., was born in Luxemburg on October 5, 1859. When he came to America he was a lad of eight years. He assisted his father on the homestead, improving and cultivating the land for 11 years. Then his father gave him 160 acres and he began farming on his own account. For seven years he and his brother Jacob worked together in the operation of their farms.

On January 7, 1899, he was united in marriage with Susan Sampont. They became the parents of five children: Charles J., Arthur, Lawrence, Peter, and Cordilla (or Cordelia). Both were devoted members of the Catholic Church, Mr. Weis having been confirmed at Sutton, Nebraska, and his wife at Port Washington, Wisconsin. Peter Weis devoted himself to farming for about nine years after his marriage. He then moved into Geneva and engaged in the livery business. He passed away on January 29, 1948.

Robert Weber came to Fillmore County in 1871 and homesteaded the NE ¼ of Sec. 22, Momence township. He married Kate Weis, a sister of the Weis brothers. Their children were Katherine, John, Nick, Peter, Jake, Clara, and Emma.

The Alfred Yetman family came to Momence township about the year 1889 and settled on the SE ¼ of Sec. 5, T6, R4W. At an early age, Mr. Yetman passed away, leaving a widow and two fatherless sons. With their aid, Mrs. Yetman managed to keep and run the family farm. Living about equally distant from Geneva and Sutton, they chose Sutton as their school and church and market town. Neither winter's cold nor summer's heat could keep them from attending Mass on Sundays; they traveled the 10 miles by horse and buggy

Grown to manhood, Bert Yetman married Mayme Burns and settled on a farm in Sec. 4, ½ mile east of the home place. There their five children were born. Leo and Robert married and settled in California. Mary married Vincent McLaughlin of Geneva. Kathryn (Mrs. Edgar Nunns) lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Eileen (Mrs. Charles Witt) lives near Hastings, Nebraska. Like his father, Bert passed away at an early age, but the family remained on the farm until the children were grown.

Frank Yetman married Minnie Schneider of Geneva, and until his mother's death he and his family lived with her on the home place. Hard times and crop failures caused them to give up farming and move to Hastings, where for many years Frank served as a police officer. Most of his children and his wife still live there. Mrs. Bert Yetman and one of her daughters, Mrs. Mary McLaughlin, live in Geneva.

It is always heartening to witness the success of men who have emigrated to America without capital and from positions of obscurity have worked their way upward to prosperity, even to wealth. Such a man was John Zimmerman, who became one of the most prosperous farmers of Fillmore County, owner of 640 acres in Momence township.

Photo from Mrs. Mary McLaughlin Mrs. Alfred Yetman



John Zimmerman was born in Bindsuchsen Kreis Büdingen, Hessen Darmstadt, Germany, on December 7, 1829, a son of John C. and Margaret (Schwab) Zimmerman. He was the youngest of their 11 children. Left an orphan at an early age, he was forced to earn his own living, and at the age of 14 he began to learn the shoemaking trade, which he followed for 18 years. He was educated in the public schools of his native land and was confirmed in the Reformed Church. At the age of 29, he married Miss Anne Mary Eifirt; to this union were born 11 children: Elizabeth, John, Henry, Emma, Samuel, Mary, Simon Philip, Sarah Eliza, Clara, Caroline, and Conrad.

Borrowing money to pay his passage, he came to America alone in 1860, on a sailing vessel which was 31 days crossing the Atlantic. He farmed on rented lands in Illinois for 13 years. In 1872, he came to Exeter, Nebraska, where he bought a few lots; but he returned to Illinois and did not locate permanently here until the following year (1873). When the family arrived in Fairmont, they lived for 2 weeks in the railway car in which their goods had been shipped; then they came to Momence township, where Mr. Zimmerman located his homestead claim of 160 acres (NW 1/4, Sec. 14, T6, R4W), for which he paid \$200. For 13 years the family lived in a sod house while he broke and improved his land, meanwhile trading in Fairmont. His crops were almost totally destroyed by grasshoppers in 1874 and again, several years later, by hailstorms. But he prospered, and in 1883 he erected a large stock barn and two years later built a good two-story residence, 30' x 24'. His farm became one of the most desirable in Momence township.

Five Swedish families came to Fillmore County in 1878 and located in Sec 36, Momence township, buying school land for \$7 an acre. Each family took a quarter section. Fritz and Axel Landberg took the NW ¼; John Gustafson the NE ¼; Frank Johnson the SE ¼; and Swan Johnson the SW ¼. Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Bowman were the parents of Mrs. Frank Johnson, and the SE ¼ was divided between these two families.

Joseph Reinsch, the second eldest son of Franz and Caroline Reinsch, was born June 13, 1851, in Neundorf, Silesia, Germany. Franz Reinsch, Joseph's father, was born in the same area on January 30, 1816, and his wife, Caroline Krueger, was born there in 1828. They had nine children. In the spring of 1869, Franz came to America, arriving in Nebraska on July 29, and made application for a homestead in Seward County near Germantown (now known as Garland).

In the fall of 1869, Joseph Reinsch and five of his brothers and sisters sailed for America and came by train to



Photo from Joe Reinsch The Joseph Reinsch family (about 1890). Back row, left to right: William, Annie, Charlie, Johnnie, Henry. Front row: Frank, Herman, Mrs. Emma Reinsch (holding baby Ernest), Emma, Joseph Reinsch, Mollie, and Emil.

Nebraska City, arriving there on November 1, 1869. They joined their father, Franz, on his Seward County homestead and lived in a dugout until they built a sod house, 20' x 28', with one window and one door.

Joseph Reinsch came to Fillmore County in 1873, selected the W ½ of Sec. 10 in Momence township, and filed his claim in Beatrice on November 5, 1873, when he was 22 years old. He married Emma Kamler in Nebraska City on April 12, 1882. They had 13 children: Emil, Anna, Frank, Charles, John, William, Henry, Herman, Amalia, Emma, Fred, Ernest, and Caroline.

During his years of proving up, Joseph walked to Nebraska City for cottonwood switches to plant a windbreak. Fillmore County records at the courthouse show that by November 3, 1877, he had built a sod house 10' x 12', with one window and one door, had plowed and cultivated 55 acres of his land, built a sod stable 10' x 16', and planted five acres of cottonwood trees for a windbreak. This homestead is now the farm property of William Reinsch, fifth son of Joseph and Emma Reinsch.

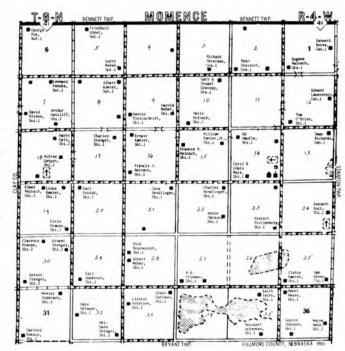
In 1905, Emil Reinsch bought a threshing rig, delivered to Shickley, for \$3,800. The separator was a 36" Avery "Yellow Fellow," with a 20 horsepower steam engine, make now unremembered. Shock-threshing season started in mid-July and lasted from 6 to 8 weeks; stack-threshing season began in mid-September and ended in December or January. A threshing day began at sunrise and ended at sundown. The charge for shock threshing was 8¢ per bushel; for stack threshing, 4¢ per bushel. Bundle pitchers were paid \$4 per day for team, rack, and man. Stack-threshing pitchers were also paid \$4 per day. At that time, No. 1 wheat sold for from 50¢ to 75¢ per bushel.

—Joe Reinsch

Photo from Joe Reinsch The Avery threshing rig purchased by Mr. Reinsch in 1910. (Notice the bundle being tossed from the hayrack.)



Photo from Mrs. N. S. Bengtson August Bengtson farm 4 miles N and 4 miles W of Shickley (taken in 1886). Left to right: August Bengtson, Nels A. Bengtson, Nellie Bengtson, Mrs. August (Hannah) Bengtson, and an unidentified woman.



Stanton Township

Stanton township is located approximately in the center of Fillmore County; its northeastern corner includes a bit of Geneva, the county seat. It was named for Edwin M. Stanton, President Lincoln's Secretary of War. It is bounded on the north by Geneva township, on the east by Chelsea, on the south by Hamilton, and on the west by Momence townships. Its northern boundary is formed by Nebraska Highway 41 and its eastern one by U.S. 81. It is crossed diagonally from its northeast to its southwest corner by the Fremont-Superior line of the Chicago & Northwestern R.R. It is also crossed from north to south by the Fairmont-Hebron line of the Burlington, which runs in a straight line down the middle of

the six eastern sections (Secs. 1 to 36), and through Geneva.

The general lay of the land is quite level. As the township has very few streams, except the south branch of Turkey Creek, which zigzags from southwest to northeast across Sec. 6, it is practically all usable farmland. The soil is a heavy loam which will raise almost all crops quite well; the principal ones are wheat, corn, oats, alfalfa, and milo. The early settlers put in a good many orchards, but for lack of subsoil moisture these are now all gone. With the coming of pump irrigation, more fruit and gardens may again be raised. By July 1, 1967, there were 77 irrigation wells in Stanton township.

Stanton Township Homestead Map

Filliam H. Powell Jesse Walker Heirs of Isaac Frank Reinsch Lightbody		Railr55 Railroad Land		Edmund Shreffler	Jeaac McBlair	3 Railroad Land		Milo William Scriven T. Barry		Calvin H. Bane	Railfoad Land	
James J. Lightbody	J. John George Marson Bowman	Railroad Land		George E. Bigelow William Huntley and McKenzie Conwell			Virgil A. Jones David Lee					
7		Cornelius M. Bowman William H. Bowman	William Roles		9 ad Land	William Burnett			Railrea	L	William H. Read	Solomon Harbaugh
7 Railread Land		John Trehka Anton Lutz		(411040 2410		Fred Adam Lyman Kirkland Webb Brunner					Jane Lemmon Isaiah Saylor, Jr.	Hiram J. Stevens
Nicholas P. Gergen	Paulus Wadman McDougal McDougal		7 d Land	16 School Land		15 Raifroad Land		J. C. Rosenburg James L. Richard Jacob Thomas Cliver C. Brown Eamis W. Stoul		13		
19 Railfoad Land		James Thompson	Charles Mau Children of Mary E. Pumphrey	Railroad Land		George W. Barber William Hulf Preston R. Snowdon William P. Friend		23 Raifroad Land		John W. Yates Peter R. Yates	Edward T. Yates Minor W. Elias Platt. Yates	
John C. Gratopp	Allison Foulk	llison Foulk Rail 29 Rail road Laed		Joseph Axtell Austin M. Baldwin		27 Raifroad Land		Davis B. Watson: Robert Shields, Jr.			Railread Land	
Francis A. Bull Fred Busse	James O. Merryman	Parkey State Control		Francis H. Beach James B. McPeck				Nuah Browhard Robert Shields, Sr.				
		Omar H. Harvey				William McPherson	Theodure D, Blackwell		Radroa	d Land	School	ham!
31-		James P. Stone Charles A. St. John		177		John Goodwid Henry C. Gronwell					Schwel Land	

The township contains four school districts. The first school was the Martland school; the other districts are Nos. 13, 46, and 47.

On Easter Sunday, April 13, 1873, the area was enveloped in a blizzard which lasted for three days. In the summer of the same year, the entire township was stripped of every green blade of grass and every green leaf by a horde of grasshoppers. In 1907, a spring cold snap caused some injury to fruit buds and other tender vegetation. The thermometer went down to 18° above zero. In 1916, the thermometer went down to -20° F., the winter's record.

Many changes have taken place in Stanton township. Today almost every home is modern, with a telephone, electricity, indoor plumbing, and all modern conveniences. The first telephones were installed in 1903. Electricity came (R.E.A.) in 1951.

Martland and Community

Nebraska in the early days was truly a wild and endless prairie, covered with buffalo grass, which billowed and waved in the western wind. Tumbleweeds and jack rabbits scurried across the plains with nothing much to stop them, as there were no fences or trees, and only a few crude "dugout" homes or "soddies."

There were drouths, hailstorms, and blizzards as well as grasshoppers to fight, and our grandparents were some of the fighters. They were some of the early settlers who came westward to stake a claim for themselves and to build homes. It was difficult to tame the prairie, but our grandparents had the stamina to do just that.

There are nowadays no reminders on Nebraska farms of the sweat and tears dropped in those first long furrows which made the virgin soil into productive farmland. One cannot forget the spirit of helpfulness that existed in a new country where the richest men had little money, and courage was the strong man's creed.

Yes, our grandparents, the early settlers in and around Martland, triumphed over drouth and pestilence. They stayed and watched the cottonwood switches they had pulled from the sandbars of the shallow, slow, winding Blue River, grow into great trees; some of them are still standing, living monuments to them. They stayed on until their acres were converted into fields of wheat, corn, and grass. The comfortable farmhouse replaced the rude dugouts and sod houses. They stayed on and helped conquer the land and build the great empire of the Middle West.

The first comers to the prairie found plenty of "buffalo chips" to use as fuel. Great herds of bison had roamed those plains for a thousand years; their offal, drying in the sun, remained as firm and hard disks for years, until, under summer rains and winter snows, they disintegrated and returned to the soil. But the settlers had plenty at first. Grandpa used to tell about gathering a wagon load and dumping it beside the sod house for fuel. Later on, cow chips were used; then, as corn crops were raised and gathered, cobs became a standby. Also, on occasion, slough grass or coarse hay was twisted into tight rolls and used as fuel. And there came a time, one year or more, when corn was so plentiful and cheap-a load of corn hauled into town would bring back not more than a couple of bushels of coal-that we used corn for fuel. Grandma used to say, "Some day the country will pay for that sin!"

In the sod house, which was easy to keep warm, a small cookstove was used.

One winter Grandpa bought some trees from a man who lived near the Blue River. He saved even the small limbs and brush in our yard, piled helter-skelter and hard to separate. The boys had to chop up armloads of it into stove-lengths for the house. I fear Grandma had to go to the brush pile herself many times to get fuel with which to cook dinner! The neighbors used to call that brush heap "Aanlam's Crow's Nest."

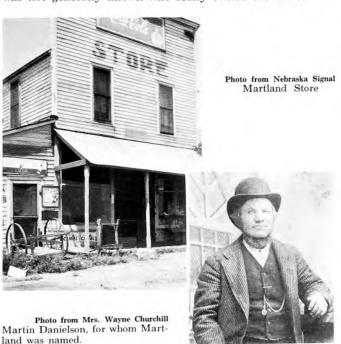
One day, I heard Grandma relate that a "Home Comfort Wrought Iron Range Company" sent a salesman from St. Louis, Missouri, out through the new country, with a demonstrator range in his light wagon. He asked for lodging for himself and team for the night. The next morning he demonstrated how strong and durable the range was, and he stressed "always a supply of water in the reservoir."

Truly, Grandma deserved that kitchen range, but the price was the drawback—\$95, which was an awful lot in those times. Easy payments were worked out, however, and in due time the new stove came by freight. It really proved to be a "Home Comfort," Grandma said, and it was a real pleasure to cook on it. That was 'way back in the 1870's. Who would have ever dreamed that nowadays we would be cooking with gas or electricity?

Martin Danielson and his wife Ellen, came to America from Sweden in 1884, and settled on a farm one mile west of Ong. Mrs. Wayne Churchill of Geneva was formerly Irene Hillgren, the daughter of Gus and Mary Van Buren Hillgren. After the death of her mother, she was adopted by her cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Hillgren. Roy's mother, Anna Danielson, was the daughter of Martin Danielson. Mrs. Charles Higginbotham, who passed away in Geneva on August 18, 1954, was also a daughter of Martin Danielson and came over to America with them. The Danielsons moved into Fillmore County and bought land northeast of Shickley.

Since it was "Mart's land," the folks who were interested in starting a little village there thought it was only right and proper to name the village "Martland"; and so that's how Martland got its name.

It was surveyed in January, 1887, by V. A. Jones. Mr. Danielson was an instigator in starting the first store there. George Bates helped build it. It was a branch store. One of the first storekeepers was John Swails, father of Lonnie (Rastus) Swails of Geneva, Rastus's earliest recollections are from 1888 or 1889. It seems that W. R. Hitch and Rathburn backed up the store, and Mr. Swails ran it for a while. Though it didn't do well financially, the store carried on. It was not generally known who really owned the store.



The John Swails family lived upstairs over the store. Pearly Swails was born there. In 1891, the Swails family moved to a farm a few miles north of Martland.

Other storekeepers who served in the store were: Bert Skinner's father and Kavan, Bert Skinner, Ashmore, George Matthewson, W. F. Dale, David Baker, Pratt Woodard, Albert Gruenhage, Ed Snodgrass, Fred Worthington, Roy Hillgren, Darold Richards, Reuben Lichti, and Bill Snowhard.

¹This section, "Martland and Community," was written by Mrs. Edgar Schelkopf.

Martland Church

The first church which served the Martland community was 1½ miles S of Martland. It was a United Brethren Church and the first pastor was Preacher Cornish, as they called them in those years.



Photo from Mrs. Wayne Churchill Martland Church in 1916. Rev. Charlton, minister, at far right, holding child.

I wonder if the hardships of the pioneers didn't draw them closer to God and keep them praying more. We all know that the closer we live to God the happier and more satisfied we are. Maybe that is why those pioneer years were called the "Good Old Years."

The John Browns lived across the road west of the church, and across the road south of Browns lived the Chris Ackers. Some of you older folks will remember these families. George, Charley, and Homer Acker were sons of the Chris Ackers. The church was moved to Martland in 1892, and placed about 20 rods west of where the former old schoolhouse stands.

Some of the later pastors from 1912 on were: Rev. Melville, Rev. J. C. Strickler, Rev. J. C. Mower, Rev. E. H. Pontius, Miss Esther Olewine, and Rev. A. B. Small.

This little church in Martland stood out for many years as a refuge and strength for those in the community; even though at times it kept us guessing as to how we could keep the expenses up, we always came out all right. The Ladies' Aid was always alive with new ambitions to keep up the interest that never seemed to lag in the Martland Church.

The Martland Church was remodeled and redecorated in 1949. On November 2, 1949, it was rededicated. The Rev. Walter Chittenden was the pastor. The Rev. W. P. Watkins, district superintendent, gave the address.

The fund for the redecorating was started when Rev. Walter Millett served the church. The "Lord's Acre" project was worked out at that time. Each person or family gave the amount that an acre would produce. The church men rented 80 acres and farmed it two years for the church. The fund continued, and building was done, while the Rev. John Reger was pastor.

It was used about two years after that. Then, as many had moved away from the community, there were only 10 families remaining who were regular attendants and could be depended upon to keep the church going. The merger of the Evangelical and the United Brethren Churches raised the salary of the student pastor beyond the amount that these 10 families could pay, along with higher benevolences. The merger of York College with the one at Le Mars, Iowa, removed local student pastors and those few families could not possibly support a full-time pastor.

This was the pressure that closed the church. The Geneva United Brethren Evangelical Church purchased the Martland Church seats and hymnals.

Later pastors of Martland were: Rev. Seth Jacobsen (1936-37); Rev. Ray Thompson (1937-39), Iowa student; Rev. Howard Hines (1939-41), Colorado student; Rev. Everett Tracy (1941-42), Nebraska student; Rev. Omar Wetherell (1942-43), Fulton, Mo., student; Rev. (Prof.) Walter G. Noll (1943-44), York College; Rev. Walter Millett (1944-47), Omaha student; Rev. John Reger (1947-49), Nebraska student; Rev. Walter Chittenden (1949-50), resident; Rev. Richard Shapland (1950-51), Nebraska student.



Photo from Mrs. Maynard Merryman Rededication of Martland E. U. B. Church, November 2, 1949

Martland Elevator

Of Martland, nothing is left standing except the elevator, still on its original plot and still serving the community, Mr. Camerman was the first manager. While there, he had some kind of fever which took all his hair and left him completely bald. Charley Conner operated the elevator in 1896. That was the year of a big corn crop, which sold at 10 and 11 cents a bushel. Some of the following manager; were Al Russell, Jim Burke (1910), Anton Posvar (1917-1927), and Fred Worthington. The present manager is Robert Hall, whose family live in the former Fred Worthington house.

The following accident story is from the Nebraska Signal for August 7, 1947:

"Tragedy struck this vicinity Saturday forenoon about 11:30, when a bin filled with wheat at the Martland elevator suddenly gave way, snuffing out the lives of three men. Those killed were Fred Worthington, Sr., proprietor of the elevator; Glenn Richards, a farmer of near Martland; and Roy Carter of Bruning. Mr. Richards and Mr. Carter had gone to the elevator to settle for wheat previously sold there.

there.

"The accident was discoverd by Virgil Steffens, who, about 10:30, had delivered a load of wheat at the elevator, then had gone on an errand. About 11:30 he returned to the Martland store about ½ mile from the elevator. He noticed wheat spilled over the driveway and out into the roadway. Accompanied by Reuben Lichti, proprietor of the store, Mr. Steffens went over to the elevator. They knew at least one man was buried in the grain as they could see the top of Mr. Richards' head.

"They hurried back to the store and called Sheriff Tobiassen and the first-aid truck of the Geneva fire department. The sheriff put in a line ring for men with scoops to come to aid in shoveling out the grain. By the time work began the wheat had settled so the top of Mr. Worthington's head was visible. Not much could be done in the way of reaching the men until farmers arrived with scoops, which was very shortly.

"Mr. Worthington and Mr. Richards were found in a standing position, close together, at the corner of the driveway and a runway that led east to the railroad track. The former received a head injury from flying timbers and his death is believed to have been instantaneous. Mr. Richards suffered internal injuries, but whether death was due to them or suffocation is not known. Mr. Carter was found about the center of the driveway under several feet of wheat. His legs were pinned down by parts of the bin. He was on his back.

"The bin that gave way contained 6,000 bushels of wheat and was a double bin along the west side of the driveway. The collapse must have occurred without warning, as the men apparently were trapped about where they stood. There are two more large divisions with two bins each west of the ones that gave way. The sound of the collapse was not heard at the Worthington home about 70 or 80 yards from the elevator.

"Mr. Worthington was loading a car of wheat at the elevator, which is no doubt why the other two men were there instead of at the office close by. Martland is 7 miles SW of Geneva on the Northwestern Railroad. The elevator had been filled to capacity at times during the harvest season."



Photo from Merritt Hedden Martland Elevator Collapse

Martland School-District 55

The "Merryman School," as it was called, was moved into Martland about 1893. It seems that it was moved in the night. It was placed a little west of the present schoolhouse, which was built about 1899. I remember Mr. Adams and Sheridan Owens were two of the earlier teachers in the new schoolhouse. L. O. Swails tells me that my mother (Mrs. Sada Heery, now deceased), Sada Davis then, was his first teacher in the Merryman schoolhouse, when it was across from Jim Merryman's, and his father's brother, Ed Swails, taught there one term. Teachers who have taught in the later-built schoolhouse are: Nelson Ronne, Ruth Schelkopf, George Rotter, Herbert Frank, D. D. Brown, Frances Patten, Wilma Whittaker, Lucille Nicholson, Florence McCauley, Marion Kroll, Ruth Sutter, Clara Busse, Irene Gruenhage, Jeanette McNamara, Helen Schwab, Gladys Anderson, Helen Hedden, and Roine Kempf.

The Martland schoolhouse is presently being used as a community hall.



Photo from Mrs. Maynard Merryman Martland's high school and lower grades (District No. 55, 1926).

Depot

When word came to Geneva that the Northwestern Railroad would be built through here, the flag was immediately run up on the courthouse to let the people know the glad tidings. In the evening, a big crowd gathered and indulged in a jubilee. Guns were fired, bonfires lighted and the band played.

The railroad came through Martland in 1888 and the necessary depot was erected. The first agent was Louis Wilkie. Some of those who followed him were Charlie Crocker, John Muir, Milton Hoak, and Charlie Clements. Some of the section men working out of Martland were D. R. Martin, Sam Saltzman (for a time), and Charlie Clements, before he went into the depot.

Post Office

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Davis kept the Eden post office in their sod house, 2 miles S and ¼ mile E of Martland for a time. Mention was made in the "70 Years Ago" items of the Nebraska Signal (1956) of a hog belonging to Mr. Davis getting snowed in on January 3, 1886. He did not find the animal for 44 days. The hog was weak, but otherwise all right. Mr. Davis was the grandfather of Mrs. Edgar Schelkopf of Geneva, the former Essie Crowley. Edgar Schelkopf

was the son of M. L. Schelkopf who was chairman of the county board in 1908.

After Mr. Davis, Ed Beach kept the post office in their sod house across from Martland for a year or so, after which it was located in the new depot. Later, about 1903, it was moved into a building which was built north of the store. The second story of this building was later used for a Woodmen lodge hall.



Martland School (District 55) pupils in the spring of 1918. Semicircle, left to right: Cleo Theobald, Earl McPeck, Isabel Diederich, Margaret Walker, Fern Cruse, Dorothy Clements, Edna Posvar, Trudy Theobald, Lavonne Miille, Ruth McPeck, Leroy Merryman, Irene Gruenhage, Clara Augustine, Lola McPeck, Ada Bass, Lorena Walker, Helen McPeck, Florentine Rotter, Archie Merryman, John Walker, Morris Merryman, James McPeck (in front), Maynard Merryman, Kenneth Clements. Front row: Fred Posvar, Joe Walker, Royal Cruse, Fred Gruenhage, Leroy Diederich, Bill Posvar.

The following three items are from the files of the Nebraska Signal:

History of Eden Post Office (By Mrs. Grant Bail)

Last week, the Signal reported a visit to this county by William H. Beach of Racine, Wisconsin, who was trying to locate his family home in this county and also learn something of a post office called Eden, which he believed his father operated.

Several readers remembered the Eden post office, but they remembered it as being located on the Henry Davis place in Hamilton township. The Beach homestead was located just east of Martland, on property now belonging to Mrs. Reese Austin.

Mrs. Grant Bail of near Martland, a long-time resident of Stanton township, this week wrote a letter to the Signal explaining the apparent discrepancy. Her letter is as follows:

"I remember when the Eden post office was started. It was in the Francis H. Beach sod house. When the people learned we were to have a post office the neighbors met at the Beach house one evening to decide on a name for the office. The people who settled this part of the country thought it the Garden of Eden, so they named the office Eden.

"I played with Maggie and Everett Beach. I have Maggie's picture yet. When the Beaches left here they went to Beloit, Kansas. Then the post office was moved a mile south to the Henry Davis home. They kept the post office several years. It was still called Eden.

"A man came on horseback once a week with the mail. My folks, the James Merrymans, got their mail at Eden. They lived one mile west of the Beach place on Section 30." —Signal, July 24, 1952

Got Mail at Eden Post Office (By Fred and Dora Ekwall)

Fred S. Ekwall of Sheridan, Wyoming, a Stanton township pioneer, writes the Signal some interesting early-day history as follows:

"Sheridan, Wyoming, July 31, 1952

"Dear Friends:

"As to the early history of the Eden post office as told by Mrs. Grant Bail in the Signal of July 24, I want to compliment Mrs. Bail on her write-up. No one knows the early history of Fillmore County better than Mrs. Bail (as to the early settlers and happenings in those days)

days).

"In the early 1880's we got our mail at the Eden post office. We were living with an uncle of ours at that time on Sec. 29, Stanton township, ½ mile W of Martland. Since I had a saddle pony it was to go to Eden post office and bring our mail home.

up to me to go to Eden post office and bring our mail home.

"I well remember the Henry Davis family, the sod house, and the mailman delivering the mail on horseback. The mail was placed on the bed and was handed out to those getting their mail there. In our mail that I would bring home was the Nebraska Signal published at Fairmont at that time, the Chicago Inter-Ocean, and the Kansas City Star, which were always welcome at our home.

"When the Chicago Northwestern Railway surveyors were laying out the town site of Martland and doing other railway surveying, they

got their meals at the home of our uncle, Swan Ekwall.

"Mother, at that time, was taking care of the house. At the dinner table the question came up as to what to name the town site that had been laid out. Uncle Swan mentioned that the land on which the town site was laid out was owned by a man by the name of Martin Danielson. One of the men in the surveying party spoke up and said, 'Let's name the town site Martland.' So that's how Martland got its name.

"I helped to unload the first load of grain that was brought into Martland. It was loaded into a railway box car before the elevator was built. After the elevator was built, I was in charge of it that fall and winter.

"Many happy days were spent at Martland with our folks and friends, but no more Martland—just memories."

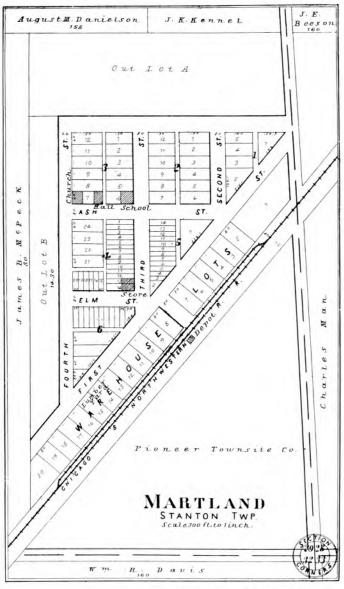
-Signal, August 7, 1952

Martland Post Office No More

The Martland post office was discontinued as of Friday evening on orders from the post office department. The mail will go through Shickley rural route 1. Patrons of the office had become very few.

Martland had a post office many years. It was formerly at the Northwestern depot and John Muir, the agent, was also postmaster. Later it was moved to the Martland store and the store proprietor was made postmaster.

—Signal, October 6, 1949



Standard Atlas of Fillmore County (1905) Map of Martland in 1905

Newspaper

The first newspaper published in the village was the $Martland\ Midget$, an $8" \times 12"$ sheet of four pages, published by Bert Skinner and a man named Bushkirk. It carried news

of local events, church notices, announcements of Woodmen lodge meetings, and liberal advertising.

Blacksmith Shop

Oxen were used by some in this early settlement. There was a blacksmith shop started up east of the store, which was run by John Shuster. After Mr. Shuster, Frank Kabley operated it.

Lodges

The Martland Woodmen lodge was organized in the early 1890's. Charley Crocker served as clerk for some years. In 1916, the Woodmen Camp annual reunion was held at the M. L. Schelkopf home. At that time the lodge was the only organization in Martland. Later there was a flourishing Royal Neighbors lodge.

Stanton Woman's Club

On the afternoon of Thursday, June 30, 1921, 22 women of Stanton township met with County Agent J. L. Thomas at the Martland schoolhouse and organized a Woman's Farm Bureau Club. The following officers were elected: Mrs. Milton Hoak, president; Mrs. William Wilkins, vice-president; Mrs. Ray Carson, secretary; Mrs. Clark Yates, treasurer; Mrs. Grant Bail, press correspondent. They voted to meet on the last Wednesday afternoon of each month. This club has proved to be a success and a big help to the community. It is still active today.

The following account of the local community program

was written by Mrs. Roy Hilgren in 1926:

I am proud of my community: First, because of the Woman's Club organized five years ago in our township, called Stanton "Woman's Club," with a membership of 20. It has this past year 91 members. After organizing, our next question was a place to meet, many of the homes being too small to accommodate the gatherings. Through the kindness of the taxpayers, our township hall was enlarged and a stage put in; in fact, a good-sized community hall was the result. Our club bought dishes, an oil stove, and necessary utensils. Many times community dinners were held in the hall. It is fitted with chairs, benches, and a piano, all purchased by the club. This past summer a music teacher gave lessons on the piano there.

The club has a Community Chest, fitted with gowns, sheets, and almost everything necessary for a sickroom. All sick and "shut in" friends are remembered with flowers. We also have stork showers

for all new babies.

Boys' and girls' clubs both in canning and sewing have been organized and excellent work has been accomplished.

Second, because of the excellent 10-grade district school under the supervision of 2 very competent teachers, thereby enabling our young folks to be at home while they receive the proper training.

Third, because of the Martland Band of 12 young people in charge of a competent leader of our own community. This furnishes a pastime for our young people and there is nothing like good, clean music to build character.

Fifth and last, but not least, is the church, with preaching every two weeks and Sunday School every Sunday morning. The Ladies' Aid of our church is very active, and much good is done by these "Hand Maidens of God."

Band

A band was started in 1899 and continued until 1902. It was composed of 25 pieces. The bandmaster was Silas Camp. Later on, in 1926, a group of 12 young people in charge of a competent community leader, Anton Posvar, furnished music for our many entertainments that Martland was always working out. This furnished a pleasant pastime for our young folks, and it had its part to play in building character. Martland always seemed to have folks in and around about who had talent and who enjoyed helping with community programs.

Literary Society

A literary society was organized at Martland in 1907 with Arthur Larson as president, Guy Carson as vice-president, Jesse Tomlin as secretary and treasurer, and George Cruse as sergeant at arms.

Community Hall

The little town of Martland, Nebraska, has only a church, school, store, elevator, and depot, but it has a woman's club of 60 members that has been responsible for the creating of unusually progressive community spirit and the building of a fine community hall. The woman's club, known as "Stanton Woman's Club," consisted of both town and country women.

When the organization began to grow, it was found that the little town hall as well as the schoolhouse afforded insufficient room for a meeting place. A larger place was needed. So, after threshing the

problem out, it was decided to enlarge the old town hall.

A committee was appointed to meet with the town board and discuss plans for building an addition to the hall. The proposition took favorably and in March it was put to a vote of the people of the community. There was only one negative vote. Work on building the annex began on a Wednesday in March, and by Saturday night of the same week, the extra section was up, enclosed, and shingled. Thirty men did the work and the Woman's Club members fed the workers. All of the work was given free and the material for the annex cost approximately \$400, which was appropriated from the township fund for public improvements.



Photo from Mrs. Essie Schelkopf Community Hall, Martland

The enlarged community building which is shown in the accompanying picture will seat a goodly crowd of people. It has a stage, dressing rooms, a piano, an oil stove for cooking meals, dining tables, and chairs. It is equipped to accommodate home talent plays, literary programs, Farm Bureau meetings, community dinners, and other affairs.

Nobody ever says that "It can't be done" in Martland. This is

the creed that we live by:

"Somebody said that it couldn't be done, But he, with a chuckle, replied

That maybe it couldn't, but he would be one Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried."

SCHOOLS

School District No. 13—comprising the S ½ of Sec. 1 and all of Secs. 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 in Stanton township—was organized on January 22, 1872. The election of officers was held at the home of Daniel Lee on January 27, 1872.



Photo from Caroline Lauenstein

District No. 13 (about 1947). A play acted by the pupils. Left to right: Caroline Janing, Shirley Sanders, Sharon Theobald, Dick Theobald, Richard Janing, Larry Sanders, Perry Lindbloom. The teacher (not in picture) was Miss Virginia Moor.

In the early days the pupils ranged in age from 5 to 20 years, and most of them walked to school. The roads were little more than trails, and so some of the younger ones often

¹The date of this account is not known. Consolidation of farms had by 1967 reduced the membership to 19; but the club was still active.

were absent for weeks at a time. Many of the boys stayed out when farm work was pressing; some of the older ones did not start till the corn was cut and quit when spring field work started. The schoolhouse was crowded, with three in a seat, and sometimes with not enough books to go around. The children who were absent got behind in their work, so that a 20-year-old might be in a class with a 10-year-old.

It was thought to be a proper thing to run the teacher out of school, and so it sometimes took two or three teachers to finish a term. In the early 1890's, the board hired consecutively three men teachers who could and did use a bat

to good effect. That ended the teacher baiting.

As more graduates went on to high school, it became necessary to keep the work more in line with that of the town schools. Attendance became more regular, and as the farms became larger the number of pupils became smaller. Some went to church schools and others went to town schools, so that the enrollment dropped to two or three pupils. In 1951, the district started contracting with District 75, and buses from Geneva picked up the children.

The first schoolhouse stood on the SE corner of Sec. 2, where it remained until the summer of 1888. To get it farther away from the railroad and nearer the center of the district, it was then moved to the SE corner of the SW 1/4 of Sec. 11,

where it remained until it was sold in 1954.

Teachers			m	g 1
1873-(?) Emma Harney Not listed Not listed 1874-(?) Emma Harney Not listed Not listed 1875-76 Maggie Stewart 2½ months \$30 per month 1876-77 Nettie Howe 3 months Not listed 1877-78 J. B. Sexton 2 months Not listed 1878-79 Frank Hoff 4 months Not listed 1878-79 Frank Hoff 4 months Not listed 1878-80 Mary Hart 3 months Not listed 1880-81 Mary Hart 3 months Not listed 1880-81 Mary Hart 3 months Not listed 1881-82 Mary Hart 2 months Not listed 1881-82 Mary Hart 2 months Not listed 1882-83 Luella Harbaugh 3 months Not listed 1882-83 Luella Harbaugh 3 months Not listed 1883-84 Flora Harbaugh 3 months Not listed 1884-85 Flora Harbaugh 3 months Not listed 1884-85 No record 1887 Kate Fisher 3 months Not listed 1888-89 Mary Harbaugh 4 months Not listed 1888-89 Mary Harbaugh 10 months Not listed 1888-89 Mary Harbaugh 10 months Not listed 1889-90 Mis Huston the word "term" Not listed 1891-92 Mis Huston the word "term" Not listed 1891-92 Mary Harbaugh 5 months Not listed 1891-92 Mary Harbaugh 10 months Not listed 1891-90 Margaret Kenney Flora fill to spring) Not listed 1907-09 Margaret Kenney Flora fill to spring) Not listed 1907-09 Margaret Kenney Eva Embree months filled out) Not listed 1911-13 Emma McGraw Mot listed 1912-22 Merle Coleman Not listed 1913-32 Audra Henry Not listed 1923-23 Audra Henry Not listed 1923-23 Audra Henry Not listed 1932-34 Doris Haver Not	Year	Teachers	Term	Salary
1874-(?)	1872	Pearley Reed	3 months	\$30 per month
1875-76		Emma Harney	.Not listed	Not listed
1875-76	1874-(?)	Emma Harney	Not listed	Not listed
1876-77		Maggie Stewart	2½ months	\$30 per month
1876-77		A. D. Stevens	6 months	\$40 per month
1877-78	1876-77	Nettie Howe	3 months	Not listed
Erma McElba		J B Seyton	2 months	Not listed
1878-79	1011-10	Erma MaElba	2 months	Not listed
1879-80	1070 70	Erma McElba	4 months	Not listed
Sewell May		Frank Holl	2 months	Not listed
1880-81	1879-80	Mary Hart	months	Not listed
S. A. Slaughter	4-14-22	Sewell May	3 months	Not listed
Mary Hart	1880-81	Mary Hart	3 months	Not listed
Lance A. Weed		S. A. Slaughter	3 months	Not listed
W. P. Evans	1881-82	Mary Hart	2 months	Not listed
W. P. Evans		Lance A. Weed	_1 month	Not listed
Luella Harbaugh		W P Evans	3 months	Not listed
Flora Harbaugh	1882-83	Luella Harbaugh	3 months	Not listed
1883-84	1002 00	Flora Harbaugh	4 months	Not listed
Sadie Martin	1002 04	Flora Harbaugh	3 months	Not listed
1884-85 Flora Harbaugh 10 months Not listed 1887 Kate Fisher 3 months Not listed 1888 Flora Harbaugh 6 months Not listed 1888-89 — McKeegan Not listed 1889-90 — Stephens (About this time Not listed 1891-92 Miss Huston the word "term" Not listed 1891-92 Miss Huston the word "term" Not listed 1892-93 J. L. Adams comes to mean 1893-94 W. G. Phillips the "school year," 1894-95 Milt Ames from fall to 1895-97 Mattie Heebler spring) 1897-99 Ed Lane Not listed 1899-1901 Irene Holister 1901-02 1901-02 Jessie Clark \$44 per month 1904-05 Stella Wilson \$40 per month 1905-06 Hazel Combs \$35 per month 1906-07 Lydia Hafer (Six months; two Not listed 1907-09 Margaret Kenney (Six months;	1000-04	Cadia Martin	4 months	Not listed
1885-87 No record 3 months Not listed 1888 Flora Harbaugh 6 months Not listed 1888-89 — McKeegan Not listed 1889-90 — Stephens (About this time Not listed 1891-92 Miss Huston the word "term" Not listed 1892-93 J. L. Adams comes to mean 1893-94 W. G. Phillips the "school year," 1894-95 Milt Ames from fall to 1895-97 Mattie Heebler spring) 1897-99 Ed Lane Not listed 1899-1901 Irene Holister 1902-04 R. A. Case \$44 per month 1904-05 Stella Wilson \$40 per month 1905-06 Hazel Combs \$35 per month 1907-09 Margaret Kenney (Six months; two Not listed 1909-10 Margaret Kenney (Six months; two Not listed 1911-13 Emma McGraw Not listed 1911-13 Emma McGraw Not listed 1911-19		Sadie Martin	4 months	Not listed
1887 Kate Fisher 3 months Not listed 1888 Flora Harbaugh 6 months Not listed 1888-89 — McKeegan Not listed "Two Kennedy girls" — Stephens (About this time Not listed 1891-92 Miss Huston the word "term" Not listed 1892-93 J. L. Adams comes to mean state of the come of th	3 - 5 - 7 - 5 - 5		_10 months	Ivot listed
1888		No record	2	N 12-4-3
1888-89		Kate Fisher	3 months	Not listed
"Two Kennedy girls" — Stephens (About this time Not listed 1891-92 Miss Huston the word "term" Not listed 1892-93 J. L. Adams comes to mean 1893-94 W. G. Phillips the "school year," 1894-95 Milt Ames from fall to 1895-97 Mattie Heebler spring) 1897-99 Ed Lane Not listed 1899-1901 Irene Holister 1901-02 1902-04 R. A. Case \$44 per month 1905-06 Hazel Combs \$35 per month 1906-07 Lydia Hafer \$35 per month 1909-10 Margaret Kenney (Six months; two Not listed 1909-10 Margaret Kenney (Six months; two Not listed 1910-11 Della Yates Not listed 1911-13 Emma McGraw Not listed 1917-19 Ada Huston Not listed 1917-19 Ada Huston Not listed 1920-21 Stella Gilmore Not listed 1921-22 Merle	1888	Flora Harbaugh	6 months	
"Two Kennedy girls" — Stephens (About this time Not listed 1891-92 Miss Huston the word "term" Not listed 1892-93 J. L. Adams comes to mean 1893-94 W. G. Phillips the "school year," 1894-95 Milt Ames from fall to 1895-97 Mattie Heebler spring) 1897-99 Ed Lane Not listed 1899-1901 Irene Holister 1901-02 1902-04 R. A. Case \$44 per month 1905-06 Hazel Combs \$35 per month 1906-07 Lydia Hafer \$35 per month 1909-10 Margaret Kenney (Six months; two Not listed 1909-10 Margaret Kenney (Six months; two Not listed 1910-11 Della Yates Not listed 1911-13 Emma McGraw Not listed 1917-19 Ada Huston Not listed 1917-19 Ada Huston Not listed 1920-21 Stella Gilmore Not listed 1921-22 Merle	1888-89	- McKeegan	.,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,	Not listed
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	1934-37			

1937-39	Wilma Mau	Not	listed
1939-41	Marcella Kelly	Not	listed
1941-42	Marjorie Sinn	Not	listed
1942-43	Jean Stephenson	Not	listed
1943-44	Mrs. Apley	Not	listed
1944-48	Virginia Moor	Not	listed
1948-51	Maxine Bornschlegl	Not	listed
1951	School contracted with District 75, Geneva.		

District No. 46, in the southeast corner of Stanton township, consists of Secs. 22 to 27 inclusive and Secs. 34, 35, and 36. This district was formed on May 20, 1872, at the Peter Yates home on the SE corner of Sec. 24. Robert Shields was notified to let the homesteaders and others interested know of the meeting. There is no record of the officers elected, or of school being held in the district before 1878. The first years after the district was formed, the pupils went to other districts (Nos. 13 and 45).

The first schoolhouse was built on the NE corner of Sec. 26. In 1892, it was moved one mile W to the NE corner of Sec. 27. It remained there one year and then was moved ½ mile S, still on the east side of Sec. 27. This first schoolhouse was used until 1907, when a new building was erected. The site remained the same until the schoolhouse was sold in 1952.

The last time school was held in District 46 was the spring of 1945. For two years they contracted with Martland, and since then have contracted with the Geneva school district.



Photo from Mrs. Wilbur Anderson District No. 46 in 1925. Front row, left to right: Russell Dubois, May Toren, John Fisher. Back row, left to right: Elva DuBois, Mabel Wells, Helen Reinsch, Frances Fisher.

The first teacher of record was Laura Welb (Mrs. John Yates) in 1878 and 1879. Those who followed her were:

Yates) in 1878 and 1879.

1880 Eva Janes

1881 Flora Harbaugh

1882-83 Mary E. Deming

1884 Ella Merrill

1885 James Evans

From 1883 to 1890 the following teachers served: Mary Jaynie,

Erma Stephenson, Lucy Kimbrough, and Ella Demaree.

1891 Ella Allen (Mrs. Al Kline)
1892-93 George Madisor
1893-95 Miss Arrowsmidth
1895-96 Miss Bumgarner

1896-97 No record 1897-98 Miss Jessie Morgan

1898-99 Clara Cole, C. H. Merryman

1898-99 Clara Cole, C. H. Merryman 1900-04 M. P. Ames

1900-04 M. P. Ames 1905 (spring) Verna Mowry (Mrs. Tom Wagner)

1906-07 Carrie Sauer

1907-08 Meda Welty (Mrs. Clark Yates)

1908-09 Mary Davis 1909-11 Delia Fisher

1911-12 Nora Dunn

1912-13 Mable Benson (Mrs. William Hourigan)

1913-14 Raymond Kenney 1914-32 Nora Dunn

1932-33 Verneda Johnson

1933-34 Verneda Johnson and Ruth Stickle

1934-36 Verneda Johnson 1936-39 Elsie Bender (Mrs. Gay Fisher)

1939-42 Maxine Schelkopf (Mrs. Jake Bornschlegl)

1942-43 Norma Ekwall (Mrs. Harris) 1943-45 Mrs. Helen Hedden

In 1945 the school contracted with Martland.

The district made fast advancement starting with dugouts and sod houses. Within only a few years many new places were built and families moved in. At one time there were 45 farmsteads in the district; in 1967, there were 11. In the early 1890's, 50 pupils were enrolled and attended school each winter. This large school attendance was very high until the free high-school tuition law was passed. Enrollment then dropped to 20 and 30 until the late 1920's when the farms began to consolidate. At one time in 1946 only one pupil was in school.

Very little of the land in the district is still in original

family names or still owned by heirs.

Clark Yates owns and lives on the NE corner of Sec. 23 and Claude Kimbrough owns and lives on the SE corner of Sec. 23. The Frantz family moved into the district in the early 1890's and Rosa Frantz owns and still lives on the NW corner of Sec. 26. Bert Yates still owns the NE corner of Sec. 24, and Norman Yates owns and lives on the NW corner of Sec. 24.

The following men are the ones who received the patent or deeds from the railroad: (The odd sections were deeded by the railroad, which received the patent from the U. S. The even sections were by direct patent from the United States government).



Mr. and Mrs. John Yates (about 1900), with children Clark Yates, Blanche Yates Pangle, and Harry Yates.

Section 22: George Barber NW ¼, William Hull NE ¼, William P. Friend SE ¼, and Preston R. Snowden SW ¼.

Section 23: Lyman Pardue NW ¼, George H. Hedges N ½ NE ¼ and John W. Yates S ½ NE ¼, Jared Yates N½ SE ¼ and James H. Kimbrough S ½ SE ¼, and Elizabeth W. Jaynes SW ¼.



Photo from C. J. Kimbrough

The J. H. Kimbrough home in 1887

Section 24: John W. Yates NW ½, Edward T. Yates NE ¼, Elias Yates SE ¼, and Peter R. Yates SW ¼.

Section 25: James B. Murray N ½, and E. N. Morrill S ½.

Section 26: Davis B. Watson NW ¼, Robert Shields, Jr., NE ¼, Robert Shields Sr., SE ¼, and Noah Browhard SW ¼.





C. J. Kimbrough Mr. and Mrs. Robert Shields, Sr., in 1880

Section 27: James B. Murray N ½, and Thomas S. King S ½.
Section 34: William McPherson NW ¼, Theodore D. Blackwell
NE ¼, Henry C. Cromwell SE ¼, and John Goodwin SW ¼.
Section 35: John Munson NW ¼, W. G. Greene NE ¼, and E.

Morrill S 1/2

Section 36 being school land, these were the men who received the first lease or deed: Silas Bailor deed to N 1/2 NW 1/4; Emanuel Kiester S ½ NW ¼, deed; J. Jensen NE ¼, lease; John Orr SE ¼, lease; and [Davis] Watson SW ¼, lease.

Until the early 1920's the roads were unimproved. Now there remain in District 46 only 4 miles of dirt roads; 3 miles are paved, and all the rest are graveled.

The first silo, one of the first in the county, was built in 1911. The first pit silo was dug in 1913. It is the oldest pit

silo in the county and is still in good shape.

There is very little waste land in the district. Only 2% of the original prairie remains. There is a good supply of water for irrigation under the whole district, and in time it will be mostly irrigated. The first irrigation well in the district was put down in December, 1940, and more have been added since.

District No. 47 was organized May 15, 1872, comprising Secs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, and 18. The first school meeting in the district was held on the banks of the creek, those attending sitting around on its bank. There were 7 or 8 present, J. H. Sager among them. Mr. Sager built the schoolhouse and taught the first term of school at \$2 a month, boarding himself, and furnishing his own kindling.

District 47 dissolved and attached itself to District 75

(Geneva), effective June 1, 1959.



Photo from Mrs. Owen Cartwright

District No. 47 entry in the annual corn carnival held in Geneva each fall (taken in 1929). The teacher was Jeanette McNamra; the truck belonged to Walter Mau.

District No. 55 was the Martland (or "Merryman") school, described above under Martland and Community.

FAMILIES

Silas E. Bailor, son of Adam Bailor and Sarah Coombs, was born in Warren County, Ohio, on December 25, 1857, and died at the age of 91 in Wellington, Kansas. The Adam Bailor family came to Nebraska in 1876 and took up a tree claim a few miles southeast of Geneva. Here Silas completed his grade schooling and later attended Geneva High School for a time.

On March 15, 1883, Silas Bailor and Della Adams were united in marriage at Geneva and began farming 5 miles S of town. To this union were born three daughters and one son; one daughter died in infancy. The other two daughters. Mabel and Blanche, attended school in District 46 for a time. The family later moved to Geneva. Mabel is now Mrs. Henry Wernimont of Geneva; Blanche is Mrs. Cecil Wilson of Wellington, Kansas. The son, Silas Bailor, Jr., was powerplant superintendent for the Caneo Co. in Hilo, Hawaii, until his death on July 6, 1965.



Photo from Mrs. Mabel Wernimont Silas E. Bailor on cultivator he invented in 1892-A. M. Webb in background.

Working on his farm and at the foundry in the south part of Geneva, Mr. Bailor designed and built the first successful two-row cultivator in 1892. He sold this patent to the Dempster Manufacturing Co. of Beatrice. In 1912, he and others formed the Bailor Cultivator Co. in Atchison, Kansas. The achievements of this part of his life are summarized in this passage from a catalogue issued by the company in the late 1920's: "Mr. Bailor has given to the world the two-row cultivator and two-row lister by a lifetime spent in close attention to every detail and his familiarity with the use of these tools on the farm. The winnowing of a lifetime spent in hard study, many privations, discouragement, and finally success."

Cultivators, listers, harrows, and other machines designed and patented by Silas Bailor were widely used throughout the Great Plains area. They were especially popular in the southern part of the Great Plains and in the lighter-soil areas of the corn belt. The ideas of mechanization of corn and cotton cultivation which Mr. Bailor saw through to reality have contributed extensively to the general modernization of farming during the past 40 or 50 years. It is particularly interesting to note that the two-row cultivator designed by him and exhibited by the Midland Plow Co. at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in 1904 was given the "Highest Award" in competition with other makes from all parts of the world.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Deming came to Fillmore County in 1871 by covered wagon and homesteaded in Stanton township southwest of Geneva. They lived in a sod house for several years. The family of 4 children-Ward, Wallace, Lucy May, and Ida—grew up locally. Besides farming, Henry Deming also taught school. Ida Deming married Emil Elia-

son, the son of a neighboring pioneer.

Joseph Diederich came to Nebraska from Wisconsin in 1875 and purchased from the Burlington Railroad the SW ½ of Sec. 7 in Stanton township, slightly less than 159 acres. He built a house and brought his family out the following year. His son John bought 80 acres from his father in 1900 and bought the other 80 acres in 1924; Joseph retired to Geneva. After John's death in 1947, the place was turned over to his son, Phil Diederich, who still lives there. Phil has an interesting document, an old tax receipt which shows that the taxes on the farm in 1880 amounted to \$20.33.



TRAVELING B. L. WILSON GALLERY.

Joseph and Anna Diederich (about 1888), with their children. Back row, left to right: John, Anna, Lizzie, Albert; Front row: Mary, Barbara (on mother's lap).



Photo from Emil Eliason

John Eliason and his wife Cecilia

John E. Eliason was born in Gothenburg, Sweden, and came to America at the age of seven years. He lived in Kane, Pennsylvania, until he met and married his wife, Cecilia. They came to Stanton township in 1881. The first year, they lived on the Swan Ekwall farm until they could build a sod house on their own land. In 1898, Mr. Eliason went to Chicago, where he lived for a while and worked for the City Railway Co. Later he came back to Fillmore County and farmed. After his retirement, his son Emil took over the place and farmed it until he moved to Clay Center, Nebraska.

(This account, by **E. F. Huntley**, titled "Pioneer Days in Fillmore County," appeared in the *Nebraska Signal*, April 13, 1939.)

I came with my parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Huntley, from Steuben County, Indiana, in 1867. My parents left in a covered wagon, along with four other relatives and their families, also in covered wagons. We left Indiana April 4, 1867. The sickness of my grandmother on my father's side forced us to stop at Waterville, Kansas, where she died. After a five-week stay in Kansas, we came on to Fillmore County and landed on Turkey Creek south of what is known as the Jim Lightbody farm.

Father homesteaded a quarter of land on Sec. 4 in Stanton townships. All of the uncles took homesteads southwest of us in Stanton township. In August, 1867, we built three sod houses, as one uncle was unmarried. Then we had to go to Lincoln, the nearest post office and town, to get our food. We got our fuel for winter on the North Blue with buffalo chips.



Mr. and Mrs. Elijah F. Huntley and their children in 1917. Back row, left to right: Theresa, Leslie. Middle row: Francis, Arthur, Sam, Chester. Front row: Paul, Elijah and Mrs. Huntley, Fred.

After we finished our sod houses, we had five good teams and we had brought our breaking plows with us. We had to cut hay for our horses with hand scythes, and you can know it took work. After they could unload in the first house they built, they took the wagons and went to Lincoln after food and feed for the horses. After they got the hay made, they had to make fire protection, or fire guards, as they called them, by plowing around hay and burning between strips of plowing. The blue stem was so rank and the grass so heavy that there was great danger of fire.

That was not a bad winter, but the next spring came the Easter storm that lasted three days and three nights. My folks' food supply ran out. There was food at our uncle's, 3 miles away, but the storm was so severe no one could get it, so we were without food for 24 hours. We had some homemade yeast and we children ate the yeast while Mother wept with sorrow and homesickness. The snow drifted until it covered the house, but it did not do any damage to the garden we had planted. We raised sod corn and garden that year.

They lived on the homestead until 1878. Then Father sold it and moved to Bennett township, where they lived four years, and then moved to Momence township.

After I was 21, I was in Colorado one year. Then I came back to

my folks in Momence township.

I moved with my folks to Elwood, Gosper County, and stayed there two years. Then I came back to Fillmore County and was married to Miss Addie Mann in 1889. We lived in Bennett township until 1896, when we moved to Clay County, northeast of Edgar. We lived there seven years, then moved back to Momence and we have lived in Momence and Bennett since 1903. So we have lived in Fillmore County 63 years and 72 in the state, taking out the year I was in Colorado.

63 years and 72 in the state, taking out the year I was in Colorado. (Editor's note: "Mr. Huntley is past 78 and Mrs. Huntley is 70. They will have been married 50 years on September 9, 1939.")



Photo from Mrs. Ernest Heinrichs

The Charles Mau family in 1923. Back row, left to right: Gussie (Frantz), Charley, Anne (Otte), Walter C., Minnie (Salzman). Front row: Dorothea (Russell), Charles and Matilda Mau, Rose M. (Cruse).

Charles Mau came to the United States as a German immigrant at the age of 20. He came as far west as Omaha, where he found work milking 28 cows a day; after that, he worked in a brewery. In the fall of 1870, he came to Stanton township and took a homestead and moved onto it in the spring of 1871. He built a dugout on the bank of a stream that ran through his land and lived in that until he was able to afford a two-room house. His good friend and neighbor, Chris Gratopp, shared the hardships of people in a new country. Many times they kept warm by the same fire of buffalo chips during the hard and cold winters of those early days.

Mr. Mau was a livestock feeder of cattle and hogs. In the first days of his adventure in livestock, he would buy and herd them himself. Fences were very few in those days. He lived for nine years on his homestead before he met and married his wife. She was Matilda Schoenborn, who had come with her parents from Germany at the age of 10 years. They were married on January 24, 1879. In 1881, Mr. Mau purchased 180 acres just north of his homestead from a family who lived in Wisconsin.

Mrs. Mau was a lover of trees and flowers, and on their homestead they planted fruit and flowering trees of every kind hardy enough to stand the Nebraska winters. Mrs. Mau planted many roses (her favorite flower) that her father had brought with him from Germany. Six of their children were born on this homestead. Later, they purchased a farm near Martland, where their seventh child was born. Again they planted trees and flowers on this new land and built barns and a big house for their family. This farm near Martland was the one that is remembered as their home place. They lived on this farm until they purchased a home in Geneva.

Soon after they moved to Geneva, Mr. Mau passed away, on September 5, 1924. Of his 80 years, he spent 60 in Fillmore County, as one of the oldest pioneers. His wife lived many years after he was gone, passing away at the age of 86 years on April 27, 1950. She had spent 71 years in Fillmore County and had known all the hardships of a pioneer's wife.

James B. McPeck came to Nebraska from Ohio in April, 1872, by train. He landed in Omaha, where a cousin, George McPeck, was teaching school. Soon after this, he pre-empted his first piece of land, 160 acres one mile E of Martland; for this he paid \$1.60 an acre.

The land office was at Beatrice. Mr. McPeck and two other men walked from Crete to Beatrice to file for their claims. There was a rush for land there, and several men were after the same tracts, and so these three men were up early and on their way, while the rest slept.

James McPeck's first team was oxen and his first farming equipment was limited. With his crude plow, he broke sod for his one-room sod house and soon had a place to live; then he began farming. He and a man by the name of Steve Dille lived in his sod house for the first winter. The second year, he returned to Ohio, having run out of funds to carry on. He

worked there for a farmer, by the month, and in the fall season cut corn and shocked it, many hours by night, for extra money.

During this time he met Ida Haines, and they were married on October 6, 1876. He returned to Nebraska the same fall and built a small frame house for his bride, who came the following April. By this time, he had bought a small team of mules and a wagon. With this rig, he met his new wife at Fairmont, where they bought scanty furnishings for their new home. Their hardships were the same as those of all the pioneers. Hot winds, grasshoppers, and other discouraging elements, but still they stayed on, determined. As the family grew, he and James Flory of near Shickley added to their homes. The McPecks had two sons, Gilbert and John, and one daughter, Maude.

In the 1890's, James McPeck bought 400 acres of land from James Holcomb across the road from the 160 acres he had pre-empted. He used 100 acres for pasture to feed his cattle and rent to neighbors for their stock. By 1903, his son John had married and was farming a part of the 400 acres, on which a farmstead had been built; and his son Gilbert, also married, was farming the original home place and the rest of the 400 acres. James B. McPeck had retired and moved into Geneva, where he and his wife spent their remaining years. His daughter, Mrs. Maude Flasche, now lives in Florida.

The children of James McPeck are Leslie, Francis, and Gladys, of Geneva, and Mildred, of Lincoln. Gilbert's children are Helen and Lola, in Ohio; Ruth, in Indiana; Jim, in Omaha; Dwaine, of Malcolm, Nebraska; and Earl, of Harvard, Nebraska.





Photo from Derald Merryman Photo from Maynard Merryman Mr. and Mrs. James O. Merryman, Sr.

James O. Merryman (account by Mrs. Cora Merryman Bail, in the Signal for October 15, 1942):

I want to tell you what a pleasure it was for me to eat dinner Sunday, October 11, 1942, at the home of my nephew LeRoy Merryman and family. I came to that place 71 years ago October 10, when 4 months old. My father, James O. Merryman, homesteaded the SE ½ of Sec. 30, Stanton township, in the fall of 1870.

That fall he built a dugout and dug a well. In the spring of '71 he came from Cass County, Nebraska, and broke some ground and planted sod corn. He then went back to Cass County where the folks lived with my uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Piper.

June 2, 1871, I was born at my aunt's home. We stayed there till I was a little over 2 months old. By that time father and mother thought I was old enough to bring to an organized county, the place that was to be my first home. I lived there until I was past 21. I was married to Grant Bail February 1, 1893. We moved to our present home, where we have lived almost 50 years.

Father and Mother came from Peoria, Illinois, to Cass County, Nebraska, in a covered wagon and later came to Fillmore County in

the same wagon.

Crete was our nearest town. Geneva was unheard of then. So

many changes have come that I wonder what the next 50 years will be like.

There were 16 members of our family present Sunday. It was also

There were 16 members of our family present suntay, it was used to the first of our circle had been present I feel it would have been a perfect day. Not many can go to their first home after 71 years.

The Signal added a few details to the interview with

Mrs. Bail. James Merryman was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and went as a young man to Peoria, where he met and married Miss Jennie Mills on March 10, 1870. They homesteaded on Sec. 30, where they lived in a dugout from 1871 until they built a sod house in 1873-1874. Mr. Merryman had to go to Beatrice to get their homestead recorded. When he came out of the office, he met Charles Mau and Chris Gratopp going in to record their claims for land in Stanton township. J. O. Merryman, Sr., died February 17, 1917, at Towson, Maryland; his body was brought to Martland for burial. His wife Jennie survived him only eight weeks, passing away on April 14, 1917.

Besides Mrs. Bail, other children of the Merrymans were Mate, J. O., and Ray Merryman. Mate died January 28, 1913. Ray, born April 1, 1883, died in 1956. James, Jr., died April 5, 1956. LeRoy Merryman, son of J. O. Merryman, Jr., was accidentally shot while hunting pheasants on October 31, 1957. LeRoy's wife, now Mrs. Virgil Eppler, and his three children still live on the original homestead.



Photo from E. A. Roles Ed Roles an early-day character, holding reins of a team of racing mules.

Ed Roles married Jessie McGaffey of Martland in 1894. Her brother, Dick McGaffey, married Roberta Gagey. The Gagey family also lived south of Martland. Ed Roles, in his younger days, was well known for his comic antics and his ventriloquism in entertainments at the old Martland Hall.

Most of the following account of John H. Shively was written in 1957:

John H. Shively was born at Petersburg, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, on August 30, 1866. He was one of a family of 10 children, six boys and four girls. He arrived in Fairmont by train, at the age of 19, on March 27, 1886, and worked for Jap Mosher that year. He helped build the railroad through Geneva. The first Fillmore County Fair was held in Fairmont in 1886, and John was there. In 1892 he moved to Geneva and in the same year married Allie Merrill of Geneva. He is past 90 now; his brick house is still standing.

Mr. Shively operated a threshing machine and threshed at every place between Geneva and Milligan. Robert Turner, the first milkman in Geneva, started a dairy on the place where he lived. Mr. Shively's son-in-law, Maurice McAvoy, lived in Franklin, Nebraska, where he was county superintendent of schools for several years before moving to Lincoln. Mr. McAvoy's grandmother was burned to death on the Fourth of July, 1886, when a tossed firecracker set fire to her long skirts.

Mr. Shively went through the tornado of June 5, 1908. His baby boy that he was carrying in his arms to the cave was struck by some flying object and killed. His own face was torn across, halfway between his eyes and chin. The doctor was sure he would not live and sewed it up roughly. He lay unconscious for nine days. He was badly disfigured but very alert and had a remarkable memory. His other child was also killed, as was the hired girl, who was tangled up in a rake. He is the only one alive of all the family who were in



Photo from Mrs. C. C. Camp Remains of John Shively farm home destroyed by cyclone June 5, 1908.

the storm. His daughter Welcome (Mrs. Maurice McAvoy) was born later.

The day he was telling this to me at the history meeting in Geneva, my coat sleeve caught on the cream pitcher on the tray being passed at lunch, spilling cream on my dress and coat. He laughed and said, "What was to be! It's like I've always said, 'Whatever is to be, will be.' I was supposed to be in that storm and everything that happened that day. I, who wasn't expected to live, have outlived them all." About that time his cup slid off his plate onto the floor, smashing, and he said, "Whoopee! What do I owe for the cup—5 cents?"

Mr. Shively spent his later years at Franklin, Nebraska, with his daughter, Mrs. McAvoy. He enjoyed frequent visits to Geneva, which he always called "home." He never missed a county fair. He was publicly recognized at the fair on the evening of August 19, 1958, which was called "John Shively Day." —Nellie Sheridan

Jake Swails purchased 80 acres, the W ½ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 21 in Stanton township, southwest of Geneva, from the railroad for \$1,200. He paid for the place at the rate of \$100 a year plus interest; it took him 12 years to pay for it. Jake's son, L. O. Swails of Geneva, purchased the place from the estate of his father after World War I. He paid \$8,000 for it, but paid for the place in three years. He wonders who, in the light of the earnings from the farm, paid the most for it. Although no one lives on the place now, it is still in the hands of the family.

Edward Arthur Tomlin, an energetic and prosperous farmer, resided on Sec. 21, Stanton precinct. He was born in Mason County, Illinois on January 6, 1859. He was the son of Hathorn and Sarah A. (Preston) Tomlin, who retired to Mason City. The former died at the age of 70, and the latter at 60.

Mr. Tomlin's grandfather, who became quite wealthy, came from New Jersey, and had been a seaman while living in the East. He spent his last days in Illinois. He died at the

¹Since this part was set in type, Mrs. McAvoy has supplied her father's death date: John Shively passed away on April 24, 1962, at the age of





Photo from Mrs. Guy Brown, Sr. Mr. and Mrs. Edward Tomlin

age of 70 and his wife at 65; both were buried in the Mason City Cemetery.

Mr. Tomlin was educated in Mason County, and taught school in both Illinois and Kansas. On December 25, 1884, he married Maggie Cruse, who had been born in Mason County on May 1, 1865, and educated there. She was the daughter of David and Hannah (Tomlin) Cruse. David Cruse was a native of Pennsylvania and Hannah Tomlin a native of New Jersey. Six sons and five daughters were born to the Cruses: Walker C., Matthew M., Elizabeth E., Maggie, Roxanna B., Sidney D., John S., Ora E., George I., Charles R., and Josephine.

From Illinois Mr. and Mrs. Tomlin moved to Kansas, and then in March, 1890, to Fillmore County. He bought 160 acres in Momence precinct, near Shickley, for which he paid \$4,000, and 18 months later sold it for \$5,000. He then bought 160 acres in Stanton precinct for \$3,900, which he transformed into one of the best farms in the area. He was a member of the Prohibition party and of the United Brethren

Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Tomlin were the parents of four children: Sarah Gertrude (Mrs. Gertrude Dever), Jessie May, Ora Alta (Mrs. Guy Brown, Sr.), and Golda (Mrs. Harper Anderson).



Photo from Mrs. Ray Serk

Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Walker and family about 1917. Back row, left to right: Blanche, Russ, Charlie, Ann, Cyrus, Jerome, Frank, Jess, Mag, and Maude.

Jesse W. Walker and his wife, Adeline (Sager) Walker and their family left Lewistown, Pennsylvania, by train in 1871, stopping first in Illinois and then in Iowa. They came on from Iowa in two covered wagons, one drawn by a yoke of oxen and the other by their riding horse and the family milk cow. They reached Omaha on October 9, 1871, and came out to the home of Jesse's uncle in Saline County, where they spent the winter.

During the winter, Mr. Walker took a homestead on 80 acres in Sec. 6, Stanton, and built a dugout with a log front. The family moved into this home in the spring and lived there for 11 years. Mrs. Walker once killed a rattlesnake on the bed in which one of the children was sleeping. Later, Tom Walker, Jesse's brother, built them a frame house, which still stands.

They went to Fairmont once a week for mail. Grasshoppers came through the township, taking everything, even eating the curtains off the windows. At two different times, they had butchered meat stolen, and once lost half a barrel of beans. Many Indians stopped in but did no harm; they just wanted food. One day there was a dead pig on the roadside and the Indians ate it. Jesse Walker broke the ground where the Fillmore County Courthouse now stands, using his oxen to pull the plow.

A schoolhouse, District 47, was built one mile S and ½ mile E of their home, and there the Walker children went to school. One of the teachers was Jerome Sager, brother of Mrs. Walker, who made his home with the family. The Walkers retired to a new home in Geneva in 1910, located where the

Geneva Post Office now stands.

Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Walker were the parents of 12 children. Three are still living: Mrs. Anna Dowis, 100 years old; Mrs. Maude McPeck, 86; and Mrs. Blanche Merryman, 84, all reside at the Sunset Home. A son, Cyrus Walker, with his family, moved onto the home place after 1910 and lived there until 1947, when they moved into Geneva.

Photo from Nebraska Signal Mrs. Anna Dowis at 100 years of age (April, 1967).



Mrs. Anna Dowis, who celebrated her 100th birthday at Sunset Home, was born in Lewistown on April 6, 1867, attended District 47, and later married Ed Dowis of Geneva, where she spent the first half of her life. In 1917, the Dowises moved to Sherman County, near Arcadia, where they lived until Mr. Dowis's death. Mrs. Dowis then came back to Geneva to be near the rest of her family. The Nebraska Signal of March 30, 1967, reporting her impending birthday party, described her as alert and by no means showing her 100 years. Her family consists of a son, Jess Vincent Dowis and wife, of Watertown, South Dakota, and a granddaughter, Velma, of Sue Bennet College, London, Kentucky.

Mabel Bailor Wernimont has lived in Fillmore County for 83 years, having been born (February 7, 1884), on the George Bailor farm SE of Geneva and at the age of two weeks taken to her parents' home just south of Geneva. Mrs. George Bailor and Mrs. Silas Bailor were sisters, and George and Silas were cousins. Her late husband, Henry Wernimont, had lived on the same Fillmore County farm for about 75 years. He had inherited 160 acres, had purchased the remainder of the original farm, and by the time of his death had increased

its area to 480 acres.

Edward T. Yates came to Nebraska from Indiana in the spring of 1873. He bought the E 1/2 of the SE 1/4 of Sec. 13, T6, R3, in Stanton township, from the Burlington Railroad. He took the NE ¼ of Sec. 24, T6, R3, as a timber claim. His brother John had homesteaded the NW ¼ of Sec. 24, so that they could live together while they proved up.

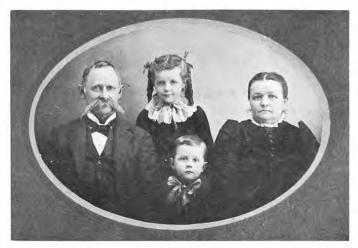
The brothers built a two-room shack over the dividing line. With a pit underneath and the walls banked to the windows with sod, they had a snug home on the wind-swept knoll. Ed used two yoke of oxen and a gang plow to break the sod and seed it to wheat, which they harvested with a header and threshed with a horse-powered thresher.

After proving up on the claim, Edward built a fourroom frame house on the 80 and brought his mother and sister out from Indiana. They lived with him for a time before they got land of their own. Later, Ed rented his place to John H. Morgan, another Hoosier, who had taken an adjoining farm in Chelsea township.

John farmed Ed's land while he was building on his own farm. In the meantime Ed drove the hack for his brother Sam, who had a mail route between Fairmont, Geneva, and Belvidere. In the spring of 1883, Edward moved onto the farm and continued improving it. He raised a family of seven

and lived there until his death in 1917.

After he died, his wife, Martha M. Yates, continued to live on the farm and worked it until the children were all of



Mr. and Mrs. Edward T. Yates, with children Edith and Howard (about 1900).

age. Then Eugene B. (Bert) Yates took over the operation of the place, but the mother lived there until her death in 1944. The heirs sold the place in 1945, and Bert Yates bought it. Another house was added in 1947, and a nephew, Robert Yates and his family, live in that. The farm is operated jointly by Bert and Robert.

FILLMORE COUNTY POOR FARM

On June 17, 1872, the governor of Nebraska, Silas Garber, signed a document permitting the sale of the SE ¼ of Sec. 16, T6, R3W. This land was originally given to the government by the railroad to be used for school purposes. A public auction was held and the land was sold for \$1,280.

The land was cultivated and, on August 1, 1873, was rented to O. C. Brown for \$1.50 per acre. Mr. Brown agreed to make payment on or before January 1, 1875, giving his note from date without interest.

The county board met on August 29, 1875, to consider building a poorhouse on this quarter, later known as the County Poor Farm, rather than renting out the land to a private party. Bids were to be taken for a specified construction project, and on September 14, 1875, five bids had been received: W. C. Massey, \$2,600; J. B. Thompson, \$2,800; J. Lee, \$1,775; J. H. Haughawout, \$1,674.50; and W. H. Chapin, \$1,473. On September 20, 1875, W. H. Chapin contracted to construct the building, within 60 days, for \$1,169.60.

Payment for the building was to be made from the \$806.74 already in the county's poorhouse fund, and from the sale of a \$368 warrant issued by the county board.

J. B. Williams was contracted to drill a well at the poor farm. He was to be paid 80 cents in cash or 95 cents in warrants per foot, at the option of the county commissioners.

On October 5, 1875, Dr. G. R. Hart contracted to serve as the poorhouse doctor for \$190 a year, payable quarterly. The single bid received for caretaker and lessee of the poor farm, that of Cyrus Marcy, was accepted on January 10, 1876. Mr. Marcy was to receive \$1.30 per cultivated acre of land, and \$3.70 weekly for care and board of each pauper. At the same time, a contract was let to J. C. Rosenburg for \$50 to build a 13' x 20' x 7' four-stall stable to be used by the lessee.

On February 7, 1876, the poor farm was ready for occupancy. On November 8, 1876, Dr. Brazelton and Dr. Dailey agreed to take over the medical treatment of the paupers for \$149 per annum.

Four dollars for conveyance to and from the poor farm to Geneva, Nebraska, was agreed upon June 15, 1878.

Cyrus Marcy asked for his release and was replaced by A. D. Stevens on December 14, 1878. Mr. Stevens was to receive \$1.25 per acre of land and \$3 per week for the care of each pauper. Doctors Hart and Oliver replaced Doctors Dailey and Brazelton on December 22, 1880. They continued their service until 1883, for \$70 per annum.



Photo from Mrs. John Reinsch Fillmore County Poor Farm. Back row center, Hugh Huston, manager; extreme right, Marion Diederich, assistant; sitting on arm of chair, Mrs. Hugh Huston. The other five people were residents of

Some minor changes and improvements were made, and caretakers and doctors were occasionally replaced as the years went by, but the poor farm largely continued in its original way under the supervision of the county board until 1937

the home.

Some of the caretakers after 1890 were Deal Fletcher, Walt Trask, James McPheren, Ed Dowis, Albert Kline, John Parnell, Carl Hurless, and H. C. Huston.

The wives of the managers of the county farm usually belonged to the Martland Aid Society and Club. Consequently they were invited to hold their meeting at the farm home once a year.

In 1887 the *Signal* reported that John Williams, an inmate of the county farm, died as the result of a fall down the cellar steps. Another accident happened a few years later when one of the inmates, who was from York, a Mr. Owens, was gored by a bull and died soon afterward.

In 1937, the poor farm was discontinued. It then became the Fillmore County Assistance Home, managed by the County Assistance Office. All of the former poor farm residents became eligible for Old Age Benefit checks and were allowed to stay in the Assistance Home if they paid for their board and room and their medical care. Private patients were also admitted. The Assistance Home operated successfully for the next eight years. During this time, a cattle barn, a granary, a hog house, a two-car garage, an irrigation well, a silo, and windbreaks were built on the premises. The original two-story frame house was destroyed by fire, and was replaced by a new brick home. Behind the



Sunset Rest Home (formerly County Farm Building), dedicated October 29, 1943.

cornerstone at the southeast corner of the new home is a bottle-sealed history of the Fillmore County Assistance Home. The new house was paid for by the fire insurance. The other improvements were financed by the farm's income. Few overhead expenses were necessary, since much of the farm labor was provided by relief-script labor and convict labor provided by the sheriff's office.

Throughout the operation of the Assistance Home, many people showed much generosity toward it, in giving both their time and their services. The county officers and especially Dr. Bixby should be commended for their faithful

services.

There were about 15 residents there during this period. Since many of the patients were bedfast and in need of medical care, the home gradually developed into a nursing home. On April 6, 1949, the Assistance Home was sold at auction to the Mennonite Church and was renamed the Mennonite Sunset Home. Before reopening the Home, Joe Kennel of Shickley, Floyd Steckly of Beaver Crossing, and William Kremer of Milford were named as the board of directors. There was also a five-man Benevolent Board representing the Mennonite congregations.

The Home was opened on March 1, 1950, with Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Troyer serving as first superintendent and matron and Mabel Gingrich serving as nurse. Later, Lena Schweitzer was employed as cook. Ernest Snyder of Shickley was the first guest. Dedication services were held on May 28, 1950.

Later, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Shantz of Canada served as superintendent and matron for several years. On April 1, 1956, Mr. and Mrs. Chester M. Helmick of Pinto, Maryland, replaced Mr. and Mrs. Shantz and served from then until 1958. Succeeding them were Mr. and Mrs. Abe Troyer (1958-1964); Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Leonard (1964); Mr. and Mrs. Wes Stutzman (1964); and Mr. and Mrs. Orville Troyer (1965-1967). In August, 1967, the operation was taken over by Mrs. Ivan Birky. The Home has an average guest list of about 30, ranging (in 1967) from 58 to 100 years of age. A Geneva physician provides medical services for the guests.

Members of the local church board include Paul Oswald, Mennonite Church, Shickley; Milford Est, Fairview Church, Milford; Albert Hostetler, West Fairview Church, Beaver Crossing; Chris Hargleroad, Roseland Church, Ayr; and Dan Nitsche, Plum Creek Church, Beemer. In addition, a Board of Missions and Charities in Elkhart, Indiana, which supervises all Mennonite homes, helps with the operations at the Sunset Home.



STORMS

Blizzard of 1888

(This account was written by Mrs. Sada Heery, now deceased):

The blizzard of January 12, 1888, took 200 lives in Nebraska and neighboring states. The weather changed in five minutes from a light snow from the south to an impenetrable sheet of blinding snow from the northwest. Several country schoolteachers in this county were compelled to stay all night in the schoolhouses with their pupils. I, with my pupils at the Bluff Schoolhouse, managed to get to a neighbor's house near the school, and spent the night and part of the next day there until the storm abated and roads could be cleared.

I will be remembered as Sada Davis if any of those oldtimers are still living.

Tornado of 1908

There was great havoc on the night of June 5, 1908, when a tornado went through Stanton township. It started around Shickley. It killed Mr. and Mrs. Arganbright, who lived 2 miles S and ¾ mile W of Martland. All their buildings were destroyed, as were the buildings across the road on the Andrew Baachman farm, but the Baachmans miraculously escaped injury. The tornado moved northeastward, hitting farmsteads of J. O. Merryman, Sr., Pete Saltzman, Sr., Roy McPharren, J. O. Merryman, Jr., Henry Bohlen, Ernest Ekwall, Bill Carson, John Dondlinger, and John Shively.

At the J. O. Merryman, Jr.'s, all buildings were destroyed and the family found shelter at the Herman Thole home ½ mile east. The tornado then went north and tore all the buildings down on the Bohlen farm. Next, at the Ernest Ekwall place, a short distance east, two legs of the windmill were blown out. At the Bill Carson place, the house was blown off the foundation. The storm, now going northeast, struck the John Dondlinger place and took out the middle section of the house. Last, the John Shively farm, about a mile west of Geneva, was struck.

At the John Shively farm, three people were killed and three were injured. The Shively family, noticing threatening clouds, had been in their cave for some time. They thought the storm was over and so came out and went back to bed. Soon a clap of thunder aroused them. They started for the cave again, but the storm hit before they could get to safety. Killed were Miss Lulu Schmidt, 18, who was employed at the Shively home; Sarah Irene Shively, 9, and Ralph Donald Shively, 5, daughter and son of the John Shivelys. Injured in the storm were Mr. and Mrs. Shively and Edward Fussell, who worked for them. John Shively's watch, which stayed in his pants pocket although its stem ring and leather chain vanished, was broken by some heavy object and had stopped at 9:22 P.M.

One of those interviewed after the storm was a neighbor,

Henry Muhlenberg. His story was this:

"The clouds looked so bad we went to our cave. The cyclone struck about 9:30. We could hear a terrible roaring sound below, and apparently above that was a whistling noise. After the storm had passed we came out of the cave expecting to see our buildings blown away but they were not. We looked about and flashes of lightning did not reveal any buildings at John Shively's, about 1/4 mile E of my place. Irvie Zink and I took a lantern and went to Shively's. I told Irvie to go to town for help and I stayed there. Irvie walked to Geneva, where the fire siren was sounded for help."

Andrew Baachman and family lived across the road south of the Arganbrights. All their buildings were destroyed, but none of the family was seriously injured. Two of the children left in their beds were found on the floor of their

bedroom. There were seven in the family.

Another interesting incident was reported about this storm. Conductor Hedburg and Brakeman Shoemaker, on a Burlington freight train, left Martland the evening of the storm about 9:30, just as the tornado broke out in all its fury. The twister turned west, and so the engineer kept going on toward Shickley, the next stop. Some of the wires had got badly tangled by the terrific wind and the train whistle would

not work; consequently, he coasted into Shickley, arriving safe and sound. No other damage was done to the train; everyone marveled at this.

This account of the 1908 tornado at the J. O. Merryman farm was related by Blanche (Mrs. J. O.) Merryman in 1957:

At our farm the storm took the house and all the other buildings. We had put the two children to bed and Grandma Merryman had gone upstairs to bed when Jim said that a storm was coming and he was going to call his mother down so we could all go to the cellar. I went and got the children up but Archie just sat down on the floor. I picked up Morris and went out in the kitchen to have Jim go after Archie but the door blew shut after me. By that time Grandma was down. She grabbed her shawl that was hanging on the stairway. She didn't know what she was going to do with it. She put her hand on the wall of the stairway and felt the plastering give way, so she put the shawl over her head and sat down on the floor. By that time the kerosene light had gone out and the windows had blown in. Jim said, "We are going. In a few minutes he called, "Where are you?" Grandma said, "Here I am, but I think Blanche and the children are dead."

I said, "Here I am, but you will have to help me up because there is plaster on me." A commode had fallen across my legs and I had Morris in my arms. Jim came and got Morris and gave him to Grandma. I got up and then Archie velled, "Mama, where are you?" Just then a streak of lightning flew across the sky and I saw Archie

sitting on the highest pile of rubbish.

By then the wind had changed to the northwest and it began to rain. There was a big elm tree out south of where the house had been. We got behind it to try to keep out of the wind. Jim went back and found a feather bed. He brought it over and we sat down on it. In a little while Jim went back and found a mattress which he dragged over and stood up against a tree to break the wind. We stayed there until it stopped raining. We found a bedspread and a quilt which we wrapped around the children. Then we could see the lights at the depot, so we started out to find shelter. The moon came out, and we could see the Herman Thole place a half-mile east of us.

Jim didn't have any shoes on, and neither did I. Grandma only had on one. That was the way we walked over to the Thole place. We had to wade through a draw where the water was up to our waists. Jim was carrying Archie with a quilt wrapped around him and I was carrying Morris with a wet bedspread around him. Thole's were in bed and didn't know there had been a tornado. It took the wheel off their windmill and the chimney off their house. We stayed there that night.

Jim and Mr. Thole went back to see if they could find any of the stock. They found some of the horses with their halter ropes tied to pieces of manger. Other horses had their halters, still buckled, pulled off their heads. Some of the horses were about 80 rods away from where the barn had been. One horse was standing in the creek with a cut 18 inches long in her shoulder, cut clear to the bone. Only 2 hogs were killed. The cattle got out of the pen in some way, though the gate was shut and the wires were broken. The chickens that survived were featherless



Remains of James Merryman farm destroyed by cyclone June 5, 1908.

The next day, June 6, 1908, was like the Fourth of July because of great number of rigs coming to see what had happened.

The storm went north from our place to the Henry Bohlen place, 3/4 mile N and 1/4 mile E, where it tore all their buildings down. Mr. and Mrs. Bohlen had gone to the cave. When he came up to get a lantern the storm caught him and carried him out in the trees north of the house. The storm continued its destructive course northeastward. Besides much property damage, it caused the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Arganbright and two children of the John Shivelys, as well as Miss Lulu Schmidt.

The storm went east from the Bohlen place to the Ernest Ekwall place, where it did some damage. The oddest thing was the fact that the storm took two legs out from under the windmill and left the other two with the platform on them. They found Mr. Bohlen and took him over to the Ekwall place. The storm went northeast and struck the John Dondlinger home. The house had been built in three parts. It took the middle part and left the other two parts standing.

After striking the John Shively place about a mile west of Geneva it continued on to the Girls' Industrial School, where it did some damage.



G. Hillgren home destroyed by cyclone June 5, 1908.

Another severe storm hit Stanton township about 6:30 P.M. on June 6, 1956. It did considerable damage but no lives were lost. Most of the damage was to barns and outbuildings and windmill towers. A good many telephone and electric lines were also damaged.

Accidents

Fern Geneva Schelkopf, the 18-month-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Schelkopf of near Martland, was drowned about 5 o'clock Tuesday evening, April 21, 1914. The child had been playing near the house while her mother was washing windows. When she was missed, the mother, father, and hired man promptly began a search. The child's body was found in the stock tank a few rods from the house. Dr. Wilson of Shickley was called. The parents applied artificial respiration, but when the doctor came he pronounced the baby dead.

It was supposed that the child had pulled herself up on some wiring near the edge of the tank, lost her balance, and fallen in. The funeral was held at the Martland church and

interment was in the Geneva cemetery.

Another accident in the community caused the death of Harry Stoldorf, youngest son of Charles Stoldorf. He died in the Lutheran Hospital at York on Thursday, April 15, 1926, as a result of injuries received two days before, in a discing accident. It was guessed that the tongue dropped to the ground while the machine was turning, frightening the sixhorse team and making them run toward the barns. The bouncing of the disc threw him forward in such a way that his right leg was caught between the braces and held tightly, while his body, back against the ground, was swept along under the heavy disc for nearly half a mile.

His wife, who happened to be outside, was alarmed by the noise and hurried to the halting team. She found her husband unconscious under the disc. After unhitching the horses, with almost superhuman strength she raised the disc and removed his mangled body. At the York hospital, where he was taken immediately, it was found that his skull was fractured and he had received fatal internal injuries. No operation was attempted. Although at first he regained partial consciousness, he was not able to give any details of the accident, and

soon sank into a coma, dying in about 48 hours.

The following Thursday, neighbors with teams and tractors went into Mrs. Stoldorf's fields and plowed them for her. Those helping were William Wilkins, Ora Brown, Roy Davis, Grant Bail, Albert Diederich, Fred Bartels, Frank Grote, Bert Stoldorf, Merritt Hedden, Warren Nickell, Lou Otte, George Grote, Harry Beavers, William Stoltzfus, Fred Reeb, John Augustine, Everett Ingels, George Hillgren, A. J. Sackschewsky, J. O. Merryman, and Archie Merryman. The ladies served dinner at the hall.

The fire that burned the grandstand at the Fair Grounds on September 15, 1938, although not within Stanton township, touches Stanton history indirectly. A. A. Russell, a former resident of Martland who later farmed north of there, was president of the Fair Board in 1938, the year of that large but luckily non-fatal conflagration.



Photo from Mrs. Mabel Wernimont

On the Bailor farm in 1892. Left—Adam Bailor plowing ½ row of corn with one horse. Norman Wood, riding the horse.

Right—Mrs. Silas E. Bailor riding the first two-row cultivator, invented and built by Silas E. Bailor in his blacksmith shop on his farm in Stanton township.



Photo from Geneva State Bank Fillmore County Poor Farm (June 17, 1928).



Fillmore County "Co-operative Farm," 1940.



Photo from Mrs. Maynard Merryman Banner Sunday School Class of Martland (1926). Front row left to right: Elizabeth Schelkopf, Anna Saltzman, Lola McPeck, Blanche Hillgren, Ruth McPeck, Dorothy Clements, Edna Posvar, Helen McPeck. Back row: Fred Posvar, Unidentified, Leroy Merryman, Kenneth Clements, Fred Gruenhage, Unidentified, Maynard Merryman.



Photo from Nebraska Signal Vernon Pearson, chairman of Shickley Irrigators Ass'n, shown measuring the static water level in one of the 45 wells measured by the directors of the Irrigators Ass'n.



Photo from Nebraska Signal Extension Council, 1965. Back row, left to right: Earl Ely, William Krejci, Clair Christiancy (president), Derald Merryman, James Wythers. Front row: Mrs. Ray Wells, Mrs. George Nun, Mrs. Bill Eich



Photo from Nebraska Signal Exeter Feeders' Tour, 1966 (at Schelkopf Brothers Farm).

West Blue Township

West Blue township is located on the northern edge of Fillmore County. It is bounded on the north by York County and on the east by Fairmont, on the south by Geneva and on the west by Grafton townships. It derives its name from the West Blue River, which winds in a northeasterly direction through its northern part. The land is gently rolling, except for some roughness along the river. There are large deposits of sand and gravel, which have been used to surface many of the county's roads. By the end of 1966, a total of 45 irrigation wells had been drilled in the township.

The history of this township is especially interesting, as the first homesteads in the county were located here. In June, 1866, William O. Bussard and William C. Whitaker, natives of Ohio, filed on homestead claims. Mr. Bussard was first and filed on the NE ¼ of Sec. 8, T8, R3W of the 6th Prinicipal Meridian. Mr. Whitaker, the second claimant, filed on the NW ¼ of the same section. These men then came onto their claims, making dugouts and shelter for their stock, thus

preparing for permanent settlement.

In October, 1866, Nimrod J. Dixon filed on the SE ¼ of Sec. 6, T8, R3W and his fiancée, Miss Lydia Gilmore, filed on the SW ¼ of the same section. Mr. Dixon selected his land without seeing it. At that time he could homestead 160 acres; but the law was shortly to change so that one person could homestead only 80 acres. As he would not have had time to come and see the land and get back to Nebraska City to file on it before the law changed, he chose his claim and viewed it later.





Mr. and Mrs. Nimrod J. Dixon

The same season, J. H. Malick and Jacob Werts, both young natives of Ohio, and James Whitaker, twin brother of William, filed on claims, making a total of seven for Fillmore County in the year 1866. All of these claim-holders, fearing the severity of the winter, spent the time until spring farther east, with relatives or friends.

In the spring of 1867, the Whitakers and Mr. Bussard returned to their claims and broke some of the ground, and then went to Missouri to spend the winter of 1867-68 with their families. They returned in the spring, bringing with them their mother, Mrs. Elisha Whitaker, then over 70 years old. She filed on a claim adjoining that of her son William.

On February 28, 1867, after having to go all the way to Nebraska City for the license, Nimrod J. Dixon was married to Miss Lydia Gilmore at the home of her parents in adjacent York County. This was the first marriage in York County. Mr. and Mrs. Dixon then moved onto their claims, where they lived continuously for 40 years.

On October 20, 1868, **Henry L. Badger**, a native of Connecticut, came with his family from Livingston County, Illinois, and settled on the NW ¼ of Sec. 2, T8, R3W. Later in the fall, E. L. Martin and L. R. Warner also filed on claims but did not settle on them until the spring of 1869. Only a few settlers were added to the list in 1869, but the year 1871 brought the railroad and with it large numbers of people.

The first settlers dealt with Nebraska City, as that was

the nearest railroad station. Mail was brought by carrier from post office to post office, the offices being in the homes of the settlers. The mail was all carried in one sack and emptied at each post office, where the mail addressed to there was sorted out and the rest put back into the sack to be carried on to the next office for a repeat performance.

E. L. Martin laid out a town on his land and called it Fillmore. He was commissioned postmaster on March 10, 1871, and kept at Fillmore the first post office in the county. In the same year, Henry L. Badger was commissioned postmaster of an office known as West Blue. He kept the office in the dugout for two years and, for some time after that, in his log house, even after the establishment of the post office in Fairmont.

J. E. Porter was the pioneer merchant of the county. He opened a store in Fillmore City on February 10, 1871; but in the fall he moved his store to Fairmont.

On March 15, 1871, Henry L. Badger was appointed registrar of voters for the county by acting Governor W. H. James. He took the oath of office before William Ong, justice of the peace in York County, and proceeded with his duties.

As early in the history of the county as 1868, the little band of settlers along the West Blue River enjoyed religious services. The Rev. Isadore Caldwell, a United Brethren circuit rider, came up the river valley on horseback and preached in the dugouts of the Whitakers, Bussards, and Dixons.

The first marriage license in Fillmore County was issued June 27, 1871, to William C. Whitaker, the first homesteader, and Sabra Brumsey. They were married June 28 by County Judge William H. Blain. The names of Mrs. H. L. Badger and John Whitaker appeared as witnesses. The county judge came from his home some 15 miles away, in Madison township (Sec. 20), and spent the night in the dugout of H. L. Badger, who lived 1½ miles from the scene of the wedding. Judge Blain borrowed Mr. Badger's coat to perform the ceremony.

The first white boy and girl of Fillmore County were born in West Blue township. They were Arthur Dixon, son of Mr. and Mrs. N. J. Dixon, born on their homestead January 9, 1869, and Emma Whitaker (Mrs. J. K. Hall), daughter of Mrs. and Mrs. James C. Whitaker, born in 1870.



Photo from Erma Dixon Arthur Dixon, first white child born in Fillmore County.

In 1872, the board of commissioners decided to divide the county into precincts six miles square. They ordered the following notice to be published in the *Fillmore County Bulletin* for four consecutive weeks, with the date for reorganization set for January 7, 1873: "Notice is hereby

given that on Tuesday the 17th day of December A.D. 1872, the legal voters of the various townships in the County of Fillmore will meet." The voting for West Blue township was at the home of William Whitaker.

In the 1870's, many more homesteaders came. A few of those whose records are available are the following:

Joseph Carney, a native of Pennsylvania, was born November 7, 1832. He enlisted for three months in the Pennsylvania State Militia in 1860 but saw no active service. In March, 1872, he came to Fillmore County and took up a homestead on Sec. 32, West Blue township. His first home here was a small frame house in which he and his family lived while he converted the wild land into highly cultivated fields. Mr. Carney and his wife Mary (Mills) had four children, William L., Margaret V., Mary A., and Susie M. Carney.



Photo from Mary Badger Halsey Carney home in West Blue township

J. B. Cory was born in Wyoming County, New York, August 11, 1839. He came to West Blue township in 1872 and took up a homestead and a timber claim on Sec. 18. In 1881, he married Miss Nancy Sloniger; they had two chil-

dren, Clara and Perry N. Cory.

Isaac Eastwood, a worthy representative of one of the prominent and highly respected pioneer families of West Blue township, was born in Yorkshire, England, December 21, 1855. He was the son of Thomas and Fannie Eastwood. He was reared and educated in his native land and there started to learn the machinist's trade but was forced to abandon this because of his health. In 1872, he accompanied his parents on their emigration to America, where they became residents of Fillmore County. His father homesteaded on the W ½ of the NW¼ of Sec. 12, West Blue township. Their first home was a sod house, replaced some years_later by a frame house. In 1882, Mr. Eastwood married Miss Inex Aldrich, who died in February, 1884. He was married again, to Miss Nancy F. Chambers, on March 11, 1886. He served as treasurer of West Blue township for two terms.

John B. Kauffman, an honored pioneer and influential citizen of West Blue township, was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, April 28, 1825. He was a son of John and Eliza Kauffman. In 1837 he accompanied the family on their removal to Ohio. At the age of 16, he commenced learning the blacksmith's trade, which he continued to follow in Ohio until April, 1870, when he came here and homesteaded on Sec. 8. He erected a log house upon his land and opened the first blacksmith shop in the county. In exchange for work in the shop, his neighbors broke his land during the first year of his residence here. He followed both blacksmithing and farming, meeting with marked success. There were still some Indians in this region at the time of his arrival, but none were hostile. While in Ohio, Mr. Kauffman was married, on December 31, 1854, to Miss Melissa Whitaker. Four children were born to them: Dora F., Martha I., Nellie E., and Lon S. Kauffman. Mrs. Kauffman died March 8, 1895, and Mr. Kauffman on March 14, 1904.

John Lindgren was born in Sweden in 1815. When he reached manhood, he married Christina Swanson, by whom he had five children.

He and his family sailed for the United States in 1868. After six months spent in Harlem, New York, he removed to Princeton, Illinois, where he lived until 1870. The family then came to Fillmore County, taking up a homestead on Sec. 4, West Blue. After constructing a dugout for the accomodation of his family, he began to break sod and improve the land. At the end of seven years, he traded it for 120 acres in the same township, where he made his home until his death on January 26, 1893. His wife died on February 26, 1898.

Elof Lindgren, the only son, owned and operated this farm after the death of his father. On November 24, 1887, he was united in marriage with Josephine A. Kron. He retired early and made his home in Grafton.

George F. Marsh, who was born in De Witt County, Illinois, in 1840, saw active duty and was wounded in the Civil War. He settled on Sec. 20 in 1873. Mr. and Mrs. Marsh had nine children: Charlie, John, Mary E., Georgiana, Samuel B., Edward, May B., Julia M., and Eleanor B. Marsh.

In 1872, John A. Martin and his wife Mary J. (Larmer) Martin, both natives of Ireland, settled in West Blue township, taking up a 160-acre homestead on the SE ½ of Sec. 20. The son, John Martin, Jr., lived on Sec. 22. On May 19, 1878, John Martin, Jr., married Miss Missouri Johnson, a daughter of Abraham and Sarah (Eckley) Johnson. Nine children were born to this union: Mabel E., Thomas L., Clara B., Dora A., Clarence L., Hattie E., Allen E., James H., and one who died in infancy.

Henry E. Oates, a well-known and prominent agriculturist of Fillmore County, was born March 1, 1839, on the Isle of Man, off the coast of England, and was reared and educated in his native land. In the spring of 1855, he sailed for America. He first located in Chicago, Illinois, where he learned the carpenter's trade. In 1860, he went to Colorado and engaged in mining until the fall of 1862, when he enlisted in Company I, Second Colorado Volunteer Infantry, and was assigned to the Army of the Southwest. He saw a lot of hard service in Missouri, Arkansas, and Indian Territory. At the close of the war he was honorably discharged. He was married to Miss Mary Bermaster, a native of Stark County, Illinois, in 1872. Six children were born to them: Henry, William J., Thomas A., Robert, Oscar, and Harriet J. Oates. In 1883 he came to Nebraska and settled on Sec. 28, West Blue township.





My father, Anson Cary Palmer, and my mother, Amanda Lewis Palmer, homesteaded on Sec. 14, T8, R3W, West Blue, 2 miles N and 2 miles W of Fairmont. My father, a Civil War veteran, had picked this location in the spring of 1869, and in 1871 brought my mother and my older sister May to Nebraska. The lumber for the house was hauled with ox teams from Lincoln. Part of the house still standing on the property is the original homestead.

A. C. Palmer was fatally injured in an accident at the Fairmont elevator in March, 1885. His widow was left to rear the six children: May Palmer, the oldest, aged 14; Clara Palmer (Beach); Eva Palmer (Reader); Charlene Palmer (Zunuwalt); Earle Palmer; and the youngest, Clarence Palmer. Clarence, the only one of the children to remain on the home-

stead, lived there for 50 years, until he retired. He now lives with his wife Ethel in Fairmont. Their three children were Dorsey Palmer (deceased), Pauline Palmer Hurst, and Joyce Palmer Dean.

—Mrs. Clarence Palmer



Hesperin homestead (4 miles from Fairmont) in 1897. Left to right: Mel Millen, Grandma Palmer, Aunt Emma Shuler, Earl Palmer.



Photo from Clarence Palmer The A. C. Palmer family. Back row, left to right: Charlene, A. C. Palmer, May. Middle row: Eva, Mrs. Amanda Palmer, Clara. Bottom row: Clarence and Earle.

The Hon. J. M. Perkins, son of Joshua and Rebecca Perkins, was born in Bedford County, Pennsylvania, October 3, 1828. On coming west in 1873, he located in Grundy County, Illinois, where he purchased a farm and turned his attention to agricultural pursuits. He made his home there until 1882, when he bought a farm in West Blue township and became a resident of Fillmore County. On December 26, 1882, Mr. Perkins was united in marriage with Miss Mary Blake, a native of Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. In 1888, he was elected supervisor of West Blue township and served in this office for seven years. He was elected to the lower house of the State Legislature in 1895 and filled that position for one term with credit to himself and his constituents; during his term, he was a member of the Committee on Agriculture, Cities, and Villages. Mr. and Mrs. Perkins had 11 children: George A., Harvey G., Charles W., John A., Edward D., Alexander R., and Frank B. Perkins, and four daughters.





Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Perkins

The following history of the NE ¼ of Sec. 34, West Blue, was written by Ora A. Robbins, the present owner and resident since birth:

In 1874, my father, Fernando F. Robbins, a Civil War veteran of 1861 to 1865, his wife, a daughter, and a son migrated from the state of New York and settled on this place. He bought out a homesteader's right and proved up on the claim. The patent, No. 10,078, was issued November 1, 1881, and was signed by President Chester A. Arthur.

The only incumbrance ever on the place was a mortgage for \$600, dated February 18, 1879. It was released January 22, 1880.

The only improvement on the place at the time my folks arrived was a dugout (if it may be called an improvement). It was just a hole in the ground for the tenant to live in, along with his wife and one young child. He was a lawyer by profession.

Going back to my folks, the daughter mentioned above, Carrie E., was born November 17, 1869. She is now Mrs. Carrie Avery who lives in the north side of Fairmont. The son, Earl D., died the year they came out here. He was one year and one day old and is buried on this place. The grave is marked by a large evergreen tree.

As to myself, I was born January 2, 1876, and have been a continual resident on this farm since. Nearly all of my schooling was at District 11, one mile west of here. I served on this school board for 33 years.



Mr. and Mrs. F. F. Robbins (about 1920)

In 1905, I was married to Miss Berneice Nichols. In 1906, we built a house just across the driveway from my folks. The house was 16' x 28', one and three-quarters stories. I continued farming the quarter.

Two daughters were born to us. Florence M. was born on May 7, 1908, and Hazel B. was born June 6, 1913. Both daughters followed the schoolteaching profession. For six years Florence taught in Districts, 81, 11, and 3 in Fillmore County. In 1931, she married Everett Nichols and now lives 2 miles S of here. They have two boys, Gene and Marvin. Both have served their time in the Army—Gene, overseas in Korea, and Marvin, in three different training camps.

Hazel taught in Districts 3, 12 and 29. While teaching in District 29, she contracted scarlet fever from one of her pupils and died in 1936.

I was in school on the day of that memorable blizzard of

January 12, 1888.

My mother died in 1923 and my father in 1926.

In my father's will, this quarter was left to me. I was appointed administrator of his estate. After the death of my parents, we wrecked most of my folks' house, dug a full basement 28' x 36', moved my house over to the basement and built to it a completely modern house. We installed a 10,000-gallon cistern for soft water, with the water under automatic electric pressure. All this project was practically done by our own labor. Laying up the basement walls, plumbing, wiring, painting, plastering, were the jobs hired.

We both belong to the Rebekah Lodge. I have been a member of the Fairmont Odd Fellows lodge for over 55 years, and was its secretary for $16\frac{1}{2}$ years. We both belong to the

Methodist Church.



Photo from Mary Badger Halsey Mr. and Mrs. William E. Smith

In February, 1878, W. E. Smith left Berkshire County, Massachusetts, where he had been born and reared, and came straight to Nebraska, buying in New York a ticket to Lincoln. He was then 24 years old. Soon after landing here, he bought SE 1/4 of Sec. 10 from Isaac N. Dille. Mr. Dille had homesteaded and broken 20 acres, but, as his wife did not like the county, they had gone back to Iowa. Mr. Smith built up the farm and fed quite a number of cattle and hogs. He served three terms as county supervisor. Three children, Harry Leah, and Ethel, were born here and graduated from the Fairmont High School. Harry was born on this farm on February 1, 1882, and lived there until he sold the farm to Floyd Lott and moved to Fairmont on December 29, 1960. He spent his childhood and married life here except for two years when he worked in Wyoming. He married Ema Haughawout of Fairmont, who was born July 9, 1882, and has always lived in Fillmore County. The couple had two children, Dale and Margaret (Mrs. Francis Nichols).



William Smith driving team (about 1900)

Miss Clara Stines, a longtime resident of Fairmont (died September 28, 1964) supplied this account of her father, Hal P. Stines, Sr., and his homestead. After stating that in 1878 Joe Rose bought the NE ¼ of Sec. 28, she continued: "In the spring of 1879, Mr. Stines went to Thompson, Illinois, and while there married Clara E. Rose on June 30, 1879. This is an account of the wedding published in the Fillmore County Bulletin:

"Married at the residence of the bride's parents, June 30, 1879, by Rev. Lower, Hal P. Stines of West Blue Precinct, Fillmore County, and Miss Clara E. Rose of Thompson, Carroll County, Illinois.

"The delighted couple arrived in Fairmont on July 11, and proceeded to West Blue, beginning housekeeping at once. Mr. Stines is one of our young and enterprising farmers, who very wisely made up his mind that it is not good for man to be alone. He has taken

Photo from Mrs. Hal P. Stines, Jr. Hal P. Stines, Sr., and his grandson making garden in 1918.



unto himself one of the most beautiful and highly prized varieties of Illinois roses and transplanted her to the more genial soil of his beloved Nebraska, where her fragrance will be daily and hourly upon Hal instead of wasted upon desert air."

"The Bulletin extends congratulations and wishes them a happy

"The next year I (Clara) was born and we lived there until 1886. I still own the farm. We then moved on the SW ¼ of Sec. 16, West Blue township. Father had bought this from the government during Grover Cleveland's first administration. The deed was signed by Cleveland.

"My brother, Hal P. Stines, Jr., was born there and has

never lived anywhere else.

"October 9, 1949, a windstorm llew all the buildings

down except the house and crib.

"Six children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Hal P. Stines, Sr.: Clara R., Fletcher H., Hilda A., Ruth A., Hal P. Stines,

Jr., and two who died in infancy."

Shelly Stines, a brother of Hal P. Stines, Sr., was reared in New York. He moved to Iowa in 1866 and farmed there until he came to Nebraska in 1880. After spending one year in York County, he purchased 480 acres of valuable land in West Blue township. He gave special attention to the care and feeding of livestock. In 1898, he erected upon his place, at a cost of \$2,500, one of the best homes in the county. He married Miss Sarah A. Bennett in 1884. Their children were LeRoy, Archie, Amy, Helen, Maude, and Dorothy.

George W. Swartz was born in Brant County, Ontario, Canada, on November 9, 1842. His parents, William and Sarah Swartz, were natives of New York and Pennsylvania, respectively, but spent most of their lives in Canada. In 1864, he moved to Livingston County, Illinois, where he made his home for 19 years. On March 27, 1872, he married Miss Elizabeth Rook of Delaware. The children born to this union were Emma (Mrs. L. A. Frederick), William, Harvey J., Clara B., and Olive L. Swartz. Arriving in Fillmore County in 1883, he bought 225 acres of land in Sec. 6, West Blue township. He farmed and improved this land, which has ever since been in the Swartz family. In 1888, he built a large barn which is still in use. The farm is owned today by William Swartz, now living in York.



The George Swartz family about 1915. Left to right: Clara, Mrs. Swartz, George Swartz, Olive, and William. Harvey and Emma not pictured.

J. A. Swartz was born in Brant County, Ontario, Canada, May 3, 1851. After being educated in the public schools of the Dominion, in 1868 he came to the United States and settled in Illinois. In the spring of 1878, he came to Fairmont, Nebraska, and rented land for one year, after which he purchased a farm on Sec. 5, West Blue township, for \$6 per acre. It was under cultivation, and the first year he raised \$2,000 worth of wheat, which more than paid for the farm. In December, 1875, he married Miss Sarah A. Pearson, a native of Illinois. Seven children were born to them: Carrie L., Ernest, Nellie, Lillian, Carl, Roy, and Jessie.

Some of the earliest industries were milling and lumbering. When the town of Fillmore was laid out by E. L. Martin in 1870 in the valley of the West Blue River, the first post office was established. The pioneer store, which opened February 10, 1871, was run by J. E. Porter, who was also deputy postmaster.

In 1873, C. M. Northrup built the first flouring mill in the county. A notice in the *Bulletin* on April 21, 1873, stated that C. M. Northrup & Company asked the citizens of Fillmore, York, and adjoining counties to assist in building the mill dam, mill race, and mill on Sec. 1, T8, R4W. Mr. Northrup wanted volunteers to bring spade, shovel, pick, axe, wagon and team, or the one thing needful to procure a substitute. He had brought from the East a turbine water wheel, corn mills, a sawmill, and a lath mill, and had made arrangements for all other machinery as soon as needed. The village now contained a mill, schoolhouse, blacksmith shop, store, and 50 inhabitants. The mill continued to operate until 1921 or 1922, when it was torn down. L. A. Frederick was the last miller and owner. People from miles around hauled their grain to the mill and took home flour and meal.

The sand and gravel of the Blue River were used extensively in the building of bridges and roads. In the early years, it was hauled from the river beds by wagons and teams. Now, large pits are dug and the gravel is pumped out by machinery into gravel trucks, which carry it off for road and cement work. The large gravel deposits on the NE ½ of Sec. 17 were once owned by Herbert Lauber of Geneva. They were for some time the property of the Overland Sand & Gravel Company of Stromsburg, Nebraska. The Nichols Construction Company of Geneva bought the area from Overland on February 16, 1946. It is estimated that the Nichols firm alone has pumped more than 250,000 cubic yards of gravel from these deposits.

The Budler brothers, Bernard and Wayne, in 1935 started a truck garden in the Blue River valley on the SE ½ of Sec. 5, raising tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet corn, and potatoes. During World War II, their business particularly thrived, and they used three pick-up trucks to deliver their produce to neighboring towns and to the Fairmont Army Air Base. In 1952, another brother, Louis, took over the business; he continues to raise tomatoes, sweet corn, and cucumbers for sale to people who come out there to get the produce.

The growing of hybrid seed corn is one of the more recent industries in the township. The Lauber Seed Farms purchased the SE 1/4 of Sec. 9 from the F. S. Ashby estate in 1942. The W. A. Biba Engineering Company then leveled 140 acres, using, for the first time, four new DW-10's, fourwheel tractors and scoops. After leveling, the Lauber Blue Valley Hybrid seed was produced on this land, irrigated from the Blue River. In 1945, the Laubers purchased the NE 1/4 of Sec. 9-long the property of Isaac Beery, whose only daughter had married a man named Flick-from the Flicks' interest. This quarter had been in hybrid seed corn production, and this use has been continued. A 2,000-bushel ear-corn dryer was built in 1947 when R.E.A. came through this area. In 1955, when the Blue River was very low, a 1,200gallon deep-well was put down to supplement the river irrigation.

In 1950, a 250-tree orchard, of apple and peach trees, was planted on a 15-acre plot, on a contoured and terraced hillside. But after seven or eight years this operation proved

to be not economically sound; the orchard has been destroyed and the land put back into cultivation.

In 1956, Lauber's Blue Valley Hybrid Milo was grown for the first time; production from the hybrid milos has been very good. Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Smith, the tenants on this farm, have been in charge since this land was first purchased. This 320-acre farm is now owned by the Lauber Seed Company and leased to the Lauber Seed Farms.

In 1953, Roy King purchased the District 1 schoolhouse and used this building as a headquarters for raising bees and selling honey. He keeps more than 3,000 bees, and honey dealers over a large territory purchase his product.

Cattle raising is carried on quite extensively in this township, as the areas around the river banks offer much good pasture. One of the largest cattle feeders in the area is the Nichols Brothers farm, located on the NE ¼ of Sec. 17 and managed by Mr. and Mrs. Howard Brower.

The history of West Blue township would not be complete without some mention of the landmarks many of us remembered as children but which are now gone. One such landmark was the beautiful cedar trees in the yard of the Ora Robbins farm. Clyde M. Husted, in his article "My Red Wheel and I" (Nebraska Signal, September 6, 1901), describes them:



Photo from Ora Robbins Trees in the Robbins farmyard in 1901

Mr. Robbins' house is well set back from the road on rising ground. In the front yard is planted 30 just common old cedar trees. We may say the trees are "common old cedar trees," but the artistic manner in which Mr. Robbins trims them is very uncommon.

Mr. Robbins is an artist and these trees are said to be as fine as any in the United States unless it be those in the Italian Gardens on the grounds of H. H. Hunnewell at Wellesley College, Massachusetts. The 30 trees are trimmed in 28 different designs. We will mention a few of the designs, but it is impossible to know the beauty of these trees without once seeing them. One is trimmed in the form of a lantern. This is very nice and shows much artistic work. The one most people admire and the one that shows off nicest from the road is trimmed into the form of a gravy dish. We have another trimmed into the form of a wash bowl and pitcher and he is now fitting a watch-dog to stand guard on another. These are fine specimens of what is called topiary work, and add much to the value of the farm. Mr. Robbins has been offered \$25 if he would transplant a single tree to another ground.

Another landmark was the huge cottonwood trees on the Badger homestead. (These are described more fully in the Badger family story.)

The general apperance of the township has changed immensely in the last generation. Most of the roads are now graveled. Farming has changed notably since irrigation. There are now 35 irrigation wells in this township, and the methods of farming have kept up with the times.

There used to be threshing rigs run by steam engines at harvest time. Nowadays, large self-propelled combines can be seen in almost every wheat field. Tractors are getting larger, and have become easier to drive, with power steering, cushioned seats, and even radios to put a little music into the farmer's long outdoor day. He can also keep up with the news, weather, and markets even while out in the field.

When butchering time came in the good old days, several neighbors brought their hogs and had a butchering bee.



Photo from Mary Badger Halsey Threshing scene about 1900

They didn't choose bacon-type hogs, but rather the ones that would give them the most lard. Water to scald the hogs was heated in large iron kettles and the hogs were dunked into barrels of scalding water after they had been killed. The scraping was done as they hung from their hind legs from trees. One picture of the time is of a butchering scene at the home of H. I. Mills. Six neighbors were posing with eight large hogs strung up in the trees. All the available dishpans and kettles were brought out to hold livers, hearts, and tongues. The meat was cared for in the home by salt curing or smoking, and in later days, by canning. Now, most farm homes have freezers. The hogs and beef are taken to a butcher, and by the time the farmer sees the meat again it is all wrapped and sharp-frozen, ready for the freezer.

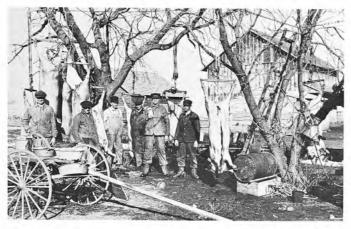


Photo from Ora Robbins
Butchering at H. I. Mills farm

The coming of R.E.A. made life much easier in the farm homes. Cows are milked by electric milkers, electric motors are used for lifting, and ironing and washing machines are lifesavers for the housewife.

CHURCHES

No churches were built in West Blue township. However, almost every school district offered the public an opportunity to participate in religious training, as Sunday School and Bible Study classes were held on Sunday afternoons in the schoolhouses. A good many families in each local district could attend these lessons.

The West Blue Aid Society was organized on November 3, 1897. Its first meeting was at the home of Mrs. Jennie Burgess. The officers were: Mrs. Jennie Burgess, president; Mrs. Dreney Farley, vice-president; Mrs. Carrie Smith, secretary; Mrs. Carrie Avery, treasurer; Mrs. Julia Verry and Mrs. Susanna Hall, directors. The dues were five cents per month. Meetings were held in the homes of the members every two weeks.

Their objective was social intercourse and the making of money for the Methodist Church in Fairmont. The finances were gleaned by dues, oyster suppers, evening socials, and ice-cream socials, and was given out by the vote of members attending meetings. Sometimes the money was used for church furnishings. No definite sums were to be raised, nor were any promises made; the women did the best they could and gladly gave what they could afford.

The members from November 3, 1897, to October 8, 1925, as listed by the secretary's books for that period, were:

Mrs. Susanna Hall Mrs. Alex Perkins Anna Hall Mrs. Valeria Patterson Mrs. Lenfert Mrs. Cora Perkins Maggie Perkins Mary Calaway Mrs. M. Badger Halsey Bertie Spahr Mrs. Jennie Foulon Mrs. John Keller Amanda McCashland Mrs. Clara Rose Stines Mary Perkins Mrs. Julia Verry Mrs. L. Bender Anna Swan Mrs. Charles Perkins J. F. Little Mrs. Mary Lashbrook Mrs. Artie Green Mrs. W. A. Lewis Sarah Stines Mrs. Dreney Farley Pira Billick Mrs. Jennie Burgess Mrs. Ralph Beuch Mrs. J. T. Bender Mrs. Flora Bumgarner Carrie Smith Mrs. Albro Jennie Farrar Alice Moul Mrs. L. H. Badger Mrs. E. M. Forbes

The officers in 1967 were: Velma (Mrs. Walter) Moul, president; Mae (Mrs. Otto) Schmidt, vice-president; Ninette (Mrs. Lew) Moul, secretary; and Viola (Mrs. Jake) Lutz, treasurer. At the present date, the West Blue Aid Society is still very active and working for the same aims and purposes as those for which the society was organized, with only a few changes. The officers are elected for a term of one year at the last regular meeting in each December. There are no dues. Meetings were changed from every two weeks to the first and third Wednesday of each month. There is one charter member, Mrs. Carrie Avery.

No community would be complete without some social life. Through the years several different clubs were formed.

In the early 1900's, a group of some 30 young people formed the Jubilee Club, for young couples who were dating. They met in the homes of the members, and their entertainment was chiefly composed of parlor games.



Photo from Ora Robbins

Jubilee Club in the early 1900's. 1-Orin Harmon, 2-unknown, 3-unknown, 4-Clarence Nichols, 5-Mary Talmadge, 6-Bernice Nichols Robbins, 7-unknown, 8-Hattie Bridgman, 9-Art Lefler, 10-Ida Shosmaker Black, 11- Jessie Nichols, 12-Mason Chapin, 13-unknown, 14-Charles Milner, 16-Nellie Lashbrook Nichols, 17-Maude Swartz Duey, 18-Clara Bear Shoemaker, 19-Hannah Aldrich, 20-Elizabeth Pollock Hutton, 21-unknown, 22-Edgar Nichols, 23-Charles McFadden, 24-Lillie Goodsel Nichols, 25-Fannie Sawyer, 26-Mamie Pollock Camp, 27-Anna Shoemaker, 28-Milt Jolly, 29-Homer Harmon, 30- Ora Robbins, 31-unknown.

The Twentieth Century Club was formed in 1910 by the married women in West Blue and neighboring communities. The purpose of this club was to quilt, sew carpet rags, or do any other similar work the hostess wished to have done.

In the early spring of 1925, a group of ladies met at the home of Mrs. Will Carney for the purpose of organizing a club which took the name of the West Blue Kitchen Club. Mrs. Carney was elected president. On November 17, 1925, the club met at the home of Mrs. Frank Rolfes. Mrs. Will Carney was unanimously elected president; the other officers were Mrs. O. A. Robbins, vice-president; and Mrs. Anna

West Blue Township Homestead Map

					-						
Anson Titus	Peter Tryon			John A. Whitaker	Owen Flin			Henry L Badger	Wilson Mathews		
Elisha L. Martin				John Boweli	N O Winberg			Henry L. Badger			
Lydia Dixon	Nimrod J. Dixon		5	William N. Howell	James B Whitaker			Thomas O'Brien	Arthur C Clark		1.
				John Lindgren					John Eastwood		
		Wm. C. Whitaker	Wm. O. Bussard			Lyman R. Jacob F. Warner Laschan- zky	Charles Hubbard			Thomas Martin B Eastwood Phillips	Martin B. John Philips Flys
	7	Elisha Whitaker	Gronville M Palmer		9	Jacob F Laschansky	Isaac N Dille		ū	John R McCashland	Thomas Wykoff
		John B. Kauffman	Eleanor Palmer			James W Toland					
Cyrus Wright	George Bussard Jeduthan B Cozey							Anson C Palmer	Byron Moffett		
Nelson F Allen	Jeduthan B. Corey		17		16	.1	5	Joseph Saylor	Phebe Isaac Spade Spade		ii.
		William Bosserman	George C Witter			Heinrich Jonothan Krunsich Hall	Owen L. Shaw			William Spade	Andrew G Church
	9.	Patrick S. Real	John Martin		21	Pyra T Stines	David J Tiffany		13	William N Stewart	Gew W Gree
enj T Lucinda aShell Long	John M. John Jenkens Ash			Heary L. Hickman	Jacob F Boyer			C. H M. Masfield	John W Stewari		
John Shofi	Thumas Henderson Ann Taylor		29	Arron W Chase	Gearge Barrows	2	7	Nellie Nellie Porter Porter	James C. Purter		15
	i	Joseph Joseph Carney Carney	Lewis 5. Beall			Henry George Schraeden Ulsh	Fernando F Robbins				
	ii.	Wm. P. Craig	John C Beatl		12	Louisa H Chaplin	James A Barr		15		6
		Anna C Bruce	Wm. A. Stuckey								
		Anna C Bruce	Wm A. Stuckey	4		1					

Bergstrand, secretary-treasurer. The other members were Mrs. Cal McElvain, Mrs. Ernest Softley, Mrs. Harry Bordner, Mrs. Frank Rolfes, Mrs. Mike Griffin, Mrs. Roy Hull, Mrs. Tina Everetts, Mrs. Alex Ogden, and Mrs. Jim Smith.

On January 19, 1926, it was voted to change the name of the group to the West Blue Designers. New members at this meeting were Mrs. W. D. Smith, Mrs. Ed McCabe, Mrs. Edna Hildebrand, and the Misses Mary and Margaret Schmitz. Five more new members were enrolled on February 5, 1926: Mrs. Charles McMahon, Mrs. Mary McIntyre, Mrs. John Kelch, Mrs. Edgar Nichols, and Mrs. Harry Kelch. In September, 1926, the membership totaled 29. In that year they joined the Federated Club.

Interesting project lessons such as "Making the Living Room Attractive," "Refinishing Furniture," "Landscaping," "Gardening," and many more have been given over the years. Members won many premiums at the Fillmore County Fair for their collective agricultural exhibits and booths displaying project lessons. In 1941, when approved practice sheets

telling how many quarts of fruits and vegetables canned during the year were handed in, Mrs. William Hofferber was the leader, with 840 quarts canned. During 1942-1943, many members did Red Cross knitting and sewing, and made bandages. The club donated home-canned fruits and vegetables to the Henderson Children's Home, and sent printed feed sacks to England.

Club goals for the year 1949 were to promote understanding and prevention of brucellosis and undulant fever, as well as to carry on charity work. The club celebrated its 25th anniversary with an open house at the Legion Hall in Fairmont on October 11, 1950. Over the years, average membership was 22, and the treasury was replenished in a variety of ways. One charter member, Mrs. Ernest Softley, is still (1967) active in the club. The club is now known as the West Blue Extension Club and has 25 members. In 1967 the officers were: Mrs. Ralph Softley, president; Mrs. Howard Miller, vice-president; and Mrs. Clyde Jacobsen, secretary-treasurer.



20th Century Club, organized in 1910

SCHOOLS

The first school in Fillmore County was taught in a dugout on the NW ¼ of Sec. 12, West Blue, by Mrs. Laura Phillips. She was employed and paid by the people. This school was finally known as District 4. After districts were organized, teachers were hired for a term of three months. If they proved satisfactory, they were contracted for another three months.

West Blue township was divided into five school dis-

tricts, Nos. 1, 4, 11, 15, and 70.

District No. 1 was composed of Secs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, and 18. It was organized under the supervision of County Superintendent G. W. Gue on December 4, 1871. He failed to make a record of this, but notified E. L. Martin that the first meeting for the election of school district officers would be held at Mr. Martin's house on December 4, 1871, at 2 P.M. He instructed him to notify every legal voter in the district of the time and place at least five days before the date set for the meeting. On October 11, 1873, on petition of the voters in District 1, the county superintendent shifted Secs. 6 and 7, and the W ½ of Sec. 5, to the newly formed District 70.



Photo from Clara Stines
District No. 1 (date unknown)

County Superintendent John A. Dempster's accounts of visits to District 1 were quoted in the Fillmore County

June 26, 1872—Visited school in District No. 1, taught by Miss Elva J. Lewis; 16 pupils present, 18 on the list. Miss Lewis is an experienced teacher of nine terms, and we class her as number one. She is doing well; and labors under the disadvantage of having no apparatus to work with or furniture, not even a desk or chair. House built of logs, dirt roof and with no floor. School in good state of

June 20, 1873—Visited school in District No. 1; W. O. Bussard, director, R. B. Likes, teacher; 18 pupils present, 22 on list. Number studying orthography, 22; reading, 22; grammar, 8; geography, 7; arithmetic, 17; penmanship, 17. School taught in log house 12' x 18' inside; seated with pine seats and desks. No blackboard; order and recitations, good; grade of certificate, second; wages per month, \$30.

Later a frame schoolhouse was built and remained in use until 1925, when a modern two-story building was

erected. Grades from one to ten were taught, and two teachers were hired. Miss Jessie Whitaker and Miss Wilma Whitaker were the first teachers in the new school. In 1934, the ninth and tenth grades were discontinued, and only one teacher was hired after that.

On January 27, 1953, District 1 was dissolved and annexed to District 19. The last teacher was Mrs. Lindell Hawthorn. The schoolhouse was sold to Roy King and is now the headquarters for a thriving honey industry.

now the	headquarters for a	thriving	honey	industry.	
Year	Teacher			Months	Taught
1872-73	Elva C. Lewis				-
1873-74	E. McCoy				3
1874-75	H. E. Wright				3
1875-76	Belle Fisher				3
1876-77	Fannie M. Bennett				31/2
1877-78	Fannie M. Bennett				$\frac{372}{3}$
1011 10	Lily Beery				3
1878-79	Mary White				3
101010	Harrison Palmer				3
1879-80	Mary Lyman				3
	William Smith				3
1880-81	F. S. Jacks				3
	H. C. Palmer				4
1881-82	Mary Masters				4
	S. H. Heller				3
1882-83	Marion W. Barrett				3 3 3
	Belle Richardson				3
1883-84	Mary Little				7½ 3 3
	L. P. Goundy				3
1885-86	Ella Bennett				3
	S. C. Cook				4
	Marietta Avery				3
1886-87	Nellie Keith				4
	Mary Avery				3
1887-88	Marietta Avery				8
1892	Nellie Rothwell				
1000	Bertha Crabb				
1893	L. M. Farrar				
1894	Lottie Bennett William Moul				
1895	Mamie Farrar				
1000	William F. Moul				
1896	Agnes Keegan				
1897	Agnes Keegan				
1898	Mable Combs				
	Agnes Keegan				
1899	Edythe M. Miles				
5522	Agnes Keegan				
1900	Edythe M. Miles				
1001	Agnes Brady				
1901	Agnes Brady				
1009	Lillian Green Lillian Green				
1902	Mary B. Stanard				
1903	Mary B. Stanard				
1000	Julia M. Marsh				
1904-05	S. D. Purviance				$7\frac{1}{2}$
	Lena Purviance				11/2
1905-06	Margaret Seibel				8
1906-07	Margaret Seibel				9
1907-08	Thomas Keenan				9
1908-09	Leah Smith				9
1909-10	Lester Westbrooke				
1910-11	Alda Bender				
1911-12	Alda Bender				
1912-13	Closed				
1913-14 1914-15	Closed Ruby Severns				
1914-15	Pearl Murphy				
1916-17	Pearl Murphy				
1917-18	Pearl Murphy				
1918-19	Anna Hoarty				
1919-20	Sylvia May				
1920-21	Wilma Whitaker				
1921-22	Ethel Love				
1922-23	Myrle Philson				
1923-24	Myrle Philson				
1924-25	Wilma Whitaker				
1925-26	Jessie Whitaker Wilma Whitaker				
1926-27	Jessie Whitaker				
1320-21	Wilma Whitaker				
1927-28	Marjorie Glenn				
1021-20	Esther Sughrue				
1928-29					
1929-30	Esther Sughrue				
	Edna Witte				

Bulletin:

ke

Martha A Drogge

1020 21



Kings Apairy

District No. 4 was one of the earliest in the county.

December 15, 1871 In accordance with a petition handed me by Henry L. Badger for the formation of School District Number 4, Fillmore County, Nebraska, I have set apart the following described sections to constitute that district:

Sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, and 12, Town 8, Range 3.

I notified them that the election of district officers would take place at the residence of Henry L. Badger, Saturday, December 30,

1871, at one p.m

I ordered Mr. Badger to notify every voter in the district five days prior to the election and then indorse on the notice such notification with the dates thereof and hand the same to the chairman of the meeting and he to deliver it to the Director chosen at such meeting and he to record the same at length as a part of the district records.

(Signed) G. W. Gue, County Superintendent. The district failing to organize at the appointment time by request of Mr. Badger, I extended the time to January 6, 1872. (Signed) G. W. Gue.

At this meeting, Thomas R. Wychoff was elected moderator, James S. Chamberlin, treasurer, and H. L. Badger, director. No action was taken toward building a schoolhouse in the district until March 24, 1873. The first three months of school was kept by Mrs. Laura A. Phillips at the residence

of M. B. Phillips.

On March 24, at a special meeting, it was voted to build a frame schoolhouse, 18 x 26 feet, from proceeds of bonds voted at this time to the amount of \$1,200. The county clerk, however, decided that the bond issue was illegal because of the length of time they were to run. The problem was reconsidered at the annual meeting, April 7, 1873, and it was voted to build a sod schoolhouse instead of a frame one; but wet weather kept this from being built. At another special meeting on July 11, 1873, an issue of bonds to the amount of \$800 was voted, to provide an 18' x 26' frame schoolhouse, with patent seats; this was finished about September 1, 1873. A school was commenced in September by Miss Belle Perry, who taught for six months.



Photo from Mary Badger Halsey District No. 4 pupils about 1900. Left to right: Teacher, George Porter; Fordyce Moul, Earl Forbes, Harry Perkins, Earl Hall, Maggie Shaul, Grace Hall, Oliver Moul, Mable Perkins, Albert Baxter, Goldie Shaul, Mae Brower, Hammond Shaul, Ada Moul, Nellie Perkins, Mary Badger, Mary Forbes.

At the annual meeting, April 7, 1873, J. S. Chamberlin was elected treasurer, and J. R. McCashland, moderator, to serve out the unexpired term of T. R. Wychoff. Every man over 21 was required to work two days building the school-

An account of a visit made to District 4 by John A. Dempster, county superintendent, was published in the Fillmore County Bulletin:

June 26, P.M., 1872 Visited school in District Number 4. Mrs. Laura A. Phillips, teacher. There were nine pupils present, 12 on the list, nearly all small children and not very far advanced. This is her first term and she appears to be doing well with them. The branches taught, chiefly reading and spelling. School kept in a dugout, not built for the purpose and inconvenient, having no furniture.

The families living in the district when it was organized were those of J. S. Chamberlin, J. W. Smith, H. L. Badger, Wilson Matthews, J. R. McCashland, T. R. Wychoff, and E. L. Warner. On January 27, 1953, this district was dissolved and annexed to District 19. The last teacher was Miss Donna Hienz. The schoolhouse was sold to Tony Lowe, who converted it into a modern dwelling for his son John.

The following records of District No. 11 are from the

files in the county superintendent's office:

January 24, 1872 In accordance with a request of a majority of the voters of District 11, I have set apart the following described sections to constitute that district in Fillmore County, Nebraska: Sections 21, 26, 27, 28, 33, 34 and 35.

I informed W. G. Barrows that their meeting for the election of district officers (viz) Moderator, Director and Treasurer would take place at the residence of W. G. Barrows, Wednesday, January

I instructed him to notify every voter in the district five days previous to the election and endorse on the notice such notification, with the date thereof, and hand it to the chairman of the meeting, who will deliver it to the Director choosen at such meeting, and he will record the same at length as a part of the district records.

(Signed) G. W. Gue, County Superintendent.

Geneva Fillmore County June 4, 1878

In accordance with a petition of the majority of the legal voters of School Districts 11 and 16, I have this day set off from District 16, the SE 1/4 of Section 29 to Township 7, Range 3, West to District

(Signed) J. B. Lewis, County Superintendent.

Geneva, Nebraska December 24, 1886

By virtue of the powers in me vested by the school laws of the State of Nebraska, and in accordance with a petition signed by a majority of those qualified to vote at any school meeting in School Districts 11 and 14 of Fillmore County, Nebraska. I have this day detached from school District 14 and attached to School District 11, the N ½ of Section 4, Town 7, Range 3, West.
(Signed) J. B. Sexton, County Superintendent.

An account of a visit to District 11 by John A. Demp-

ster, county superintendent, was printed in the Bulletin:

Friday, P.M. September 27, 1873

Visited school in District Number 11 taught by Mr. George Barrows in his own house; five pupils present, six on the list, all small and not very far advanced. Mr. Barrows informs me that he has taught 22 terms in the Eastern states. Under the circumstances, with small school and inconvenient place, he has not the opportunity to display the ability of a teacher of so much experience.



Photo from Mary Badger Halsey District No. 11—last day of school year.

The first frame school was taught by Miss Belle Perry and was known as the "Butterbaugh" school. Ora Robbins has in his possession the boards from above the door of the old schoolhouse, with this name on them.

During the years 1920, 1921, and 1922, Miss Sylvia May taught this school. She was instrumental in starting and organizing the Parent-Teachers Society in the district. Meetings of this group gave occasion for displays of local talent and for hearing well-known guest speakers such as Newton Gaines from the University of Nebraska and L. C. Oberlies of the Telephone Company. At one meeting, the Cotton Blossom Singers, a group of Negroes from Mississippi under the direction of Laurence Jones, was passing through the country and gave a program. All the families from miles around would attend these programs at the school; on such occasions the schoolhouse was always overflowing.

On January 27, 1952, this school was dissolved and annexed to District 19. The last teacher was Mrs. Caroline Stadler of Heartwell, Nebraska.

The following item, written by John A. Anderson, Sr., appeared in the *Nebraska Signal* for May 14, 1953:

This is a farewell sigh to old No. 11!

The beautiful custom and tradition of the community dinner, the last day of school was observed today, and will be no more. The fine palatable viands served by the culinary women experts will tease our appetites at No. 11 no more and the fine sociability of the community by patrons and friends—old and new, that has been enjoyed will move out with the closing of No. 11.

The social hour of the ladies following the dinner, when discussion of the latest in Parisian styles, to chickens and gardens have been enjoyed, is now history. And the ball games in Don Galusha's pasture passed out today. But as usual the men and boys motored to

the contest.

The game was, as always, much enjoyed and closely contested and to the credit of good umpiring by Bob Halsey perfect peace and pleasure was enjoyed by all. The presence on both sides of athletic

girl players added grace to please the spectators.

The school house in District No. 11 has been the scene of many community activities in the past, such as the P.T.A. for 12 winter seasons, and gatherings in the horse and buggy days. No. 11 has the singular distinction of having one pupil of the primary grade, in the then new schoolhouse of near homestead days still an active and loyal friend of school activities and who has seen groups of A, B, C, pupils of No. 11 as successful teachers.

The school festivities today were in honor of the school and the successful term closed by Mrs. Caroline (Keister) Stadler of Heartwell. The final events here reported are the results of progress intended for betterment of opportunities that can only be found in

the good old United States of America.

District No. 15 was founded in 1872.

January 25, 1872 In accordance with a request of a majority of voters in School District Number 15, I have set apart the following described sections in Fillmore County, Nebraska, to constitute that district:

Sections 13, 14, 15, 22 and 23 in Town 8, Range 3, West . I notified A. C. Palmer, that meeting for the election of district officers, Moderator, Director and Treasurer would take place at the

residence of Mr. J. Saylor's, Thursday, January 25, 1872, at one o'clock, P.M.

I directed him to notify every voter in the district five days previous to the meeting and indorse on the notice such notifications

with the dates thereof and give it to the chairman of the meeting who will deliver such notice to the director chosen and he will record the same at length as a part of the records of the district.

(Signed) G. W. Gue, County Superintendent.
Officers elected at that first meeting were Owen L.
Shaw, moderator; Ansen C. Palmer, director; and Joseph
Saylor, treasurer.

In accordance with a petition signed by a majority of the legal voters of the School Districts Numbers 15 and 19, I have this day set apart from District 15 and annexed to 19, the NE 1/4 of Section 13, Town 8, Range 3, West of the 6th Principal Meridian in Fillmore County, Nebraska.

(Signed) Lewis Goodrich, County Superintendent Recorded by Henry Vauck, County Superintendent. On January 27, 1953, this school was dissolved and annexed to District 19. Miss Genevieve Elward, now Mrs. Wayne Lefever, was the last teacher.



Photo from Harry W. Smith District No. 15. Back row, left to right: Harry Smith, Lottie Bennett (teacher), Clara Stines, Leah Smith, Hilda Stines, Front row: Leroy Stines, Ernest Laschanzky, Amy Stines, Clara Laschanzky, Anna Hartman, Arch Stines, unknown, Gus Laschanzky, unknown.

District No. 70, founded in 1873, was another school with a life-span of nearly 80 years.

In accordance with a petition of a majority of the legal voters in School Districts Number 1 and 29, Fillmore County, Nebraska, I have this day set apart the following described territory to constitute District Number 70:

Sections Number 6 and 7 and west ½ of Section 5, Town 8, Range 3, West; also Sections 1 and 12, Town 8, Range 4, West.

I notified Mr. E. L. Martin that the first meeting for the election of a moderator for three years, a director for two years and a treasurer for one year, would be held at Fillmore Post Office in said district on Tuesday, October 21, at two o'clock P.M.

I instructed him to notify every legal voter in said district of the time and place of holding said meeting at least five days before the day above mentioned and indorse on the notice a return showing each notification with the dates thereof and deliver it to the chairman of said meeting who should deliver the same to the director chosen to be recorded as part of the records of said district.

(Signed) John A. Dempster, County Superintendent,

(Signed) John A. Dempster, County Superintendent. The school was built and operated on Sec. 6 for several years. Then the building was moved to rented land just across the road to the west in Grafton precinct. Here school was held until 1885, at which time a new schoolhouse was erected just south of it on Sec. 1 in Grafton.

The school was in operation until 1952, when it was discontinued and the building sold. Miss Norma Witte was

the last teacher.

the mot	tottoriori	
Date	Name	Months Taught
1873-74	Anna Dilworth	3
1874-75	Anna Dilworth	3
1875-76	Dora Kauffman	3
	R. J. McKnight	4
1876-77	R. J. McKnight	3
20,0,,	H. C. Palmer	3
1877-78	R. P. B. McKnight	3
101110	Hattie Palmer	3
1878-79	Hattie E. Ambler	3
1010-10	Hattie Palmer	$2\frac{1}{2}$

1879-80	William Sheets	3 3½
1880-81	Mrs. J. M. Lowry	31/4
1000-01	Hattie Ambler R. J. McKnight	2 4
1881-82	S. C. Cook	3
	Lillie Hoskinson	3
1883	J. S. Leonard	7 7
1004	W. B. Hoskinson	7
1884	T. C. Cook	3
1885-86	Ella Bennett A. W. Griffin	3 4
1000-00	Nellie Stevens	3
	Kittie Hann	2
1886-87	Willis Moul	4
	Grace McCashland	3
1887-88	Grace McCashland	7
1889-1903	No Record	
1904-05	Julia Marsh	7
1905-06	Julia Marsh	8
1906-07	Elizabeth Heagney	8
1907-08	Elizabeth Heagney	8
1908-09	Elizabeth Heagney	8
1909-10	No Record	_
1910-11	No Record	
1911-12	Ethel Ely	9
1912-13 1913-14	Josephine Schinzel	9
1914-15	Josephine Schinzel Dorothy Pusey	9
1915-16	Ruhy Severns	9
1916-17	Ruby Severns Clair Hawkins	9
1917-18	Edna Kleinschmidt	9
1918-19	Edna Kleinschmidt	9
1919-20	Grace Jolley	9
1920-21	Gertrude A. O'Brien	9
1921-22	Annetta Saul	9
1922-23	Alyce Real	9
1923-24	Stella Ely	9
1924-25	Stella Ely	9
1925-26	Mabel Whitaker	9
1926-27	Mrs. Mabel Trautman	9
1927-28 1928-29	Marguerite C. Murray Eileen White	9
1929-30	Eileen White	9
1930-31	Gladys White	9
1931-32	Eileen White	9
1932-33	Dorothy Smith	9
1933-34	Nola Smith	9
1934-35	Elaine Anderson	9
1935-36	Elaine Anderson	9
1936-37	Elaine Anderson	9
1937-38	Helen O'Connor	9
1938-39	Helen O'Connor	9
1939-40	Helen O'Connor	9
1940-41	Evelyn Luethke	9
1941-42	Norma Jean Harmon	9
1942-43	Mrs. Will Swartz	9
1943-44	Elizabeth Lutton Elizabeth Lutton	9
1944-45 1945-46	Letha Steiger	9
1946-47	Gladys Finnegan	9
1947-52	Norma Witte	45
1011-02	- TOTALINA TTAVOO	10

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE WEST BLUE CORNET BAND

FILLMORE COUNTY, NEBRASKA by Edward David Perkins Arlington, Virginia June 1, 1957

Original organization sponsored by F. C. Bennett and Joshua M. Perkins

Date organized — 1883 or 1884

Date disbanded — Probably about 1907

Name - West Blue Cornet Band

First public appearance - Fourth of July celebration at Badger's Grove in 1884—the day Mabel Perkins Baker was born

Original Members Instrument Played Name Lou Bullock Tenor Horn Bass Tuba Charlie Bullock Walter Chamberlain Clarinet Charlie Chamberlain Cornet Harvey Perkins Charles Perkins E Flat Cornet B Bass Mose Bennett Cornet Fred Bennett B Flat Cornet Louis Farrar Alto Horn Baity (Doc) Farrar Gus Lashansky Tenor Horn Alto Horn Baritone Horn Arthur Curtiss John Moore Alto Horn Alpheus Hall Bass Drum Otto Elliott Snare Drum or Horn HENRY MOORE, leader — (German watchmaker and Jeweler)

Members Joining at Later Dates B Flat Cornet Edward D. Perkins E Flat Cornet John A. Perkins George Perkins Tuba Johnnie Brennan Trombone William Walworth Tenor Trombone Frank B. Perkins Baritone Horn John Hall Alto Horn Edson Hall Snare Drum Alexander Perkins Cornet Snare Drum Chester Perkins Frank Finney Cornet Emmett Finney Cornet John Little Bass Drum Ralph Little Alto Horn Forest Farrar Cornet Tenor Horn William Gillin Otto Gillin (leader) Cornet

Charlie Gillin George Wallen (McCool) John Wallen (McCool) Ed Reed

Elwood Bender

Wes Spencer T. J. Bender (drum'major)



Photo from William Swartz This is the building in which the first school was held in District No. 70. William Swartz attended school here in 1883 at the age of 7.



Tenor Horn

Cornet

Cornet

Alto and others. Also composed

music. A fine musician

West Blue Cornet Band-perhaps about 1888.

Band practiced — First, at the Bennett schoolhouse, District 15. Later, at the schoolhouse in District 4. Still later, built its own Band House on Father Joshua Perkins' property right across from George Perkins' house.

Uniforms — At first the Band just had caps. Later it was uniformed in blue coats and caps, braid trimmed. Still later the uniforms were red caps and coats, braid trimmed.

Band Wagon — The Band had a band wagon built like a circus band wagon, curved high to the back and with a low curve to the front. It was painted light blue and had the letters W B C B on the sides. The wagon was pulled by a matched team of spotted grey Normans called "Duke and Charlie" and owned by George Perkins, and a matched pair of Hamiltonians called "Doc and Deacon," owned by John Little.

Banner — The ladies of the West Blue Church organization

Banner — The ladies of the West Blue Church organization made a banner for the band which was carried in all the parades in which it marched. This banner, though somewhat frayed and worn, is in the possession of Edward Perkins and hangs on his bedroom wall. It is made

of silk and is described as follows:

One side — Border (about 6 inch) of dark red, center of pale blue, about 17 inches square, 3 inch gold fringe on a scalloped bottom, beautifully hand embroidered with variegated flower clusters. In the center the letters W B C B and the date 1885.

Other side — Blue border, red center. Center embroidered with the words West Blue, Nebraska. Embroidered cornet in each bottom corner and a snare drum in center of bottom border.

Some of the places and events at which the Band played:

Fairmont County Fair; All Decoration Day celebrations at Fairmont and Grafton; in Crete; at G.A.R. Encampments at Beatrice (week), Omaha (twice), Hastings (twice), Grand Island, and Kearney.

When Frank Putlitz ran for clerk of the district court, the Band played at the meeting at which he announced his

candidacy.

Played at the ceremonies at the founding of McCool.

Played at Republican Rally in York in 1896, when Mc-Kinley and Bryan ran. It rained so hard they could not go in the Band Wagon but had to go to McCool in lumber wagons and then to York by train. This was on a Friday. The Democrats had a rally on Saturday so they hired the Band to stay over and play for them too.

Played for a political rally at Fairmont when Teddy

Roosevelt was there.

In 1892, the Band led the Fourth of July parade up around the park in Fairmont. Someone in the crowd threw a lighted firecracker which ignited Mrs. Treadwell's dress; she later died as a result of the burns.

On a trip to play in Kearney the Band got off the train in Hastings to change trains. The crowd wanted music so all the bands played. The crowd liked the music of the W B C B and cried "Hurray for the Blues."

The Vigilant Society

On the night of July 20, 1890, two horses were stolen from the farm of Herbert Rhodes, five miles northwest of Geneva. The same night his barn burned, with some horses inside. It seemed suspicious to Mr. Rhodes that the burned horses had shoes on although his horses did not. It was later discovered that a band of horse thieves from Kansas had been substituting old horses for good ones and then burning the evidence. Mr. Rhodes offered a reward of \$150 for the return of his horses. Fillmore County—the sheriff at that time was C. E. Summers—would pay \$50 for arrest and conviction of the thief.

Shortly after this incident, the Vigilant Society was formed. The first meeting was held August 9, 1890, in the District 18 schoolhouse. The original officers were George Jackson, president; M. Rodgers, vice-president; F. F. Robbins secretary; and George Redfern, treasurer. At the same time,

one manager from each town was elected; these were David Pollock, A. W. Loomis, W. A. Dewey, and W. S. Brown.

The constitution was as follows:

We, the undersigned, do hereby organize into a society to be hailed and known as the Vigilant Society of the Townships of Geneva, Madison, Fairmont, and West Blue of Fillmore County, Nebraska.

The object of this Society shall be to recover horses or mules and to detect and bring to punishment any person or persons who may steal a horse or mule or horses or mules from any member of this Society.

The officers of this Society shall consist of a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, three Managers from each town, to be elected annually, and ten Riders to be appointed by the Managers.

The duties of the President shall be to preside at all meetings, and have a general oversight of the interests of the Society and see that the Riders perform their duties promptly when called upon.

The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in the latter's absence or inability to attend or act.

The Secretary shall keep accurate minutes of the transactions of

the Society, and read the same at the annual meeting.

The Treasurer shall have custody of the funds of the Society and invest them under the directions of the Society. He shall pay out such funds only upon the written order of two or more of the Managers of either town, or under a resolution of the Society certified by the President and Secretary.

The Managers—It shall be the duty of each Manager, when complaint shall be made to him by any member of this Society, that such member has had a horse or mule stolen, to notify and call out a sufficient number of Riders forthwith to pursue the thief or thieves, and to recover such stolen horse or mule; to direct the Riders' movements, and in conjunction with any one or more of his associate Managers, use such means and measures for the recovery of such horse or mule, and the arrest and conviction of the thief or thieves, as in their judgment will best accomplish these objectives. The Managers of each town, or a majority of them, shall audit the claims for services and expenses of the Riders called out by them or either of them, and draw an order upon the Treasurer for the sum so audited and allowed, and report the same at the next annual meeting.

It shall be the duty of each Rider to hold himself in readiness to go when called upon by the Manager of either of the four towns embraced in this Society, in pursuit of the horse or mule alleged to have been stolen, and the thief forthwith, and to use due diligence

in the performance of his duties.

It shall also be the duties of the Managers of the Society to take some action that will best recover any stolen property or bring any criminal to justice who may commit any offense that would commit them to the Penitentiary.

Over the years many suspicious persons were investigated and much stolen property was recovered. On October 26, 1916, a special meeting was held in Geneva, called to order by the president, B. B. Ogg. The purpose of this meeting was to disband the organization and pay up all indebtedness, then pro-rate the balance to the eligible members. The sum of \$275.68 was pro-rated to 47 members.

F. F. Robbins held the office of secretary during the entire existence of the Society.



Members of the Vigilant Society (by townships): Fairmont

1 11 111 1	Fairmont	
A. M. Black	F. O. Bridgman	Frank Thompson
M. H. Shoemaker	J. H. Smith	A. W. Reams
A. W. Loomis	W. W. Seeley	Pete Keeler
W. O. Hoffman	F. M. Chapin	M. E. Millin
F. C. Chapin	L. Stieger	George Manley
L. Casburn	A. G. Church	S. W. Bair
I. W. Kelch	Wm. Hodgson	Frank Peterson
T. Shanks	G. D. Salyer	Wint Black
S. Sawyer	C. O. Peterson	E. L. Brown
B. M. Barker	George Aldrich West Blue	D. D. Diowii
Fred Hodgson	S. Dewey	H. Hodgson
W. A. Dewey	C. Milner	E. G. Hall
F. F. Robbins	F. J. Bender	Vick Benway
C. H. Morrison		
John Foster	Charles Aldrich	Andy Magee
	C. Manley	G. A. Peterson
James Hodgson	M. Perkins	G. A. Perkins
S. M. Cole	J. Carney	J. W. Clark
W. H. Beswick	E. McCabe	Fred Pearson
John Ahrons	32.2	
	Madison	Apr. 101 - 27 - 17 - 28 - 0
G. W. Jackson	A. Huston	B. J. Benedict
W. H. Searles	Giles Hadley	L. P. Loghry
C. O. Wells	J. B. Stoclon	H. Linsley
Peter Smith	Mort Patterson	Phil Smith
D. Pollock	Will Houchin	Ed Maulsberg
J. S. Park	L. Stewart	Harry Brown
T. W. Cable	G. A. Walker	F. L. Blaise
G. G. Wellman	B. A. Merritt	E. Fricke
G. Warner	John Shafer	Henry Cook
W. H. Lapp	W. H. Garrett	C. M. Benedict
John Gibbs		
oun anno	Geneva	
J. I. Hutchen	W. J. Phinney	John McCabe
W. S. Brown	C. Goodrich	G. W. Fraley
J. M. Ward	G. Redfern	G. Rogers
M. Rodgers	C. Redfern	C. C. Sumway
W. H. Nichols	M. W. Porter	F. N. Ayers
S. Westhaver	H. Rhodes	G. H. Williams
W. B. Hunter	W. Hosack	H. W. Stephenson
J. Morgan	A. D. Fisher	D. Tope
Joe McFadden		M. Pangle
J. Moshier	F. G. Wellman R. H. Matterson	Ira P. Heath
H. Haggerty	I. J. Heath	C. A. Chesnut
J. A. Brower	W. H. Cooksey	L. Chesnut
D. P. Shibley	J. T. McMayon	Lewis Goodrich
D. B. Ayres	B. B. Ogg	Mrs. Frank Ayres
W. H. Miller	F. Jackson	J. J. Fergerson
A. Richards	D. H. Goodrich	Mrs. L. McFadden

Pioneer Reminiscences

J. R. Schofield

W. F. Brink

The following accounts of the Dixon, McCashland, Badger, and Spade families are from Nebraska Pioneer Reminiscences, published by the Daughters of the America Revolution in 1916. This first story, of the earliest settlers in the county, is largely in the words of Mr. and Mrs. Dixon.

The first settlement in Fillmore County, Nebraska, was made in 1866 by Nimrod J. Dixon, a native of Pennsylvania. He was married to Lydia Gilmore, who had previously filed on a homestead adjoing his. Mr. and Mrs. Dixon continued to reside on their homestead until they moved to Fairmont, Nebraska, after living on the farm 40 years.

Mr. and Mrs. Dixon were married February 28, 1876, at the home of Mrs. Dixon's father, Elias Gilmore, near Blue Vale. Mr. Dixon got his license at Nebraska City. From that time until the summer of 1868 they were the only settlers in the county, and were seven or eight miles from the nearest neighbor.

In relating her experiences, Mrs. Dixon said: "I was afraid to stay alone; so when Mr. Dixon had to go away, I went with him or my sisters stayed with me. At that time, we had to go to Milford for flour and 25 miles to get a plowlay sharpened. At such times Mr. Dixon would stay at my father's home near Blue Vale and help them two or three days with their breaking, in return for which one of the boys would come and help him.

"The Indians visited us frequently and I was afraid of them. One time a number of them came and two entered the dugout and asked for flour. We gave them as much as we could spare, but they could see the flour sitting on a bench behind the door and wanted more. We refused, but they became very insistent, so much so that Mr. Dixon grabbed

a black-snake whip that hung on the wall and started toward them. This show of resistance was all that was necessary. It proved to the Indians that Mr. Dixon was not afraid of them, so they gave him powder and shot to regain his friendship.

"An Indian came in one day and gave me a lot of beads, then he wanted flour, which we gave him. He took it and held it out to me saying, 'Squaw cook it, squaw cook it!' This I refused to do, so he said, 'Give me the beads, give me the beads.'

"My baby, Arthur, born January 9, 1869, was the first white child born in Fillmore County. I recall one time that I was home alone with the baby. An Indian came in and handed me a paper that said he had lost a pony. I assured him that we had seen nothing of the pony. He saw a new butcher knife that was lying on the table, picked it up, and finally drew out his old knife and held it toward me saying, 'Swap, swap!' I said, 'Yes,' so he went away with my good knife.

"The worst fright I ever did have was not from Indians. My sister Minnie was with me and we were out of salt. Mr. Dixon said he would go across the river to Whitaker's and borrow some. We thought that he wouldn't be gone long so we stayed at home. While he was away, a cloud came up and it began to rain. I never did see it rain harder. The river raised, and the water in the ravine in front of the dugout came nearly to the door. The roof leaked so we were nearly as wet indoors as we would have been out. The rain began about four o'clock in the afternoon. It grew dark and Mr. Dixon did not return. We thought that he would certainly be drowned in trying to cross the river. While we were in this state of suspense, the door burst open and a half-clad woman rushed in, saying, 'Don't let me scare you to death.' I was never so frightened in my life, and it was some time before I recognized her as my neighbor, Mrs. Fairbanks.

"Mr. and Mrs. Fairbanks had gone to Whitaker's who were coopers, to get some barrels fixed for sorghum, and left the children at home. When it rained, they thought they must try to cross the river and get to their children. Mr. Dixon came with them. At first they tried to ride horses across, but the one Mrs. Fairbanks was riding refused to swim, and threw her into the water, so she had to swim back. They were all excellent swimmers, so they started again in a wagon box which those on land tried to guide by means of a line. With the aid of the wagon box and by swimming they succeeded in getting across. That was in the fall of 1869.

"The only time I ever saw a buffalo skinned was when a big herd stayed a week or more on the south side of the river. Kate Bussard and I stood on the top of the dugout and watched the chase, and after they killed one we went nearer and watched them skin it."

Mr. Dixon took his claim without seeing it. In October, 1866, he went to the land office and learned that he could then take a homestead of 160 acres, but the new law would soon go into effect providing that settlers could only homestead 80 acres. Mr. Dixon was afraid he could not go and see the claim and get back to Nebraska City and file on it



Photo from Mary Badger Halsey The second "Badger Bridge"—the first bridge to be built by the county.

in time to get 160 acres. In telling about it, Mr. Dixon said, "I thought it would, indeed, be a poor quarter-section that would not have 80 acres of farm land, so I took my chances.

"In the year 1868, the first year that we had any crops planted, it almost forgot to rain at all. The barley was so short that it fell through the cradle. There were no bridges so we had to ford the river. It was hard to haul much of a load across because the wagon would cut into the mud on the two banks while the sandy river bottom would stand a pretty good load. That difficulty I overcame by making bundles or sheaves of willow poles and placing them at the two banks and covering them with sand. Later the settlers made a bridge across the river near the homestead of H. L. Badger. This has ever since been known as the 'Badger Bridge.' The first bridge was made of logs which we procured along the river.

"I was making a hayrack of willow poles at the time of the total eclipse of the sun. It began to grow dark, the chickens went to roost, and it seemed that night was coming

on.

"The year 1869 was rainy and we raised good crops and fine potatoes that season. That was the year they were driving Texas cattle up to eat the northern grass and then ship them east over the Union Pacific Railroad. The cattle stampeded, so they lost many of them and we saw them around for a year or more.

"My first buffalo hunt was in 1867. The country seemed to be covered with great herds and the Indians were hunting them. Twenty of us started out with five wagons. There were Jake and Boss Gilmore, Jim Johnson, and myself in one wagon. We had only about three days' supplies with us, expecting to get buffalo before these were exhausted, but the Indians were ahead of us and kept the buffalo out of our range. Our party crossed the Little Blue at Deweese. Beyond there we found carcasses of buffalo and a fire where the Indians had burned out a ranch. Realizing that it was necessary for us to take precautions, we chose Colonel Bifkin our leader and decided to strike another trail and thus avoid the Indians if possible. We traveled toward the Republican River but found no track of either buffalo or Indians, so we turned around and followed the Indians. By that time our food supply was exhausted, but by good luck we shot two wild turkeys.

"We were soon following the Indians so closely that we ate dinner where they ate breakfast, and by night we were almost in sight of them. We thought it best to put out a guard at night. My station was under a cottonwood tree near a footlog that crossed a branch of the Little Blue. I was to be relieved at 11 o'clock. I heard something coming on the footlog. I listened and watched but it was so dark that I could see nothing, but could hear it coming closer; so I shot and heard something drop. Colonel Bifkin, who was near, coming to relieve me, asked what I was shooting at. 'I don't know, perhaps an Indian; it dropped,' I replied. We looked and found merely a coon, but it did good service as wagon grease, for we had

forgotten that very necessary article.

"The Indians kept the main herd ahead of them so we were only able to see a few buffalo that had strayed away. We went farther west and got two or three and then went into camp on the Little Blue. We always left a guard at camp and all of the fun came when Boss Gilmore and I were on guard so we missed it. The others rounded up and killed about 20 buffalo. One fell over the bluff into the river and it fell to our lot to get it out and skin it, but by the time we got it out the meat had spoiled. The water there was so full of alkali that we could not drink it, and neither could the horses, so we started back, struck the freight road and followed it until we came to Deep Well Ranch on the Platte bottom. We had driven without stopping from ten o'clock in the forenoon till two o'clock in the morning. We lay down and slept then, but I was awakened early by chickens crowing. I roused the others of our party and we went in search of something to eat. It had been eight days since we had had any bread and I was never so bread-hungry as then. We came to the Martin home about three miles west of Grand Island and although we could not buy bread, the girls baked biscuits for us and I ate 11 biscuits. That was the home of the two Martin boys who were pinned together by an arrow that the Indians shot through both of them while riding on one pony.

"That morning I saw the first construction train that came into Grand Island over the Union Pacific Railroad. If

I remember correctly it was in November, 1867.

We took home with us five wagonloads of buffalo meat. I did not keep any of the hides because I could not get them tanned. Mr. Gilmore got Indian women to tan a hide for him by giving them sugar and flour. They would keep asking for it and finally got all that was coming to them before the hide was done, so they quit tanning, and Mr. Gilmore had to keep baiting them by giving them some more sugar and flour in order to get it done."

Mr. and Mrs. Dixon had eight children. Loyd Dixon, the youngest son, and his wife, still own the original home-

stead, but reside in Fairmont, Nebraska.



The Winberg Homestead, S ½ of NE ¼, Sec. 4, West Blue township—taken in 1905. Center: Mr. and Mrs. August Winberg; holding horse, Harry Winberg.

Pioneering in Fillmore County by John R. McCashland

In the fall of 1870, with Mrs. McCashland and two children, Addie and Sammy, I left Livingston County, Illinois, and drove to Fillmore County, Nebraska. We started with two wagons and teams. I had three good horses and one old plug. I drove one team and had a man drive the other until I became indignant because he abused the horses and let him go. Mrs. McCashland drove the second team the rest of the way.

A family of neighbors, Thomas Roe's, were going west at the same time, so we were together throughout the journey until we got lost in the western part of Iowa. The road forked and we were so far behind we did not see which way Roe turned and so went the other way. It rained that night and a dog ate our supplies so we were forced to procure food from a settler. We found the Roe family the next evening just before we crossed the Missouri River, October 15, 1870.

East of Lincoln we met a prairie schooner and team of oxen. An old lady came ahead and said to us, "Go back, good friends, go back!" When questioned about how long she had lived here, she said, "I've wintered here and I've summered here, and God knows I've been here long enough."

When Mrs. McCashland saw the first dugout that she had ever seen, she cried. It did not seem that she could bear to live in a place like that. It looked like merely a hole in

the ground.

We finally reached the settlement in Fillmore County and lived in a dugout with two other families until I could build a dugout that we could live in through the winter. That done, I picked out my claim and went to Lincoln to file on it and bought lumber for a door and for window frames.

I looked the claim over, chose the site for buildings, and when home drew the plans of where I wanted the house, stable, well, etc., on the dirt hearth for Mrs. McCashland to see. She felt so bad because she had to live in such a place that I gave it up and went to the West Blue River, which was near, felled trees, and with the help of other settlers hewed them into logs and erected a log house on the homestead.

While living in the dugout, Indian women visited Mrs. Mc-Cashland and wanted to trade her a papoose for her quilts. When she refused, they wanted her to give them the quilts.

I had just \$42 when we reached Fillmore County, and to look back now one would hardly think it possible to live as long as we did on \$42. There were times that we had nothing but meal to eat and many days we sent the children to school with only bread for lunch.

I was a Civil War Veteran, which fact entitled me to a homestead of 160 acres. I still own that homestead, which is farmed by my son. After visiting in the East a few years ago, I decided that I would not trade my quarter-section in Fillmore County for several times that much eastern land.

The Badger Family

Lewis H. Badger drove with his parents, Henry L. and Mary A. Badger, from their home in Livingston County, Illinois, to Fillmore County, Nebraska. They had a covered emigrant wagon and a buggy tied behind. Lewis was 12 years old October 5, 1868, the day they crossed the Missouri River at Nebraska City, the nearest railroad station to their future home.

The family stayed with friends near Saltillo while H. L. Badger came on with the horse and buggy and picked out his claim on the north side of Fillmore County, it being the NW ¼ of Sec. 2, T8, R3W of the 6th principal meridian.

At that time the claims were taken near the river in order that water might be obtained more easily, and also to be near the railroad which had been surveyed and staked out in the southern edge of York County near the West Blue River.

The Badger family came on to Lincoln, then a mere village, and stopped there. They bought a log chain, and lumber for a door; the window frames were hewed from logs. When they reached the claim, they did not know where to ford the river so they went on farther west to Whitaker's and stayed all night. There they forded the river and came on to the claim the next morning, October 20, 1868. There they camped while Mr. Badger made a dugout in the banks of the West Blue River, where the family lived for more than two years. The hollow in the ground made by this dugout can still be seen.

In 1870, H. L. Badger kept the post office in the dugout. He received his commission from Postmaster General Creswell. The post office was known as West Blue. About the same time, E. L. Martin was appointed postmaster at Fillmore. Those were the first post offices in Fillmore County. Before that time the settlers got their mail at McFadden in York County. Mr. Badger kept the post office for some time after moving into the log house and after the establishment of the post office at Fairmont.

In 1867 the Indians were all on reservations but by permission of the agents were allowed to go on hunting trips. If they made trouble for the settlers they were taken back to the reservations. While the Badgers were living in the dugout a party of about 1,000 Omaha Indians came up the river on a hunting trip. Some of their ponies got away and ate some corn belonging to a man named Dean, who lived farther down the river. The man loved trouble and decided to report them to the agent. The Indians were afraid of being sent back to the reservations, so the chief, Prairie Chicken, his



The Badger farm in 1897. Left to right: Lewis H. Badger, Mary Badger, Mrs. Charles Weis, Charles Weis, Mrs. Minnie Badger.

brother, Sammy White, and 17 of the other Indians came into the dugout and asked Mr. Badger to write a letter to the agent for them stating their side of the case. This he did and read it to Sammy White, the interpreter, who translated it for the other 18. It proved satisfactory to both Indians and agent.

In August, 1869, while Mr. Badger was away helping a family named Whitaker, who lived up the river, to do some breaking, the son, Lewis, walked to where his father was at work, leaving Mrs. Badger at home alone with her four-year-old daughter. About four o'clock it began to rain very hard and continued all night. The river raised until the water came within 18 inches of the dugout door. The roof leaked so that it was almost as wet inside as out. Mr. Badger and Lewis stayed at the Whitaker dugout. They fixed the canvas that had been the cover of the wagon over the bed to keep Grandmother Whitaker dry and the others sat by the stove and tried to keep warm, but could not. The next morning the men paddled down the river to the Badger dugout in a wagon box. The wagon box was a product of their own making and was all wood, so it served the purpose of a boat.

It should be explained that the reason the roofs of the dugouts and log houses leaked was because of the material used in their construction. Shingles were out of the question to these settlers of small means living 100 miles from the railroad. There were plenty of trees near the river, so the settlers hewed out logs for ridge poles, then placed willow poles and brush across for a support. On top of that they put dirt and sod. When it rained the water naturally soaked through. The roof would leak for several days after a big rain.

The next dwelling place of the Badger family was a log house built on the south half of the quarter-section. For some time, they lived in the log house and kept their stock in the dugout stable on the river bank. Thus they were living during the great April storm of 1873, which lasted for three days. All the draws and ravines, even the river, were packed full of snow that was solid enough to hold a man up. There was very little snow on the level, it all being in drifts in the low places. The Badgers had a corn field between the log house and the river. While the storm raged, Lewis wrapped himself in a blanket, and by following the rows of corn made his way to the dugout stable and fed the horses once each day. It was impossible to give them water.

Henry L. Badger was commissioned by Governor Butler the first notary public in Fillmore County. Later he was appointed, by Acting Governor James, registrar of voters for the election to be held April 21, 1871, to elect officers for the new county. At that election he was elected both county clerk and county surveyor.

In the late sixties when the county was first settled, the country abounded in buffalo, deer, antelope, elk, prairie chickens, wild geese, ducks, and turkeys. The muddy stream known as the West Blue River was clear and the fish found in it were not of the same variety as those caught now. Wild plums grew in abundance along the river bank and were much larger and of finer quality than the wild plums of today. In those days glass jars for canning were not as plentiful as now, so they picked the plums late in the fall, put them in a barrel and poured water over them and kept them for winter use.

Lewis Badger tells of going on buffalo hunts with his father and seeing herds of thousands of the big animals, and driving for ten hours through the herd.

In early days the settlers did lots of trapping. The Indians were frequent visitors and one time an Indian went with Mr. Badger and his son to look at their traps. In one trap they found a mink. Mr. Badger remarked that they got a mink in that same trap the day before. The Indian said, "Him lucky trap." The Indian would not steal, but he wanted the lucky trap, so the next day that trap was gone and another in its place. The Indian seemed to get the best of the bargain, for it is a fact that they never caught a thing in the trap he left.

Although most painfully familiar to every early settler,

no pioneer story is complete without the grasshoppers. They came in herds and droves and ate every green thing. For days great clouds of them passed over. The next year they hatched out in great numbers and flew away without hurting anything. Mr. Badger had a nice young orchard that he had planted and tended. The grasshoppers ate the leaves off the trees and as it was early in August they leafed out again and were frozen so they died. Snakes feasted on the grasshoppers.



Photo from Mary Badger Halsey The log house built on the Badger homestead about 1873.

After seeing a garter snake at that time just as full of grass-hoppers as it could possibly be, Lewis Badger never killed a snake or permitted one to be killed on his farm. Many people asked for and received the so-called "aid for grasshopper sufferers." In this section of the county it seemed absolutely unnecessary, as there had been harvested a good crop of wheat, previous to the coming of the hoppers.

In 1871, the railroad was built through the county. That season Lewis Badger sold watermelons, that he had raised, to the construction gang at work on the road. The town of Fairmont was started the same year. In those days the settlers would walk to town. It was nothing unusual for Mr. and Mrs. Badger and Lewis to walk to Fairmont, a distance of six miles.

When the Badger family settled on their claim, they planted a row of cottonwood trees around it. These trees made a wonderful growth. In 1911 part of them were sawed into lumber. There were two especially large cottonwood trees on the farm. One measured 26 feet in circumference at the base and 19 feet around five feet above the ground and ran up 40 feet before it began to branch out. The other was 33 feet around the base but branched into three trees four feet above the ground.

Mrs. H. L. Badger died January 11, 1894, and Mr. Badger July 21, 1905. Mrs. Mary Badger Halsey and son still live on the original homestead.



Threshing machine working on the H. L. Badger homestead about 1897. At far right: Lewis H. Badger standing by one of the freight wagons used to haul freight from Fairmont to Geneva before the railroad came to Geneva. This wagon is now in the "House of Yesterday" at Hastings, made over into a "Conestoga" wagon.

Fillmore County in the Seventies

by William Spade (written in 1915)

We came to Nebraska in October of 1870 by wagon and wintered a mile east of what is now the Red Lion Mill. We made several trips to Lincoln during the fall and winter and one to Nebraska City, where brother Dan and I shucked corn for a farmer for a dollar a day with team.

I moved on the William Bussard claim, later the Elof Lindgren farm, in March 1871, and raised a crop, then moved on our homestead in Sec. 24, T8, R3W. We built part dugout and part sodup for a house and slept in it the first night with only the blue sky for a roof. This was in October, and we lived in this dugout until 1874, then built a sod house.

In April, 1873, we had a three days' snow storm called a blizzard. In the spring of 1871, I attended the election for the organization of the County of Fillmore.

I followed farming as an occupation and in the fall of 1872 William Howell and I bought a threshing machine, which we ran for four seasons. Some of the accounts were never paid.

Our lodging place generally was the straw stack or under the machine and our teams were tied to a wagon, but the meals we got were good. Aside from farming and threshing, I put in some of the time at carpentry, walking sometimes six miles back and forth, night and morning.

In July or August, 1874, we had a visit from the grass-hoppers, the like of which had never been seen before nor since. They came in black clouds and dropped down by the bushel and ate every green thing on earth and some things in the earth. We had visits from the Indians, too, but they mostly wanted "hogy" meat or something to fill their empty stomachs. Well, I said we built a sodup of two rooms with a board floor and three windows and two doors, plastered with Nebraska mud. We thought it a palace, for some time, and were comfortable.

In June, 1877, I took a foolish notion to make a fortune and in company with 10 others, supplied with six months' provisions, started for the Black Hills. We drove ox teams and were nearly all summer on the road; at least we did not reach the mining places till August. In the meantime the water had played out in the placer mining district so there was "nothing doing." We prospected for quartz but that did not pan out satisfactorily, so we traded our grub that we did not need for gold dust and returned to our homes no richer than when we left. However, we had all the fresh venison we could use both coming and going, besides seeing a good many Indians and lots of wild country that now is mostly settled up.

Pioneering in Fillmore County

The following account was written by Ella Louise Bennett Waring (Mrs. John K. Waring) of Geneva in 1911:

The first real settlement in our county was in 1864, when William Bussard and William Whitaker entered homestead claims on the Blue River in the northern part of the county. At about this time a few families located on Turkey Creek. These, however, were not destined to remain alone for long, for in the early '70's there was a "grand rush." C. H. Bane and J. W. Eller, attorneys, G. A. Hart and C. H. King, physicians, and E. R. Spear, the first minister, arrived about this time.

J. E. Porter, merchant, Nimrod Dixon, a farmer, and E. L. Martin founded a town called Fillmore City on the present site of Fillmore Mills. Its history begins in 1870. In the fall of 1871, when the B. & M. Railroad was completed through the county 4½ miles S of the Fillmore Mills, the merchant J. E. Porter moved away and there was soon nothing left of the town.

In 1871, steps were taken to secure a county organization, for we were attached to Saline County and existed only in name. Acting Governor William H. James issued a proclamation ordering an election to select officers and locate a county seat. This election was held at the home of Nathaniel McCalla on Turkey Creek; there were 81 votes cast. In 1872, work was begun on a county building; the jail was built first, then the courthouse.

The different parts of our county were settled by different nationalities with their different ideals and characteristics. Liberty precinct was a Bohemian settlement, Momence a German, and in the southwest were our Swedish people. However, the first settlers took up the north end of the county and were from the eastern and middle states: Massachusetts, Maine, New York, and Ohio. These people also settled around Fairmont and Geneva. As my father brought his family here very early, I will tell you something about these settlers and their ideals as they appear to me, and I shall give the little incidents as I remember them and thus you must draw your

own conclusions as to their ideals and their part in making

our county what it is today.

My father, hearing in 1873 of the rich soil and fine climatic conditions, determined to investigate the opportunities in the Far West. When the War of the Rebellion closed, thousands of men returned to their homes and civil life. Many found their places filled, their businesses either decayed or ruined; some were unsettled by their terrible experiences and were unable to go on with their former occupations, others did not care to do so. Naturally they hurried toward the then "Great American Desert."

The government had passed the Homestead Act, giving special privileges and inducements to the returning soldiers and had granted large tracts of land to the Union Pacific, and later to other railroads, for building railways. Every other section of land in our county for a distance of 10 miles on either side of the proposed railroad was set aside for this purpose, except for Secs. 16 and 36, which were reserved to provide funds for school purposes. In the early '70's many ambitious young men from the Eastern states got together a few household articles, loaded the prairie schooner, and, with their wives, started out to make a home on this government land. You are familiar with the slogan "Nebraska or bust" painted on the white canvas—and, in common parlance, a great many of them were indeed busted when they reached their destination.

When we came from our eastern home among the Berkshire Hills, this country was a limitless expanse of blue sky and green earth, and here and there a darker green where they told us trees were planted and somewhere in those shadows someone had built a hut or dug a place in the ground and put huge timbers over it. The logs were drawn from the Blue River and then piled with brush, and dirt was shoveled over this, and it sheltered them. The only home these people had, their children were born in; they lived here for a few years, for most of the early settlers were very poor, often burning buffalo chips for fuel and cooking the insipid wild beans for food. They were so poor, in fact, that in 1874, the grasshopper year, aid societies were formed in the East and many were thus tided over until a crop could be planted and harvested. Long trains of white-capped wagons drawn by thin, weak horses contained discouraged settlers and their families going East (if only to Iowa or Illinois) to spend the winter.

In the spring of 1875, long trains of prairie schooners traveled westward, and this year a bountiful harvest rewarded their labors; but rains, hard and continual, set in as the grain was being harvested. Much of it was completely spoiled or so much injured that the bread made from the flour was black and musty and almost impossible to eat.

In spite of all this, the courage of these people did not fail, and in 1876 there was another bounteous harvest. I remember the shocks of wheat that stood out like huge houses in a town on the open prairie. We had sod corn the men had planted on new-broken land; tall, straight stalks grew up and large, fat ears were harvested that fall.

I wish I could describe some of the early settlers as I remember them: J. E. Porter, E. L. Martin, and Nimrod Dixon, as well as the first white woman I remember well, Mrs. E. A. Whitaker, who was over 70 years of age.

My sister taught in the first log schoolhouse in District 1 and boarded with Granny Palmer, who lived in a dugout on the side of a cliff on the Blue River. The furniture in her home consisted of a small cookstove, one chair, two or three small boxes, and a homemade table and bed. She must have had a skillet and a few dishes, but that is all I remember. She always wore a huge, dark, slat sunbonnet and smoked a cob pipe.

Then there was an old man, Warner, who lived in a dugout near the Whitakers on the Blue, a small, energetic man, a minister of the gospel from Vermont, but a man with such a strong temper that he was a terror for miles around. The Indians were his only friends. They camped and fished on his land spring and fall for a few weeks each year, for the agent of the Omaha Reservation still let them. They were forbidden to beg, but it was not an uncommon thing to see a pony silhouetted against the sky. We would know it was an Indian by the pony's peculiar gait, halfway between a trot and a gallop. Father would always give them things, food or clothes, and sometimes they would nod and grunt and shake hands all around and sometimes, like agents of later days, they would fling away with sullen glances. They were dressed in blankets, moccasins, and long strings of beads. The huge rings that dangled were always topics of conversation among us children for days after such visits. And sometimes we would visit their encampment, their dirty round tents with poles protruding from the top, and dirty children. There were fat, sleek ponies which the Indian boys rode or drove to the running water to drink. The squaws were cooking over open fires or caring for their babies, and many buffalo robes hung around the camp.

A half-mile west of us was a small board house with a tiny barn and with trees planted all around. Mr. Shaw lived here with his family. We always called him Mr. Shaw. To me, he was an old man in his rusty, baggy suit of black. dressed so differently from the neighbor men. Although he was only 30, we never saw him working in the field; but at every baptism, picnic, circus, or meeting that came along, Mr. Shaw-with his young wife, her name was Rilley, always with a baby in her arms-would start out early for the celebration. The wife was neatly clad and also the three little girls, sitting on a board behind their parents in the wobbly lumber wagon drawn by two sorrel horses. The little girls had bright hair ribbons and hats, neat dresses, and whole shoes and stockings, for Mr. Shaw was one of the very few to receive a pension. One day a man of national repute was going to make a short stop in Fairmont and all the countryside turned out. I remember Mr. Shaw well that day, looking old and bent, carrying a faded flag that the fierce breeze nearly whipped from his hands. There were grouped together young, tall, stalwart men who marched up to pay their respects to the great man in the car. In a few years Mr. Shaw moved away. Where he went or what became of his family we never knew, but the land he homesteaded, although now owned by strangers, is still known as the Shaw land.

There were the Halls, Ohio people, who had located on a homestead four years before we came. Their two-room sod house was neat and comfortable. Their land was surrounded by hedges of cottonwood, honey locust, and box elder. The many-paned windows were filled with bright, blooming flowers, in both winter and summer. Their home was surrounded by trees and shrubs. We used to buy milk, butter, and eggs there, and Mrs. Hall was neat, capable, and thrifty.

The Crumsick family lived a half-mile farther on. They lived in a half-frame and half-dugout house. Not a tree or flower brightened the life of the little woman who worked like a man by her husband's side. Great barns soon loomed up on their farm, and they raised cattle and hogs, but not a tree or shrub did they ever plant. They lived unto themselves, never attended church or Sunday School, and, like Mr. Shaw, moved away.

[Apparently Mrs. Waring attempted to write a full narrative history of her family's settlement in West Blue. There is, at this distance, no way of knowing whether the following is part of a longer manuscript, part now missing, or whether it represents as far as she got with the story. However, we reprint it in full, as we have it, for the sharpness of detail and of its feeling for the pioneer life, which undoubtedly reflects the experiences of many.]

In 1875, H. L. Badger and other settlers along the Blue sold father a section of land in West Blue precinct. Returning to Massachusetts, he chartered a car and loaded furniture, lumber, and such other things as he thought could be used in the new home, as there was not a tree or shrub on the whole 640 acres. But glowing indeed was the description of the prospects in store for us in this country with its wonderful climate and black rich soil, so different from the worn-out farms in New England. I think now he must have read Washington Irving's "Prairies" or "Astoria" or he

would not have been so enthusiastic. Certainly Mother did not share his optimism, but there was a schoolhouse only a few rods from where he planned his new home. The children would have educational advantages-and mother was deter-

mined that her children should have an education!

We came in the early spring. Our only real rest from travel after we boarded the train at Canaan, Connecticut, was an hour's walk in Chicago, where we changed cars, and another two hours at Council Bluffs before ferrying across the Missouri. Council Bluffs consisted of only a few houses. Mother and the children climbed up a hill, where a woman gave us all a drink of terrible-tasting water that she pulled up from a funny-looking well. After mother's talk with her she was greatly depressed. I often thought what must have been her feelings from Lincoln on.

The country became wilder, flatter and flatter, and when we reached our destination, there was nothing to be seen but green earth and blue sky. We had at last reached

Fairmont, our goal.

In the spring of 1875 a passenger train came whistling and blowing into the little town of Fairmont. The train consisted of an engine, one baggage car, and two day coaches. As the train stopped, a middle-aged man stepped from the train to the railroad platform. He was holding the hand of a little girl of ten. He was closely followed by a tall boy of perhaps 20, who was leading a smaller boy of 12 by the hand. He was followed by a boy of about 18, who clasped tightly the hand of a little boy of 2. Then followed three other groups of two each: a slim girl of 16 with a girl of 8, then one of 14 with a little girl of 6, and last of all, the end of this little procession, a tired worn woman of perhaps 35 with a sleeping baby of 4 months in her arms. All looked tired and dusty, and no wonder, for they had ridden three days and three nights in a day coach and now at last were near the place they were to call home. At least they were in the town only three miles from the farm lately purchased, which the parents of this group of children hoped to have for a home.

The train, with much clatter and rattle, passed out of sight and the group stood on the little wooden platform in front of a very small and very red building with the sign "Fairmont R.R." in large white letters conspicuously lo-

cated on a red board.

The town consisted of a little red depot, a two-story white building with the sign in big black letters "Burlington Hotel," and two small one-story buildings with high, square false fronts, labeled respectively "Porter's General Store,"

"Post Office," and "Livery Stable."

A small building stood near the railroad track about four rods from the depot with the words "E. L. Martin" and "Coal." Three or four new-looking shanties with stovepipes emerging from their roofs for chimneys and one good-looking white house completed the buildings of the town of Fairmont.

As the train became smaller and smaller until it was finally lost in the horizon, a young man of 22 stepped briskly up and, grasping the hand of the father of our little group, said in a hearty, loud voice, "Welcome, Captain Bennett! Another man by this time was hurrying toward the platform and he too, evidently, was interested in our family, for, taking the toil-worn hand of Captain Bennett, he welcomed him in the same hearty western style. Then with twinkling eyes he remarked, "We got room enough here for all of you," and waved his hand over what seemed an endless seat of green in every direction. Then he said, "You must be tired; come over to the hotel and we will divide up." So the little procession went along in the same position as before—the father with his little girl whose hand he once more took in his, with the others following demurely in his wake and the mother bringing up the rear across the green plot of ground leading from the depot to the hotel.

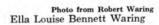
"Captain Bennett, we will take three of the girls to our home," said one of the men. A middle-aged, sick-looking man stepped forward and said, "The rest of them can come home with me." So it was decided that we were thus to be disposed of. Father and three of the older boys went to the two-story building, the Burlington Hotel.

Will Chapin took hold of my hand, and Vie, who was 8, two years younger, and Fannie, 15, followed. On the path that led to the town proper, I noticed one large white house. I comforted myself by thinking, "There is where we are going." This man that held my hand was friendly and pleasant, but we passed the house and went toward a building even smaller than the others. The door was open, and a happy-looking young woman with black hair and bright eyes smiled broadly. She kissed each of us on the cheek and said, "Come right in, supper is ready." Then Will pulled up two boxes and Vie and I were invited to sit on one, side by side, at the little table that was set for five. Suala, that was her name, took one of the two chairs and gave Fannie the other, while Will sat on the remaining box. We were helped to potatoes, meat, gravy, and other foods just as we had had at home. These two were so lively and jolly. Fannie fell in with their chatter and my homesickness soon disappeared with

Afterwards, as Fanny helped with the dishes, Vie and I sat and looked around-such a tiny room with a big flat bed in one corner, that took over a fourth of the place, a cookstove in the other corner, and boxes for cupboards. There were two windows and the only door, the one we came in at. The table now was cleared, the dishes put away, and while I sat wondering where we all would sleep, Suala bade Fannie to get us ready for bed, while she turned down the nice white covers and I knew no more until I heard talking and

laughter.

The sun was pouring in the window. Suala said Will had gone out to where Father was building a new house. He was a carpenter and rode out on a load of lumber. After breakfast Vie and I went out of doors. The houses seemed as small and poor as they did the day before, but the air was sweet and pure, and there were wild flowers in bloom near the house, small bright-colored ones without fragrance. picked a bouquet and Suala put them in a cup in the windowledge. There was a rumbling sound and soon we saw a long streak of smoke in the distance. A freight train came puffing in and we all watched it as it maneuvered around, leaving cars and picking them up again. Suala said the train men were switching the cars on side-tracks, that were meant to be left. At last it sent great clouds of black smoke from the engine and with clatter and much loud shrieking, moved away. It was every day the same when the freight train came in.





In the afternoon we walked out to Mr. Taylor's, where Mother and the other children were taken upon arrival. This was about a mile away. The dwelling, which was very low and flat-looking, was made of boards, end to end. Inside, it was quite comfortable, having three small rooms, most of which were filled by beds. Mr. Taylor took us back to town, Suala and Fannie sitting with him on the spring-seat in the rattling lumber wagon. Vie and I sat in the box behind and bobbed around like marbles when the horses trotted over the rough, winding road.

Will came in for supper and said the frame of the new house was well started—Father was a skilled carpenter—and when our car came with the furniture we were able to move



Photo from Mary Badger Halsey Planting corn about 1925

in. What a day that was! How impatiently we waited for the load of lumber to be there, so we could ride. Finally we started out over the prairie on foot, walking, walking toward the northwest. We could see the new house in the distance, but never seemed to come closer to it. Finally Fannie said, "When we get to that stump, we will sit down and rest." The stump proved to be a bag half full of grain; a man was sowing in a field near by. There were no buildings until we reached our house. Mother was already there and had supper ready. After supper we sat around on piles of lumber and boxes and talked and planned and watched the beautiful sunset. The car had partly unloaded. The beds were up, the floor was only partly laid, but the house was enclosed and HOME.

The house was all there was. All raw prairie, green and bright with flowers, but not a tree, bush, or stone on the 640 acres of land! Truly it took a brave heart not to have many misgivings. But now Mother knew what she had and what she must do. She never complained in the months that followed. If she had any misgivings, we did not know it. She came to stay, and we did.

At first we bought milk from a neighbor, going with a three-quart pail for it, morning and evening. One day father came from the west, leading a cow. It was the handsomest cow a family ever had. We called her Corey. Father had bought her from a man by that name. Twin calves were born a few days later. They were named Bright and Dime. Father built a little barn for these and one day added two bay horses to our livestock, fine young horses, Snap and Dan, who served us many years.

It was time to plow or break the prairie. Snap and Dan made very little impression on that vast domain of green. Two yoke of white oxen were purchased. Strong and patiently they toiled that spring until long black fields appeared where only a few weeks ago was green prairie. It looked to me like a black patch on a large green garment. This was planted to sod corn and was again green and beautiful.

Father and the boys worked long hours on the house and in the field, and when winter came, considerable corn was harvested and hay cut and stacked for our livestock. Fences and yards were built and another good-sized barn, so the winter found us comfortable, but very, very homesick for the beautiful trees, the fine buildings, and the cultured life we had left behind. Mother made friends with the neighbor women. They gave her flower-seeds and she bought bunches of cottonwood sticks to put into the ground, when spring opened. We were sent to school in the little schoolhouse close by. Mother organized a Sunday School there, which met in long, lonesome Sunday afternoons. My sister May, a little girl of perhaps six, often led the singing, she being able to get the right pitch. "Hold the Fort," "Pull for the Shore," and "Little Band" were favorites and always sung, when Ezra Witter, a young man with a growing family, was not there to start the tunes with his tuning-fork. Mrs. Hall had a sweet, although shrill, voice. Her son Alfred inherited her love of music. He was a lad around 13, who took upon himself the duty of opening and closing the schoolhouse in summer and tending the fires in the great stove in winter and trimming and cleaning the kerosene lamps.

This schoolhouse was a community center for that region for many years. Long benches were made, that sat along the sides and back of the room under the blackboards. There were knots in these boards, and figures and characters made

were greatly disfigured on their account.

One winter a young schoolman was engaged to teach the school. He wore a shock-cap with tails that were always fluttering in the wind, and acted and talked so differently from the rest of us.

[Mrs. Waring's manuscript ends abruptly here.

-Editor.]



Photo from Ora Robbins Bird's-eye view of Fairmont

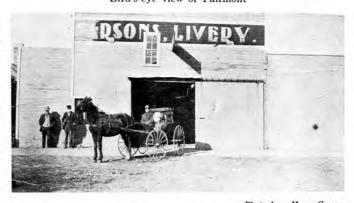


Photo from Harry Carson Left to right: William Heckman, Nimrod Dixon, and Harry Carson in rig. Harry Carson "Tater" hauled mail overland from Fairmont to Geneva for his father—Henry Carson at the are of 14 years. "Tater" started carrying mail on the Fairmont route in 1908, and was a rural carrier for 51½ years, retiring June 30, 1959. One sack held all the patrons mail when he first became a carrier.



Cottonwood tree planted on Badger farm that grew to 26' in circumference at base.



Photo from Ora Robbins
Tunnel to windmill; in the tunnel Mrs. Nichols and granddaughter Hazel Robbins. Standing on the snow bank Mrs. Robbins and daughter Florence.





George A. Williams was born in Lafayette, Illinois, August 17, 1864. He married Mable Grubb October 22, 1888. In 1890 he purchased 240 acres of land in West Blue township, which became their family home. Mr. Williams served in the lower house of the State Legislature from 1919-23 and was co-author of the bill directing and construction of the new state ctpitol.

In 1924 he was elected Lieutenant Governor. He served two terms in this capacity under Governor Adam McMullen and Governor Arthur J. Weaver.

After retiring from active politics he was an active layman in church affairs.

Mr. Williams passed away July 7, 1946.





Sawing cottonwood logs in 1909 or 1910. Left to right: Art Kerekel, Mr. Herndon, Wallace Fassnacht. Bottom picture: Cottonwood logs on Badger farm.



Clarence Nichols, Maud Moffat, about 1900



Courtesy Nebraska Signal Artist drawing of the Fair-view Apartments.

APPENDIX A State legislators from Fillmore County (1866-1967)

Name	Residence	Senate	House	Name	Residence	Senate				
Anderson, Nils	Shickley		1882, 1899	Marks, Robert H.	Ohiowa	Senate			11	louse
Babcock, N. C.	Exeter		1881	Mathewson, George D.	Shickley					1905
Ballard, John R.	Fairmont		1887-1889	McFarland, Elmer W.	Ohiowa	1929				1919
Bedford, Mervin V.	Geneva	1955-1957 (Unicameral)	Murphy, P. A.	Exeter	1929			22.1	
Berkley, Hugh	Ohiowa	1000 1001 (1883	Northrup, C. Maxam	Geneva				1907,	
Blaine, William H.	Geneva		1885	Owens, Claire E.	Exeter					1877
Brown, Guy A., Sr.	Geneva		1929	Perkins, George A.					19	31-35
Chase, J. O.	Fairmont		1877	Perkins, George A. Perkins, J. M.	Fairmont					1905
Conwell, M.	Grafton		1899		Fairmont					1895
Cooksey, W. H.	Burress		1901	Rasmussen, Eric	Fairmont				1965,	
Coulter, John F.	Fairmont	1879	1301	Class Charles II				(U	Jnicam	eral)
	Fairmont	1079	1873	Sloan, Charles H.	Geneva	1895				
Cramer, J. E. Davis, John P.	Geneva		1923	Sloan, Robert J.	Geneva	1903				
	Geneva			Smith, Charles C.	Exeter	1911				
Dempster, John A.	0.77	180	1887, 1889	Smith, H. L.	Geneva	1885				
Dobson, Richard	Grafton		1, 1893, 1897	Smrha, Charles	Milligan	1923,	1927			
Dye, William	Fairmont	1883	1000 1011	Sterling, James H.	Exeter	1887				1885
Eggenberger, Peter, Jr.	Strang		1903, 1911	Stone, Isaac	Fillmore					1879
Foulon, James S.	Fairmont	4000	1913, 1917	Swan, H. N.	Fairmont				1909,	
Fowler, Charles A.	Ohiowa	1899		Taylor, William H.	Exeter					1899
Goodrich, L.	Fairmont	1907		Trask, I. N.	Geneva					1903
Hill, Earle L.	Ohiowa		1933	Ward, John M.	Geneva				1915,	
Howarth, Walter	Exeter		1915	Warner, Charles A.	Geneva	1891			1010,	1011
Jenkins, John D.	Fairmont		1879	Watson, Charles J.	Fairmont	1919,	1921	1925		
Jensen, John	Geneva		1893	Whitzel, Thomas J.	Geneva	1010,	,	1020		1883
Landgren, George	Shickley		1925, 1927	Williams, George A.	Fairmont				1010	
Langhorst, Henry	Ohiowa		1895		1 animont				1919,	1921
Logsdon, S.	Shickley		1907	Mr. Williams	served as Lt.	Governo	or 19	25-193	1.	

APPENDIX B Roster of Company G, First Nebraska Infantry, U. S. Volunteers

Allen, Ethan J.
Anderson, Hugh S.
Ashbrook, John M.
Ashton, Lee R.
Barnes, James
Barth, Henry F.
Belknap, Clarence A.
Chenoweth, Claude M.
Cleaveland, Howard G.
Coon, Marion L.
Cobb, Winfred R.
Craig, Walter A.
Deakins, Oliver M.
Deaver, Harvey W.
Dedmore, Oscar D.
Dowis, Jonathan E.
Gregg, Alva V.
Harvey, Oscar C.
Harwood, Ernest G.
Haughawout, George L.
Heckman, Henry M.
Heckman, Shelly E.
Hensel, Claude P.
Higginbotham, Charles B.
Hitchcock, Henry M.
Hogue, Walter W.
Hughes, Silas E.
Johnston, Wilber B.
Madison, Charles H.
Marsh, Samuel B.

Merryman, John R. Milligan, Walter W. Mohler, Charles E. Morrow, Stanley F. McPherren, Edmond C. North, Thomas C. Oberkotter, John F. Ogden, George E. Placek, Emil E. Porter, Charles K. Pool, Edward Ray, George R. Reed, Lewis E. Scriven, Alba J. Scriven, Loomus A. Shaffer, Nel Shumaker, Harry L. Simacek, Charles Simmons, William H. Smith, Arthur C. Smrha, Charles, Jr. Spivey, James Steven, William A. Talmadge, Edwin R Van Buren, Frank R. Van Nort, John H. Walker, Charles E. Walker, Gilbert D. Walker, Willie P. Walker, Guy C.

Warner, Leonard H. White, Charles C. Whitzel, Loyd E. Wilson, Edward F. Williams, John Woodworth, Charles R. Wright, Robert O. Honorably Discharged Dec. 12, 1898 Q. M. Sergeant William H. Carson Sergeant William H. Smith Sergeant John Burlington Corporal Carl V. Propst Wagoner Perry L. Sargent Carter, Oscar M. Eaton, Sylvester Ekwall, Fred S. Huston, Arthur H. Kingsley, Howard F. Marsh, Judson C. Merrill, William J. Moore, Percy H. Pfleiderer, Fred Taylor, Guy E. Officers Col. John P. Bratt Col. John M. Stotsenburg Col. H. B. Mulford Capt. Fred A. Williams

Capt. V. Claris Talbot 1st Lt. Claude H. Ough 1st Lt. Deo W. Burr 2d Lt. Burton Fisher 2d Lt. Harry E. Hannes Sergeants First Sgt. John A. Stewart Q. M. Sgt. Henry C. Underwood George S. Higginbotham Francis M. Walker Wilber E. Camp Franklin R. Camp Corporals Charlton B. Hyde Arthur S. Hannes John H. McPherson Alvin R. Scott Ernest W. Waite Ward G. Roberts John A. Witter Arthur H. Parmelee Musicians Claude F. Head Elwood Bender Artificer Frank W. Geller Wagoner James J. Cameron

APPENDIX C

Capt. Lee Forby

Some further notes on Manleyville, Geneva Township Adoniram J. Manley bought a half-selction of railroad land, the S ½ of Sec. 27, T7N, R3W, in November, 1872. Manleyville was platted

in February, 1875.

Mr. Manley desired to establish a village, and to encourage the erection of homes and business houses, he promised to give settlers the lots if they should erect a substantial dwelling or place of business within one year in the planned village. If they should fail to erect such structures within said period, their interest and titles to said lots were to lapse and become null and void. There were no other considerations for granting such deeds.

None of the deed-holders ever erected a building there, and so Manley never parted with possession of the various tracts. Thereafter Manley had his half-section of land, including the several lots and tracts, fenced, and he held possession of the land until his death. It was willed by him to his wife Dorliska. He had a daughter Jessie (Cushman). A. J. Manley died on August 6, 1889, at either Dunkirk or Pomfret (both villages in Chautauqua County), New York. Dorliska sold the farm to Mordecai Pangle on November 20, 1899.

Those who took deeds in Manleyville (all dated February 15, 1875) were the following: John G. Bigelow, Wilson Price, R. F. Livermore, L. F. Jefts, Berry and Bedu, Henry J. Manley, Mead (or Mearl) Drake, D. Hanson Wait, Emerson Howe, G. E. Noble, John Haitt (or Hartt), Adelaide L. Forbust (or Forbush), and Calvin Bane. Mr. Bane in turn deeded his lots to Milton Selby, T. L. Williams, John Chase, and C. D. Camp.

APPENDIX D

Population of towns in Fillmore County from the first census after the founding of each town (figures from the U.S. Bureau of the Census):

Exeter	1880	412	Geneva		Milligan	1890	184	Shickley	1890	207
	1890	754		1890 1,580		1900	283	- titelite's		-
	1900	673		1900 1,534		1910	336		1900	372
	1910	916		1910 1,741		1920	418		1910	429
	1920			1920 1,768		1930	412		1920	396
	1930			1930 1,662		1940	392		1930	
	1940	841		19401,888		1950			1940	
	1950			1950			367		1950	316
	1960			1960		1960	323		1960	371
Fairmont .	1880		Cualton		Ontowa	1890	369	Strang	1890	269
ranmont .			Grafton			1900	319		1900	
	1890			1910 353		1910	373		1910	238
	1900			1920 324		1920	433		1920	175
	1910			1930 284		1930	394		1930	153
	1920			1940 240		1940	326		1940	
	1930	740		1950 159		1950	253		1950	
	1940	810		1960 171		1960	195		1960	
	1950	729							2000	00
	1960	829								

Official figures for 1877 gave the populations of the townships as follows:

Belle Prairie Bennett Bryant Chelsea	235 269	FairmontFranklin	696 349	Grafton	305 258	Momence	254
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APPENDIX E

Some school districts not included in the text:

District No. 22 was founded on February 17, 1872, by County Superintendent G. W. Gue, on petition of the legal voters, to include Secs. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, and 36 in T8, R1W. At the election of officers, Fred Sturdevant was elected director. The first teacher listed in the annual report from April 1872 to April 1873 was Frank Hager. The second teacher listed was Clara A. Root.

On February 1, 1879, Secs. 13 and 14 were added. On November 18, 1893, Secs. 34, 35, and 36 became a part of District 95.

The district was dissolved on February 26, 1962. All its territory was annexed to District 20, except for the NE ½ and the SE ¼ of Sec. 13, and the SW ¼ of Sec. 25, all in T8, R1W, Fillmore County; these were annexed to District 68, Saline County.

District No. 23 was organized by Superintendent Gue on February 17, 1872, to include Secs. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15, all in T8, R1W. On February 1, 1879, Secs. 13 and 14 were transferred into District 22.

The first teacher listed was Mary Dunafon, in 1873-1874. The first director was J. G. Hainer.

This district was dissolved and added to District 20 on January 15, 1953.

District No. 24, organized by Superintendent Gue on February 29, 1872, consisted of Secs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, and 17, in T8, R1W. On April 4, 1885, the SE ½ of Sec. 16 was set into District 20, as was the SE 1/4 of Sec. 18 on January 3, 1889.

The first teacher listed, in 1872-1873, was Elsie Meade. The first director was C. J. Orcutt.

The entire district was dissolved and annexed to District 20 on January 15, 1953.

District No. 26 was organized March 4, 1872. It was composed of ections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and the N 1/2 of 16, 17, and 18, in T8, R2W, Fillmore County. It was dissolved and annexed to District 19, January 27, 1953. Early teachers were Lottie E. Bock, April 1874 to April 1875, Jennie Bothwell and Henry Kahle in 1875-76.

District No. 27 was organized March 12, 1872. It was composed of sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15, in T8, R2W. It was dissolved and annexed to Districts 19 and 20, January 27, 1953. The first teacher was Daniel Keller, 1872-73.

District No. 28 was organized March 12, 1872. It was composed of sections 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, and 36 in T8, R2W. It was dissolved and annexed to District 19 on January 27, 1953. The first teacher was Ann M. Clark, April 1872-73.

District No. 78 was organized November 13, 1876, and composed of sections 1, 2, 3, the N 1/2 of sections 11 and 12, the NW 1/4, N 1/2 and NE 1/4 of section 10, T8, R2W. It was dissolved and annexed to Districts 19 and 20, January 15, 1953. The first teacher was L. R. King, April 1876-77

District No. 83 was formed and joined with District No. 76 of Thayer County on December 12, 1885. In accordance with written petitions signed by a majority of qualified voters the boundaries of Districts No. 10 and 31 in Fillmore County were changed by detaching the following: the SW $^{1}\!\!/_{4}$ and S $^{1}\!\!/_{2}$ SE $^{1}\!\!/_{4}$ of section 32, T5, R1W, from District 10; and the S 1/2 of section 25, SE 1/4 of section 35, all of section 36 T5, R2W, from District 38.

This territory detached from Districts 10 and 38 formulated

Fraction School District No. 83 of Fillmore County.

An organizational meeting was held at the residence of J. G. Slingerlands on December 21, 1885. Superintendent J. B. Sexton ordered James Reed to notify all voters of the meeting. On the appointed day, E. F. Medlar and Martha J. Medlar appeared and requested that the SE 1/4 of section 31 be detached from District No. 34 and attached to the newly formed district. The basis for the request was "that the location of their dwelling house was so that on account of streams of water at certain times of the year it is impractical and almost impossible to have children attend school in District 34 for a period of two or three weeks each year." The request was accepted.

On May 5, 1953, District No. 83 in Fillmore County and District No. 76 in Thayer County were dissolved and annexed to Districts

No. 34 and 38 in Fillmore County.

District No. 88. On December 16, 1887, in accordance with two written petitions, one from School District No. 9 of Fillmore County, and another from District No. 85 of Thayer County, Nebraska, signed by a majority of legal voters, the following ground was set off from District No. 9 of Fillmore County and attached to same School District No. 85 of Thayer County: S½ of sections 35 and 36 in Township 5, Range 1 W in Fillmore County. This territory constituted Fractional School District No. 88 of Fillmore County and Fractional School Dstrict No. 85 of Thayer County

On June 9, 1952 the district was dissolved by petition and annexed

to District No. 21 of Thayer County, Nebraska.

District No. 90 was organized March 12, 1888. It was composed of section 4, the N ½ and SE ¼ of section 5 and the N ½ of section 6 detached from District No. 26 and this together with sections 31, 32, and 33, T9, R2W, York County. It was dissolved and annexed to District No. 26 No. 27, 1052 trict 19, Fillmore Co., and District 83, York County, January 27, 1953.

District No. 91 was organized August 10, 1888. It was formed by detaching from District 28, sections 24, 25, 36, and the E 1/2 of sections 23, 26, and 35. It was dissolved and annexed to District 20, January

15, 1953.

APPENDIX F Fillmore County Officers

The following is a roster* listing (along with the year in which the officers that have served the county since its beginning in 1871.

alies at studen	Commis	
1871 (April 21) E. L. Martin, C.	U Decesti	Charles Barrett second dis
Jesse Lee	H. Bassett,	Charles Barnett—second dis- trict
1871 (October 10)		1880
T. E. Barnett (3)		
Burnett (2nd), H.	G. Smith	
(1st) 1872		1881 Cyrus Macy—first district
E. L. Martin—first	district	1882
1873		Simeon Sawyer - second dis-
W. T. Burnett-sec	ond district	
1874		1883
Elijah Shephard – trict	-third dis-	J. H. Springer—third district 1884
875		Daniel H. Lynn—first district
W. C. Henry—first district		1885
.876		C. C. Miles—second district
E. D. Place—second district		1886
1877 Elijah Shephard –	third dis-	J. H. Springer—third district 1887
trict	tilla dis	W. J. Hildreth—first district
1878		
William Ramsdell	— first dis-	
trict		1: 6 6
ovember, 1887 election		wnship form of government at the
ovember, 1007 electro	Super	wicowe
387	Super	1888
W. M. Murray	Ex	xeter W. J. Hildreth
J. H. Rushton	Fair	rmont Ed Beach
J. M. Perkins		t Blue J. M. Perkins
Peter Honey		afton Peter Honey
J. Donnelly R. A. Matteson		nnett G. B. Clawson eneva J. Jensen
B. A. Merritt		eneva J. Jensen adison James Holmes
H. Porter		berty H. G. Porter
Joseph Stov		engary W. M. Chase
O. D. Wilson		nelsea O. D. Wilson
Robert Turner		anton Robert Turner
P. Reinsch A. N. Anderson		mence P. Reinsch ryant A. N. Anderson
J. M. Lefever		ryant A. N. Anderson milton William Zinn
W. A. Simms		Prairie F. M. Denman
M. F. Garrison		anklin R. L. Clemons
889		1890
A. B. Vennum		xeter A. B. Vennum
W. J. Hildreth		xeter W. J. Hildreth
E. McCann Ed Beach		irmont Ed D. Beach V. A. Stuart
J. M. Perkins		st Blue J. M. Perkins
Peter Honey		rafton Peter Keenan
G. B. Clawson		ennett G. B. Clawson
W. S. Brown		eneva W. H. Cooksey
John Jensen J. M. Hiskey		eneva W. S. Brown adison J. M. Hiskey
H. G. Porter		berty P. Kelly
A. V. Kouba		engary A. V. Kouba
O. D. Wilson, Jr.		nelsea O. D. Wilson, Jr.
A. H. Stevens		anton A. H. Stevens
Pius Reinsch		omence C. H. Yost
W. H. Davis William Zinn		ryant W. H. Davis milton John Medlar
F. M. Denman		Prairie F. M. Denman
R. L. Clemons		anklin J. W. Quinlan
891		1892
M. E. Trauger		xeter M. E. Trauger
Ed D. Beach V. A. Stuart		irmont J. S. Foulon
J. M. Perkins		irmont C. W. Dumond st Blue J. M. Perkins
Peter Keenan		rafton Peter Keenan
G. B. Clawson		ennett G. B. Clawson
Walt S. Huston		eneva Walt S. Huston
W. S. Brown		eneva W. S. Brown
G. A. Walker P. Kelly		adison G. A. Walker iberty Paul Anton
A. V. Kouba		iberty Paul Anton engary A. V. Kouba
O. D. Wilson		helsea G. R. Simmons
Charles Charlton	Sta	tanton Charles Charlton
Pius Reinsch		omence Pius Reinsch
		ryant W. H. Davis milton M. L. Schelkopf
W. H. Davis		
M. L. Schelkopf		
	Belle	e Prairie George Matson ranklin M. F. Garrison

893		1894
W. J. Hildreth	Exeter	W. J. Hildreth
James S. Foulon C. W. Dumond	Fairmont Fairmont	James S. Foulon
J. M. Perkins	West Blue	C. W. Dumond William E. Smith
Peter Keenan	Grafton	Joseph Welch
Stephen Kendall	Bennett	Stephen Kendall
W. S. Brown	Geneva	W. S. Brown
Walt S. Huston	Geneva	M. V. King
J. N. Taylor Paul Anton	Madison	J. N. Taylor
James Krisl	Liberty	Walter Howarth
G. R. Simmons	Glengary Chelsea	James Krisl Morgan Warner
Charles Charlton	Stanton	Charles Charlton
Pius Reinsch	Momence	August Bengston
William H. Davis	Bryant	William H. Davis
M. L. Schelkopf	Hamilton	H. H. Barney
Joseph Moor	Belle Prairie	Joseph Moor
William H. Garrison	Franklin	William H. Garrison
E. J. Barbur (1), J. S Ward (4), James Krisl 896 P. A. Murphy (1), J. Schelkopf (7) 897	(5), Chas. Fowler (6), M. L. Schelkopf (7)
Wm. Smith (2), John W 898	ard (4), S. J. Speld	e (6)
P. A. Murphy (1), F. L. Schelkopf (7)	A. Strickland (3),	James V. Rohla (5), M
899 C. W. Dumond (2), Joh	n M. Ward (4), Sa	muel J. Spelde (6)
900 Thomas Nugent (1), 1		
Samuel Logsdon (7) 1901		
J. M. Perkins (2), J. M. 1902	Ward (4), R. W. S	towell (6)
A. J. Stinton (1), N. Sc (7) 903	haf (3), A. A. Ham	ouz (5), M. L. Schelkop
E. D. Beach (2), D. B. 4 904		
Henry Kolar (1), Cla Thomas Jacobson (7) 1905	us Franzen (3), l	Henry C. Schmidt (5)
W. E. Smith (2), D. B.		
Thomas Kelly (1), Cla Schelkopf (7) 1907	us Franzen (3), H	. C. Schmidt (5), M. I
J. B. Stephenson (2),, J 1908		
Thomas Kelly (1), Joh Hoag (7)	n O'Brien, Sr. (3),	Frank Steck (5), L. A
404		
G. A. Perkins (2), J. H	. Heath (4), Frank	
G. A. Perkins (2), J. H 1910 D. Songster (1), John vacancy), Frank Steck	. Heath (4), Frank O'Brien, Sr. (3), (5), Jacob Bellar (7	R. A. Matteson (4—fi
G. A. Perkins (2), J. H 1910 D. Songster (1), John vacancy), Frank Steck 1911 Geo. A. Perkins (2), R.	. Heath (4), Frank O'Brien, Sr. (3), (5), Jacob Bellar (7) A. Matteson (4),	R. A. Matteson (4—fi Frank Demaree (6)
G. A. Perkins (2), J. H 1910 D. Songster (1), John vacancy), Frank Steck 1911 Geo. A. Perkins (2), R. 1912 D. Songster (1), John Bellar (7)	O'Brien, Sr. (3), (5), Jacob Bellar (7) A. Matteson (4), (1) O'Brien, Sr. (3),	R. A. Matteson (4—fi) Frank Demaree (6) Frank Steck (5), Jaco
G. A. Perkins (2), J. H 1910 D. Songster (1), John vacancy), Frank Steck 1911 Geo. A. Perkins (2), R. 1912 D. Songster (1), John Bellar (7) 1914 Dennis Songster (1), H Boe (7)	O'Brien, Sr. (3), (5), Jacob Bellar (7) A. Matteson (4), (1) O'Brien, Sr. (3),	R. A. Matteson (4—fi Frank Demaree (6) Frank Steck (5), Jaco
D. Songster (1), John vacancy), Frank Steck (1911) Geo. A. Perkins (2), R. (1912) D. Songster (1), John Bellar (7) 1914 Dennis Songster (1), H	. Heath (4), Frank O'Brien, Sr. (3), (5), Jacob Bellar (7 A. Matteson (4), O'Brien, Sr. (3), (enry J. Mueller (3) A. Matteson (4), Frank	R. A. Matteson (4—fi) Frank Demaree (6) Frank Steck (5), Jaco), Frank Steck (5), J. Co Peter Eggenberger (6)

County Commissioners

J. F. Mitchell (1), Fred Softley (3), Clarence E. McCartney (5),
John C. Boe (7)
1924
Harry Bergstrand (2, A. A. Russell (4), J. P. Moor (6)

Clark Robinson (2), Link Chestnut (4), J. P. Moor (6)

County Commissioners, Continued Clerk of District Court County Judge Mitchell (1), Fred Softley (3), Clarence McCartney (5), 1879 1871 (April) William H. Blain J. S. B. Camp C. M. Northrup E. T. Ketchum (7) 1883 Vincent Dworak 1875 1928 1887 H. Sheldon 1877 J. D. Hamilton John A. Anderson (2), A. A. Russell (4), J. P. Moor (6) 1891 H. F. Putlitz 1879 B. F. Shickley 1930 1897 Emmet F. Real 1887 D. H. Conant H. P. Wilson William Guthrie (1), Joe Walter (3), Clarence McCartney (5), 1901 W. C. Henry 1891 E. T. Ketchum (7) 1904 B. F. Benedict 1893 B. F. Shickley 1932 1916 Frank H. Hitch 1897 Franklin Skipton John A. Anderson (2), A. A. Russell (4), Fred Walter (6) 1938 Frank Peterson 1903 John R. Patterson Wayne Winchell 1942 1907 W. R. Fulton 1934 Leo Murphy (1), Joe Walter (3), Frank Naimon (5), H. B. Thom-1928 George A. Landgren County Clerk Howard Hamilton 1936 as (7) 1871 (April) Henry L. Badger 1936 1942 Guy Hamilton (Oct.) J. E. Spear 1871 Ray Cellar John A. Anderson (2), A. A. Russell (4), Ernest Silvey (6) 1956 1875 J. Jensen 1938 George P. Wintersteen 1879 County Attorney Leo Murphy (1), Henry Rath (3), Frank Podlesak (5), H. B. E. H. Cobb W. C. Massey 1883 1886 W. C. Sloan Thomas (7) 1887 1890 C. H. Sloan 1940 1891 R. A. Matteson John Barsby 1894 John A. Anderson (2), W. A. Churchill (4), Ernest Silvey (6), E. 1895 Sid Donisthorpe 1898 Frank W. Sloan S. Thomas (7-fill vacancy) 1897 Alvin N. Strickland 1902 John K. Waring 1942 1901 E. J. Barbur 1906 Arthur D. Curtiss Leo Murphy (1), Henry Rath (3), Ed Myers (5), Fred Walter W. C. Peterson 1905 1908 George Landgren (6-fill vacancy), E. S. Thomas (7) Uriah F. Stannard 1907 A. D. Curtiss 1910 1944 Bert A. Lynn 1911 Dana C. Geiselman 1912 Ernest Souba (2), J. W. Hammond (4), Norman Wright (6) W. H. Sisler 1916 1916 John Barsby Marguerite H. Burke (ap-Thomas J. Keenan 1924 1922 William Guthrie (1), William Bohlen (3), Ed Myers (5), George pointed to fill vacancy) 1926 Guy Hamilton Harnett (7) E. L. Cumberland 1924 J. W. Hammond 1930 1948 Rupert M. Young 1932 1934 John Gewacke W. E. Goodrich (2), Guy Brown, Sr. (4), Norman Wright (6) Mildred E. Young (a pointed to fill vacancy) 1942 Young (ap-Robert Waring appointed 1950 to serve 1941-1945 (W. Clarence Dawson (1), Wm. Bohlen (3), Ed Krejci (5), A. T. An-1944 Willard Foster W. II) derson (7) County Coroner County Surveyor Willard E. Goodrich (2), Guy Brown, Sr. (4), Norman Wright (6) 1871 (April) T. E. Barnett 1871 (April) H. L. Badger 1871 (Oct.) James Shepherd 1954 1871 (Oct.) H. L. Badger James Biba (1), William Bohlen (3), Ed Krejci (5), A. T. An-1875 R. H. Wirt V. A. Jones 1873 R. M. Cotton derson (7) 1877 H. L. Badger 1875 1879 G. W. Whipple W. S. Crawford 1879 Willard E. Goodrich (2), Ed Myers (4), Norman Wright (6) 1881 Dr. T. C. McCleery 1886 V. A. Jones 1885 C. F. Ballard Peter Eggenberger 1890 T. C. McCleery James Biba (1), William Bohlen (3), Ed Krejci (5), Ed Johnson 1889 1893 Henry L. Badger 1893 Dr. Deo Ramsdell (7)1897 J. H. Haughawaut 1897 John A. Patterson 1901 H. L. Badger Ralph O'Connor (2), John Kroll (4), Norman Wright (6) 1899 T. C. Canine Peter Eggenberger, Sr. 1905 A. G. McGrew 1901 1907 C. G. Hrubesky Leo Murphy (1), Ira Frazier (2), William Bohlen (3), John Fahl-1903 A. W. Fitzsimons Peter Eggenberger 1908 berg (5), Edwin A. Johnson (7) 1905 Dr. F. A. Wells R. G. Wongdahl 1909 1907 T. C. McCleery William Biba 1914 W. F. Dickinson Ira Frazier (2), John Kroll (4), Anton Uldrich (6) 1909 Henry W. Drake 1932 1911 Robert Gibbons 1946 Ed Schelkopf (deceased Leo Murphy (1), William Bohlen (3), John Fahlberg (5), Edwin Isaac Steele 1914 Nov. 21, 1958)

A. Johnson (7)

County Sheriff County Treasurer 1871 (April) J. F. Snow 1871 (April) Wilbur Deuel 1871 (Oct.) J. G. McFadden 1871 (Oct.) A. T. Hager C. A. Warner J. M. Fisher 1875 W. J. Currier P. D. Sturdevant 1879 W. G. Harmes # ANNES 1879 1881 1883 Austin Adams 1885 W. I. Carson 1887 Arthur Murdock 1889 C. E. Summers 1891 Emil Sandrock 1893 H. G. Porter 1895 Joseph W. Talmage 1895 B. B. Ogg 1897 Jacob Weis M. W. Dinneen 1899 1899 James Krisl 1903 H. S. Page 1901 E. J. Demoster Frank B. Ashton 1909 1905 Charles F. Buehrer 1916 C. J. Warner 1909 E. C. McPherren 1922 John E. Little 1914 H. N. Swan 1930 Frank Steinacher 1916 Lester Donisthorpe 1942 Harry A. Hulse 1922 Clay Thomas 1948 Albert Tobiassen 1934 Harry E. Swanson Melvin Olson 1966 1946 Barton Lepper Jean Harrington 1950 Bert Lynn 1962 Judson Cumberland

County Superintendent Public Instruction 1871 (April) G. R. Wolf 1871 (Oct.) G. W. Gue J. A. Dempster 1872 J. B. Lewis 1877 J. B. Sexton 1883 John J. Burke 1887 J. C. Clegg 1893 P. H. Hines 1897 Chas. Smrha. Jr. 1899 J. L. Adams 1903 Henry Vauck 1904 John E. Ray 1909 1911 Alice Jennett 1914 Lillian D. Green 1918 Margaret Haughawaut 1922 Elizabeth E. Schelkopf Hannah Gilmore 1934 1938 on October 1, 1958) Jan.-July, 1959 Robert Quick

Clay Co. Surveyor Everett 1958 Ablott-Acting Surveyor County Assessor 1903 B. B. Ogg

1907 R. J. McKeag T. F. Combs 1912 Walter Huston Voted against election of a County Assessor in November, 1916. 1950 E. L. Cumberland

Charles Miller

Elsie Reinsch

1954

1956

(served jointly with Saline Co., appointed)

July, 1959 Dewey Ganzel (served jointly with Saline Co., appointed)

1962 Emma Renken

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Index

As it is not possible to index all the thousands of names that appear in such a book as this, it is necessary to set up some fairly consistent principle of selection, one which will combine maximum usefulness with maximum interest. This index, therefore, attempts to include the following: (1) All names of pioneer homesteaders whose names appear on the homestead maps of the several townships; (2) all names of early settlers who founded families, or stayed long enough to have significant influence on their townships; and (3) early county officers or founders of major pioneering businesses (for example, the first blacksmith in a community). Beyond these three basic principles, we have attempted to include the earliest businesses and professional people, and teachers in individual districts-if mentioned in the text rather than in our detailed listings. For pioneer historical interest, we have indexed every personal name in the "Early History" chapter and every name in the early-history section of Geneva. Outside those sections, the names of pioneers are set in bold-face type in the text, and these are all indexed. Some other names will of course appear; these are primarily those of persons who, though figuring only slightly in the text, had significant or interesting experiences. For example, a person who was neither a "pioneer" nor the founder of a family may have left us an account of a blizzard or a storm - or may have survived, or perished in, some disaster such as a tornado.

Churches and schools, as too numerous to list by separate names, are grouped: Churches are listed by towns in alphabetical order under the heading "Churches"; schools are arranged by district number under the heading "Schools."

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