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OLD SETTLERS' HISTORY
OF
YORK COUNTY, NEBRASKA



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Old Settlers' History of York County

and

Individual Biographies

Prepared and Arranged by the Officers of the
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Dedicated to
THE PIONEERS OF YORK COUNTY

"Oh! tell me a tale of the early days—
Of the times as they used to be."



NAMING OF YORK COUNTY.

In looking up early incidents for the Old Settlers' History, to be kept in the County Judge's office of this county, the first question was, why was the County named York? I first wrote to the State Historical Society at Lincoln, but could find no reason from there. I find from A. T. Andreas' history of Nebraska, and from the help of Judge Sedgwick in investigating the Journals of the first and second Territorial Legislatures that met in 1855, that one A. D. Jones, a member of the first Territorial Legislature from Douglas county, (and by the way Omaha was the capital of Nebraska at that date) was chairman of the committee on defining the boundaries and giving names to new counties. Mr. Jones proposed to name the new counties after prominent leaders from each political party; that accounts for the name of Polk, Hamilton, Butler, Fillmore, Clay and many others. Seward county was first named Green, after a senator who afterwards joined the rebels in 1861, and the good people of Green county petitioned the legislature and had the name of their county changed to Seward. The journal of the first territorial legislature of 1855 shows that the north line of York county was the Platte river, the boundary was later changed to include its present boundary.

York county was named by the legislature of 1855, long before any white man settled here.

I next wrote to A. D. Jones, who seemed to have a good deal to do with laying out and naming new counties in the early day, but the letter was returned, and I learned after that Mr. Jones went to heaven ten years ago. I secured from early records the names of members of the first legislature and wrote to quite a number and some of the letters were returned uncalled for, and others were answered, stating they could remember nothing of the reason for naming York county. A party suggested that if I wrote the editor of the Bee, Mr. Rosewater, he could tell me everything, so I wrote, enclosing a stamp, and got no reply and he is a stamp ahead. I recently wrote to the Public Librarian of Omaha, for Omaha was Mr. Jones' home, and he was very

prominent in its early history, in fact he homesteaded the land where the principal part of Omaha now stands. I thought this Mr. Jones, who named York county, might have come from York, Pa. I received the following letter, which is the first ray of information as to why this county was named York.

“To M. Sovereign, York, Nebr.

Dear Sir: Your letter regarding information about A. D. Jones has been received, and we find that Alfred D. Jones was born in Philadelphia, January 30, 1814. A Nebraska handbook makes a brief mention that York county was named after York, England, but gives no reason for it. This is all I can find. Am sorry it is so meager.

Very truly yours,

BLANCHE HAMMOND,

Acting Librarian.”

YORK COUNTY.

Topography.

York County is situated in the center of the most beautiful, and when all conditions are considered, the best agricultural district to be found in the fertile and far-famed Nebraska.

Measuring from the center of the county it is ninety-two and one-half miles to the Missouri river, and from the same point it is sixty miles to the Kansas state line, while the Platte river is thirty-three miles north and thirty-six miles west in a direct line.

The county is as near the center of the celebrated South Platte country as it is possible to locate the center of a section of country, the extent of which is so indefinite. The county is twenty-four miles square, and contains 575 sec-

tions or 368,640 acres of land. Upon the "divides" or plateaus the surface of the country is very level and smooth, slightly undulating, and as one travels towards the streams, he finds the surface traversed by numerous ravines or "draws," but very few of these are so deep or abrupt as to forbid of cultivation. They are a natural shelter for stock and in days gone by were the favorite feeding ground of the buffalo and elk. They produce the very best of wild native grasses, and are considered an advantage rather than a detriment. The faint outlines of the "buffalo paths" are still visible in many places and the appearance presented would indicate that immense herds once frequented these favorite haunts.

The West Blue River traverses the southern edge of the county, running in a zig-zag course, the general direction being east and west. This stream furnishes excellent natural water-power, and there are now located upon it some of the best flouring mills in the State, three of which are in the limits of this county.

Beaver Creek crosses the west line of the county near the center north and south and runs nearly due east about half way across it, when it turns southward and runs in a southeasterly direction until it meets the West Blue River, about one and a half miles east of the county line in Seward County.

Lincoln Creek traverses the north half of the county from west to east and furnishes a number of good mill sites.

The Blue River, the least important of the four water courses, traverses the northwest portion. These streams are not "mighty rivers" but furnish abundant water for stock and drive machinery all the year round.

They are skirted by a belt of timber, in some places very light, and heavier in others. The valleys formed by them are picturesque and very beautiful, in many localities almost enchanting.

The soil throughout the entire county is uniformly rich and productive. The "divides" or uplands seem equally

productive and fertile as the bottom lands of the valleys. Since the first settlements of the county an entire failure of crops has been unknown. There have been partial failures of one or more of the cereals, but there has always been a harvest, and after the first severe trials incident to the settlement of any new country have been surmounted, the county has been more than self-supporting. There is a copious rainfall every year, and the soil and sub-soil are such that the earth is always moist just below the surface.

Early Settlements.

No settlements were made in York County until the location of the Territorial Road, in 1861, from Nebraska City to a point on the line of the "Old Government" or "California Trail," forty miles due east of the present city of Kearney, familiarly called the "Old Oregon Trail," and more definitely known to early freighters and travelers as the Nebraska City Cut-off.

It followed the natural "divides" of the county, running near enough to the creeks and rivers to obtain water for the ox and mule teams of the freighters.

This historic "Trail" entered York County in the southeast corner, passing through West Blue, York and Baker Precincts on one of the continuous "divides" that across the county, running in a general course east and west, and came down on the Beaver bottom just south of York, and out on the divide crossing J. P. Miller's homestead, Southwest quarter of Section 12, Township 10, Range 3. Along the line of this trail, at convenient point for obtaining water and fuel, numerous ranches were established. Five of these pioneer hotels were located in York County, the oldest being Porcupine Ranch, situated at Porcupine Bluffs, near the west line of the county. It was inaugurated in the year 1863, by Benjamine F. Lushbaugh, United States Indian Agent of the Pawnees, and was conducted by Samuel Kearney. It was also a relay station of the Overland Stage Coach, and twenty-seven miles west of Fouse's Ranch, located at Beaver Crossing, in Seward County.

The following year, 1864, Mr. Lushbaugh also



NERVA FOUSE
Settled in York County in 1865

established a Stage Station, on N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$, 15—10—2 and placed in charge a Mr. Chapin, who kept it for a period of six months, when it passed into the hands of Jack Smith, who remained proprietor until the freight wagons disappeared, and its mission was ended.

The McDonald Ranch was also established in 1864, and is named in honor of its original proprietor. This ranch was purchased by a Mr. Baker, in the fall of 1865, and operated by him until the close of the freighting business. It was located just east of Porcupine Ranch.

Antelope Ranch was situated only a few miles east of the McDonald Ranch, and was established in the month of November, 1865, by James T. Mathewson.

Next to the Jack Smith Stage Station west was the ranch known as Jack Stone's Ranch, established in August, 1865, by George Chapman, but operated by him for only six months, at which time he transferred it to John McClellan, alias Jack Stone, and maintained by him until the business of freighting was abandoned.

One would think from hearing of the McClellan Ranch, the Jack Smith Ranch and the Jack Stone Ranch, all just down the Beaver Creek from York, that there were three ranches, but from information gathered from old settlers it appears that George Chapman first started a ranch and sold to John McClellan. This John McClellan afterwards got into a fight with a fellow and whipped him, and knocked the breath out of him, but the fellow soon got his breath and picked himself up; and John McClellan said, "Why I thought I knocked you dead as a stone," and he was afterwards called Jack Stone, and the ranch was lastly known as the "Jack Stone Ranch."

Robert Henderson, N. A. Dean and M. Sovereign went to the site of the Jack Stone, McClellan, Ranch, to verify its location, also to find the location of the Jack Smith Stage Station.

Mr. Henderson, who put in the first crop on the Jack Stone ranch in 1865, and lived there, locates the place where the ranch house stood, near the south bank of Beaver Creek and about 40 rods from the S. W. corner of Fred Whitecombs

farm, the S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ —9—10—2, about 4 miles S. E. from York, the Ranche was built of logs with sod roof. Marks of the buildings remain in the pile of dirt and an old caved in well. The course of the creek is very familiar to Mr. Henderson and he made no hesitancy in locating the exact spot, and by the way it is the exact location where the first white child was born in old York Precinct, our friend Mrs. Alex. Stephens now living at 815 York avenue.

The Ranch stables were about 30 rods S. W. of where the house stood on the N. E. corner of N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$, 16—10—2.

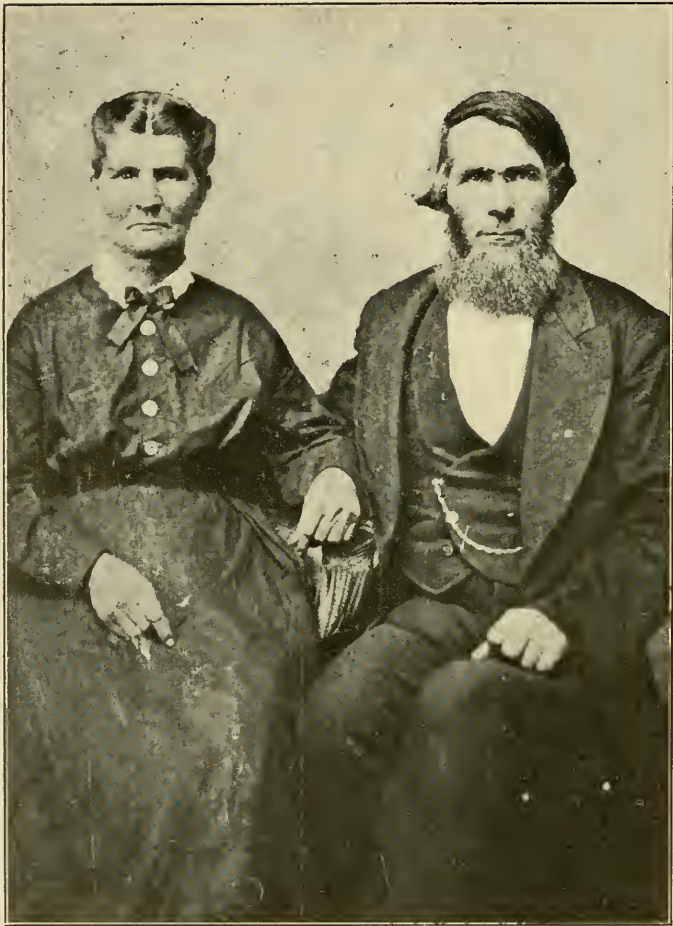
Next the party proceeded to locate the Jack Smith Stage Station which was about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile down the creek. There was no trouble in locating the Stage Station it was on the banks of a big draw on Sec. 15—10—2, this is the Station made famous by the shooting of a drunken stage driver by the keeper of the Station—Jack Smith, the victim was a driver in charge of the overland stage coach, and in passing over the road stopped at Smith's Station. He was, under the influence of "pioneer whiskey," very abusive, and finally declared his intention to shoot Mr. Smith.

With this purpose in view, he went to the stage, secured his revolvers, returned to the ranch and drew a bead on Mr. Smith, just as he was about to enter the ranch.

Mr. Smith shot first, the ball entering the forehead and producing instant death. Our Mr. Henderson saw the fellow's hat with the bullet hole through the band.

Near the site of Mr. Smith's old Stage Station, on the bluffs, a few rods south of Beaver Creek, on the northwest Quarter of Section 15, Township 10, Range 2, may be seen the grave of the first white man interred in York County. His death occurred in 1865, was tragic and brought on by his own evil intentions.

H. H. Klone, an early settler, says that about the same time the stage driver was shot and buried near Jack Stone's Ranch a wagon boss, a stranger, Sam Tate, was passing through the country and was killed by lightning in a



MR. AND MRS. JOHN ANDERSON

First homesteaders in York County. Sec. 2, Town.
9, Range 1. 1865

storm, and nothing could be found on his body to, in any way, identify him, but \$500.00 was found in his pockets; the parties who found him buried him by the stage driver, and as a compensation for the 500.00 sent to Nebraska City and procured paling and placed a fence around his grave, the fence is supposed to be around the stage driver's grave but is by his side and around the other grave.

Mr. Henderson says he has read the lead pencil lettering many times as he went by the grave. This was 47 years ago, and the marker is in a good state of preservation was brought in by the party and left at the County Judge's office with other curios of early times.

This was the first death occurring in the county, and although assuming the form of a tragedy, Mr. Smith was justified in the course he pursued. This death occurred February, 1865.

The party also found plain marks of the famous old Freight Trail, that so many thousands of California gold hunters passed over in "49" and later years in their untiring hunt for wealth and other thousands of Mormons on their way to Utah where they committed so many atrocities in the guise of Indians on the early pioneer emigrants.

The marks of this old Trail which brings to mind so many thrilling incidents of early times is on the banks of the big draw just below the residence of Mr. John Nelson on Sec. 15—10—2 about 4 miles S. E. of York. The emigrants used to travel in great companies for protection against the indians, and drove their wagons side by side usually making a trail two to four rods wide. Mr. Henderson says he counted 160 wagons of Mormons in one company, and it took them 3 hours to all get in camp, but in going down this steep draw they made 4 separate tracks, and came together in the draw and made one track coming out on the west side.

The first permanent settlement of the county was made by John Anderson and his son William Anderson, upon the first homestead claims in York County on Section 2, Town-

ship 9, Range 1, and are honored as the pioneer settlers of the county.

The early settlers without exception took up sites for their future homes in the timber groves that bordered the principal streams. The wild natural scenery of their charming valleys attracted and irresistibly drew them to their shady nooks and the prime-necessities of pioneer life, wood and water were in abundance.

The first settlements were made in the valley of the West Blue, in the territory now embraced by West Blue Precinct. The early pioneers in this portion of the county are: John Anderson, William Anderson, Nerva Fouse, Elias Gilmore, George Stubblefield, Henry Chatterton, William J. Taylor and David Buzzard. In the northwest part, J. W. Kingston and Philando Church settled upon the Blue River in 1870, and in the north and northeast, upon Lincoln Creek, David Doan, James H. Stewart, Newton Hyett, and John A. Mercer made settlement in 1868, and C. C. Smith and a Mr. Coon, in 1867.

In the more central part along the valley of Beaver Creek the pioneers are John Kora, Julius Frost, Henry Nichols, William Sweet and Christian Bristol, the date of their settlement being 1870.

A little further west on the creek David Baker settled in 1869, and the following year Thomas Bassett and Marion Shackelford.

In the south and west parts, Fernando McFadden made settlement in 1866 on the West Blue, and Levi Woodruff (now deceased) in 1868, and also the Hendersons in June, 1866.

In 1870, during the month of April, the organization of the county took place. The United States census, which was made during this year, disclosed a total population of 640, one half of which had made settlement in the spring and summer.

There was but one frame house in the entire county, the residence of Uncle Elias Gilmore, situated on the West

Blue, and but one schoolhouse, a sod structure, also located upon this stream.

One post-office comprised the entire mail facilities, which was located upon the West Blue on the road between Fairmont and York, at the residence of Fernando McFadden, established in the month of July, 1867. Mr. McFadden has the honor of being the first Postmaster appointed in York County, and his euphonious name was also given to the post-office. At this office they were supposed to have a weekly mail, but high water, a sick horse, or some other incident often delayed it, and not unfrequently two weeks passed without any mail coming into York County.

Large numbers of buffalo invaded the county in August, 1868, which was the last appearance of these animals in any considerable numbers. Their advent was a godsend to the almost destitute pioneers, who found themselves in a position to lay in a winter's supply of meat, and it is needless to add they were not backward in taking advantage of their good fortune. During this year (1868) the Pawnees, Otoes, Omahas and Poncas were united in a war against their common enemy, the powerful Sioux, and invaded York County on the war-path. The line of battle was on the south side of the West Blue, about eight miles south of the city of York. No white settlers were molested, but the Indians skirmished here and there over the southern part of the county according to their usual mode of warfare.

In 1870 there were but two or three houses between the residence of J. W. Kingston in the northwest part of the county and the city of York, and the settlements were scattered and many miles apart. Yet, those were grand old days, and the first settlers are unanimous in pronouncing them as such. They were obliged to make long journeys for their social amusements, but always enjoyed them. A trip of twenty-five miles for the purpose of visiting a neighbor was no uncommon occurrence, and you may rest assured, those visits were always pleasant and agreeable. All were united in one common bond of friendship and hearty good will toward each other. A new settler was hailed with delight, and the neighbors (all were neighbors) would go fifteen or twenty miles to assist him in erecting his sod

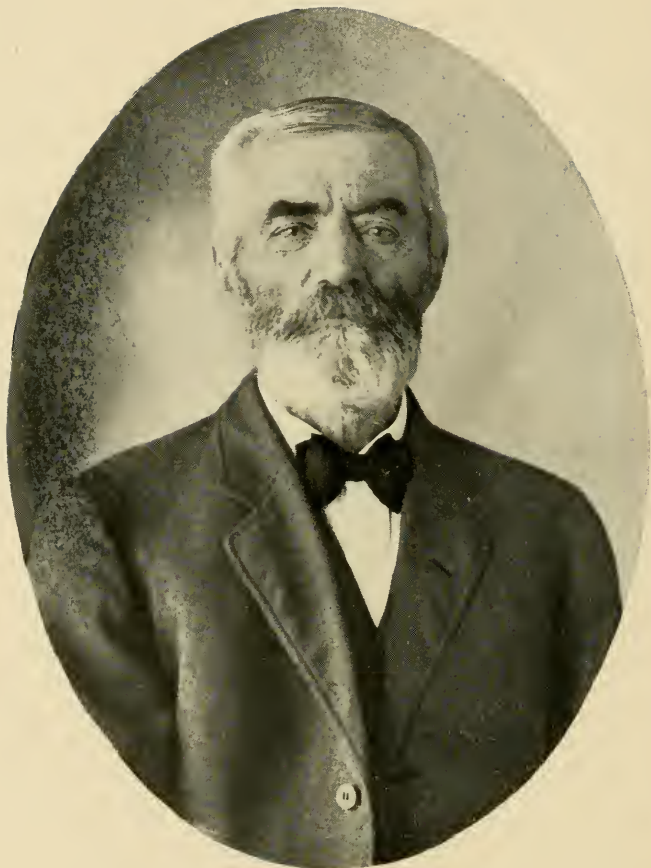
house, and giving him an honest welcome. The stranger became one of them and without the least formality. Such hearty good will is contagious, and no sooner did the new settler see it manifested than he took the disease, and was as jolly, free and friendly as the rest. Long trips across the country were not unfrequent, and little dreaded.

The nearest mill was located at Milford, Seward County, a distance of thirty-five miles from York, and with their little grists, they made the journey in three days and often in two. The bulk of the trading was done at Lincoln, except lumber, which was purchased at Plattsmouth or Nebraska City, on the Missouri River. The many trials and hardships of pioneer life, interspersed with the numerous pleasures incident to it, from a volume that can never be fully written.

Organization.

Prior to the year 1870 York County was attached to Seward County for judicial and revenue purposes. On the 18th day of March, 1870, His Excellency David Butler, Governor of the State of Nebraska, issued a proclamation in response to a petition signed by N. A. Dean, John Anderson, William Anderson, Nerva Fouse, Elias Gilmore, George Stubblefield, Henry Chatterton, H. W. Taylor, David Buzzard, J. W. Kingston, P. Church, David Doan, James H. Stewart, Newton Hyett, John A. Mercer, C. C. Smith, Mr. Coon, David Baker, Fernando McFadden, Levi Woodruff, Robert Anderson, Randolph Fairbanks, J. W. Wartz, E. Melick, Elisha Martin, Will Whitaker, Jim Whitaker, G. W. Vance, A. J. Gilmore, Jacob Gilmore and David Henderson, the voting population of York County at that time, authorizing a permanent organization of the county.

In accordance with this proclamation, on the 26th of April, 1870, the people of York County met at the polling places of the three precincts, and exercised their franchise, at which election eighty-six votes were cast throughout the entire county. Of this number fifty-one were polled in Precinct No. 1, at the house of Uncle Elias Gilmore. Section 17; in Precinct No. 2, at the old pre-emption house of A.



J. W. FROST
First County Treasurer of York County, Nebraska

M. Ghost, situated at York, on Section 18; in Precinct No. 3, at the residence of J. H. Parker on Section 34 in Thayer Township.

A full compliment of county officers were duly elected and the choice of the people resulted as follows: Edward Bates, Clerk; Julius Frost, Treasurer; George Flock, Sheriff; D. T. Moore, Probate Judge; W. H. Armstrong, Superintendent of Public Instruction; Frank Manning, Surveyor; Dr. S. V. Moore, David Buzzard, Capt L. F. Wyman, Commissioners.

All of the above officers qualified and entered upon the immediate discharge of their duties.

At this election the county seat was located at York, in consideration of about 200 lots given to the county by the Town Plat Company.

The first session of the newly elected Board of County Commissioners was held June 4, 1870, in the old pre-emption house before mentioned, which was situated near the present site of the Rankin Implement Shop, just south of the public square. At this session the County Clerk was instructed to purchase, upon the credit of the county, all necessary books and stationery for keeping the county records, which was the first official proceeding of the board.

Messrs. David Buzzard, John D. Reed, Julius Frost, and County Clerk, Edward Bates, were appointed a committee to investigate and settle the individual accounts of the county with Seward County, and John D. Reed was also appointed Attorney for York County.

The county was divided into three Commissioners' Districts comprising the following territory: District No. 1, Town 9, Range 1, 2, 3 and 4 west. District No. 2, Township 10, Ranges 1, 2, 3, and 4, west. District No. 3, Townships 11 and 12, Ranges 1, 2, 3, and 4, west.

York was officially declared the county seat, and the County Clerk ordered to give due notice of the fact as provided by law.

The second session of the board was held July 6, 1870. At this session the county was divided into three voting precincts, including the same territory embraced by the three Commissioners' Districts, and designated them by similar names. Shortly after they were given the names of West Blue, Beaver Creek, and Moore.

During this month the first tax was levied, and the following March A. E. Streeter made the first assessment of the county. The assessment roll shows a total valuation of all property, real and personal, to be \$22,464, while the total tax levied amounted to \$2,920.04.

On the 4th of October, 1870, Edward Bates resigned his office of County Clerk, and D. R. Creegan was appointed to fill the vacancy. On the 12th of this month Judge D. T. Moore, Dr. Thomas L. Myers, now of Aurora, and A. J. Gilmore, were appointed Commissioners to appraise the school lands of the county. At one of the closing sessions of 1870, held November 15, Judge Moore generously donated his salary as Probate Judge to the county and was accorded a vote of thanks by the board.

It will be remembered that at this time a court house and fire proof vault were things unknown in York County, and no secure place had been provided for the archives of the county. The old pre-emption house of A. M. Ghost, was used as a court house during this year and up to the fall of 1871. Each officer was responsible for the records entrusted to him, and was at liberty to carry them in his pocket, hide them under his bed, or make such arrangements for their safety as he thought best.

James D. Houston and wife wished to transact some business with the County Clerk, D. R. Creegan, and walked to his home, a sod house, on Section 8 in Thayer Township, and made their business known. The records were in a cracker box under a very low bed, and Mr. Greegan got down flat on his stomach to get the cracker box out, getting the necessary papers he waited on his customers, and then shoved the box well under the bed so it would be sure safe; in a few minutes Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Read came to him on some county business, down the County

Clerk got on his stomach again and fished the famous cracker box out from under the bed and waited on them. This same Capt. J. B. Read loaned York County the first money that ever graced the county treasury, \$6.35, the money was promptly repaid Mr. Read as soon as the County was able to do so, as shown in Commissioners' Record No. 1, at Page No. 7; a little later, at page 10 of the same record we find a vote of thanks tendered Judge D. T. Moore for his generous donation of his year's salary as Probate Judge to the County. These are incidents in the struggles of our early county officers with the problem of finances, how different now in this year of 1912 the finances of the County are so swollen that it makes our "Sunshine Billey" look like the pictures of the great trusts.

In November of this year, a new mail route was established from Lincoln to Grand Island, via Seward, and three new post offices were established in the county, named Palo, Thayer, and Aikin's Mill. Chancey Aikins served Uncle Sam as Postmaster at Aikin's Mill and J. H. Parker at Thayer. Soon after this the citizens of York petitioned for a mail route between York and Fairmont by way of McFadden, which was granted on condition the people pay for conveying the mails. Such a piece of economy on the part of a Postmaster General of the present time seems incredible, but nevertheless it remains a historical fact. Dr. Thomas L. Myers was appointed Postmaster at York, but the office not proving very lucrative, he soon resigned and F. O. Bell was appointed as his successor. He held the office for two years and was succeeded by J. E. Cochran, who resigned in a short time and Mrs. M. J. Hammond was appointed.

At the first session of the County Board of the year 1871, held January 3, Beaver Creek Precinct was divided on the line between Ranges 2 and 3, and the west portion was made a new precinct, under the name of Baker. Morton Precinct was also divided on the line between Range 2 and 3, and the portion formed into a new precinct and named Stewart.

On the 29th day of July, York Precinct was created and the county seat made the place of voting.

At an adjourned session of the board, convened November 2, 1871, the county was re-divided into nine voting precincts, each eight miles square, named as follows, commencing at the northeast corner, and running west thence east, etc.: Stewart, Houston, North Blue, Baker, York, Beaver Creek, West Blue, Woodruff and Henderson.

During this year the first county road was laid out along the West Blue and was surveyed by H. Badger. Soon after this a bill was drafted by Judge D. T. Moore and D. R. Creegan, making all section lines a road, in certain counties, including York County. This bill passed the Legislature and became a law. The provisions were afterward extended to include all the counties of the State.

In August, 1871, it was decided to call a special election to vote upon the proposition to sell enough of the town lots owned by the county to build a court house. The proposition was carried, \$1,500 worth of lots sold, and the contract to build a court house was let to Mr. Charlton. It was a fine building for that time but would be rather insignificant now. Prior to this time and the building of the court house, the records were kept in a sod building of one room adjoining Dr. Tutton's drug store and the sessions of the Commissioners held in the Doctor's store, who was County Clerk until the close of 1872, resigning December 2. John H. Helms succeeded him being appointed to fill vacancy.

In the fall of 1870 A. J. Gilmore was elected County Commissioner to fill the place of David Buzzard, whose term of office had expired. At the general election of 1871 Judge D. T. Moore was elected as delegate to the Constitutional Convention. Two hundred and eighteen votes were cast in the county and the following persons were called from the walks of private life to serve the county: A. B. Tutton, County Clerk; B. M. Elliott, Treasurer; C. D. Aikins, Sheriff; S. P. Buckmaster, Probate Judge; H. H. Tate, Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In the spring of 1871 York County received its first proposal for building a railroad, Dr. Converse, Superintendent of the Midland Pacific Railroad, submitted a proposi-

tion to the people of York County in which he offered to extend the company's road from Seward to York if the county would vote bonds to the amount of \$150,000, payable in twenty years, and donate the right of way. The proposition met with decided opposition throughout the county in general but more particularly in the southern precincts that received little benefit in the way of building up and establishing towns.

While the settlers were fully aroused to the necessity of having railroad facilities and fully appreciated the advantages to be derived from one, yet they were unwilling and very sensibly refused to load the young county with a debt that would have been a burden to its inhabitants for many years. A special election was called March 19, 1872, and the proposition accordingly voted down.

In the spring of 1872 an incident showing the pluck and sterling qualities of the early settlers took place in the taking of a claim in Lockridge Township. A Mr. Niles Nyser, whose ancestors had never owned land, living at Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, decided he would own a farm and walked from Mt. Pleasant, Iowa to Lincoln, Nebraska, and looking over the map decided York County would suit him; selected an eighty and walked to Lockridge Township to see the south one-half, northwest quarter, section 34, township 11, range 3, walked to Lincoln, made his claim; paid the required fee, \$14.00; walked back to his claim, made him a dug-out; put up some hay; and walked back to Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, a distance in all of over 700 miles. The next spring he took his family to the homestead; found the prairie fires had burned his hay, but nothing daunting he went to work happy in the fact that he owned a farm.

The annual election of 1873 gave the county the following officers: L. J. Gandy, Treasurer; F. W. Liedke, Clerk; W. E. Morgan, Probate Judge; J. P. Miller, Sheriff; T. A. Parkinson, Superintendent Public Instruction; Frank Manning, Surveyor; T. Brooks, Coroner; W. H. Greer and Thomas Burgess, Commissioners, and the following year of 1874 H. S. Burtch was elected Commissioner.

The Great Easter Storm.

One great event in the early history of York County that stands out most prominent of all, and never to be forgotten while an early settler is alive, is the awful Easter Storm that began the evening of Sunday, April the 12th, 1873. The spring had been early and small grain was all up, and farmers had their spring work well under way; the weather had been dry and the wind blowing strong from the south for more than a week, and Sunday, April the 12th, the wind quieted down and the day was pleasant until in the afternoon a bank of heavy clouds made their appearance in the northwest; soon there began a heavy rain and as night approached the rain turned into sleet, and then to snow, then for three days and nights without a moment's cessation the storm raged in all its fury, with the air so full of whirling snow, it was impossible to see an object scarcely a rod away. Fortunate for the early settlers that their dwellings were mostly sod houses, or dug-outs, and in the place of being blown away they were more likely to be snowed under, which happened in many cases; in several instances the settlers took their meager stock in the sod houses with them and all lived together for three days. Many interesting incidents have been related by persons who experienced such a strange make-up of families, and although the milk and eggs were handy none have desired a repetition of the novelty. After the storm was over the neighbors who were not snowed in had interesting experiences digging their neighbors out of their dug-outs; one family that was snowed under in a dug-out held a conversation with their rescuers through the stove-pipe that stuck up through the snow, and showed them where to dig down for the door by running the broom handle up through the snow. The writer went to one dug-out where nothing but the stove-pipe was visible, and holoood down through the stove-pipe and asked the owner what he was doing, he promptly answered he was reading the B. & M. advertisements about the beautiful climate of Nebraska. Mrs. Capt. Read tells us that Andy Hansen, a Dane, had a homestead on Section 32 in Thayer Township, and had built him a comfortable sod house on the south side of the draw, front door opening to the north, and that he was away from home

when the storm came, and that the storm blew the front door open, and when Mr. Hansen came home after the storm his house was so full of snow he could not find place for a dog to crawl in. In Thayer Township a band of Pawnee Indians came along after the storm and discovered some stock that had drifted to the creek in the storm and perished, the Indians immediately went into camp and remained as long as the supply of meat lasted. The Blue, near the west line of the county, was literally full of dead stock that had drifted as was supposed, from the Platte River bottoms. Mr. John Davis, who had settled in Leroy Township, did not have his stable up when the storm came, and his stock which was tied to the wagon all perished; much stock was lost under similar conditions. Our townsman, N. A. Dean, had his stable built under a bank; in one end of the stable were two mules, in the center horses, and in the other end hogs and chickens; the snow kept drifting in, and the mules tramping to keep on top until they got up to the roof and broke through and went out; the hogs and chickens in the other end were snowed under at least 25 feet deep, and Mr. Dean was surprised when on digging them out a week later found them all alive and hungry. As far as known only three lives were lost in the storm in York County; one, the 15 year old son of J. S. Gray, in Arborville Township, the boy was trying to carry a sack of corn from the barn to the house, missed the house and was not found until the storm was over; the other two deaths occurred in Henderson Township, a Mr. Frank Kailey had built a log house, but had not had time to chink it up when the storm came, and the first night of the storm the house drifted half full of snow, the stove and beds were under snow; they thought they must go to one of the neighbors and they started, Mr. and Mrs. Kailey and their baby boy, Mrs. Kailey soon gave out in the deep snow and awful storm, and Mr. Kailey tried to carry his wife and baby on his back but only went a short distance and gave up exhausted, then left his wife and baby and went for help but never found them till he found their dead bodies in the snow drift where he had left them when he went for help. His homestead was the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 30, township 9, range 4.

A project for building a narrow gauge railroad had been advanced by some of the leading citizens of the county.

the stockholders to be residents of the county. This created quite a stir and some enthusiasm was manifested. It was meeting with some favor and endorsement when another proposition was received from Dr. Converse which ran the narrow gauge scheme entirely off the track. The second proposition was submitted in 1874 and demanded only \$94,000, in county bonds in consideration of which the Midland Pacific Road was to be extended to York. The bond campaign of 1875 was a very warm one and met with some opposition. Eleven hundred and seventy-five votes were cast at this election and the proposition was favored by a sufficient majority in the county, while the precinct of York voted to issue its bonds to the amount of \$10,000 as an additional bonus. The company fulfilled its promises and the first train reached York in August, 1877. In the fall of 1875, at the general election, Liedke, Gandy, Miller and Brooks were re-elected. W. B. Cummins, Probate Judge; J. E. Cochran, Superintendent of Public Instruction; A. B. Codding, Surveyor;

At this election Hon. George W. Post, at this time a young and promising member of the York bar, was elected Judge of the Fourth Judicial District, and was re-elected in 1879. The first representatives to the State Legislature from York County were elected in 1876. The Senatorial District included York and Hamilton counties.

Well known men such as Hon. S. V. Moore and Hon. Lee Love were chosen to serve the people as Representatives, and Hon. W. M. Knapp as Senator. Benjamin Woolman was this year elected Commissioner.

In 1877 Messrs. F. W. Liedke, J. P. Miller, L. J. Gandy, W. B. Cummins, J. E. Cochran, and A. B. Codding were re-elected, and Thomas Gray as Commissioner.

At the general election in 1878, W. T. Scott and W. H. Keckley were elected to the State Legislature and F. W. Liedke as State Auditor. Mr. Liedke resigned his position as County Clerk, and the Commissioners appointed Hon. Lee Love to fill the vacancy caused.

At the election of county officers for 1879, W. B. Cummins, J. P. Miller and A. B. Codding were again re-elected. J. A. Eatherly was elected County Clerk; A. J.

Bell, District Clerk, E. E. Armor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Charles W. Wullbrandt, Commissioner.

In the fall of 1880 Hon. S. V. Moore and Albert Wilsey were elected as Representatives; Martin Burns as State Senator, and Jesse Love, County Commissioner.

The election of 1881 gave the county the services of the efficient officials who were elected as follows: Milton Sovereign, Clerk; J. W. Bennett, Treasurer; W. W. Giffen, County Judge; James H. Hamilton, Sheriff; E. E. Armor, Superintendent Public Instruction; A. B. Coddling, Surveyor; J. W. Wells, M. D., Coroner; S. A. Myers, Commissioner.

In the spring of 1873 the county was encumbered by a debt of \$44,000 caused by the erection of bridges and other internal improvements, and funded its debts by issuing bonds to that amount.

Calamity of Grasshoppers.

In the latter part of July, 1876 the early settlers were visited by a new and unlooked for calamity of grasshoppers. In the afternoon of a hot day, July the 20th, a mysterious cloud appeared in the northern horizon, and all were wondering what it was, until suddenly the awful cloud of grasshoppers covered the country, so thick at times that the sun was darkened, and all gardens and green vegetation was soon devoured; much of the small grain was in the shock and mostly saved, to the great comfort of the pioneer settlers; the grain that was standing was soon ruined, the grasshoppers would bite the straw off just below the head; after they had done all the damage they could they filled the ground with eggs and left. The next spring the eggs began hatching, and the settlers were filled with alarm for the coming crops, and every device imaginable was made for catching young grasshoppers; a petition was filed with the County Board of Supervisors asking them to take measures to exterminate the young grasshoppers; the County Board met in special session April 25th, 1877, and Book No. 1, page 470 shows the following proceedings:

“After deliberating upon the subject, the following resolution was adopted by the Board, to-wit:

Whereas, the grasshoppers are now hatching out in large numbers, and believing that the interests of the county demand an immediate action by the Board of County Commissioners to encourage the destruction of these pests, it is hereby resolved by the Board of County Commissioners: 1st, That all persons in the county are hereby called upon to turn out and kill and destroy grasshoppers. 2nd, That for all grasshoppers caught and killed within the limits of the several Road Districts in the county and delivered to the respective Road Supervisors, the Supervisors shall give his receipt, stating the amount, when and by whom delivered. 3rd, Supervisors shall receive and receipt for grasshoppers every Friday afternoon, and shall at once annihilate them by burning. 4th, On or before the 2nd day of July each Supervisor shall make and return to this Board, in writing and under oath, the amount of grasshoppers delivered to and burned by them. 5th, The holders of Supervisors receipts shall be entitled to pay by the County Board as follows: for grasshoppers delivered on or before May 18th, 1877 the sum of Two Dollars per bushel, in county warrants, and for grasshoppers delivered after that date, and on or before June 1st, 1877, the sum of One Dollar per bushel, in county warrants.”

August 11th, 1877 we find the following proceedings in Book No. 2 at page 15:

“The following accounts were audited and allowed by the Board, to-wit:

Jas. Seaman	.....2 bu.	grasshoppers burned.	\$4.00
J. P. Gandy	.....2 “	“	4.00
F. M. Ross	.....1 “	“	2.00
S. E. Gandy	.....1½ “	“	1.00
L. J. Gandy	.....1 “	“	2.00
W. Young	.....1½ “	“	3.50
Jamieson	.....½ “	“	1.50

H. Kelley2 “ “ “ 2.00

Board adjourned,

H. S. BURTCH,

D. DOAN,

B. WOLLMAN,

County Commissioners.”

Attest:

F. W. LIEDKE,

County Clerk.

The Village of York was at that time liberal, patriotic and interested in the prosperity of the county as a whole, and procured devices for catching grasshoppers and used them in the town and country, catching great quantities of grasshoppers and piling them upon the court house square in great piles and burning them free of charge. Mr. H. C. Kleinschmidt tells us he has seen grasshopper piles on the public square nearly four feet high when they were small, and that a bushel of young grasshoppers would make more than a hundred bushels of grown grasshoppers, that one grasshopper egg would hatch out five or six young grasshoppers.

Much sympathy was created in the cities east of us by reports of the needs of the early settlers, and wheat, corn, flour, potatoes, beans and many things that were badly needed and greatly appreciated by the old settlers were received, and car loads of clothing, consisting of swallow-tail coats, plug hats, quaker bonnets, hoop skirts and other old cast-off clothing was received that furnished a great deal of amusement to the old settlers, and was a great relief to the donors, and brought in free by the railway company.

The long, cold, wet spells contributed by a kind Providence, did more to rid the country of the grasshoppers than all the devices of man.

The misfortunes of the early settlers created a bond of sympathy destroyed selfishness, and made all friends and neighbors.

County Roster.

The following is the roster of county officials from the organization of the county up to 1881.

1870. Commissioners—David Buzzard, S. N. Moore, L. F. Wyman, A. J. Gilmore, October 13, 1870; D. T. Moore, Probate Judge; J. W. Frost, Treasurer; Edward Bates, Clerk; D. R. Cuegan, appointed clerk October 6; George Flock, Sheriff; W. H. Armstrong, Superintendent Public Instruction; Randolph Fairbanks, Coroner; Frank Manning, Surveyor.

1871-72. Commissioners—A. J. Gilmore, L. F. Wyman, Andrew Houston, J. H. Stewart (1872), S. P. Buckmaster, Probate Judge; B. M. Elliott, Treasurer; A. B. Tutton, Clerk; John H. Helms, appointed December 2, 1872; H. H. Tate, Superintendent Public Instruction; Randolph Fairbanks, Coroner; F. Connelly, Surveyor.

1873-74. Commissioners—James H. Stewart, Thom-Burgess, H. Burtch (1874), L. F. Wyman, W. H. Greer, O. C. Harris, appointed June 7, 1873; W. E. Morgan, Probate Judge; L. J. Gandy, Treasurer; F. W. Liedke, Clerk; C. D. Aikins, Sheriff; T. A. Parkinson, Superintendent Public Instruction; F. Brooks, Coroner; A. B. Coddling, Surveyor.

1875-76. Commissioners—W. H. Greer, Thomas Burgess, H. S. Burtch, David Doan (1876), William B. Cummins, Probate Judge; L. J. Gandy, Treasurer; F. W. Liedke, Clerk; James P. Miller, Sheriff; J. E. Cochran, Superintendent Public Instruction; Francis Brooks, Coroner; A. B. Coddling, Surveyor; W. M. Knapp (1876), Senator; S. V. Moore and Lee Love (1876), Representatives.

1877-78. Commissioners—H. S. Burtch, David Doan, Benjamin Woolman, Thomas Gray (1878), W. B. Cummins, County Judge; E. S. Connelly, appointed February 4, 1878; L. J. Gandy, Treasurer; F. W. Liedke, Clerk; J. P. Miller, Sheriff; J. E. Cochran, Superintendent Public Instruction; William H. Keckley, Coroner; A. W. Coddling, Surveyor; W. T. Scott (1878), W. H. KECKLEY (1878), Representatives.

1879-80. Commissioners—Benjamin Woolman, Thomas Gray, A. C. Eberhart, Charles Wullbrandt (1880), W. B. Cummins, County Judge; L. J. Gandy, Treasurer; John A. Eatherly, Clerk; A. J. Bell, District Clerk; J. P. Miller,

Sheriff; E. F. Armor, Superintendent Public Instruction; Charles LeCount, Coroner; A. B. Coddington, Surveyor; Martin Burns (1880), Senator; Albert Wilsey (1880), S. V. Moore (1880), Representatives.

1881-82. Commissioners—C. Wullbrandt, Jesse Love, S. A. Myers.

Recollections of a Pioneer Pastor's Wife

BY MRS. W. E. MORGAN

Shall I ever forget my first sight of Nebraska, and my first sniff of Nebraska air? We had ridden all day and all night in the close, stuffy sleeper, and about sunrise we arrived at Plattsmouth. Here, as was the custom in those days, the cars were put on the ferry boat, "Vice President," and ferried over the river. We stepped out onto the platform and drew in breath after breath of the glorious, invigorating air, fresh and sweet as if from the plains of Paradise, life-giving as the elixir of youth. "Glorious!" I exclaimed. It seemed to me that with every breath I inhaled hope and courage.

All the morning we steamed along the long rolling prairies, and about noon we arrived at the village of Lincoln, then a place of "magnificent distances" and few inhabitants, giving no indication of the busy streets, tall-spired churches, magnificent schools and universities, and flourishing business houses that now fill our capital city.

My brother awaited us with his double-seated "Nebraska surrey," not quite as stylish as the surreys of the present day, but more commodious and useful. Myself and two babies dined at the restaurant around the corner, while my brother and the reverend munched crackers and cheese on a doorstep near by (this I learned afterward. I supposed at the time that they were dining at some luxurious hotel.) After refreshing the inner man, we mounted into the Nebraska surrey and started on our journey toward our "home." I don't know what were the sensations of the parson, but I felt like Abraham when he started out to find his Canaan, "Not knowing whither he went." It was a glorious October morning. All over everything lay the

palpitating mists of the Indian summer, golden in the sunshine. Over our heads beamed the bluest of skies, while around us everywhere stretched the boundless prairie. We seemed to expand and grow tall as we looked out upon the sea of land rising and falling in undulating billows, like the waves of the ocean, while around and above us was the exhilarating air.

Here and there appeared little black mounds, which my brother informed us were sod houses, and now and then a group of dark, flitting figures, which they said were antelope. Aside from these no signs of life appeared. For all that we could see we were the only lonely voyagers upon the boundless prairie. The reverend gentleman became so absorbed in viewing the landscape that he missed the road.

The sun went down; the twilight deepened. One by one the stars peeped out, and still no signs of the little town of Seward, where we had hoped to find supper, and a bed. About midnight, however, the hotel came in sight, and we were hospitably entertained by the landlord, who gave up his own bed to furnish us a resting place. The landlord was the Mr. Clough who was so deeply involved in the terrible tragedy which happened five years after in this same hotel. We were only too glad to stretch ourselves on a good bed, and we lay down to a dreamless sleep on this, our first night in our new Eldorado.

The next morning, bright and early, we resumed our journey under skies as fair, through air as balmy as ever. At noon we stopped for dinner at a half-way-house, and here I had my first sight of the interior of a sod house. To say that it was not inspiring would be putting it very mildly. A dirt floor, roof of willows upheld by a big tree for a ridgepole in the center, wooden bunks built around the sides of the walls for beds, and to complete the picture a barefooted woman in a soiled calico dress. My heart was fast going down into the region of my boots, but I called up the spirit of my Puritian ancestors I invoked the Salem witches from whom I can claim direct descent, and I set my teeth in grim determination not to be daunted by the first untoward obstacle in my path. We were refreshed by

a good dinner of bacon and eggs, coffee and hot biscuits, and continued our journey, to pull up about sundown at the hospitable home of our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Tagg, where we found a good supper and a warm welcome awaiting us. Here was a sod house, consisting of three good-sized rooms, a carpeted floor, plastered walls, and many of the comforts, and even luxuries, of civilization. Here we rested and visited over Sunday.

On Monday morning I drove over to our claim to see the house which was to be our residence, for a while at least, until we should finish a frame house which my brother had already commenced, and which would be ready for occupancy before cold weather. They told us, though, that Nebraska winters were lovely, and that we had nothing to fear from cold or storms.

I found a place about 10x12, half dugout, half sod, a dirt floor, dirt walls, and a shingled roof which slanted to the south. We had two windows, one on the north which I could only reach by the aid of a chair, the other on the west. Our cabin opened to the south. A sod partition extended through the building, the east half being used as a stable for the horses and cow. My sensations can be better imagined than described as I contemplated the prospect. To add to the cheerfulness of the outlook somebody had picked a chicken and left the feathers somewhat promiscuously scattered about. However, we did not stop long to contemplate or moralize, but went vigorously to work to make the cabin habitable. We bestowed our belongings as compactly as possible, to wit: A cook stove, bed, table, and cooking utensils (which for convenience were stowed under the bed.) The rest, organ, bureau, etc., were put on the north side of the house and protected with an old wagon cover.

The weather continued delightfully warm and balmy, and we were flattering ourselves that our frame house would soon be ready to occupy.

It had been a delightful day in November, somewhere about the middle, I believe. The sun had set in a blaze of glory. I woke sometime in the middle of the night to find my bed wet with what felt like snow and the wind was

howling as if all the spirits of the storm were turned loose. The morning revealed the fact that our bed was covered with about two inches of snow, our door barricaded by a big drift, and the whirling sleet made it dangerous to venture out. We were in the midst of a genuine Nebraska blizzard. To add to our discomfort we had only green elm to burn, and a scanty supply of that. I wrapped the children in blankets and quilts and kept them as close to the stove as possible, but their little blue faces showed that our utmost efforts were unavailing to keep them even moderately warm. Meanwhile the parson put on his heavy soldier's overcoat, and chinked up the cracks and crevices through which the snow and wind were making rapid inroads.

It was, I believe, three days before the storm cleared so that we could get to the Beaver Creek, two miles away, and obtain some decent fuel. Meanwhile we whistled to keep our courage up, and emulated Mark Tapley, who got jolly in proportion as things grew dark.

We had three blizzards that winter, one after the other, and we began to think that the famous Nebraska winters were a myth. Our baby had not been well all winter, and finally grew so much worse that my husband went about six miles to find the only doctor in the vicinity. He came back bringing no doctor, but a bottle of carbolic acid. The doctor said that was all the medicine he had. I thought he might have come, at least. I declined to administer the carbolic acid, but happened to remember a simple, old-fashioned remedy, which I had on hand, and gave, and then I watched all night in fear and trembling. But with the morning the little fellow seemed better, and the danger was averted.

We gave up all hopes of finishing our house before spring, and settled ourselves to remain all winter in our little dug-out with as good grace as possible. One day, in April, I think it was, my husband started for Lincoln to get a load of lumber for the house. I got a friend to stay with me during his absence, as he would be gone two days. It was a warm, cloudless morning when he started, but by noon the sky was overcast with clouds, and at four o'clock it commenced to snow, and the wind began to rise. We

gathered a supply of fuel, got supper, and by eight o'clock there was a whirling, howling blizzard upon us from the north. We got the children in bed, left the light burning and put our clothing within reach, not knowing but that before morning we should be without a roof to cover us, for the wind from north lifted our roof, and all night long it danced over our heads, and we lay shivering, expecting to be driven out before the blast. Morning found the storm somewhat abated, and we were thankful that a roof still covered us.

My brother had gone east to bring his wife, a New England woman accustomed to all the luxuries and refinements of the east. The parson went to Lincoln with the lumber wagon to meet them and bring them up to their future home. During his absence my friend and I fixed up the cabin. We put down a rag carpet on the three feet of floor which occupied the center of the cabin, put up white curtains at the windows, and a valance about the bed to conceal the cooking utensils, washed the children's faces and arrayed them in clean gingham gowns, and then prepared what was for us a sumptuous supper. I remember that I had concocted some mince meat out of such odds and ends as I could find, and in lieu of green apples I had used all the extracts and cordials that I had on hand. My brother had assisted at the operation. In fact he had been chief cook upon the occasion. We considered it a masterpiece. This was my piece de resistance for supper. We also had some canned cherries which I had brought from Illinois, some gingerbread, molasses, and some fried bacon and warm, light biscuit, with coffee.

We flattered ourselves that we were pretty "swell." But, alas for our expectations! Our dirt cabin and fine fixin's failed to impress Mrs. C. She couldn't eat any supper, and evidently considered the "grace" which was said at table an entirely superfluous affair. The parson himself confessed that as he drove up with his dainty New England freight, the little cabin, with the pile of debris, and the cow in front, didn't look remarkably inviting.

We finished our house sufficiently to make it habitable that spring, and moved in.

Some time in the spring of 1872 Brother Davis came up to York to hold a quarterly meeting. There had been a freshet, and Father Baker had ferried Brother Davis over Beaver Creek in a sorghum pan. In those days a quarterly meeting was a very important event, and as we were to entertain the elder we of course laid ourselves out in the way of housekeeping. We intended to do things up in style. We had induced the men to put us up the inevitable summer kitchen (sod) so dear to every woman's heart, and were planning on a fine lay out in the culinary department. Alas for our hope! The freshet flooded our sod kitchen to the depth of six inches or more, and I helped get Brother Davis' Sunday morning breakfast, wading around in my bare feet, in water half way to my knees. I don't suppose the brother had any idea through how many tribulations we concocted that breakfast of fried chicken, canned cherries, etc.

It was sometime in that same spring that another incident occurred, that might have forever put an end to any more pioneering. The snows had been very heavy all winter, and the roads were almost impassable. But Sunday dawned warm and pleasant and we were glad to avail ourselves of the chance to take an outing. Mr. Morgan had gone with the horse and buggy to the Buzzard school house to hold morning service and Mr. Mellersh, Mrs. Tagg and children, and myself, with two babies, started about noon in the lumber wagon for Father Baker's, where Mr. Morgan was to hold services in the afternoon. We had a lovely drive through the fresh spring air, and arrived at the creek to find the little bridge covered with two feet of water. The bridge was just wide enough for a team and wagon, and one false step would precipitate us all into the water. We noticed Father Baker standing on the opposite side, jesticulating with his arms and evidently shouting to us, but our driver paid no attention, gave the reins to the horses, and almost as if by a miracle we passed safely over. We found Father Baker white with fear. He told us that we were the first to pass over the bridge during the flood, and that it was a wonder we were not all tipped over and drowned. I rode back in the buggy with Mr. Morgan, and we found the draws flooded with water and ice, the

water often coming up into the buggy, while the horses went plunging along over cakes of ice and through torrents of water. We finally reached home in safety, as did the rest of our company, thanks to protecting Providence.

Our larder in those days was not always as well supplied as it might have been. I remember one instance, in particular, where a scarcity of provisions was very embarrassing. I think it was on Tuesday morning. We were then living in our own sod house (quite a residence, by the way, of which we were very proud). We had a living room, bedroom, pantry, and chamber upstairs which was reached by an adjustable ladder which could be hooked up when not in use. Our parishioners had made a "bee" and laid the sod for us, and we had a very comfortable house. I remember that on this particular morning I had discovered a bedbug (whisper it not in Gath), and had turned the house out of doors in consequence. About eleven o'clock I chanced to glance eastward, and there, coming over the hill, were a horse and buggy. Oh, my prophetic soul! I knew by the pricking of my thumbs that meant company. Sure enough, three ladies from town had come out to spend the day, one of them from Fairmont and whom I had never met. My first thought was, "what have I got to eat?" I made a hurried mental inventory of my edibles, and it stood thus: Meat, none. Butter, none. Fruit, none. Vegetables? Yes! I did have about one mess of green peas growing in the garden. I had some flour, milk and tea. So we dined off green peas, hot biscuits without butter, and tea. We had plenty of hot water, anyway.

Time wore on and our little church grew and flourished until we were able to put up a church building with the aid of good friends in other denominations. In those days the denominational lines were very lightly drawn. We were not Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Baptists, but a unit of Christian people trying to establish a town and county that should be God-fearing, temperate, and a synonym for the highest type of Christianity. I thank God that the work we did was well done, and that always the town of York has stood as a bulwark against

the saloon power, and has been a representative town in the state for a broad catholic Christianity.

When we had finished our little church the reverend felt that nobody but Dr. Miner Raymond, of the Northwestern University was equal to the occasion for the dedicatory exercises. We felt that we were laying big foundations, and we wanted a big, broad man, to lay the corner stone. Dr. Raymond consented to come, and two other churches secured his services. The reverend and I met him at Fairmont with "Tod," who was then only a three-months-old baby. I can inform you housekeepers that then and there my troubles began. We were to entertain the Doctor, and he was, of course, accustomed to all the luxuries of a Chicago market. Butter was an impossible article. Likewise fresh meat. I had no chickens, and the canned fruits which we were able to obtain were not palatable. To add to my distress the doctor was far from well, the water having disagreed with him, so that his stomach was all out of order. Hence our fare of fried bacon, eggs and sorghum was all out of the question for him. I think he lived mostly on boiled milk for the first three days of his stay with us. About Friday he felt a little better, and began to manifest a good deal of anxiety about the dedication exercises. The music, especially, seemed to weigh on his mind. "Have you a choir?" he asked. We confessed that we qualified to such an article. In fact we had a good choir and organist, and both would have done credit to an eastern town. But I did not enlighten the Doctor. As he seemed to think that "no good thing could come out of Nazareth," I thought I'd leave him with his own opinion. On Friday evening the Doctor insisted that we have a choir practice. So about nine o'clock we went over to Mrs. Millen's, who lived about a mile away, for a practice. The Doctor insisted on accompanying us, though we would very much have preferred to have left him at home. We arrived rather late, and found Mr. and Mrs. Millen in bed. She got up and dressed, however, pulled out the organ from its box in the corner, and we sang a little, while the Doctor took a survey of the premises. A sod house, dirt floor, dirt roof, the interior lit by a dim kerosene lamp! Certainly the outlook was not very promising. The next night we left the Doctor

at home, took our choir down to the church and had a good practice.

On Saturday night we entertained fourteen people who had come up from the Blue, and other localities to attend the dedication. I'll never tell where we put them to sleep, except that the reverend occupied a pile of sacks at the head of the stairs.

The Doctor continued very suspicious about the exercises, especially the raising of the money. "Where are the people to come from?" he asked. "I don't see any houses!" And again, "Unless you are a better man than I think you are, William, you'll never raise the money." On Sunday morning the little church was packed. Teams stood thick all about the place, and men were standing outside the doors and windows. After the singing of the first hymn by the choir and congregation the Doctor settled back with a look of solid satisfaction on his face. He preached one of his best sermons. The occasion seemed to inspire him. At the close of the discourse the men and women from the little sod houses and dug-outs scattered over the prairie, and the men from the lawyers' and doctors' offices in the town, showed the material of which they were made, when out of their limited means they subscribed \$1,100, and raised every dollar of the church indebtedness.

One little incident, which gives a light among these shades, I desire to recall. The parson, after the manner of parsons, had traded for a saddle horse, which he rode on his Sunday tours from York to Lincoln Creek and return. Now it chanced that the parson's horse had been at some time in his life used on the race track, and was an animal of no mean pedigree or paces. One Sabbath, two of the young men of York, who have since achieved dignity with their years, accompanied the parson on his Sunday rounds, they also mounted on horseback. On the road home the parson was riding leisurely along, a little in front, when something very much like a wink passed between the horsemen in the rear, and they immediately put their horses to their top speed. The parson's nag needed no spur. He "smelt the battle from afar," rose to the occasion and soon

distanced his competitors. The parson always claimed that he pulled his horse up as soon as he could collect himself, but the "boys" tell a different tale, and have never ceased to relate how the parson raced horses on Sunday.

I might tell much more. Scene after scene of those days crowds upon my memory. How we fought fire and flood, grasshoppers and famine, and above all whiskey. How hot the battle raged at times, till even the staunchest trembled. But God gave us strength to hold on, until finally victory perched upon our banners, and the saloon forces beat an ignominious retreat.

And now the shadows are gathering over our pathway. The faces of the pioneers show lines of care. Toil and sorrow have whitened the once sunny hair. We are facing towards the sunset. Soon the places that have known us will know us no more. But among the cherished memories that we shall carry with us into the Land of the Hereafter will be the memory of our pioneer days in York, and among those who shall meet and greet us in the Bright Beyond, there will be none dearer than our old friends of York county.

Cost of Pioneering.

That the early settlers of York County were never molested by the Indian is generally believed. The fear and apprehension which was constantly in the minds of these pioneers added to the loneliness and privation which truly called for brave hearts and strong courage, may not be so well understood.

The following experience may serve to show the cost of pioneer courage as found in one noble woman and is written as a loving tribute to one of the best of mothers.

In January, 1867, James Waddle leased what is known as the Jack Stone Ranch one of the landmarks of York County's early history. He left a man on the ranch to put in a crop and returned to Wisconsin for his family, wife and seven children. In June of the same year the family



MRS. JENNIE STEPHENS.
First White Child Born in York
Precinct

came to this temporary home. The husband and part of the family spent the time establishing the permanent home on the Blue River in Hamilton county. It was when the family was thus separated that the following incident occurred.

One July morning the mother and her little group were aroused by two horsemen who sought from her, food and rest and brought to her tidings that on the previous day the Sioux Indians had raided the first settlement to the west. Had taken the stock of farmers, killed two boys and carried two young women into captivity.

The men hastened on to carry the news to the capital at Lincoln.

The mother faced this problem. If the Indians followed the trail or freight road she with her children was in their path. If instead they followed the stream or West Blue the other members of her family were in danger.

The horsemen advised her to start at once for civilization, because they thought the Sioux would spare no one in this region. She had a team of horses and a pony.

Could she leave without knowing the fate of her loved ones? What she decided after an hour of careful thought was at eleven o'clock she placed her oldest son, a lad of fifteen years, on the pony with the charge that he should go to the father. The boy had been over the trip but once, no road to follow, nothing but the hot July sun to guide his path from without and the boyish prompting of great danger from within. With an overwhelming desire to do well his part, he rode over the wide stretch of prairie.

The agreement was that he should ride to the family home and return by noon the following day. If he did not return, the mother with the remnant of her flock would start toward the eastward to seek a spot where people "could live."

The long vigil of that night is the silent climax of this tale. It is better imagined than described. With the team of horses and wagon drawn close to the window and the faithful watch dog brought from the Wisconsin home, her

only protector, crouched under the window, she sat by the bedside of her children, in her arms the writer of this sketch, a babe of four weeks.

The first hours of darkness brought a heavy electric storm. I have heard my mother say "that nature expressed and calmed the anguish of her heart as she looked into the face of her first-born, a girl just budding into womanhood, and thought could she see her carried away by a band of Indians or rather could she see her life go out in innocence and purity?"

As the storm ceased the little group was aroused by a sound of alarm which frightened the horses, the watch dog barked and growled. One of the children exclaimed, "Oh, there are Bob and father!" In the sweet Scotch accent always noticed in time of great earnestness the mother answered, "No children, that's no' Bob neither is it your father."

The alarm increased when with one great bound the watch dog leaped through the screened window into the midst of the waiting group crouched at my mother's feet. The sound without was the mingling of a growl and a sharp shrill whistle. It became fainter and at last died away, the little group thinking kind providence had caused the Red man to pass them by.

The cause of this alarm was not, however, the fierce Red Skin, but proved to be a wandering wild animal of the mountain lion family and so far as we know the only one of its kind that has ever been seen in this country. It killed stock in the settlement and was shot beyond Beaver Crossing the following day. The night watch wore away and with the new day came fresh courage to face life's duties. The mid day sun brought the boy on the pony, the father and the absent members of the family, for the Indian raiders had followed the stream farther to the south.

In the passing years this experience has been rehearsed with many a laugh and joke as to how we met the Indian raids. Yet this experience with its happy ending bears

evidence of something of the cost of making this "Our Fair Nebraska."

Mrs. JENNIE W. STEPHENS, York, Nebr.

York County Agricultural Society.

The Agricultural Society of York County was organized at the office of F. M. Bidwell, in the month of June, 1872. N. W. Graves was elected President, F. W. Liedke, Secretary, and L. D. Stilson, General Superintendent. The first fair was held in October, 1873, upon the present grounds of the society. The half mile track had been surveyed and laid out during the summer of 1872. There was a fair representation of trotting stock. The exhibits of cattle, sheep and farm produce were limited, for it will be remembered the country was then enjoying the days of its tutelage. However, there was a good representation of all classes of entries, and an interest manifested by the farmers of York County that was highly encouraging to the founders of the society. The premium list of this year aggregated \$500. After a series of years of successes and reverses, and owing to the fact that so many were attracted to State, National and World fairs by the larger attractions, and especially the enticing attraction to go away from home offered by the special, low rates of fare offered by the different railway companies, the county fair has been abandoned and the grounds sold.

Old York Precinct.

Old York Precinct occupied the geographical center of the county, eight miles square. On the third of August, 1869, David Baker pitched his tent on the banks of Beaver Creek, under the spreading branches of a friendly old elm, that stood on Section 10, Town 10, Range 3. Mr. Baker and his family made this their home for a period of three months, during which he erected the first frame house in the precinct, hauling the lumber from Nebraska City. His settlement is the first that it is our pleasure to record. The next settlers who arrived, are Isaac Crable, ex-Sheriff J. P.

Miller, Isaac Baker, Thomas Meyers and Edward Bates. Messrs. Crable, Baker and Bates took up claims on Section 8. Sheriff Miller on Section 12, Thomas Meyers on Section 2. In 1870 a large number of settlers came into the precinct, and nearly all of the valuable claims were taken up, and before the close of 1871 all the government land was exhausted. Among the first who came in 1870, Lorenzo D. Brakeman, F. M. Connelly and D. A. Ritner made settlements on Section 4, Town 10, Range 2. Charles F. Day and A. J. Day on Section 18, Nathan Johnson on Section 20, Thomas Porter, Section 24, David Graham, J. S. Shawl also on Section 24. H. M. Detrick, J. W. Andrews on Section 30, and R. C. Shipman and John Murphy on Section 10.

Early History.

The site of York was taken as a pre-emption claim by Messrs. Ghost and Sherwood for the South Platte Land Co., in the spring of 1869. They erected a small frame building which was situated just south of the public square, near the Central Hotel stables. In October, 1869, the city of York was surveyed and platted, and when the spring of 1870 opened it was represented by one sod house and the frame building referred to above. In the fall of 1870, two brothers by the name of Elwood inaugurated the first store in York County in the old pre-emption house, which they maintained until the following spring, when they packed up their little stock and went sadly away, believing with all sincerity that the future city was only a phantom and unworthy to be courted. A few weeks after their premature departure, F. O. and J. H. Bell came out from Lincoln with a wagon load of general merchandise and opened the second store where the Elwoods had vacated.

During the summer and fall of this year the city began to develop by the presence of a few frame buildings that were put up. In the summer of 1871, Dr. A. B. Tutton started the first drug store in York County on the northwest corner of the public square, and during the month of September J. E. Carter built a second store on the west side of the square, stocking it with general merchandise.

a short time after, Brahmstadt & Kleinschmidt built their store, and W. A. Reed built the first hotel. In November L. J. Gandy opened the first hardware and implement house, and in January, 1872, Charles Le Count offered his services to the citizens of York as a tinsmith. Thomas Gray began pounding iron in a sod blacksmith shop in the fall of 1871, and William H. Gould opened the first wagon shop in the spring of 1872. Some of the buildings erected during this year were the millinery store of Mrs. E. Wilson, Dr. Thomas L. Meyers' drug store, the furniture store of D. A. Stonecypher and the store of F. M. Connelly, occupied by Wyman & Buckmaster as an implement house. In 1871 F. A. Bidwell was appointed Land Agent of the B. & M. R. R., and opened his office at York, and in 1872 the frame court house was erected. All of these improvements gave the city the appearance of active business life and a promise of becoming, in the near future, a prominent city of the state. The success of its founders led others to cast their lines in it, until it began to acquire a growing fame and demand considerable attention from the outside world. In August, 1877, when the first train of the B. & M. R. R. made its triumphal entry into the city, it found a town of 600 inhabitants to offer it a hearty welcome.

Incorporation.

At a session of the Board of County Commissioners, held September 7, 1875, York was incorporated as a town, and the following Board of Trustees appointed: Hon. George W. Post, F. A. Bidwell, F. M. Connelly, W. A. Reed. The first meeting of the Board took place September 25. F. M. Connelly was elected Chairman, and W. T. Scott, Clerk. The first regular meeting was held December 6. S. M. Wells received the first appointment as Marshal and F. M. Connelly, as Assessor. The town attorney was instructed to draft suitable ordinances for the government of the town and the maintenance of peace and quiet to its citizens. The election of 1876 brought into office the following gentleman: Trustees—Charles Le Count, Chairman, J. A. Eatherly, J. A. McKillip, J. F. Green and H. C. Kleinschmidt, J. A. McKillip, Treasurer; Edward S. Connelly,

Clerk, and M. J. Shackelford, Marshal.

In 1877 J. P. Miller was chosen Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and his colleagues were: W. T. Scott, C. Le-Count and A. B. Codding. J. P. Gandy was appointed Marshal, Joseph Massison, Treasurer and Assessor, C. M. Scott, Clerk.

On the fifth of September, 1877, York was formally organized as a city of the second class and divided into two wards. W. T. Scott was honored with the mayoralty of the new city; Lee Love and George Butterfield as Councilman of the First Ward, and C. Le Count and A. B. Codding as Councilmen of the Second Ward. The remaining offices were distributed as follows: City Clerk, C. M. Scott; City Treasurer, D. C. Sayer; City Marshal, Charles Penn; Police Judge S. M. Wells; Engineer, D. C. Evans.

At the election of 1878 all of the city officials were re-elected except City Engineer Evans, who was succeeded by A. B. Codding. In the Council, the Messrs. George Butterfield and T. C. Evans were returned from the First Ward, and Messrs. G. B. France and R. H. Tuttle from the Second Ward. In the fall of 1878, His Honor Mayor Scott, was called to the higher position of serving the people of York County as member of the State Legislature, and resigned the mayoralty of the city. Mr. France, who had been chosen President of the Council, acted as Mayor during the balance of the term.

The election of 1879 gave the city the following officials: Mayor, Col. B. Crabb; City Clerk, C. M. Scott; City Treasurer, W. W. Giffen; City Marshall, W. H. Gibbs; City Engineer, A. B. Codding; Police Judge, S. M. Wells. In the Council Jesse Love succeeded George Butterfield in the First Ward, and T. D. Knapp came in as the successor of G. B. France in the Second Ward.

In the spring of 1880 N. V. Harlan was elected Mayor, T. E. Sedgwick, Councilman in the First Ward; George Butterfield, Councilman in the Second Ward; C. B. Allen,



MR. AND MRS. D. J. COLLING

Pioneer Merchants. Settled in York Setember 20, 1878.
32 Years in the Merchantile Business in York

City Clerk; W. W. Giffen, City Treasurer; A. C. Montgomery, Police Judge; A. B. Coddling, City Engineer.

The year 1881, Messrs. Harlan, Allen, Montgomery and Coddling were re-elected and E. L. Hatch, City Treasurer. T. D. Knapp was re-elected in the Second Ward, and James McKillip as Councilman for the First Ward.

The City of York.



CITY OF YORK 1874

York is situated in the geographical center of the county and in 1910 had a population of 6,500. It has three railroads. The Burlington & Missouri River railroad, which traverses the county from east to west; The Chicago & Northwestern, passes through the county from north-east to south-west, and the Kansas City & Omaha, which bisects the county north and south. The principal streets are substantially paved with brick, the sidewalks are wide and are entirely of cement and brick in the principal part of the city. York has a splendid supply of water from deep wells, furnished by the York Water company, an electric system that covers the entire city, a large gas plant, capable of supplying the demands of the city for many years.

to come, and a sewerage system of both sanitary and drainage sewers.

York is beautifully located in a valley, near the banks of the Beaver, while the residences lie along up the gentle slopes and away on the crests of the surrounding hills. It is a city of homes and the most beautiful and attractive residences in the state. A profusion of stately trees hide with their foliage all but the tallest buildings, and many well kept lawns add to the inviting appearance of the tasty and elegant homes. There are two parks, one of which is equipped with large natural shade trees, seats, swings, a band stand and is traversed by the winding Beaver Creek. Across the street from this park are the Chautauqua grounds, with a large pavilion and ample shade. Every year a ten days program is given at these grounds, comprising the best talent the country affords. York is a member of the state base ball league, and the grounds, convenient to the city, are provided with amphitheatre and all necessary equipment. York has a capacious opera house, two "air domes" and two moving picture shows, for amusements. A lecture course is given each winter under the auspices of York College.

Banks.

The first bank in York County, a scalping concern, was established in York in 1875 by William McWhirter. The laws governing banks were very lax in those days, and no one ever knew what the capital stock of the bank was, but it is thought by H. C. Kleinschmidt who was employed as clerk in the bank that Mr. McWhirter had about \$1500 invested in the banking business. There were no bank examiners in those days, and no law against usury, and one of the rules of the bank was, not to buy any paper unless it was gilt-edged, and not to pay more than 50 cents on the dollar for good notes, and to pay 45 cents on the dollar for county warrants, and charge 3 to 5 per cent a month for the choicest loans.

The first bank ledger in York County was opened by

William McWhirter January 1, 1877 The book was six by seven inches and one-fourth of an inch thick.

The original book can now be seen at the First National Bank.

It seems from reliable information that Mr. McWhirter had been doing a private brokerage business for some time, but in 1877 he procured a little room on the west side of the square and started York county's first bank.

The first month's business shows the following list of depositors: L. J. Gandy Co., treasurer; F. M. Ross, L. J. Gandy, F. O. Bell, C. S. Hesser, Brahmstead & Kleinschmidt, F. J. Greer, D. T. Moore, Sayre & Thompson, Aultman & Co., John Bittinger, Halstead & Multner, M. Sovereign, E. H. Bly, Mrs. John Fero, A. C. Montgomery, F. H. Gerard, David Erb, G. W. Wirt and William F. Morrison.

The total of the deposits at the end of the first month was \$3,186.38. The first balance sheet showed up clear and plain. It never was footed up.

It is unnecessary to say he made seads of money, and when he died a few years later he was counted a rich man. A remarkable change has taken place in the banking business in York County the capital tock and surplus of the York banks alone amount to \$424,151, and the deposits in the same banks amount to \$1,816,653.00, and York can boast of as fine a four story, fire-proof bank building with all modern equipments, as can be found in the state.

Agricultural implements and farm machinery, general merchandise, dry goods, hardware, wholesale grocers and drugs are among the many features of its general business character.

It enjoys the facilities of two good hotels, several smaller ones and a number of restaurants, furnishing good and ample accomodation to the traveling public.

A growing and important industry worthy of mention is the York Nursery, comprising several acres of choice land devoted to the propogation of fruit and ornamental trees and shrubs; and doing the largest business of any nursery in the

west. Also a well equipped brick yard that supplies the home demand for brick, and ships many car loads away each year

New York.

The advent of the B. & M. R. R. and the location of their depot at York, about thirty rods north of the north end of Lincoln avenue, and consequently outside of the city limits, induced Mr. Wooley, the owner of the land adjoining, to survey and plat a town, which he named in honor of the great metropolis, New York. It was incorporated as a town in 1880, and from its favorable location has assumed a prominent place as a business town. It is now a part of the City of York.

The Temperance Struggle in the Early Days of York.

In the spring of 1876 an application was filed with the city board for a license to open a saloon in the city of York to sell malt, spirituous and vinous liquors. At that time the city board consisted of five members, H. C. Kleinschmidt, J. A. McKillip, J. A. Eatherly, F. J. Greer and C. LeCount, who was chairman; three of the board, Kleinschmidt, Le Count and Greer, were temperance, and two, McKillip and Eatherly, were for saloons; the board were to meet in the evening of the day the petition was filed, and that day a son of Mr. Greers who was attending school taught by Miss Etta Beecher (afterwards, Mrs. Dr. Wm. Knapp) committed a misdemeanor that anyone thought he ought to be nearly killed for, and his teacher gave him a severe whipping, his father like fool parents sometimes do, took the boy's part and wanted Mr. Kleinschmidt, who was also a member of the school board, to use his influence to prevent Miss Beecher getting the school for another term. Mr. Kleinschmidt said she was an excellent teacher and had already promised her his support for another term. Mr. Greer flew mad and said he would vote to grant saloon license, the temperance folks hardly knew what to do, the time was too short to get up a remonstrance, but they thought about Mr. Geer, practicing medicine, who a

short time before had been in the country to visit a sick woman whose husband they saw in town, and they made arrangements with him to give Mr. Greer an urgent call to come and see his wife who lived a good way out and paid him the usual fee the doctor would charge. The party who got Dr. Greer to go and see his wife at once, went on ahead and had his wife get in bed and she was apparently very sick when the doctor got there, the council adjourned their meeting till the next night and then the temperance folks were on hand with their remonstrance with George B. France as their attorney, Edward Bates was attorney for the whiskey element. Charles Le Count was chairman and Mr. Greer promptly made a motion that the license be granted to the applicant and the motion was seconded. Council for the remonstrators objected to the motion and called attention of chairman Le Count that the motion was out of order, and requested that the motion be not put, or acted on, and the chairman sustained the objection and refused to put the motion; the meeting continued in session with more or less wrangling till seven o'clock the next morning when the ladies brought in an excellent breakfast. Mr. Kleinschmidt and Mr. McKillip agreed to pair off and go home to breakfast neither to return without the other, but Mr. Kleinschmidt was a little suspicious and had his little boy watch and tell him if he saw Mr. McKillip going to the court house; he had no more than got down to the table when the little boy hollered, "There goes McKillip, father, on the run to the court house," and up jumped Kleinschmidt and raced to the court house just in time to head him off, so they all ate the nice breakfast furnished by the temperance ladies.

George B. France and Jorn A. Eatherly, a member of the city board, were well acquainted, having resided in the village of Milford, Seward county, Nebr., together for five or six years: while there they spent much time and money attending the singing schools of the early days held during the lonely hours of the winter. When the term closed the teacher always gave a concert, and it was understood that the teacher could call on any two to sing any one of the pieces which were learned and sung during the winter.

Eatherly and France at one of these concerts were called on to sing and they immediately arose and endeavored to sing the music arranged by the teacher, but made a complete failure.

Mr. Eatherly, during this night session of the city board, commenced saying rather abusive things of and to the attorney for the remonstrators, George B. France, and he was headed off in his effort to create a disturbance by Mr. France saying, "John, let us sing." This remark caused good feeling again, and Eatherly proceeded to tell of the incident of the singing school, ending with the remark, "George, what do you want?" France replied, "Adjourn the meeting for two weeks and set the application and remonstrance down for trial as provided by law." This was finally done. The following day Mr. France and F. A. Bidwell drove to Central City and obtained from George W. Post, then Judge of the District Court, an injunction restraining the city board from granting a license to the applicant, when the board next met the injunction was served.

The member of the board who changed his views was a druggist and six violations of the liquor law were obtained against him wherein he had illegally sold intoxicating liquors, and he was informed that if he ever voted to grant a license to the applicant he would be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. One of those in favor of a saloon met the Rev. C. S. Harrison who was fighting strong for temperance, and told him that unless a saloon was forthcoming in York they intended burning the houses of the temperance people one by one until such a license was granted, he was informed at once by Mr. Harrison that for every building of a temperance advocate destroyed there would be a building of a saloon advocate destroyed. The man then threatened to flog Mr. Harrison and immediately the coat of the Reverend was off, and the gentleman cuffed till he was entirely satisfied.

The good people of York were not molested again by the whisky element till after the B. & M. R. R. was built to the city and the depot located north of the city limits.

A Mr. Wooley who, owned the land north of town, conceived the idea of laying out a town just north of York, leaving a strip of land between the two towns which was afterwards called "The Dead Line". This was done, and the new town called New York, the village board was organized and saloon licenses were granted; the temperance people of York organized, raised a fund of \$1500.00 to aid in fighting the saloons of the new village, employed detectives, and had the saloon keepers up before the Justice of the Peace and District Court till life with them was a burden, and their business very unprofitable. While these conditions were going on the saloon men had it in especially for a Mr. Creelman, a leader in the anti-saloon fight, this Mr. Creelman worked, together with Mr. Henry Seymour, in Mr. Chessman's elevator on the R. R. in New York; Mr. Creelman was sent to Eatherly's store in the old town for some repairs for the elevator, two saloon men learned of his trip and decided to follow him and lay him out, they were talking their plans as they passed the elevator and Henry Seymour overheard them and as soon as he could leave the elevator followed them hastily, saw them go in the Eatherly store where Creelman was and rushed in after them; they had knocked Creelman down and were on top mauling him, Seymour grabbed a hickory pick-handle and began beating the saloon men, the hickory club came out first best, the saloon men were glad to get away, and left town for fear of arrest. The saloons soon quit the unprofitable fight and there has never been a saloon near York. Since New York had no other excuse for being a separate town and soon united with and became a part of the city of York, the dead line was surveyed and platted and the fight ended.

York School District

York School District was organized June 14, 1871. It included a territory five miles square in which the city occupied about the central position. Notice of the formation of this district was served upon the entire voting population, residing in its limits. In the school records the names of the male residents of the district are entered, which will

give the reader an idea of how sparsely the county was settled at this period, and also the names of the early settlers of the now prosperous city. The total number claiming a residence in the above territory which included the city of York is only twenty-two and were the following persons: H. M. Detrick, G. W. Dixon, W. L. Draper, Thomas Myers, Gottlieb Hofer, J. H. Bell, F. O. Bell, A. B. Tutton, J. S. Tutton, A. E. Hendricks, J. P. Miller, James J. Holley, Ichabod Cook, M. B. Noel, A. J. Day, Isaac Crable, C. F. Day, Edward Bates, L. D. Brakeman, D. A. Ritner, R. Charlton, August Bonge.

A. B. Tutton was elected director, A. C. Montgomery, moderator, and Thomas Myers, treasurer. No further steps were made towards perfecting the organization until January 15, 1872. At a meeting held at this date, the district voted to issue bonds to the amount of \$2,000 for the purpose of purchasing a building site and erecting a school house. This building was completed in season for a summer school, which was taught by Miss M. A. Hill. During the winter session of this year J. Cochran was employed as teacher. The first school established in York was taught by A. C. Montgomery in the winter of 1870-71. The old pre-emption house served as a school house, and twenty-two pupils were in attendance, some coming a distance of eight miles. It was maintained by subscription and was of two months' duration. Mr. Montgomery received his wages in wood, grain, cash, or whatever the settlers could best give from an individual standpoint.

At the annual meeting of the board in 1879, it was decided to call a special election, and submit a proposition to the citizens of York, for issuing the bonds of the district to the amount of \$58,000, for the purpose of erecting a new school building, the old house having become too small to accommodate the fast growing school population. This election took place May 16, and was universally favored. A building was commenced immediately and it was completed in 1881.

Prominent among the names of the officers of the district during the past are those of H. M. Detrick, W. A.

Reed, F. A. Bidwell, T. D. Knapp, H. C. Kleinschmidt, Judge D. T. Moore, C. Le Count, J. A. Eatherly, and among the names of teachers who carried away with them the benedictions of their pupils and patrons may be mentioned: J. E. Cochran, E. J. Wiswell, Mrs. Coiner, Miss Beecher, Mrs. C. B. Allen, nee Miss Effie Cutter, T. A. Parkinson, ex-Mayor N. V. Harlan, Mrs. Pound, Miss Hart, Miss Gunnel, Miss Hayes, Miss Kate Keckley.

York has attained a reputation as a literary and educational center and affords the best possible opportunities for educating the young in all branches, in music and art as well as in the business, literary and classical courses. And now has three public school buildings, the Central, or High School building valued at \$50,000.00, with a corps of 39 teachers, and an enrollment of 1,500 scholars, the school is fully equipped with all modern appliances and is doing splendid work. York College is a religious, non-sectarian institution, offering the advantage of several courses of study, from a business or normal education to a finished classical or scientific course. It is now in a prosperous condition and is completing a new gymnasium at a cost of about \$15,000.

York Business College and Normal School is known and patronized throughout the entire west. Its rapid growth and large student body are the best evidence of its efficiency.

Ursuline Convent school has handsome and pleasantly shaded grounds and commodious buildings. It is conducted by the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Catholic church, and has students from a number of states and of all denominations. Many who desire to place their children under the parental care and restraint of the sisters patronize this school, regardless of religious creed. The school has an average attendance of 200 scholars, the larger part of them board, and have their homes in the building connected with the school; the course of studies embrace all grades from Nos. 1 to 12 inclusive, and includes music, painting and needle work. There are 10 teachers employed in the school work, and a good work is being done.

County Schools.

The Public Schools in York County have grown from the small beginnings of the early settlement when schools were taught in private dwellings and claim shacks, and from when School district No. 1 was organized in 1869 in West Blue Township till now—(1912 there are one hundred and three school districts.)

Each school has its own library of reference books, maps, globes, charts etc., and throughout the country there is uniformity of text books prepared especially for the York County Schools by County Superintendent Alice Florer, practically the same work is being done in every school.

Many of the schools are doing excellent work in manual training and domestic science in spite of the fact that they are not yet fully equipped for these subjects. A great deal of this work has been done through the Corn Contests held for three successive years.

York County has an efficient body of teachers all holding first or second grade or life certificates. The Reading Circle for all teachers meets one Saturday in each month. Educational problems are discussed beside the work in the regular text books.

Reading contests between pupils of the various districts have been most successful. This plan for the improvement of reading originated in York County but has now found a place in many other counties in Nebraska.

Patron's Day observed in many schools has been the means of bringing the home and school in closer touch.

In York County there are 5658 children of school age, and there was paid to Male Teachers \$12,865.00; Female Teachers \$61,722.40 for the year closing 1912. School receipts for year ending July 1911, \$115,982.76.

First Term of Court.

The first term of the District Court in York County was held at York, in the spring of 1872. His Honor, Chief



MRS. NELLIE H. YOUNG

Taught First School in York Precinct, 1868. Wages Then
Were \$6.00 Per Month.

Justice G. B. Lake, presided. and Hon. G. W. Post served as District Attorney, Court sat one-half day in the fall of 1872, and transacted the entire business that the docket called for. The only case of any importance called was the injunction suit, to restrain the county from issuing bonds in the sum of \$150,000 to the Midland Pacific Railroad Company. After hearing the case, His Honor decided in favor of the plaintiffs and made the injunction perpetual.

There were two divorce cases, the first cases on the docket to disfigure the pure white records and can be seen by examining trial docket No. 1 at page No. 1 and appearance docket No. 1 at page No. 1. The divorces were granted May 29, 1872. But the first Court trial in York County was not a white man's trial, nor a trial for divorce but a trial among the original occupants of the country, the Pawnee Indians; they were not educated in modern civilization and knew nothing of the divorce business, but understood that when a man and woman were legally contracted to marry, they should be man and wife, The trial is related by N. A. Dean in his own words, as follows:

(Indian Trial)

Quoted by N. A. Dean

“It was the winter of 1870 the Pawnees' Chief camped on the west side of the Blue River, Section 9, Township 9, Range 1, West. In that tribe there was a young man who wanted to get him a wife. Their custom was that if a young man wanted a wife he must pay the price. This young man fell in love with a young girl that was also camped with these people. The contract for their marriage was to be made with the girl's father. The contract was made and the price paid, which was in ponies and furs. The marriage ceremony consisted of the contract with the father of the girl and a whip made of three strands of raw-hide fastened to a horn handle of elk prongs presented to the young man by the Chief of the tribe.

After all the arrangements were completed with the

girl's father and the young man, and the time set for the ceremony everybody in the case was happy except the girl. Here is where the trouble began with these parties. The girl objected; she thought that she was the one who should be consulted, and refused to carry out her father's contract with the young man, and her father could not persuade her. The matter was reported to the Chief; the Chief with his select warriors were called together as a council of war. After they had heard the evidence of the father and the young man and the girl; the girl's objections were that there was another young man she preferred; still the verdict of the Chief and his counselors of war was that the girl should carry out the contract and accept the young man as her bridegroom. The girl still refused and was forced to be married to the former young man.

The young man, father and mother could not persuade her to accept, and the next morning the matter was referred back to the Chief. Their mode of punishment for what they considered a crime was to be whipped; so the Chief ordered the young girl whipped. She was taken by two young men of her own tribe, a rope was put around her neck, her back was bared, she was then bound to a tree; the Chief had ordered one of the young men to give her ten lashes with the whip that had been presented to her husband at their marriage ceremony.

Her cries and screams, so severe was her punishment, that they were heard a half a mile away. They were then camped on the south side of the Blue and Heller's folks were on the north side. Heller's folks hearing the cries and screams supposed that one of their neighbors was sick and had started across the river to the neighbor's house to find out the cause. After they had crossed the river they saw this young girl coming crying and hallooing. Not understanding their language, they could not make out what it was only they saw the welts that were upon the girl's body and motioned her to go to the house on the other side of the river.

The girl went to the house, ran through the house into the bedroom and jumped on the bed, still crying and

hallooing. Heller's women folks not knowing what it meant ran out of the house and waited until the men came home. Not understanding what the case was, we went to the Chief's wig-wam and there through the interpreter found out what is stated above. In talking to the interpreter and he talking to the Chief we were given to understand that that was their law and their custom of punishment for all crimes. Through us and the interpreter the Chief sent the father to the house and brought the young girl back to camp. Fa^her, mother and her intended persuaded the young girl to carry out her father's contract. We watched the couple through the winter and they seemed, after knowing one another, to enjoy one another's company and left in the spring their camping ground for Omaha, their old home."

Edward Bates opened the first law office in York and a short time after he was joined by Hon G. W. Post. During the first year of his professional life at York, while sitting one morning in the door of his office anxiously waiting for a client, Judge Post saw a herd of antelope cross the town site, passing over the ground now occupied by the high school building.

York College.

York College was founded on August 26, 1890, and is now in the twenty-third year of educational work. The following persons constituted the first Board of Trustees:— Judge D. T. Moore, Rev. E. A. Leeper, D. D.; Lee Love, Judge N. A. Dean, C. J. Nobes, D. E. Sedgwick, M. D., Judge A. C. Montgomery, Rev. J. C. Countermine, D. D., F. O. Bell, Judge G. W. Post, Rev. G. F. Deal and Rev. F. W. Jones.

It was the noble purpose of its founders to establish under United Brethern auspices an institution of higher learning, where the young people of Nebraska and the West could secure a thorough education at the minimum expense of time and money and under the most pleasant and healthful surroundings and the best moral and religious influences.

The freedom of York from the licensed liquor saloon was the one predominant force which led to its location.

This fact has also contributed much to the rapid growth which has characterized its work with the on-go of the years. Character is the great need of every age. Safe environments will always be of first consideration in choosing a College. In this particular, York College has no equal in the West.

It must not be accounted a sectarian institution. It does not stand for any special creed. Several different denominations are always represented on the Faculty and Board of Trustees. But the institution is earnestly Christian. It stands for the Bible and employs all diligence to up-build good character, and no less than one thousand students have within its halls been led to enter the Christian life.

Rev. J. George, D. D., served as president the first four years; Rev. W. S. Reese, D. D., for the next three years; and Rev. Wm. E. Schell, A. M. D. D., has since been its official head, being now in his sixteenth year of service.

The College has a beautiful campus of eleven acres and three fine buildings: Collegiates, academy, normal, business, music, oratory and art departments are maintained. The equipments are first-class in every respect. The institution holds official recognition from the state department of public instruction on the basis of the State University and of the State Normal Schools, and issues all grades of State certificates. The endowment is \$50,000 and the total assets aggregate the sum of \$160,000.

The surroundings are ideal, the advantages are second to none, and the rates of expense are moderate. The enrollment of adult students for the twenty-second year was 468. Hundreds of graduates have gone forth from its halls and are now doing a good and honorable part in the business and professional work of the great world; and a far larger number, though not completing courses, have been benefitted by terms of years of study and by reason of the help secured at York College are now wielding a better influence and filling a larger sphere of service to their fellow men. Ten are missionaries in the foreign field, one hundred and fifty have entered the ministry of the Gospel, more than one thousand have become teachers in the public schools.

and thousands of others in shop and mill and store, on the farm and in the learned professions, are bestowing the benefactions of broad culture and high character for the uplift of society in the state and nation.

If York College has accomplished so much in the few short years of its beginning history, who can measure the vast, far-reaching influence of its greater work in the golden years to come?

The members of the Executive Board at the present time are: Wm. E. Schell, Chairman; N. A. Dean, Treasurer; J. W. Purinton, Secretary; W. B. Johns, J. M. Bell, and E. A. Gilbert. Vernie R. Porter is the president of the Board of Trustees.

Churches.

Methodist Episcopal.—The first attempt made to organize a class in York County, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, took place at the house of David Baker, in the spring of 1871, Mr. Baker acting as class leader. The members of this pioneer class were: David Baker, Elvira Baker, J. H. Bell, Thomas Bassett, L. D. Brakeman, Ella Brakeman, Sarah N. Moore, Thomas Myers, John Murphy, Mary Murphy, S. W. Pettis, Mrs. Shackelford.

In the fall of this year Rev. W. E. Morgan was appointed pastor to this charge. It was given the name of York Mission and included the entire county. Immediately after taking charge, Judge Morgan re-organized the few members that resided in the county at this date into two classes, one on the West Blue, and the other, the original class of the York Methodist Episcopal Society, at the house of David Baker, the total membership of both classes reaching twenty-seven. Mr. Morgan officiated as pastor until the close of the conference year in 1875. He held the first service after his appointment in the store of Brahmstadt & Kleinschmidt and from this time until the completion of the school house in the summer of 1872, at the residence of Mr. Baker. Services were held at the school house until the spring of 1873,

at which date the Presbyterian Church was completed. It was used by the Society until the following September, when the Methodist Episcopal Church was completed, Rev. Minor Raymond, D. D., of Evanston, Ill., officiating at the dedication services. At the fourth quarterly conference of the year 1871-72, held during the month of February, 1872, Rev. Morgan presiding, the following Board of Trustees were elected: David Baker, S. W. Pettis, C. Tagg, Albert Deems, recording steward.

The lots upon which the church formerly stood were donated to the society by the South Platte Land Company, and \$100 was received from the Church Extension Society. The balance was contributed by the citizens of York and members of its several church societies. In 1880 the society conveyed this building to the Swedish Lutheran Church Society, and it was removed to its present site in 1881, and services were held at Bell's Hall. A parsonage was erected in 1887. Rev. Edwin Buck was the successor of Judge Morgan, closing his ministry in the fall of 1877, being succeeded by Rev. E. J. Willis, who also remained for a period of two years. Rev. W. S. Blackburn was appointed to this charge in the fall of 1879, remaining one year. Rev. G. A. Smith came to York in October, 1880. The officers of the church at that time were: Trustees, L. J. Gandy, A. B. Coddling, Geo. Beck, G. W. Woods, A. W. Wirt, E. M. Cheeney. E. M. Battis, J. C. Tenney, T. D. Knapp; E. M. Cheeney, recording steward.

Presbyterian Church.—The organization of the Presbyterian Church of York took place in a grove of elms, since destroyed, situated on the banks of the Beaver, not far from the mill site, July 23, 1871. Rev. George H. Carroll, District Missionary of the Board of Home Missions for western Iowa, presided and preached the sermon, after which the society was formally organized by the following members: A. C. Montgomery, Annie M. Montgomery, Robert Charlton, F. O. Bell, Elizabeth Dixon, R. R. Crawford, J. A. Crawford, M. C. French. A. C. Montgomery was elected Ruling Elder and Clerk and the pulpit was supplied during the first year. Rev. D. B. Fleming became the first pastor in 1872 and during this year the church edifice was commenced and com-

pleted, the dedication services taking place November 17. Rev. T. K. Hedges officiated as pastor in 1873, and in 1874 the church was again supplied. Rev. A. S. Powell was called as pastor in 1875, and in April 1876, D. P. Temple was elected and ordained Ruling Elder. Rev. W. F. Gibson was pastor for one year, commencing in 1877, being succeeded by Rev. B. F. Sliarp, who began his labors in April, 1878. In March, 1879, W. W. Giffen was ordained Ruling Elder and during the summer of 1880 the church building was enlarged at a cost of \$400, making it 24x56 feet. It was then a comfortable frame building, elegantly furnished with oak pews, while the walls and ceiling were tastefully decorated. The property was valued at \$1,500. Since the organization ninety-seven persons have united with the church out of which number five have been removed by death, viz: Robert Charlton, Mrs. Annie M. Dickey, Mrs. Clara Vanvalkenburgh, Mrs. George W. Miller, and Miss Minnie Sleirart, and several others have been dismissed at their own request and recommended to other churches, leaving a present membership in 1882 of eighty-four.

St. Joseph Catholic Church was first attended as a mission in 1877 by Father William Byrne, and by him organized into a church. It was under his charge until the spring of 1878 when he was succeeded by Father O'Brien, who was in attendance until 1880. Father Wallace attended during the years of 1880 and 1881 and was succeeded by Father C. J. Quinn, of Utica. The church was commenced in 1879 and completed in 1881 at a cost of \$1,100. The parish then had a membership of 300.

The Congregational Church, of York, was organized in May 1872, at the office of F. A. Bidwell. The organizing members were F. A. Bidwell, Mrs. F. A. Bidwell, Austin Harris, Mrs. Austin Harris, L. D. Stilson, Dr. W. Anderson, Mrs. Dr. Anderson. The society erected a large frame building, designated as a school building, in 1874, which was used as a house of worship until transferred to Messrs. Buckman and Worley. The first Board of Trustees were elected shortly after the organization and included F. A. Bidwell, Austin Harris and Dr. William Anderson. First church clerk, L. D. Stilson. The membership at that time

was 100. Board of Trustees: George P. Chessman, George B. France, F. A. Bidwell. The church now has one of the finest church buildings in the west, located at the corner of Platte and 7th Street.

Universalist.—The organization of this church dates back to June, 1880, at which date it was organized by Rev. L. S. Roripaugh. Rev. E. R. Earl, pastor. This house of worship was completed in April, 1881, and the property was valued at \$1,800. The Trustees of the church were: John Itner, J. D. P. Small, Charles LeCount.

First United Brethern Church.—The United Brethern Church was organized in June, 1887 by Elder Johnson of Seward. Held the first meeting in the Universalist church on East Hill with six members to organize. During the summer of 1887 they held part of their meetings in a vacant store room in North York belonging to Wooley. At the meetings there were about twenty members. joined the church and conference stationed Rev. Schwartz here and called it the York station.

In the Spring of 1888 they built a little frame building in what is now known as the Cheney's addition, and worshipped in that church until the congregation got too large to hold them.

In 1893 they moved the church to York College Chapel and sold their building to the German Lutherans. They worshipped in this chapel until 1900, then they built a commodious church which they now occupy.

The membership in 1912 was 350 and 265 belong to the Sunday School.

The First Baptist Church.—Organized August 23, 1873 with David Graham and wife, Thomas Porter and wife, Mrs. Ellen Johnson as charter members, Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Johnson still living at York.

Rev. Mitchell was the first pastor. Rev. Peck was the first resident pastor, which was in 1879. David Graham was the first deacon.

The church had a membership of 20 when Rev. Peck

consented to become pastor; salary to be what they could pay him.

L. D. Stilson, Mr. Whitlock and David Graham were elected as Trustees in 1874. F. M. Dillon elected as Treasurer October, 18, 1879, there being very little finances to handle up to this time as the pastor was supported by missionary funds, and what donations he received from the different churches which he served.

Rev. A. W. Clark came to the church as pastor August 1, 1883 and on December 25 of the same year, the building of the present church building was decided upon.

Present membership, 160.

Church of Christ.—York, Nebr. In the Spring of 1883 R. C. Barrow, who was then State Evangelist of the Church in Nebraska, held a meeting in the old Town Hall in York.

June 3rd, 1883 a meeting of the members of the church incorporated with T. J. Hatfield, Wm. Williams, and Jas. S. Hiatt, Elders and Trustees. With the help of the Church Building Association they built a building in which to worship, which was dedicated in June, 1884 where they met for a number of years. There was a congregation of the church who owned what is now the Lockridge Town Hall, who because of so many members moving away sold the building and deposited the money for the purpose of aiding in building more centrally in the city. In 1896 this money was applied toward the purchase of Lot 5 Block 30 to which the old building was removed and remodeled and where it stands now at the corner of Platte avenue and Eighth street. This was dedicated in 1897 by Z. T. Sweeney of Ohio.

The growth of this church has been steady and the loyalty of its members inspired by the word of God and the ministers in charge have helped to give it the influence it has in the community.

In January 1910 Evangelist Yenell held a meeting which was helpful and which added many to the church.

Ministers who have been in charge are M. H. Wilson, A. W. Harney, T. J. Olliver, J. H. McSparrow, H. A. Lemon, T. L. Reed, J. M. Fisher, J. A. Kieferle, G. J. Chapman, E. B. Widger, T. A. Maxwell, W. E. Brandenburg, and the present minister (1913) A. F. Ritchey.

In 1912 a full sized basement was finished for the use of the church. This was equipped so that it adds much to the convenience of the building for Sunday school, social and many purposes.

The elders who have served, upon whom much of the responsibility has laid are T. J. Hatfield, Elihu Harlan, Z. W. Sutton, Geo. Spears, P. N. Elarth, R. A. Williams, T. J. Winters, J. M. Barnard, Ira Harlan, Walter Harlan, D. E. Moss, J. W. Ramey, B. A. Root, M. D., and T. E. White. The present elders are J. W. Ramey, Walter Harlan, B. A. Root, M. D., and T. E. White, of whom J. W. Ramey has served since December 30, 1903 making a service of almost ten years.

The membership at present numbers Three Hundred four.

German Reformed Emanuels Congregation. Corner of Nebraska Ave. and 11th St.

The first German emigrants from the Volga region of Russia to settle in York came here in November 1888. Even before they had homes of their own or visible means of support, they appealed to the pastors of their denomination in Sutton, Nebr. for spiritual supply, and in answer to this appeal different pastors of the Reformed church preached to these people for years.

The first resident pastor was Rev. J. Vollprecht, now of Humboldt, and under his pastorate the congregation was organized in 1891 as: The German Reformed Emanuels Congregation, affiliated with the Nebraska Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States.

The services were at first held in the homes; then in the building on 6th St. recently destroyed by fire; above

Blackburn's store; and for six years above W. W. Wycoff's office.

In 1906 under the pastorate of Rev. F. Maurer of Harvard, the congregation erected its first church home, the little frame building on the corner of Nebraska Ave. and 11th St. From 1907 to 1908 it was part of the charge of Rev. U. Zogg of Sutton.

In 1910 the congregation declared itself self-supporting and elected Rev. W. Bonekemper; since November 1911 the present pastor Rev. J. Biery has been in charge.

Five of the charter members are still among us. They are: Mr. and Mrs. Peter Pfenning, Mr. John Hesler, Mr. and Mrs. John Reisbig. The congregation now has 116 adult members, and as all are in comfortable circumstances, hope soon to enlarge its present church edifice and build a parsonage.

A Brief History of the First Lutheran Church of York, Nebraska.

In October 1902 a committee composed of Revs. M. D. Berg, J. N. Lentz and A. B. Leamer made a canvass of the city of York to ascertain the feasibility of establishing an English Lutheran church. Meeting with encouraging results they appointed a Sunday service in the Swedish church on W. 8th Street and Platte Avenue. The response was so favorable that the President of the Nebraska Synod sent supplies for a time.

The following winter, Rev. W. T. Kahse, a student of the Western Theological Seminary, Atchison, Kansas, spent his Christmas vacation in York. He made a canvas for Lutheran people, and started a Sunday School. It was the intention of the President of the Synod to send supplies having been rented to the Free Methodists the Sunday School was disbanded and the supplies for the winter postponed.

In 1903, Rev. C. E. Sparks, a student of Wittenberg College, spent a summer vacation in York and succeeded

in rallying the Lutheran forces. With the aid of the Board of Church Extension, he was enabled to secure the Fraternal Hall for Sunday services. He organized the Sunday School, and on August 2, 1903, the congregation was regularly organized by Rev. L. P. Ludden, D. D., the Western Secretary of the Board of Home Missions. There were 29 charter members. The following composed the Official Board: Geo. Harr, L. M. Worman, S. F. Hansen, W. M. Swartzwelder, J. E. Johnson and C. D. Dreier.

From September 1, 1903 until April 1, 1904, Rev. J. G. Griffeth, D. D., acted as a supply pastor. During his incumbency, the Ladies' Aid Society was organized, six new members received and the church now owned by the congregation was leased.

June 1, 1904, Rev. George F. Scheese of Selinsgrove, Pa., took charge and served until November 1, 1904 and resigned and returned to the East.

January 12, 1905 at the earnest solicitation of the South Platte Conference of the Nebraska Synod, Rev. R. A. White took charge and served the congregation until April 1, 1913. He found the membership very much discouraged and scattered. By heroic effort he rallied them and soon infused new life in the congregation. The Ladies' Aid Society has been a very important factor in the development of the work. Though only a few in number, they raised and expended about \$2800 during the pastorate. Each year the church raised her full apportionment for all benevolent purposes. July 28, 1908 the church was bought for \$1480. The transfer was made November 14, 1908. The Trustees signing legal documents were R. A. White, Pastor L. M. Worman, C. D. Dreier and August Dreier. J. E. Johnson was one of the Church Council, but he was away from home at the time, so his name does not appear. Following the purchase were extensive repairs and renovations of the building. The old rickety tower was taken down, a new roof was put on, a basement was constructed underneath the entire church, the doors were changed from the center to the southeast corner, a beautiful art glass window was put in the east end of the church where the doors had been, an art glass transom was placed

over the doors, a Giblon furnace by which the church is heated was installed, the interior was beautifully papered, the woodwork painted and grained, and beautiful oak pews were put in. Beside these there were many smaller improvements made which gives the congregation a delightful auditorium in which to worship. The membership is now about 55. It would have been more than a hundred except for removals. At the present time it is in a state of growth and from all outward appearances there will be rapid development in the future.

On January 23, Rev. R. A. White offered his resignation to take effect April 1, 1913.

Rev. C. E. Sparks of Auburn, Nebraska has been called and will begin his work as pastor June 1, 1913. The Church Council as now constituted will be the new pastor, Rev. Sparks, M. L. Warner, Fred C. J. Voss and William H. Newcomer, Jr.

History of the United Evangelical Church in York County, Nebraska.

On April 10, 1879 at a session of the Des Moines Conference of the Evangelical Churches of Iowa, it was resolved that York Center, Waco and surrounding country be taken up as a mission to be known as York Center Mission. Rev. E. D. Einsel was sent as the first preacher in charge. A couple of years later some of the appointments were attached to charges outside of York County and York Center Mission was discounted.

On March 13, 1903 at a session of the Platte River Conference of the United Evangelical Church, it was resolved that York and surrounding country be taken up and called York Mission. Rev. Arthur E. Miller was appointed the first pastor and with his wife and the families of E. Reisinger, E. P. McCoy and Elias Anderson constituted the charter membership of the church. In May of the same year the lot at the corner of Grant avenue and Eighth street was purchased and on the first Sunday in June the first service was held in the building then there. This was a part of the

Boyer's old drug store building. A class was organized on June 14, 1903 with 12 members. The corner stone of the present church building was laid in the spring of 1907, and on October 27th, under the pastorate of Rev. W. C. Brewer, the church was dedicated to the worship of God. The property is now valued at \$10,000.00. The membership of the church is 93. The pastors have been as follows:

Rev. Arthur E. Miller—From 1903 to 1907.

Rev. W. C. Brewer—From 1907 to 1908.

Rev. A. Essley—From 1908 to 1909.

Rev. B. Hillier—From 1909 to 1913.

Rev. Arthur E. Miller—From 1913 to —.

Mr. E. Reisinger has been superintendent of the Sunday school ever since its organization.

E. Reisinger, J. L. Browitt and Arthur E. Miller were the first board of trustees.

The church is now pretty well organized for work in all departments and has great possibilities before it.

Societies.

York Lodge, No. 56, A. F. & A. M., was granted a dispensation August 2, 1874, issued to the following members: Malcolm G. Barney, Charles Lee Count, Samuel McConaughy, William M. Knapp, Lee Love, Andrew Rowley, J. D. P. Small, J. W. Foster, Albert A. Burtch, Henry Smith, James A. McKillip, John A. Eatherly. A charter was granted to the same members June 24, 1875, by Grand Mas-Frank Welch, and Grand Secretary William R. Brower. The first meeting was held November 3, 1874, at which the following officers were chosen: W. R. Knapp, W. M.; Lee Love, S. W.; M. G. Barney, J. W.; J. A. Eatherly, Secretary; J. D. P. Small, Treasurer; J. A. McKillip, S. D., Charles Lee Count, J. D.; Andrew Rowley, Tiler. Trustees: M. G. Barney, Charles Lee Count, J. A. McKillip. The lodge is in a prosperous working condition, and one of the strongest in the state.

York Lodge No. 35, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, was granted a charter October 2, 1872, and is the pioneer lodge of York County. The charter members are: William H. Keckley, S. E. Gandy, J. P. Miller, Austin Lindsay, D. A. Ritner, E. H. White, A. E. Streeter, Francis Brooks, R. B. Stevens. At the first meeting held October 2, 1872, the following officers were elected: W. H. Keckley, Noble Grand; S. E. Gandy, Vice Grand; E. H. White, Secretary; J. P. Miller, Treasurer. The lodge built a fine large frame building, in 1878, the chambers of which are devoted to the lodge and ante-rooms of the Order. The membership in 1882 reached seventy-five (75) with the following officers: A. F. Rice, Noble Grand; C. F. Day, Vice Grand; A. L. McClellan, Secretary; W. H. Gould, Treasurer.

Robert Anderson Post, No. 32, Grand Army of the Republic, was granted a charter June 23, 1880, by James W. Sorogage, Department Commander, and Jno. S. Wood, Assistant Adjutant General.

It is named in honor of Gen Robert Anderson, the hero of Fort Sumpter, and its roster of charter members includes the following gentlemen: B. Crabb, Captain Company H, Seventh Iowa Infantry; R. D. Ralstron, private, Company H., One Hundred and Nineteenth Illinois Infantry; J. B. Laycock, Sergeant, Company F, Seventh P. R. C. Infantry; John Lett, private, Company E, Eleventh Iowa Infantry; A. W. Gandy, private, Company E, Third Iowa Cavalry; W. M. Knapp, private Company G, Fiftieth New York Infantry; A. C. Montgomery, private, Company B, Eighty-third Pennsylvania Infantry; S. E. Gandy, private, Company E, Third Iowa Cavalry; E. Granger, private, Company F, Twenty-eight Iowa Infantry; H. C. Graves, private, Company D, Sixty-fifth Illinois Infantry; J. W. Frost, private, Company I, Seventh Minnesota Infantry; George Flock, private, Company D, Sixth Iowa Infantry; D. Hutchinson, private, Company I, Thirty-sixth Iowa Infantry; A. H. Campbell, private, Company E, Fifty-third Illinois Infantry; W. L. Nichols, private, Company E, Third Wisconsin Infantry; D. W. Keister, private, West Moreland Guards; L. D. Müller, private, Company L, First Indiana Cavalry; J. S. Gray,

private, Company E, First Indiana Artillery; H. D. Wright, private, Company I, Eleventh Illinois Infantry; T. V. Smith, musician, Company A, One Hundred and Second Iowa Infantry; G. W. Albem, private, Company C, One Hundred and Forty-eighth Pennsylvania Infantry; N. M. Morgan, private, Company L, Second United States Artillery; S. R. Lichtenberger, Captain, Company D, Fifteenth Illinois Infantry; W. H. Keckley, private, Seventh Iowa Battalion; A. M. Fansler, private, Company B, United States Marines. The first Post Commander was B. Crabb, First Senior Vice Commander J. B. Lacock; First Adjutant, John Lett. The post meets the first and third Thursdays in each month, has a membership of ninety-nine, and is one of the strongest in the State.

The present officers of the Post are Wm. F. Bullock, P. C.; F. M. Staley, S. V.; J. Fountain, J. V.; M. Sovereign, Adjt.; A. W. Wirt, S. M.; E. Reisinger, Q. M.; E. Van Vranken, O. D.; R. C. Shipman, O. G.; Rev. C. B. Couch, Chaplain; H. W. Alberts, Q. S.

The Press.

The first newspaper published in York was the "York Monitor," E. H. White, Editor and Proprietor; the first issue was on June 6th, 1872, a five-column, four page paper, subscription price \$1.50 per year, cash in advance. The first issue contained an add: Bell Bros., Groceries, Dry Goods, Hardware, Queensware, Boots, Shoes, and Agricultural Implements. They offered to take Railroad Bonds and Green backs for goods. It is presumed the early settlers had their pockets full of Railroad Bonds, or they would not have offered to take them. This issue also contained an Add. for Brahmstead & Kleinschmidt, General Mdse., Post & Warrington Attys., L. D. Stilson Contractor and Builder, D. Stonecypher, Furniture; also a notice for sealed bids for the erection of a Schoolhouse in Dist. 27, size 16 x 20 and to be built of pine lumber.

The "Tribune" started by Frank and Arthur Wellman, brothers of Walter Wellman, who made the famous attempt to reach the north pole, and cross the Atlantic in a baloon.

In those days there were raging newspaper wars to thrill one with fantastic terrors.

There were several editorial writers on the paper at that time and their well known characteristics are apparent to those who knew them well in after years. Here is one from W. E. Dayton's hand, you may be sure.

Speaking in the paper of the Tribune Editor, who had interfered to prevent the county board from paying a printing bill, he wrote:

"We challenge the paltry wretch to do his dirtiest. The cleanest thing he can do is dirty beyond expression and the nastier he becomes the sooner he will die of his own rottenness."

P. N. Elarth had the following advertisement in the paper:

"Swenskar.—Behofen ni en Symaskin eller Musik—instrument, hanvanden eder till."

There was some humorous advertising in the paper that week which old residents well acquainted with the parties will enjoy as a reminiscence story.

There was here at the time a very cranky and grouchy gentleman, J. E. Phillips by name, selling musical instruments. At the same time John Oppfelt, our present neighbor, was dealing in the same line, as well as the late P. N. Elarth. Phillips was always suspicious of something or somebody and seemed to imagine that the other two dealers mentioned had combined against him, so he published this:

"In view of some malicious combinations that have been formed by certain persons to injure my business, I have concluded to sell organs and pianos at cost for the next five years, if necessary.

J. E. PHILLIPS."

The next week this humorous reply appeared:

"In view of certain malicious combinations that have been formed by certain parties against J. E. Phillips to in-

jure his business, we will assist him by selling organs and pianos at cost for the next five years if necessary.

JOHN OPPFELT,
P. N. ELARTH."

Mr. Elarth has gone to a better land, while the frosts of time have whitened and thinned the locks of neighbor John. Phillips left here nearly twenty years ago but if alive he no doubt remembers the kindness of the two men who came to his assistance when combinations threatened his business.

The Wellmans sold to Whedon & Culley, who changed the name of the paper to the York Democrat. The "Tidal Wave" was started by Adams & Woolman in the interest of Greenback currency, run three weeks and was bought by T. E. Sedgwick changed to a Republican paper, "The Times," and has been built up to a daily and semi-weekly paper with a large circulation. Besides the Daily Times, York has another daily, "The York Daily News" published by the York Blank Book Co., Thos. Curran Mang., and three weekly papers, The York Democrat, York Republican, and The New Teller.

The Pioneer Physician.

(From The New Teller, Feb. 5, 1913.)

The historian of south York county mentioned in an article published last week the valuable services rendered early settlers by Dr. Dewese who proved a good friend to many sick and suffering ones. The northern portion of the county was also fortunate in having a pioneer physician in the person of Dr. S. V. Moore, whose home has been in York for a number of years. Though his days of strenuous effort are long since ended and failing health keeps him by his fireside during the winter days, he has a very keen memory of the time when cold and storms had no terrors for him and he willingly braved the worst blizzard to respond to a call for help. Dr. Moore came to York county in 1869. He



DR. S. V. MOORE

Pioneer Doctor and Legislator; and His Grandson, Robert

took a homestead north of the present site of Bradshaw and built his sod house on a hill about a half mile from Lincoln creek. He had both studied and practised medicine in his former home in Illinois but had not expected to continue to follow the profession in Nebraska. But the need of his neighbors was so great and their wish for the medical treatment he alone could give so urgent that he gradually yielded to their demands and soon found himself practising medicine over the most of York county and parts of Polk and Hamilton. If a call to a sick bed came in plowing time the plow must be left in the furrow till the sick were visited and if a winter storm was brewing the wife and children must be left to care for themselves and the stock as best they could until the father-doctor could reach home again.

There were few contagious diseases to contend with, though the children of the plains succeeded in catching measles and kindred ailments as do those of the towns. Diphtheria was a dreaded visitor sometimes and pneumonia was greatly feared. Dr. Moore remembers being called to the bedside of a young woman who was very sick with this disease. A storm was raging and lighted lanterns were hung outside the door of the house to guide the doctor. As he entered the little room where the woman lay he found her bed surrounded by weeping friends who believed her to be dying. The doctor left the door wide open and someone in the room suggested that it be closed. "No, leave it open" commanded the doctor as he made his way toward the sick woman. When she had recovered the power of speech the patient told the doctor that she heard his command and blessed him for it for she was perishing for lack of oxygen and the air in the little room was rendered the more impure by the number of people who were crowded in. All of these friends save the husband and a woman to serve as a nurse were banished by the physician and since it was too cold to send them to their homes he told them to make themselves as comfortable as possible in a sod annex to the house. To those who insisted that the patient was dying he said "she is not dead yet," and she did not die. She too is living in York today.

On one occasion the doctor was gone from his home for three days and nights, being prevented from returning by a blizzard. As he was nearing home on the evening of the third day he was stopped by a settler whose wife was sick and who besought him to tarry with them. Though doctor Moore had not been able to send word to or hear from his family during his absence he yielded to the settler's prayer and watched with the sick woman till nearly morning. As a little mule which carried him many a mile through heat and cold and never failed to find the way home over trackless fields of grass or snow. Sometimes when homeward bound Billy would lower his head and sniff the trail like a dog. "Nell," a beautiful mare of high degree, had her part too, in carrying relief to the suffering. Sometimes the way, there were no roads in those days, led through the water filled basins and across streams and more than once it was necessary for the rider to lift his feet and saddlebags to the horses back to escape a wetting while fording the waters. The travel in winter of course called for the most endurance and frequently led to exposure to the elements sufficient to endanger life. The pioneer physician was not supplied with fur coats or robes and was often chilled through and felt the pangs resulting from frosted hands and feet. Once a woman in a household where he had a patient insisted on preparing the doctor for the homeward trip by wrapping his legs in old quilts tied with strings. Before he reached shelter he was most grateful for the kindly solicitude, for without the extra wrappings he knew he might have frozen.

Once when the physician was watching by the child of a neighbor which had been attacked by membranous croup he was summoned home to find that his little son was similarly afflicted and his wife had been fighting the disease with all the remedies at her command. The question of medicine was an important one to the doctor of the early seventies. Drugs must be procured from Lincoln or Milford and then compounded by the doctor himself. A good supply of medicine must be carried on every trip for often one call was the only one the doctor could make and at the best, medicine must be left for several days with

directions for use or change as the patient's condition might demand.

Often the doctor was called to a home consisting of one room sod house with only a strip of carpet for a door and heated by a cook stove in which cornstalks were used as fuel, it requiring the constant labors of one person to replenish the fire. The patient in such a home had usually a bed of straw covered with carpet for a couch and almost nothing in the way of comforts. Yet Dr. Moore recalls that by far the greater majority of his patients recovered in spite of adverse conditions. There were a few cases of tuberculosis under his care in those early days but he held out no hope of recovery to the patients or their friends while doing all in his power to alleviate their distress and make their last days easier.

In many cases the only compensation Dr. Moore received was that of the deep gratitude of his patients. There was little to pay with then and it was not unwillingness but lack of means which left him unrewarded. Some men paid their debts in farm labor and their services were greatly needed at times by one who left his own things so frequently to care for the things of others. When the grasshoppers took the settlers' crops they also took the hopes of the doctor for ready money which had been promised him by those who lost their all. But of these things he never complained and indeed it is necessary to question him closely concerning this part of his experience. Sometimes the doctor traveled twenty-five or thirty miles to see a patient and sometimes a trip of sixty or more miles would be necessary in order to make two or three visits. Charging at present professional rates for visits calling for such an expenditure of time and strength would have given Dr. Moore a good start on the road to wealth, if the charges could have been paid.

This story of heroism might be indefinitely prolonged, for hundreds of thrilling incidents doubtless crowd the history of that fourteen years. "Hero" is a very appropriate name for a man who lived the life of a pioneer doctor but after all it does not express much. For the name

is often bestowed for one act of supreme self risk, while the doctor practices self-sacrifice year in and year out with no great crisis, save the ordinary cries of life, to nerve him to endeavor.

First Happenings in York County, and York.

- First permanent settler—John Anderson in 1865, on 2-9-1, West Blue Township.
- First frame buildings, at Porcupine Ranch, on 17-10-4, in 1863, in Brown Township.
- First death occurred at Jack Smith's Stage Station, killed by lightning.
- Second Sam Tate was shot by Smith in self defense in 1865, grave can be seen on brow of hill, Sec. 15-10-2, 4 miles southeast of York.
- First white child born in the county—Lillie M. Gilmore, June 3rd, 1866, she is now Mrs. J. E. Hunt of Bayard, Nebraska.
- First wedding in York County, Mr. N. J. Dixon and Miss Lydia A. Gilmore, married at E. Gilmore's Febr. 27, 1867, by Squire Millspaw.
- Second couple married, our own Mr. and Mrs. Ed Copsey, Oct. 27, 1867.
- First School District organized in West Blue Twpt. in 1869, was organized by Hon. G. B. France School Supt. of Seward County. (York Co. was part of Seward Co. at that date for judicial purposes).
- First school house, built in said Dist. in 7-9-1 in 1869, N. A. Dean helped haul logs to saw mill in Seward Co. to get lumber for helping build the house.
- First school taught in 1868 by Mrs. Nan Schaffee in Ed Copsey's house in Henderson Twp.
- First Fourth of July celebration was held around the unfinished school house, West Blue Twpt. in 1869, Rev. Mr. Caldwell was orator of the day.



MRS. LILLIE GILMORE HUNT.
First, Settler's White Child, Born in
York County, June 3, 1866.

First Post Office established on S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ 8-9-2, 1867, Fernando McFadden P. M.

First sermon preached 1868 at David Henderson's in Henderson Twp. Rev. Davis, a Baptist minister, held the service.

First baptism, Andrew Houston, fall of 1871, by Rev. W. E. Morgan, at Brahmsteads & Kleinschmidt's unfinished store room, in York; J. H. Bell held the bowl of water.

First County Fair held in York 1873, N. W. Graves, President.

First Newspaper "The York Monitor" June 6, 1872, E. H. White Editor and proprietor, a copy framed, can be seen at the York Republican Office.

First case tried in the Dist. Court, Febr. 7th, 1872, a divorce case, before Judge Lake, Edward Bates Atty. for plaintiff, divorce granted.

First white child born in old York Precinct, Mrs. Alexander Stephens, at the Jack Stone Ranch, June 15th, 1867.

First school taught in York by A. C. Montgomery in a claim shack just south of the public square on Lincoln Ave., 1870.

First school house built in York 1871, John Shaw and J. P. Miller were the contractors and builders.

First church was built in York by the Presbyterians, spring of 1873.

First couple married in York, Mr. William Heideman and Miss Caroline Reets, married by Judge D. T. Moore, Aug. 9, 1870, Mrs. Sarah N. Moore and Mrs. Cap. Reed were witnesses.

First physician located in York, Dr. Thomas Meyers, 1871.

First store opened by Elwood Bros. in 1870, succeeded in a few months by F. O. and J. H. Bell.

First bank established by Wm. McWhirter 1875, capital supposed to be \$1500.00. Rules for buying good notes

50c on the dollar, and paid 45c on the dollar for county warrants, and made loans at 5 per cent per month.

First Railway train reached York August 1877.

First Sunday School organized at D. T. Moore's residence on 18-10-2 in 1870, Mr. Moore was elected Supt.

First Board of County Commissioners, Servetus V. Moore, L. F. Wyman and David Buzzard.

First County Treasurer, Julius W. Frost; First County Clerk, Edward Bates; First Sheriff, George Flock; First County Judge, D. T. Moore; First County Supt. W. H. Armstrong; First County Surveyor, Frank Manning; First Coroner, R. Fairbanks.

First suit in York County was to recover a yoke of oxen, one with bush of his tail off, costs in case \$1.75.

First Guardian Sarah Parker for Francis R. Stillwell, June 1, 1870.

First Christmas gathering at Randall Fairbanks in Henderson Twp., 1867, the gathering was composed of the Waddles, Georges, Copseys, Wescots, Hendersons, Barses and Chaffees. The weather was so warm the children went barefooted, and Mr. Fairbanks took off his front door to enlarge his table.

By W. E. Dayton, Deceased.

(Written for the Old Settlers Reunion.)

I came to York County in the spring of 1871. That is, my parents brought me here. I was a kid in those days, and "Granny Biby, peace to her memory, said that with the exception of Dick Martin I was the meanest boy on the Blue River. Granny only said this, however, when she didn't want me to "cut her a stick of wood." At such times it was "Elmer, honey, won't you please cut old Granny a stick or two of wood?" And the wood was always forthcoming, and Granny was always liberal in payment for the same. That in which she paid would not pass with everybody as coin of the realm, but it would with a

good many people, and it always did with me. It consisted of liberal twists of "long green terbacker," with an occasional "boughten" piece thrown in.

The lumber with which my father built his little house on the homestead was hauled from Lincoln. I remember that the neighbors who lived in soddies and dug outs thought Dayton was putting on too much style with his new frame house. It was a poor affair, compared with the house there now, and with the other houses in York County that have sprung up out of the prairies, but it was home. And that word "home" in the early days meant all the world to hundreds and thousands of hard working, brave men and women who sat down for the first meal under their own sod and willow brush, and they said the word and it had its full meaning. There was no landlord to divide the profits. The roof was their own. And though it was not a very good one, and leaked somewhat, yet it was not long before they made a better one to replace it. No matter how fine the houses may be now, we must always remember the cosy old soddies and dugouts that cradled Nebraska's greatness as a farming and commercial state.

We will always remember the free, cordial life of those days, gone now for an easier, if not a better. Every man's house was his neighbor's. What one lacked was easily and freely made up by another, and the bonds of universal brotherhood were never stronger any place on God's green earth than they were in York County in the good old homesteading days.

A miracle was accomplished when these broad prairies were peopled. The buffalo had hardly disappeared from sight, frightened at the white spread of the prairie schooner's sails, till his trail was turned under by the braking plow of advancing civilization. Unbroken solitude here today. Tomorrow you passed the same spot and a habitual home was nearly ready for its occupants. Almost before the claim was staked the school district was organized and the teacher employed, justices and peace officers were elected, and the civil law that governed it in the old homes in the east had scarcely time to draw a full breath until it was in perfect operation in the new home. The church and the Sunday school came in with the movers' wagons in a

little box under the feed box at the rear end, and it was taken out and set up before camp was pitched. With such men and women composing the nucleus around which was built the population of Nebraska she could not have been other than the great State she is. Her good name and her peaceful character will stand monuments to their enterprise and integrity until men shall move no more.

McCool Junction.

McCool Junction was organized on the advent of the K. C. & O. R. R. in York County, March the 28th, 1888, it is situated on East Half of the S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ 13-9-3 and the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ 18-9-2 and part of the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ 24-9-3 and is beautifully located on the banks of the West Blue river in the Blue River Valley and has one of the finest natural parks found in the state, and is a great resort for Class Day, School and Sunday School Picnics. The village formerly had a saloon, but by the effort of the good people of the place, greatly assisted by the Catholic Church, rid themselves of the saloon, and the village has been built up and improved till it is one of the nicest little towns in the county, full of enterprise, and surrounded as it is by a rich farming district, enjoys a good healthy business in all its lines of industry. The first village officers were: J. J. Gilmore, W. E. Butler, James Grier, H. Tolles and Thomas Henahan. Its present officers (1913) are: Frank Montgomery, Arthur Marshall, Lewis Walbrecht, Lloyd Hays, and Emmitt Finney.

Henderson.

The Village of Henderson is located on the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 6-9-4 in Henderson Township, was incorporated October the 4th, 1899, soon after the F. E. & M. V. R. R. was built through the county, this road gave them direct communication with York and the east, and was a great convenience. The first Board of Village Trustees were: A. C. Neufeld, chairman; Peter Goosen, D. H. Tessman, D. J. Kroeker, J. P. Funk, and A. Franz secretary.



MR. AND MRS. DAN GEORGE
First Settlers in Henderson Township and Youngest
Daughter, Mrs. Dr. J. M. Kilgore



The village was located in the midst of a thrifty German settlement, which by their economy, frugal living and industry has become the wealthiest settlement in the county, and the village and country surrounding has more fine automobiles, and indications of luxury than almost any other part of the county.

Henderson is well supplied with stores, has a good bank and all the conveniences of a thrifty village.

Henderson has a good public school building and the Mennonites who constitute the principal part of the population have a large school of their own, and the only church building.

Henderson had a saloon for several years, but it was a source of trouble and the good people of the place, in the spring of 1912 voted to get along without a saloon. In the spring of 1913 the friends of the saloon in some way secured enough votes to have the saloon again, but there seemed to be a legal question about reestablishing the saloon that could not be overcome and the saloon has never been reopened.

The present board of Village Trustees are J. J. Morse, chairman; J. C. Wenzlaff, Johann Doell, D. D. Weins and A. M. Youst, with F. H. Tuschoff, secretary.

Benedict.

Benedict was incorporated in 1890 with J. W. Downing as chairman and G. M. Douglass as clerk. The Board was: J. W. Downing, O. D. Keeler, Walter Scott, Robt. Cavender and Cris Sparling. Scott and Cavender, deceased, J. W. Downing in California and O. D. Keeler and Cris Sparling yet in Benedict. G. M. Douglas the clerk, holds down a good position in Columbus. The present Board is W. J. Degraw, chairman; P. F. Conant, B. J. Huff, F. C. Wirth and James Marvel, with M. L. Cavender as clerk. A. Schneider has the credit of serving 14 years on the Board and 8 years as chairman.

The first school taught in Benedict was by Frank Slagle; R. B. Brabham was director.

In the winter of 1886-7, bonds were voted by Morton Township to aid the Kansas City & Omaha R. R., and in January 1887, there were slight evidences along the right of way on section 13, that a town was to be started there. A small grain office and scoophouse were the first, and for two months the only buildings. This village was named in honor of E. C. Benedict, president of the K. C. & O. R. R. John Lett and the firm of Oughton & Stillwell drove into town the same day and same hour; the one from the West and the other from the East. These men built houses at once for their business and also as residences for their families. Mr. Lett went into the hotel business and Oughton & Stillwell opened the first grocery store. The Eckles building adjoining the hotel was put up at the same time, and used at once and for years after by the firm of Knott & Sparling, our first general merchandise dealers. These were followed by Miller & Downing, hardware; S. M. French, restaurant and confectionery; Baum, the druggist. In the meantime Dr. J. A. Van Dyke located and at once picked up a large practice, and proved to be a fine physician. Mr. Levens erected a billiard hall on the site of the present residence of F. M. Brabham. James Stoddard erected a building north of the livery barn of C. E. Anderson, and Barney Davis put up a second billiard hall. These buildings were afterward moved south onto Sherman street. Stoddard's building is now occupied by J. B. Marvel as a restaurant, and the other was owned and occupied for some years by J. B. Johnson, but is now fallen into decay and will soon be torn away to make room for a better building.

Frank McConaughey opened the first bank with B. B. Crownover as cashier. The place now contains two banks, the First National and the Farmer's State Bank. Martin & Crownover were the first firm engaged in shipping live stock. Martin (Lee) died on his farm one mile south of Benedict, May 17th, 1893. Mr. Crownover (Elmer B.) resides at present upon a farm which he has just sold to H. A. Johnson for \$204 per acres—this lies adjoining the village on the west, and was formerly the home of Henry Harrington.

On Sunday, June 27th, 1887, the first train, a construction train, pulled into our little village; there was a large concourse of people from the surrounding country to see it, and great was the rejoicing that now we could go to York without driving a team. The townsite had been taken off the farms of E. B. Crownover and Henry Harrington—sixty acres from each. Geo. Kinyon erected a blacksmith shop and a residence; Joe Downey a residence, and S. P. Stryker, a small hardware store in which he lived until able to put up a residence on the block now owned by H. W. Hoffmaster, Sr. Here the first child born in Benedict first saw the light. Miss Alta Stryker, now a lady of some 26 summers. The Doctor built him a cosy home where at present the M. E. parsonage stands. C. H. Dovenbarger erected a livery barn on the southwest corner of the block on which Dr. Karrer is building a fine residence. Later, Fairman & Harrington opened a general store on the west side of the R. R., east of the present residence of O. B. Canfield. In August, R. B. Brabham came to town from his farm, and took upon himself the duties of Post Master, which office he held during the remainder of Pres. Cleveland's first term, and was followed by John Lett, who in turn gave way to Mr. Brabham again, when in 1892. Mr. Cleveland defeated Harrison for a second term. In 1896, however, the scales turned again, and John Lett was returned to power. He is yet Post Master and, if he can stand the Civil Service examination, is likely to serve for many years.

In the fall of 1887, John Lett was elected Justice of the Peace and served for six years or to January, 1894, when J. E. Hoover succeeded him and has held the office ever since, and Woe unto the man who falls into his clutches if proven guilty of any serious misdemeanor.

Benedict owns the Electric Lighting and Water plant, thus making a little money on the side for the village. Our plant is acknowledged to be among the best to be found outside of the larger cities of the state.

We have three Fraternal Lodges: The Modern Woodmen, A. O. U. W., and Degree of Honor. These orders, in 1907, with the help of some public spirited citizens, erected

a fine Fraternal building on the main street of the town, and all are justly proud of their Fraternal Hall, which cost \$3,000, and was begun without a dollar in the treasury. There remains less than \$500 of a debt against the property.

The Presbyterian Congregation had, in 1884, built a church near the cemetery two miles west of the town, this building and the Parsonage was moved in, the summer of 1889, and the Lutheran people erected their church the same year. Rev. B. F. Sharp of York was the first Presbyterian Pastor, and Rev. Schneur was the first Lutheran Pastor. The Methodist people built some years later with the Rev. D. M. Buckner as their first Pastor.

Mr. Vandever built a large grain elevator, Mr. Stryker also went into this business and A. L. Sprague built a fine elevator north of the depot—these three grain firms went out of business and James & Bro. purchased the Vanderver plant which is yet in operation under the management of the Hastings Grain Company, N. G. Ensey, manager. The other Elevators were taken down and removed to points in Kansas. The farmers some ten years ago, met and organized the Farmer's Grain Association, erecting a large elevator, which has done a good business every year, paying a better price for grain than any of the surrounding towns have been paying, and, also, paying an 8 per cent dividend each year. The elevator has been under the management of A. J. Houston nearly ever since it was completed. R. E. Conahaughy put in a lumber yard here in 1888, which passed into the hands of the Rogers Lumber Co., which was bought out by the new Benedict Lumber & Fuel Association, another organization formed by the Farmers. This has proven to be a great success financially. In 1907, on the 15th of April the six buildings on the south half of the block 22, on Sherman street were destroyed by fire. A very heavy wind was blowing from the North West and it was with the greatest difficulty that the S. E. quarter of the town was saved. The Post Office and Miss Lett's Queensware stock, the barber shop, drug store, R. B. Brabham's building and stock and the building and hardware stock of C. H. Dovenbarger were destroyed with some salvage on the stocks. Mr. Dovenbarger built a fine brick store building on his lot, and

S. J. Parker built a brick building on the site of the barber shop, which is the home of the Village Club.

Lushton.

Lushton is situated on Section 25 in Henderson Township, was surveyed and platted in the spring of 1887. The first board of village trustees was: A. Holmes, chairman; M. W. Strater, A. Cookus, M. D. Calkins, F. C. Williams, with Ed. Allison Clerk and Homer Hager Treasurer. The K. C. & O. R. R. was completed through the county the same year. The first general store building was built in the spring of 1887 by the Dorsey Bros. They stocked up, and operated the store for one year then sold to Dailey & Farber who carried on the business for 10 years, Mr. Bailey moved to University Place and Mr. Farber died. During the summer of 1887 Mr. Albert Holmes built a general store building, stocked it, and has carried on a merchantile business, and kept the post office in connection with it for 26 years. Mr. Holmes has always been identified with the interests, and prosperity of the village, and is really a part of it. Henry Grosshans of Sutton, and Philip Schwab built Suttons first elevator in the spring of 1888, the first load of grain was delivered in Lushton in the fall of 1887 and shovelled in a car, our genial friend, Mr. M. B. Thompson helped shovel the grain; the farmers at that time were very much elated over having a grain market right at their door instead of hauling the long distance they had been accustomed to. During the latter part of 1887, J. J. Burras of Lincoln and C. N. Kincaide of Lincoln organized the first lumber company and stocked up October 1st of the same year. The yard was purchased by Mr. M. B. Thompson and successfully operated by him for a number of years. Mr. P. H. Purcell built and operated the first hardware store; and Mr. Edwin Moore the first drug store. William Cookus put in the first blacksmith shop and at this date, June 1913 will pound iron in any shape you ask for. Mr. William Walters built and operated the first hotel, a two story frame building on the east side of the main street. The first bank, "The State Bank of Lushton" was organized in the spring of 1888 by George and Tom Clawson, and Mrs. Susan Dailey represented the

ladies in the first millinery store, and sold millinery for a number of years. Will R. Vanderburg built and operated the first elevator in 1888, and the first church that graced the village of Lushton was moved in and rebuilt by the United Brethren church.

Lushton is a village of about 200 population in the midst of a thriving farming district, now has 2 elevators, 1 harness shop, 2 cream stations, 1 hardware store, 2 general merchandise stores, 1 drug store, M. W. A. Hall, blacksmith shop, furniture and undertaking establishment, bank, hotel, meat market, confectionery, lumber yard, 2 churches, and an up-to-date school building. The Town has always done a good business, had a saloon one year but soon tired of it and joined the Prohibition ranks.

The present Village Trustees are: A. Holmes, chairman; J. L. Labart, V. A. Siekler, Fred Franz, J. L. Ashmore with K. Anderson Clerk and Treasurer.

Bradshaw.

In the fall of 1880 when the B. & M. R. R. was extended from York to Grand Island the town of Bradshaw was established. The town was first located on Mr. W. F. Morrison's farm a little east of where it now is, but was soon moved from there and located on the land owned by Messrs. O. R. and J. M. Richards.

Mr. W. D. Post opened up the first general store in Bradshaw in the fall of 1889, in the building now occupied by Mr. Yoder. The postoffice was then moved from Plainfield to his store and he became Bradshaw's first postmaster. Mr. Post also acted as depot agent and telegraph operator, besides running a drug store and elevator and handling live stock. As a competitor in the grain business he had our then worthy citizen, Mr. O. R. Richards, who began buying grain the same time. To Mr. A. Linsley, now deceased, belongs the distinction of being the oldest resident of Bradshaw. He opened up a blacksmith shop, as soon as the town was located, near where the hotel now stands. About the same time Messrs. LeCount and Knapp opened

the first hardware store. In the spring of 1881 Mr. O. A. Stubbs opened the second general store and became one of Bradshaw's business men. As a resident physician, Dr. A. R. Allen came first in the spring of 1882 and is thus one of Bradshaw's oldest residents. Thus the business enterprises began to increase and develop until at the present time we have an array of business firms of which we can well feel proud.

The village of Bradshaw has had a sad as well as eventful history, which placed her for a time in the long list of the ruined cities of the world. In the evening of the third day of June 1890, the residents of this little village and the surrounding country stood in helpless suspense and watched two peculiar storm clouds approaching, one moving from the northwest to the southeast, and one moving from the southwest to the northeast. The clouds met near the edge of Bradshaw and before the citizens could seek a place of safety the cyclone was upon them. Not a house in the village but was damaged and most of them were entirely demolished. Business houses were ruined and many of them were swept away entirely. The flood of rain and the intense darkness that followed made the situation most pitiable. Some of the residents were buried beneath the debris and many of them were injured—some fatally. As soon as possible the news was sent to York and right royally did the residents of that city respond with every possible assistance.

It will ever be a credit to the pluck and energy of our citizens, some of whom lost every dollar of their property, that in the face of the most appalling disaster and discouragements they arose with faith and determination, and over the ruins of the past they rebuilt their homes and re-established their business. A stranger would never suspect now that this pleasant little village with its beautiful homes was ever in such utter ruin.

The maiden name of Mrs. J. M. Richards was Mary Bradshaw and from her our village received its name.

The first board of trustees were: David Hitchcock, president; Harry Belcher, clerk; J. H. Currie, treasurer; A.

Linsley, R. C. Buckley, H. M. Richmond, and Henry Koch trustees.

The present (1913) board of trustees are: J. H. Currie, chairman; C. B. Palmer, Jr., clerk; E. C. Roggy, I. H. Johnson, C. W. Gardiner and C. H. Bedient, trustees.

Methodist Episcopal

Doctor Babcock built the first Methodist church in Bradshaw in 1882 and the name of the circuit was changed from York circuit to Bradshaw circuit. Rev. H. F. Tyler was appointed to this circuit in 1882 and moved the class from Eberhart to Harmony church. Then from 1883 to 1886 came Rev. A. J. Marsh. He moved the class from Harmony church to Bradshaw and built the main part of the present parsonage. Following him came A. J. Whitmore for one year. From 1887 to 1889 Rev. L. C. Lemon preached at Bradshaw and attended the Methodist college at York. From 1889 to 1890 Rev. W. H. Prescott labored on this charge, building an addition to the parsonage and rebuilding the church as it now stands after the destructive cyclone of June 3rd 1890.

The following pastors have since served on the Bradshaw work: Rev. C. S. Kathan 1890-1891; Rev. L. Morrison 1891-1892; Rev. L. Ingham 1892-1893; Rev. C. L. Hamilton 1893-1895; Rev. F. Deal 1895-1896; Rev. J. A. Chapin 1896-1897; Rev. W. K. Williams 1897-1898; Rev. H. G. Claycomb 1898-1901; Rev. M. A. Wimberley 1901—

Christian

The Christians in the vicinity of Bradshaw were organized May 15th, 1875, the congregation meeting for worship consisting of seven members: Benjamin Mapes and wife, Christopher Owings and wife, Margaret Higgs, Wm. Mapes, Mary C. Hasbrouck, with Elder Noah Brotherton of Hamilton county, presiding. In the fall of the same year Sarah Hasbrouck and William F. Morrison were added.

In the winter of 1879 E. Evans held a meeting in the Plainfield school house just north of Bradshaw on the Owing's farm and organized a Sunday school, five additions were the fruit of that meeting. In the spring T. A. Parkinson was hired as pastor. In 1881 they moved their place of worship to Bradshaw, where nine were added by letter.

The church of Christ at Bradshaw was organized May 18, 1884, with twenty-eight members, Elder Wohlgamuth presiding. In the spring of 1885 they commenced to build the church house that was blown down at the time of the cyclone in 1890. Of that congregation three are here, some are deceased, most of them went west to find homes. In the fall of 1885 Wm. Eckerman held a revival, the fruit of that meeting was thirteen added, of that number five are still in the church. The evangelists who have held meetings since that time are: R. C. Barrows, D. A. Youtzy, J. S. Beem, A. W. Henry, A. W. Harney, N. B. Alley, A. D. Finde. The pastors who have labored for the church are C. W. Henry, A. W. Harney, E. C. Whitaker, H. E. Motter. The student preachers are: H. J. Kennedy, Earl Boyd, F. W. Henry.

Congregational

In the latter part of 1879 Rev. Wm. Woolman of Hastings held services in the small school house a little northeast of what is now Bradshaw, then called Plainfield. Some time in February of 1880 a proposition was submitted to the Christians of the place to organize a Congregational church. The following named persons consented to enter the organization: Dr. S. V. Moore, L. A. Moore, H. E. Simmons, A. P. Simmons, L. N. Buell, Mary Buell and H. E. Linsley. A council was called at the home of L. N. Buell March 19, 1880 and was composed of pastor and delegates from the Arborville, Grafton, Seely, York and Council churches and H. N. Gates, superintendent of missions for Nebraska. Rev. C. S. Harrison of York was chosen moderator and Rev. W. S. Hampton, clerk. This council recommended that we be organized as the Congregational church of Bradshaw. The church was incorporated May 1, 1880, with Rev. Wm. Woolman pastor. The corner stone of the

church was laid Oct. 22, 1880, and the building dedicated free of debt June 2, 1882, and cost about \$1,500.

The following ministers have served this church: Revs. Dyas, Winslow, Benton, Geer, Baker and Otis. The evening of June 3, 1890, the building was made a total wreck by the cyclone.

Schools

The first public school in the western half of York county was held in a little dug out over on Lincoln creek in 1872, with Mrs. A. Linsley as teacher. The district was eight by twelve miles in extent and known as district No. 15. As the country was settled up the district was divided and other little soddies were built. Then a "frame school" was started in Owens Bros. old store building, which stood on Mr. Steinberg's farm. In 1881 the first little school house was built in Bradshaw. To this additions were made from time to time as needed. But this, the toil and savings of many years, like the most of Bradshaw was laid in ruins in one brief hour. After the cyclone, as the district was already bonded to the limit, fifteen hundred dollars of the "cyclone fund" was used for a new building. To this was added five hundred dollars from the public schools of York county and five hundred dollars from the county board.

Bradshaw has graduated two of her principals into the office of county superintendent, Mr. E. S. Franklin in 1887 and E. C. Bishop in 1899.

The following teachers have served as principals of the Bradshaw schools since 1881. Misses Sylvia Butler and Carrie Moffitt. Messrs. Geo. Greer, A. B. Coddington, E. S. Franklin, Chas. Harlan, Wm. Bartz, H. B. McDermed, W. T. Oats, Fred Archard, W. S. Wright, W. T. Utterbeck, T. A. Gierins, J. H. Frew, E. C. Bishop, R. F. Marquis and J. N. Peck.

D. W. Baker.

D. Webster Baker was born in 1854 in Fulton Co., Pa.



JOHN LETT

President Old Settler's Association

He grew to manhood on the farm where he was born, and in 1874 came with his parents and brother Francis A. to Nebraska, settling on Sec. 21, T. 12, R. 3, in York County near the site of his present home. In 1879 he married Esther A. Black at her home in Pennsylvania. He has been engaged in farming all of his life, but taught a few terms of school before getting established as a farmer. When still a young man Mr. Baker began to take an active interest in public affairs and was thereby soon led to accept various offices. He has been director of his home school district for 21 years. He was a member of the York County board of Supervisors from 1894 to 1898. In 1902 he assisted in organizing the Farmers' Grain Association of Benedict and was chosen president of the company. Was deputy assessor from 1904 to 1906. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1906 and took an active part in the important legislation of the session of 1907. He was re-elected in 1908, and again in 1910, and although his party was in the minority during these latter sessions he was given a place on some of the most important committees of the House.

Mr. Baker is a member of York Lodge No. 56, A. F. & A. M., also of Solomon Chapter No. 33 and Joppa Commandry No. 17, all of York.

John Lett.

John Lett was born in Richland County, Ohio, February 28th, 1841, and as a consequence, looks forward to the day when he shall be elected to the Presidency of this great Republic, as have so many sons of that favored state.

When he was but four months old his parents moved to Cedar County, Iowa, settling in the town of Tipton, and entering 80 acres of government land adjoining the town. His mother died when he was but eight months old, leaving his father with five small children, one, a brother two years older, blind. His father, Abraham Lett, was in a bad predicament for with so many little children, he could do but little work himself and so he looked about him for a good woman to mother his little flock, and fortunately, he sue-

ceeded in finding a splendid woman who came into the family and proved to be a blessing to that group of motherless young ones, for, although she had reared 18 children of her own, she managed the household well and gained the confidence and affection of her new brood.

At the age of 20 years, Mr. Lett enlisted in Co. E, 11th Iowa, Vol. Infantry for three years "or during the war," and at the expiration of his first term of enlistment re-enlisted for another three year term. He participated in the battles of Shiloh, Corinth, Iuka, Vicksburg and Kennesaw Mountain. It is now generally admitted in and about Benedict, where he has reigned as Postmaster for twenty years, that he and W. V. Powell were chiefly instrumental in winning the battle of Shiloh, and if their attention had been called to the matter a little earlier in the day they would have saved Gen. Wallace's Division from capture.

He was in Sherman's Atlanta campaign and made the "march to the sea" with other thousands of brave men. From Savannah to the battle of Bentonville, N. C. and then on to Washington to take part in the "Grand Review" which marked the end of the great Civil War. In the last year of the conflict he had been promoted to the rank of Corporal, and then to Quartermaster Sergeant of his Regiment.

Discharged from the service, he came home and soon thereafter, November 25, 1865 was married to Miss Carrie Draucher, a sister to Arthur and David, who were for a long time residents of this county. Mrs. Lett was born in Clearfield County, Pa., June 13th, 1844. They went onto the old home farm of his father, and lived there happily until the Spring of 1871, the great tide of emigration rushing through Iowa for the free lands of Nebraska set them to thinking that they too, were entitled to a quarter-section of land, and John came out and took up the N. E. Quarter of Section 32, Town 12, Range 3 in what is now Morton Twp. Going back to Iowa to clear up his affairs, he returned to his homestead with his family in October, 1871. He was forced to occupy a sodhouse owned by R. M. Lytle until he could put up one like it. He had just \$3.00 in money to winter his wife, three children, two horses and two cows. They





M. SOVEREIGN AND GRANDDAUGHTER

wintered after a fashion that would not at all be popular with the average young couple of today. They had a little hominy and one sack of flour in their wagon when they arrived, and a can of kerosene that kept company with his food supply, and John says that he can taste that oil to this day, for they had to eat it for it was a groundhog case. Mr. Lett was a member of the first Grand Jury held in this county. In the summer of 1872 he lost a horse and traded for a yoke of oxen, which were used on the farm and to go to church and to York to do his trading. The ox team made a great hit at 4th of July celebrations. Eight children were born to him, one of which died in infancy, and Estella at the age of 27. The great Easter blizzard and the several raids of the grasshoppers are vividly remembered. In 1875 the family moved to York, where he engaged in the selling of farm machinery and seeds. While living in York he served two years as assessor, and was also elected Commander of the Grand Army Post. In 1880 he moved back to the homestead, where going behind year after year, he moved to the new town of Benedict, and was one of the first two families settling in that village. Here he built and operated the first hotel. About this time he was elected Justice of the Peace and served with satisfaction for six years, also procuring a notary's commission, in which capacity he still serves the public. When Mr. Cleveland retired from the presidency, he secured the post office and is yet postmaster, after more than twenty years' service. He has served under Lincoln (as a soldier), Harrison, Cleveland, McKinley, Roosevelt and Taft, and thus far under Professor T. Woodrow Wilson.

In 1885, he was elected Department Commander of Nebraska G. A. R., and had the intense satisfaction of leading 20,000 men at the Reunion in Denver, Colo. Mrs. Lett passed away August 1, 1912 at the age of 68 years. She was buried by the side of her two daughters in beautiful Greenwood Cemetery at York.

M. Sovereign.

M. Sovereign homesteaded in what is now Thayer Township in 1872, and with his family moved on the place

in the spring of 1873, just in time to get the full benefit of the Great Easter Storm while living in a half finished frame house. The storm raged for three days and nights with such fury it was at the risk of one's life to venture from the house to the stable. After the storm was over I took my shovel and went to the home of S. W. Sidwell, who lived in a dug-out. The only sign of a residence was the stove pipe sticking up through the snow. I went to the pipe and asked Mr. Sidwell what he was doing down there? He promptly replied he was reading the B. & M. advertisements about the beautiful climate of Nebraska. After the destructive grasshopper raid of 1876 we decided to sell out and leave the country, and sold our fine 160-acre farm, with frame house, 120 acres broke out, stable and well, for \$1000.00, but the purchaser failed to complete the settlement till too late to go elsewhere the next spring, and C. R. Keckley was about to marry a girl who had a claim she could not hold if married, and I bought her 160 acres for \$100.00 and moved on the land in the spring 1877, remained and improved the farm till elected County Clerk in the fall of 1881. While living on our homestead we found congenial neighbors and friends. I think the early settlers in York County among the best in all the qualities that go to make first-class citizens. A neighbor family who had moved in the best circles in the East, came in their lumber wagon and ox team one afternoon—five miles, to make us a visit, we had a splendid time till about midnight, they hitched their ox team to their wagon and started across the prairies to their home.

In the fall of 1881 I was nominated on the republican ticket for County Clerk, and ran against Mr. Black of West Blue Township, the democrat nominee. In canvassing the county I frequently met my friend, T. E. Sedgwick, who was working for the other fellow, but since my election Mr. Sedgwick has been one of my warmest friends.

After I was elected County Clerk we moved to York, I served four terms, and have made York my home since. Was elected Mayor of the city for 1906-7 and am proud of the fact that with the able assistance of every member of the city council, and the city attorney, the first paving contract was let, and work begun on the first paving district;



N. A. DEAN
Came to York County in 1868

ground was secured free for East Hill Park; the Gas Plant was installed; the first cement crossing in York was made across Academy Avenue, on the north side of West 6th St. Lincoln Cox did the work under the supervision of H. W. Brott, a practical mason, and member of the city council. I remember with pleasure the concerted action of the Council in all these improvements, and all the business of the city. The Council were half democrats and half republicans, and I remember but one vote taken during the two years that was not unanimous. I have now, this year of 1912 lived out all my own time, three score years and ten, and am living on borrowed time, and feel that I would like to borrow as long as they have any time to lend. In writing these few incidents many events in my life come fresh to my mind, some I would like to forget, and many are refreshing and inspiring as a morning shower.

Nathaniel A. Dean

Nathaniel A. Dean was born in Allegheny County, Maryland in 1850; with his parents he moved to Somerset County, Pa., in 1852, and attended the public school until 1866, the close of the war. In 1867 with his brother-in-law, R. Brooke, he made a trip over the greater part of Kansas, and stopped for the winter at Maryville, Nodaway County, Mo., where Brooke purchased a farm and lived.

In the year 1868, being a boy of 18 years, I saddled up my pony, took my lariat rope and started for the Great American Desert; I crossed the line into York County and the second day of October, 1868, my first stop was at John Anderson's who had just homesteaded the first homestead in York County, and I wintered with "Uncle" Elias Gilmore on the "Blue."

I was one of the first that signed the petition to Gov. David Butler for the permanent organization of York County; April, 1870 we had our first election; there were three voting precincts organized, one on the "Blue," one where York now stands and one in the Northern part of the County; at the same election we voted and located the

County Seat, which is now York. I voted on the "Blue" and we polled fifty-one votes and elected the first officers on the lot now stands the Blodgett Hotel. (See names York County History). My first two years in York County were full of experiences,—buffalo hunting, elk and antelope; part of the time I associated with the Indians, but when it came to their eating I preferred my own cooking as they relished stale animals, and skunks. In the fall of '79 I spent some of that time at "Old Fort Kearney" reading novels of "Buffalo Bill," "Kit" Carson and "Calamity" Jane, I was anxious to see them, and I spent some happy days with them.

In 1870 Peter Heller, with his family, moved from Iowa to York County; fortunately for me he had a young lady of seventeen years, and I persuaded her parents to give her to me; on Christmas day 1871 at high noon in a sod house, on a dirt floor was where she promised to protect me; to this union there were eight children, four boys and four girls, all born raised and schooled in York County, and they have made York County their homes all their lives.

We were like all young married people in those days in York County; all we had was our name, money was a thing of the past, everything was purchased through trade. We dried buffalo meat and traded for dishes and furniture to commence housekeeping. We made our bedstead, chairs and tables out of slabs sawed out of cottonwood that I sawed myself on the Blue River in the first saw mill in this county. We have held our own these 44 years, as the old saying is—"a poor man for babies." I helped cut the logs and with ox teams we hauled the same to Milford, Nebraska saw mill, and with the lumber we built the first school house in York County. The first team that I ever owned was an ox team, I paid for the same by breaking prairie, now on the quarter section that Geneva, Nebraska, stands upon. Our first trading after coming to this country was done in Nebraska City; it would take with our ox teams two weeks and over if the weather was good to make the trip. We have experienced in these forty years all kinds of Nebraska weather; went through the grass-hoppers' season, the storm of 1873 and also in 1888 which his-

tory has so well recorded. My homestead was on the "Beaver," nine miles east of York, and I afterwards moved up on the divide south of York. In 1886, with my family, I moved into the city and tried all kinds of business, and the citizens of York know the results. In '89 four of us organized the U. B. church and in '90 with the Rev. Jones from Gibbon we organized what is now our York college; that year I was elected Treasurer of the College, and have held the position ever since.

Daniel Graves

Daniel Graves was born in Rutland County, Vermont, June 22nd, 1844. In 1847 he left the Green Mountain state with his parents by the way of the Great Lakes, there being no railroads east of Chicago at that time, and settled in McHenry County, Illinois, where he was reared, and in the common schools of that state obtained his education. At an early age he began work upon the farm, and throughout life has continued to follow agricultural pursuits. Although he started out for himself at the age of twenty-one empty handed, he soon became the owner of a small farm of fifty-six acres in Illinois.

In 1872 Mr. Graves was united in marriage with Miss Martha Loomer, to this union was added the birth of seven children: two little daughters are deceased; while the living are, Almira G., Nora M., Daniel, Jr., Mabel P., Henry C. Mira G., and Nora M., were born in Marengo, Illinois, the rest being born in York County, Nebraska.

On selling his farm in Illinois, in 1877 he came to York County, Nebraska, and purchased four hundred acres of railroad land on section 11, Arborville Township, and as his financial resources increased, he has added to his possessions until he now owns one thousand and forty acres, which he has transformed from wild prairie into highly cultivated fields.

In connection with his farming he fed cattle for over twenty-five years. His five living children are at this date located on his various farms in York County, Nebraska. In

the year 1901 he was afflicted with a paralytic stroke which unfitted him for manual labor. After remaining on the old farm eight years longer, he decided to move to York, purchased property, and built a modern home in the fall of 1908, at 916 East Avenue. He has passed the past eleven years in California and Florida, the winters here being too severe for health.

Julia A. Brown

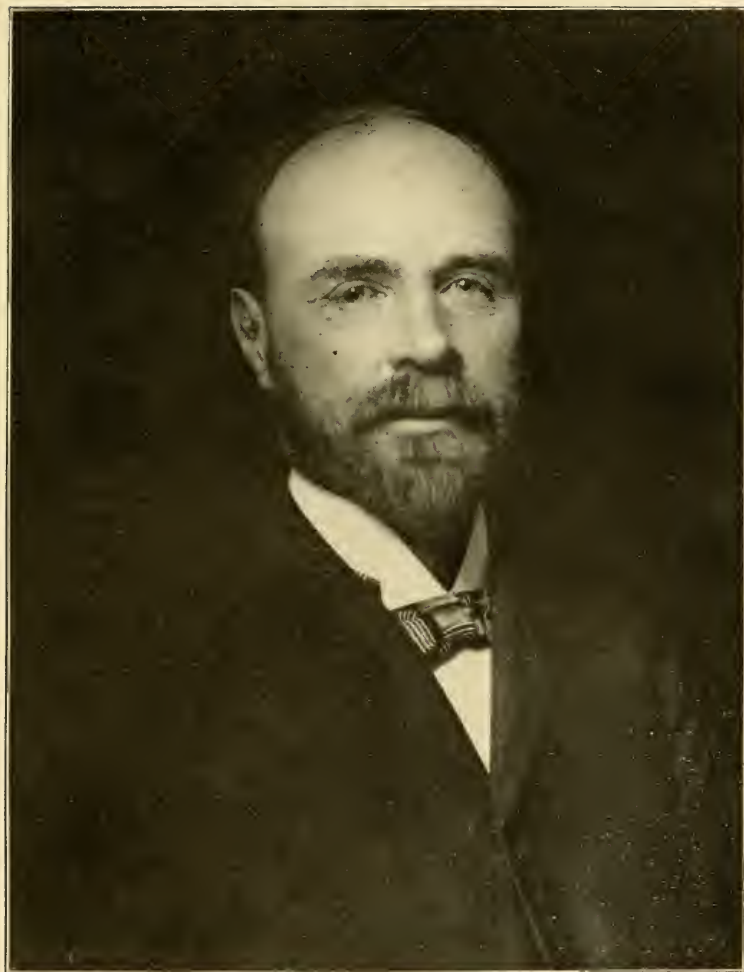
I came to York County in 1884—I know something of the disappointments and sacrifices one has to make to live in a new prairie country. Driven from the Southwestern part of the state by hot winds and prairie dogs, we were very discouraged and finances low. I decided to locate in York for my future home. I took up the vocation of nurse. I have seen the gradual rise, but no fall of York for 28 years; saw the big fire on the South side in which my son, W. T. Brown at present a resident of Fairmont, Nebraska, got hurt and was left a cripple. ----

York is called the banner city of Nebraska; I love it for its high standard of morals and enterprise of citizens wearing the wonderful fabric of life that shall be a contribution to the Heavenly World.

George Wallace Post

Born at Cumberland, Guernsey County, Ohio, February 20, 1848. The son of Rev. William E. and Sarah S. Post, both of Scotch lineage.

When about three years old the family removed to Hibbardsville, Ohio, where the family resided until about the year 1859 when the entire family removed to Clay County, Missouri. This was just before the War of the Rebellion. Political animosity soon became so pronounced that men known to be in sympathy with the Union were not safe in that part of the country. The father of the subject of this sketch was an outspoken anti-slavery advocate and friend of the Union. As a result practically all of his property was confiscated and destroyed and he, glad to get away with the



JUDGE GEORGE W. POST
Attorney in First Law Suit in York County

members of his family uninjured. The family then located at Leon, Decatur County, Iowa, from which place they removed a year later to Davis County, Iowa, near Bloomfield, where the father died in 1868 leaving a widow and six children, two daughters and four sons. In May 1864 the subject of this sketch enlisted in Company D, 45th Iowa Infantry and was discharged in September of the same year by reason of the expiration of the term of service.

In addition to the Public Schools he was educated at the Troy College, an institution then flourishing at Troy, Iowa. By teaching school and working by the month he earned the money to assist his mother and family and pay his way through school. While in school he also devoted a part of his time to reading law and in 1871 was admitted to the Bar at Bloomfield, Iowa. Soon after this he came to York, Nebraska and engaged in practice of his profession. From 1871 to 1875 he was active in his profession, being engaged in much of the important litigation in this part of the State. In 1875 he was elected District judge of the Fourth Judicial District, which comprised the counties of Dodge, Colfax, Platte, Merrick, Hall, Howard, Hamilton, Polk, Butler, Saunders, Seward and York. Four years later he was elected to the same office. Before the expiration of his second term he was forced to resign his office by reason of ill health, which was induced by overwork. On March 5th, 1883 he was appointed Collector of Internal Revenue and United States Disbursing Officer for Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. This appointment came to him without solicitation on his part. He discharged the duties of that office until October 1886, at which time he resigned in order to devote himself to his personal business. In 1872 he issued the first call for a Republican Convention in York County and presided over the convention. He was Chairman of the County Republican Committee for many years. He was the chief attorney for the Northwestern Railway Company south of the Platte River during all of its construction period.

He was united in marriage on January 1, 1879 with Miss Laura McConaughy, at Mount Pleasant, West Moreland County, Pennsylvania. To them have been born five children, four daughters and one son.

On retiring from public office he devoted himself to the business of banking, in which he was already interested. On March 20, 1884 he was elected President of the York Exchange Bank. This bank was soon reorganized as the York National Bank, of which he was elected President and continued as such until October 1893 at which time he and his business associates bought the First National Bank of York, and consolidated the two banks and operated the same as the First National Bank. He served as President of this bank until August 1912. He organized and became President of the First Trust Company of York in August 1911. He organized and became President of the Bank of Benedict November 27, 1889, and continued as such President until February 8, 1906, at which time the bank of Benedict was converted into the First National Bank of Benedict. He served as President of this bank until August 1912. On May 14, 1897 he and his business associates organized the State Bank of Bradshaw. He served as President of this bank until March 1906, at which time this bank was converted into the First National Bank of Bradshaw. He was elected President and served until August 1912. In June 1889 he became President of the Blue River Bank of McCool Junction and served as such until August 1912. In April 1902 he bought the controlling interest in the Bank of Lush-ton and served as Vice-President until August 1912. In May 1885 he became President of the Farmers & Traders Bank of Waco and served continuously as President until August 1912. In November 1890 he and his business associates organized August 1912. Thus making an aggregate bank service in York County of almost one hundred and fifty years.

He has also served the city as Mayor, Councilman, Park Commissioner, etc., etc.

As president of the First National Bank of York he erected the present bank building on the Corner of Lincoln avenue and Sixth Street, in which the bank at this time is situated. At the time of writing this sketch he has sold a large part of his property in York County and is about to remove with his family to California.

A. W. Wirt

Few Facts From Town 11-12, R. 3.

“Forty Years Ago”

First visit to Free-soil Nebraska and first State Fair held at Lincoln, Sept. 1872. With Brother, A. B. Coddling from Mendota, Ill., filed on Sec. 14, T. 12, R. 3. A. B. C. on Sec. 34. (Moved Mar. 1873). On Easter Sunday, April 12, at Sunset we watched the approach of the noted Easter Blizzard coming from the northwest in a perfect half circle like a new hemisphere had broken loose, sure it was a “scare sight.” Fleeing before it birds of all kinds, buzzards, hawks, owls and crows. They were frightened, wearied and fell to the ground. The storm lasted three days and nights, many families had just moved into new sod shanties. There was much suffering and lack of fuel and shelter for stock; one young man perished in the effort to care for his team. Other families took their team—their only support—into the shanty with them, it was the only refuge, they could not see them perish at the door. Many cattle drifted with the storm and snow and perished. The wind and snow was so fierce and blinding that the only safe place was the sod shanty, and stay there.

Then, there cometh another evil that no man knoweth from whence it came—That grasshopper raid, Aug. 1874. They came as clouds, dropping to the earth and covering the ground and consumed immense stuff for a meal. They remained three days and nights and ate the entire corn crop of the county, which was earing fine; they ate leaf, ear and stalk. (Wheat was in shock). Their green eyes beheld every tender leaf and plant. Wife’s garden was her summer’s delight and promise, but while we slept they ate it top and root; with open hole in the ground, turkeys and chickens feasted till ashamed and disgusted; faithful teams shook their mains and snorted like “Pharaoh’s Horses.” Cows broke loose and ran for relief, the women cried. The grasshoppers went as they came—suddenly and in clouds, they shadowed the sun and the men said, “Lord we are willing,” and we went nine miles to Sunday school. Wife and baby Nellie and papa, (to balance) went, on a riding

corn plow rig and buggy box to Capt. Eberhart's school house in 1875. New frame school house on Sec. 8, Town 11, R. 2, by M. Sovereign's homestead. A Sunday school was easily organized,—house full—Sovereign, Superintendent; Hon. Wm. H. Keckley, Bible teacher. The whole vicinity rallied like soldiers to their flag, it was a place for prayer, song and cheer. Stromsburg Sunday School sent invitations to visit them, Father Keckley moved: "If anybody goes, we all go." We had two four-horse (long reach) rigs, decorated, mounted by U. S. flag, school banner, and a set of sleigh bells on both teams to lead the way. With F. J. Parris and Samuel Sidwell as marshals to keep the music quiet, for it was Sunday. To say the least, Stromsburg gave a happy greeting and the shady grove on the Blue River for our picnic dinner—"Remember the Joy Life as Well."

The last wild buffalo: Three stray grazers were seen the summer of 1874 in Northwestern part of county and just northwest of York. One was shot by Jess Gandy near the Washburn Ranch on Lincoln Creek; the other two unawares, came very close to three women who were taking a walk to Joe Boyers, they were Mrs. R. B. Brabham, Mrs. Wm. Greer and Mrs. Ronaga, (One lost her knitting, another her shoes) The two remaining buffalo were shot, one near Stromsburg in a pool, the last at South Bend on the Platte.

Incidents to Happy Settlers Only, In Perfect Accord With All Neighbors.

For 20 miles around—(The Corn Stalk Fire.)

Rather lend than borrow—(The flour sack.)

Rather help than pay money—(The money bag.)

Rather visit than hunt or fish—(The men.)

Rather be at ease than curse the flees—(The women.)

Rather be content than quench the spirit—(The wolf.)

Rather stay than fail getting away—(The family.)

"Forty Years Ago" 1912.

Chas. M. Sandall

Charles M. Sandall was born in Sweden, Dec. 23, 1845, came with his parents to America in 1858, settling in Henry county, Illinois, where they lived one year, then moved to Hening county, Iowa. Here he lived with his parents until the fall of 1871 when he came West, taking a homestead in York county, Nebraska, on Sec. 34, Twp. 11, Range 3. The following spring he returned to Iowa and on Feb. 20, 1872 was married to Miss Fredricka Anderson; they started the next Spring in a movers' wagon for their new home in Nebraska and lived on the homestead five years and then sold and moved one mile west, where they have lived ever since.

They were blessed with nine children: Clars, Silas, Rebeka, Oscar, Esther, Othillia, Ernest, Fred and Rudolph, of which eight are still living. Othillia leaving her earthly home Feb. 14, 1910, also a little daughter who now makes her home with her grandparents.

Mr. Sandall and wife are charter members of the Swedish Lutheran church which was organized 1874, and are still active members. His wife being the first Swedish lady in York county. Mr. Sandall has been largely instrumental in bringing the Swedish people to this community.

Daniel Beishline

Daniel Beishline was born in Columbia county, Pennsylvania, April 17, 1850, and was one of a family of Levi and Maria (Wenner) Beishline who were natives of the same state; whose parental grandparents were Henry and Elizabeth (Yost) Beishline, of German ancestry from Father's and Mother's side, and on the Mother's side were Daniel Wenner and Betsie—name not remembered, was married to Miss Emma J. Coleman of Ashbury, Columbia county, Pa., Nov. 27, 1873. He tried farming in Pennsylvania four years during which time a little girl came to stay with them and was named Vernie Mand, she was born September 30, 1856; they then sold out and came to Nebraska by railroad in January, 1878, arrived in Fairmont and visited with Hiram Ammerman a few days, who had come to Nebraska

the year before, and he was a neighbor in Pennsylvania. From there we came to Wm. H. Coleman's, who had homesteaded on section 10, range 4, town 11, a few years prior to that date; a brother of Mrs. Beishline farmed for him four years and then bought eighty acres of Railroad land for \$5.00 per acre on section 9, and leased 40 acres of School land on section 16. He built a sod house that fall and lived in it one winter without it being plastered and it afforded us shelter for thirteen years; its walls were two feet thick, curtains separated the bedroom from the kitchen. The breaking of the prairie was begun and by the next Spring we sowed forty acres of wheat. More prairie was broken as time would permit until the farm was broken out. In 1892 we built a comfortable farm house which seemed the more pleasant because of the long time it was waited for; we lived through many ups and downs and it seemed like more downs than ups.

We since bought other pieces of land, one forty on section 16 we paid \$20.00 per acre for, this was about six years later, and in 1908 we bought forty acres more for which we paid \$95.00 per acre. Three children came to bless our home in Nebraska as follows: Warren Clark, Jan. 26, 1883; Robbert Ray, April 27, 1890; Mearl Lee, Sept. 13, 1893. Vernie Maud is now married to Edd Oattie and is living on part of the farm. Warren Clark is in Cherry county on a 640-acre homestead, Robbert Ray is with Warren and is looking for a homestead. Mearl is at home helping to run the farm.

M. Burns

M. Burns, the subject of this sketch was born at Pekin, Niagara county, New York, on the 14th day of October, 1837 in a double-log house. At that time, those log houses were very common, the country was new and the people were generally poor. The land was stony and covered with heavy timber that had to be cleared from the land before anything could be grown to support the thinly inhabited country. Boys like myself on the farms, before they were hardly in their teens, had to shoulder the ax and help in cutting the timber and clearing the land so that crops could be

grown, working side by side with the fathers during the summer season and often during the winter.

It was my privilege to attend the district school during the winter months until I had nearly reached manhood; then it was my privilege to attend a private school for two winter terms, where I perfected myself in the higher branches then necessary to qualify a person for teaching. After I reached my majority, I attended what was then Genesee College, located at Lima, New York, since changed to Syracuse University.

I enlisted on the 8th day of August, 1861, in the 44th Regiment of New York Volunteers' Infantry and went with the Regiment down to Halls Hill, Virginia, as first Regiment of Company B; was taken sick while in camp, and sent to the hospital in Washington, being discharged from the service on the 19th day of April, 1862. Recovering somewhat from my sickness, I went to Plainfield, Illinois, in the fall of 1863 and commenced teaching, first in country schools and later in graded schools. While living there and teaching, I became acquainted with Miss Malvina C. Hess and on March 15, 1865, we were married. From that union were born two children; Ritey H. and Abbie C., Ritey H. died in 1890, Abbie C. is still living. We came to Nebraska in the Spring of 1878, on the 15th day of March. My wife having two sisters living in York county, we went directly there and bought some Union Pacific land, in what was then called North Blue Precinct. I built a small house to live in, and then commenced seven years of hard work with a determination to make it win. I sold the farm in 1885, feeling satisfied that I had realized my determination.

In 1880, the people of York and Hamilton Counties honored me by the election to the State Senate. I came to Lincoln in 1888, and entered the hardware business, I sold it out and went back to York in 1892, in charge of the Farmers and Merchants Bank. Sold that out and came to University Place in 1898, where I now reside.

As I review the past years I come to the conclusion that at the time it was wise for me to come to Nebraska. I have seen the ups and downs, financially, that come to most persons in a new country, and a dark shadow came over my life

when on the 26th day of September, 1908, I was called to lay away in her last resting place the wife who had been my strength and support for so many years. She had gone to her reward, and I am alone in the years that are old, but there is comfort in meeting my friends of my earlier Nebraska experiences.

I always think of York County and the City of York as the nicest county and city there is on the American continent.

Recollections of a York County Pioneer

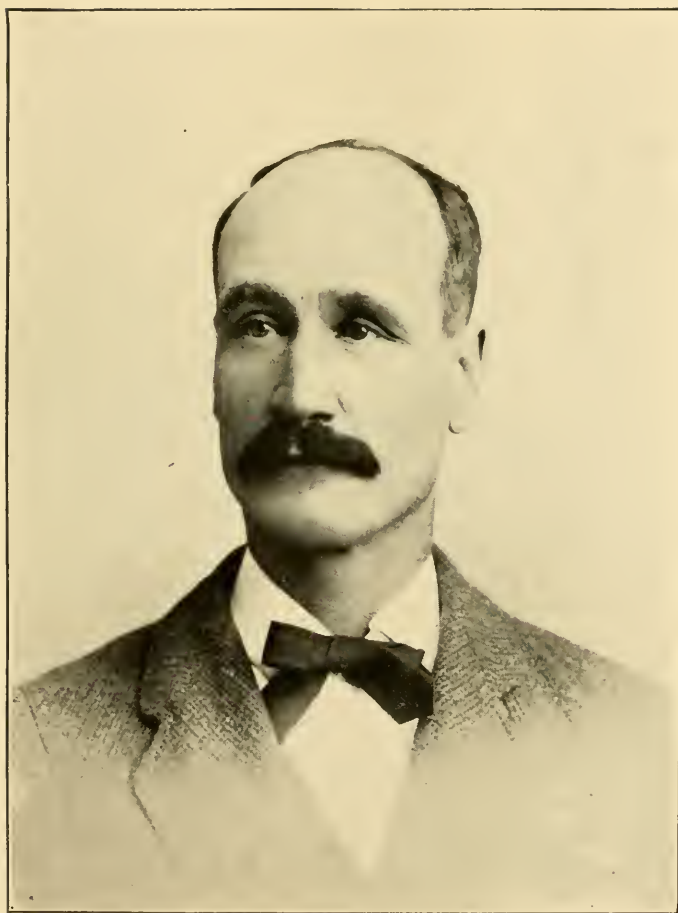
Sebastian Gilmore

I first set foot on York County soil in West Blue Township in the month of November, 1866. I homesteaded in the same township in 1868, being too young to homestead until this date.

When we look back and compare York county now, we old settlers can fully realize the great change that has taken place in the forty-six years that have passed. In 1866 it was a vast prairie, almost a desert, with a little timber on the Blue River, with elk, deer and buffalo frequently venturing to the river for water, with the Indians camping on the river banks, and it seeming a paradise to them, with everything that really made it an example of the typical Frontier. Indeed a very uninviting place for the white settlers. No postoffice was nearer than Camden, a little station on the Freight Road in Seward County, located about five miles north of the present City of Crete. The mail was brought to this place from Nebraska City on horse-back.

A change came when the capitol was located at Lincoln. We got permits to establish a postoffice on the Blue River. In 1869, the writer had the privilege of carrying the mail from Lincoln to McFadden Postoffice, which was located near the present site of McCool, on pony back. This was a part of the old Star Route Mail System.

My route took in the following Post Offices: Milford, Camden, West Mills, Beaver Crossing, Blue Valley and McFadden. I planned to make the route trip once every week



SEBASTIAN GILMORE

Helped Build First Frame Residence in York County, West
Blue Township

but sometimes I failed on account of bad snow storms, which would fill up the ravines and make them difficult to cross, for very few of them were bridged.

Perhaps it would be of interest to mention one of my experiences on the mail route during the winter:

One morning on arising, at West Mills, I found that a terrible blizzard was raging which was a common thing in those days. I was already one day behind time and I thought that I must make the rest of the trip that day at all hazards. I started out but had only gone a little way when I came to a deep ravine, drifted level full. I knew my pony could never break a path through the drift and carry me, so I got off, tied the mail sack on the saddle quite securely I thought, and led the pony through. When I reached the other side I found my mail sack was gone. I knew it would never do to go on without it for I never would dare to go on up the Valley without any mail, so tying my pony to a tree I waded back through the path almost to the other side and found the mail buried in the snow.

This excitement warmed me up a little and I mounted my pony and came on up the River and delivered the mail that day.

Many like experiences fell to my lot that winter. I received as a salary about six dollars a trip.

I still live on the same homestead that I took in 1868. However, we do not get our mail once a week as then, but instead, every morning it is brought to the door in an automobile. While this is more convenient, it certainly cannot be more appreciated than the mail brought on the old Star Route, for that was to a great extent the only touch of the life we had lived in the East, that was open to us.

Reminiscences of Pioneer Days

By L. D. Stilson, Soldier and Farmer

I was born July 26, 1839, in Erie county, N. Y., and lived there until the breaking out of the war of 1861-65, when on September 16th, 1861, I enlisted in Company D, 49th Regi-

ment, N. Y. Volunteers and went to the war and was soon partaker of the incidents of warfare. A bullet struck me in my chin passing up into my mouth thus rendering the eating of hard tack an unpleasant task. At another time I was put with others to digging trenches; an accident occurred which nearly proved serious. A man behind me in the trench, struck me across my back with his pick, accidentally of course. In the battle at Antietam I was wounded in the head and was unconscious for some time, when I came to the battle was over and dead soldiers all around me, but at last I was picked up and taken to the hospital; as soon as I recovered I was again at my post of duty. I received bullet wounds at other times, once in getting away from the enemy at Libby prison by escaping between two guards, they fired a shot that entered the calf of my leg which I'll carry to the day of my death. I was discharged the 16th day of December, 1862, on account of physical disability, and laid in the hospital at Annapolis Junction for three months from chronic difficulties caused from exposure in camp and field.

I came back to my "father's house" where kind friends cared for me most tenderly and I improved quite rapidly. In the Spring I went to farming on my father's farm (my father and mother had moved to town some four miles away). I found it quite lonesome, living alone and I sought a companion to whom I was married on January 10, 1864, a Miss LaDelle Cushman, who has been a devoted wife and mother of four sons and one daughter.

I came to York county, Nebraska, March, 1870, locating on a homestead on Sec. 22, Town 10, Range 2. I spent a few days looking around and went into Iowa, where I superintended the building of my uncle's house. After an absence of two months I went back to York State and spent the summer settling up business and getting ready to go to my western home. I left there the last of August, leaving my wife and two sons to come later. My wife was convalescing from a severe attack of spinal fever. At Lincoln, Nebraska, I was given a chance to work for the B. & M. R. R. Co., in the bridge and construction gang, from Crete to Kearney; I was with them until we reached the end of the line to Kearney, I then came to York and went to work, superintending car-

penter work. I helped to build the first frame building in York. I put up some forty frame buildings in York, and several school houses in York county. I tried farming on my homestead by hiring the breaking done at four or five dollars an acre, I also put up a frame building 12x20 for a house on my farm and went back to York State for my family, July 26, 1872, returning the last of the month.

The next great event was the "April Storm." The day of the 12th of April had been a lovely day, but as night came on a huge black bank of clouds came up from the northwest, bringing a thunder storm and then growing cold as the north wind came, turning the rain to snow and beating against the windows, and blowing the snow into every crack and crevice. For three days we were without fresh water, as we had no well and it was unsafe to go to the neighbors, we melted snow and kept as warm as we could, burning corn on the ear and wrapping up in outer garments; no meat in the house for three days but the good Lord provided on the third day, in the afternoon the sun came out and looking out the south window on a pile of corn was a prairie chicken getting something to eat. The chicken was prepared and we enjoyed the feast.

We helped to establish a Sunday School in our district school house and had a good attendance of some seventy-five persons. We also had preaching service during the summer by Rev. Broadwell, a Methodist preacher and homesteader living some four miles west of us. Then the days of grasshoppers in 1873-4. The sun darkened at noonday by the insects; at feeding times how the idolized gardens suffered, even eating into the onion bulbs, stripping trees, bushes and cornfields till nothing remained but bare stalks. The prospect was not very promising. One morning we observed immense flocks of birds which proved to be swallows; they seemed to be feeding upon the grasshoppers. Another morning after a heavy thunder storm the ground was covered with tiny frogs, walking along over them they would crunch and sound like breaking eggshells; never since have we witnessed the like.

The early days of pioneer life was fraught with trials and disappointments. When everything seemed to point

towards prosperity, something would take place to discourage and darken our prospects and we come down to the years of helplessness with the satisfaction that we did the best we could within our environments, and now, I bid you adieu.

Montraville Robbins

On the 2nd of September, 1871, we left the town of Lawrenceville, Illinois, for Nebraska, arriving in York county, on the 20th day of September; we made this trip in a covered wagon, and made the same trip in the same wagon and with the same team of horses from Lawrenceburg, Indiana, the year before; our trip took us through Missouri about three hundred miles, which was not a very pleasant Journey as it was just after the war. Mrs. Robbins and I were alone several nights, I lay under the wagon with my rifle as we did not have a watch dog with us. The first thing I done in York county was to look up a piece of land and go to Lincoln and homestead it; there was no railroad in the county at that time nor was there in Fairmont, as we passed the construction party at Dorchester, there was no railroad in the county. After the Burlington got to Fairmont we did our trading there, but before that time we went to Mill with our grain to Lincoln, then we had grist mills at Milford, later at Beaver Crossing, then one at Red Lion, and a few years later the town of York began to loom up. Doc Converse began the building of the Union Pacific R. R. as a competing line of the Burlington, no corruption there you see. At that time all the settlers in the county were along Blue River, there were no houses on the high prairie. I did not wait to buy lumber for I had nothing much to buy with; I looked around for the best location I could find and dug a hole in the bank a kind of combination, part dugout with a front made out of nice prairie sod covered with brush and soil, all in one room, there was no parlor, but we left a place on the side so we could build a parlor at a more convenient season. That winter we did not live sumptuously—no meat, butter or milk, barley coffee; the next Spring I shot deer, also an antelope, then we had some meat the next fall when I got a dressed hog at Beaver Crossing, it was away in the night before I got home and down about Blue Vale a pack of

wolves came after me and I had to fight them off until I got up west of McFadden, they were on both sides of the wagon trying to jump in, I had no gun but they finally left me.

Our next experience was the "Easter Storm" on the 12th day of April, 1873; a good many of the present settlers will remember this storm in our dugout; we were covered over for three days and nights with a light burning all the time and we could hardly tell whether it was day or night. There were times when it tried men's souls and temper, but we were in a good humor, if I do say it myself, and done the best we could under the circumstances. I should have said that the fall before this I went away down on the Blue and got five bushels of potatoes and a half dozen of chickens and expected to have eggs for sale the next summer. I buried the potatoes and made a nice hen house in the side of the bank for the chickens, in the meantime the potatoes all froze and the coyotes came in and just before daylight one morning and cleaned up all the chickens, so with the snow storm, grasshoppers, the loss of the potatoes and poultry and but very few neighbors things looked rather discouraging, although we had neighbors that lived within one-half mile of us, Mr. and Mrs. George Brown, but they were in the side of another bank and we did not know they were living there, but we were young then and courageous, and little things like that didn't bother us. I go a well auger and made wells, I was gone from home a week at a time, during this time Mrs. Robbins would be living alone in the dugout with wolves and stray Indians about. Finally we got a sewing machine and several times Mrs. Robbins had to give the Indians demonstrations on this sewing machine. There were no roads then on sections lines, and I can remember when we were coming to York we would take the nearest way possible. At first York consisted of a little frame house and one sod, but now as I stand on Hill Side and look over the city it is surely wonderful to see what a splendid city with its fine buildings and shade trees all built up where forty years ago there was nothing but the raw prairie, but with all our hardships in our pioneer days that we have lived through them without having to go back to wife's folks and we feel

fully repaid in staying by York county and sometimes I think probably we ought to be more thankful for what we have and for our health and friends.

Mr. Chistian Haloch

Father and mother and we six children drove from Illinois with our old horses, took a homestead June 15, 1866 We first pitched our tent on the Blue River and went to work building a dugout, and to get ready for the winter, we had hard winters and lots of snow. This is what made it hard for us, the snow was so deep that a team could not get through, we had to go to Lincoln to get anything at all and no money to get anything with. It was too late to raise anything when we came and there wasn't anything in the line of work to be done, so we had to stay for we couldn't get away. Never will I forget the time when we didn't have enough to eat and many times I heard mother say "I don't know where the next meal will come from." For three weeks we lived on homemade hominy, in the making of which we took the wood ashes to hull the corn and we didn't even have salt to pour over it; for clothes, we had no shoes, mother made us rag shoes which we six children all wore. I remember the first pair of shoes I had after we came west to Nebraska. We saw buffalo, deer antelope and wild turkeys, but hadn't anything to shoot them with. There were lots of Indians here then and we were afraid of them at first, they would beg the last mouthful we had and we would give them some of what we had for the reason that we were afraid of them and thought they would kill us, that was all we worried about as we had been told that they would kill us if we didn't give them something to eat.

We could catch fish any time we could go to the river and cut a hole in the ice and put a piece of red calico on the hook and the moment it was in the water we would have a fish bite; we didn't have anything to fry them in so Mother used to boil them, but we got so sick of boiled fish that we children could hardly look at them. Thank you, no more boiled fish in mine, I can smell them yet and that is forty years ago. I wasn't very old those days but I can remember

things better that happened then, than I can remember things now .

But those times were the happiest times in our lives, every body was so good and sociable and that is more than can be said of the people of today, one would divide with the other.

Nathan Johnson

Mr. Nathan Johnson was born Nov. 15, 1840, in Coventry, Rhode Island, and when four years of age he with his parents moved to West Batavia, New York. Here he grew to manhood, and at the first of the war he answered the call of his country, enlisting August 21, 1861 in Company D. 49th Infantry. He was promoted to Sergeant of Captain, Geo. H. Selkirk's Co. Here he served in the Potomac army and was wounded May 4, 1863 at the Battle of Frederickburg, receiving a bullet which he carried to his grave.

On May 5, 1864, he was taken a prisoner during the Battle of the Wilderness; he spent nine weary months in the Southern prison of Florence and Andersonville, and was released February 28, 1865, at Wilkington, North Carolina.

He received his honorable discharge May 22, 1865, at Rochester, New York. At the close of the war he went to Batavia, Iowa. Here he was united in marriage on November 1, 1868, to Miss Eleanor J. Graham. They removed from Iowa to Nebraska in March, 1872. He homesteaded one hundred and sixty acres of land three miles South of the City of York. The walls of their house were sod with two small windows, dirt roof and the ground for a floor. Five children were born to this union, two dying in infancy. The surviving ones are Mrs. Ruth Wright of Chicago, Ill.; Charles E. and Mrs. Gertrude E. Currah of York. Mr. Johnson and wife were in the great Easter storm of 1873, which commenced April 16, and lasted three days. It was the worst storm that ever occurred in the history of the state.

The few settlers with their sod houses and straw barns were not prepared for such a storm, it was of such fury that horses, cattle and people that were out in it perished. Mr. Johnson, to save their cow took it down cellar which was out

side of their house. After the great Easter storm came the grasshopper pest, and many other privations that were endured by the early settlers.

One great drawback in those days was that no railroads were in the country and all freight for York had to be hauled from Fairmont. The fuel that was burned was hauled from the Blue river and Beaver creek. Some corn, cron stalks and hay were burned for fuel.

Nathan Johnson was honored with public office, being elected to the legislature from 1893 to 1895 and also was county treasurer from 1896 to 1900. He filled both of these offices with great fidelity and honor to himself and his friends.

In 1909 his health began to fail and thinking that a change in climate might be beneficial he and his wife left York on December 9, for Kessmine, Florida. For a time it seemed that his health was improving but on the 17th day of January he felt the fatal stroke coming while he was out walking with his wife. They returned to their temporary home and two hours later he died.

His widow returned to York with his body, where it was interred in Greenwood cemetery. So lived and passed away this man of a quiet example, of few words, of a kind and kingly spirit, a brave comrade, a firm friend, an honest official and an obliging neighbor; such men as Nathan Johnson have made York county one of the best governed counties of the state.

Mrs. Johnson, with her son Charles lives on the old homestead which has been her home for over forty years.

Speech Delivered by Mrs. George Bowers At the Old Settlers Picnic.

“We were living at Fairbury, Ill., when we made up our minds to go West. We joined a colony that was locating homesteads at Gibbon, Buffalo county. We packed our goods and shipped them to Gibbon, having a promise of reduced freight. George’s brother Amos, came down from Joliet and they started with their teams to drive through.

George thought he would let me stay about six months or until he got some kind of a house for me and the baby. When they crossed the Missouri River they fell in with eight more old soldiers coming after homestead lands, among them were John Lett, Wm. Cross, Robert Lytle and Art Draucher. They went to the land office in Lincoln and were told that there was no government land in York county, so they thought they would have to strike for Fillmore county. In the meantime George and Amos had given up all thoughts of Gibbon, deciding that it was too far west and the ten old soldiers were going to locate near each other. When they reached Beaver Crossing they met Zachariah Heath, who had been here and taken a homestead and was on his way back looking for work. He told them that there was plenty of government land in York county and told them which way to go to find Aikins Mills post office and that Mr. Aikins would locate them. When they reached Aikins they left their lumber wagons and drove on to Hamilton county to look around, where they found Mr. Spafford trying to bore a well. He had got down eighty feet and broke the auger. They were disgusted with the country and the whole bunch and they came back and located within a few miles of each other with Aikin Mills as their post office. They then piled up some sod to hold their claims till they could go to Lincoln and file on them. Next they broke out an acre in the northwest corner of our claim and while doing so dropped a few potatoes in the furrow and plowed them under and planted a little corn the same way. They broke a fire guard next to the road then broke on the line between George's land and his brother's (n. hf sec. 8-10-3.) Then they went up one side and down the other breaking as much on one claim as on the other, about ten acres. They had been here about six weeks when George wrote for me to come at once or he would not stay. He had our goods shipped back to Columbus from Gibbon and the railroad was so put out because he did not locate at Gibbon that they charged double rates for shipping them back and he did not have money enough to pay the freight so he broke out ten acres of land for Dr. Greer, who had filed on the southeast quarter of the same section our land was on, and thus secured enough money to pay the freight. George had taken the cook stove, two chairs, a mattress besides some boxes of canned goods, some potatoes,

and seed corn when he drove through. There was a water hole at the back of our homestead in a draw where George set up the stove. He stood two large boxes on end a few feet apart, laid some poles across and then covered them with a quilt to set the table under, which, by the way was another box, staked the wagon cover over it and we slept in it. We lived that way about a week and then they all worked together and built a sod building for a stable and we lived in it all summer. As I was the first woman to come they built ours first, then they put up sod houses for nearly all.

By that time they had learned more about breaking the sod, cutting and hauling it, when it was the toughest to handle, etc. Then in the fall they built a better house for our home. It had windows and doors and a floor in half of it. I put down a rag carpet which I brought with me. We put a lot of straw on the ground and put my carpet in the half that had no floor, but before our house was finished, George, with others, went out west to kill buffalo for meat. My second son was just one week old and I was still living in the stable with blankets for doors and windows. When George had been gone about a week it began to rain and then it turned into snow and we had a regular Nebraska blizzard. The door was in the west and was drifted full so I had to crawl out the window and drag in poles and chop them in the house to keep from freezing. I stayed in bed as long and as much as I could with my two boys (the oldest was two years). When the storm was over Mr. Eberhart sent his oldest son to see how I had stood the racket with instructions for me to come there till George got home, so I took the two boys, one on each arm, and waded through the snow one-half mile while the Eberhart boy carried a little grip. I stayed there several days. When George returned he had plenty of buffalo meat and we got through the winter very well.

George hauled goods from Columbus for Aikins, who in the meantime had started a little store on Lincoln creek (Aikins Mills). The first summer we had no cow, no chickens, no pigs, no milk, no eggs, no butter. In the fall our brother-in-law, O. D. Keeler, came out and took a homestead. He brought a box as large as he could get checked as bag-

gage and my folks sent me a few things to eat, among which was some eggs. We took thirteen to Mrs. Aikins and got them to set them for us and then gave her a dollar for the hen. She hatched seven chicks and we brought her home and the second night something caught the hen. I then had to bring them in the house every night for a while, until George fixed a sod coop for them. While George was putting up hay (by the way he broke two acres of prairie for Lem Gandy to pay for a scythe to cut his hay and had to cut it all that way). I crawled on my hands and knees and lifted the sod and picked up the potatoes of which we had three grain sacks full, but when the blizzard came our potatoes froze and so did my chickens. We only had flour enough the first year to make gravy and we lived on corn bread. Poor stuff, too. With no milk or lard, not enough lard to even grease the pan. After moving into our sod house I went down to the northwest corner where our little patch of breaking was, took an old hatchet and chopped holes in the sod and planted some cucumbers, beans and melons. There were quite a number of Indians around begging, so when my garden was ready for use I would get my baby asleep, put him on the bed and run for dear life to pick a few beans or cucumbers for fear the Indians would steal him while I was gone. We gathered wild plums on the creek and as we had no sugar we cooked them with our musk melons into a jam—the melon making the sweetening. In the spring when Keeler came out he chartered a car to Columbus and father sent me a cow, pig and a dozen chickens and we started in with bright hopes. We sowed wheat on the breaking and oats on the fire guard, and left a little for garden and everything began to grow and look nice when about the 20th of June there came a hail storm and everything was cut to the ground. We felt pretty blue. George hitched up his team and went to Beaver Crossing where he broke four acres and took corn for pay. He brought home with him a kitten, the first cat I had seen in Nebraska. After the hail I replanted my garden and had some late cucumbers and beans and the corn came out and made a few small ears. That fall my folks sent me a barrel of things, navy beans, dried apples, sweet corn and \$2.00 worth of sugar. All this time the settlers hauled all their fuel from the Platte river. It took two days to make the trip. Those who came ahead of us had taken all

the creek claims with any timber. Sometimes George could wade around in the water on the R. R. land, every other section was R. R. land, and get a little drift wood.

From my dozen chickens I raised about fifty more so I had about thirty hens to start in with the next year. George got little ash poles and made some frames for chairs like the old-fashioned splint bottom and I sewed grain sacks on them for seats. We had no bedstead for two years, instead we had stakes drove in the ground and poles laid on them and the fleas nearly ate us.

William Escribde McCloud

William Escribde McCloud, son of William Escribde McCloud and Ann Sears McCloud, was born Jan. 6, 1872, at Moravia, Appanoose County, Iowa. On the maternal side he is of English descent, and on the paternal side he is of Scotch-Irish descent. His grandparents on both sides were born in Virginia. His parents were married in Iowa and lived at Moravia until the fall of 1877 when they sought a home in Nebraska, moving permanently to York County in the Spring of 1878. His father was a farmer and stock raiser.

W. E. McCloud secured his education in the schools of the county which was supplemented with a Business Course at Omaha. After returning from school he engaged in the farming and stock-raising business with his father. He was married December 24, 1896 to Miss Estella Evans of Waco, Nebraska, and took full charge of the farm of 320 acres. There was born to them one son who died in infancy.

In January, 1899 he purchased a Meat Market at Holdrege, Nebraska, in partnership with his brother, C. A. McCloud. Phelps County not seeming as good to him as York County he sold his interests in Holdrege, and he returned to York County in July, 1900, and resided at Bradshaw, Nebraska, where he bought grain and had charge of the elevator belonging to his brother, C. A. McCloud. In October, 1905, the elevator having been sold he entered the First National Bank of Bradshaw as bookkeeper. He was promoted and in February, 1906, took charge of the Bank of



C. A. McCLOUD
York County Pioneer. President First National Bank.

Lushton as Cashier. In October, 1906, he gave up this position and came to York where he entered the Farmers National Bank of York as bookkeeper. This bank had been organized in August, 1906 with C. A. McCloud as President. He was promoted and held the position of Assistant Cashier of the Bank at the time of his election to the office of County Treasurer of York County, November, 1909.

He took hold of the work in this office with his usual energy and attention to detail and was able to make a good record. This was attested to when asking for re-election he received the flattering majority of 1285 votes.

The contrast in the development of the County at the present time with its evidences of wealth and prosperity is great when compared to the level treeless prairies of an early day. When going visiting or to market it was possible to start out in the general direction of the place desired to be reached.

York County is a most desirable place in which to live.

Ezekiel Evans

Ezekiel Evans, the son of Ezekiel and Mary Jermain Evans, was born in "Baltimore Hundred," Sussex County, Delaware, February 28, 1829. He lived in the first tier of houses near the Atlantic Ocean for a number of years. He "followed the sea" but desiring to improve conditions he left for the west at 26 years of age and settled in Illinois.

He was married to Miss Martha Jane Williams, September 29, 1857, and lived near Warsaw, Hancock County, Illinois, until again the western fever took possession of him and he with his wife and family now consisting of six sons departed for the west and located in York County.

When he came to the county to homestead he came on the train as far as Lincoln, then by stage as far as Seward, when it was necessary to come the rest of the distance on foot. He homesteaded the Northeast quarter of Section 18, Town 11, Range 1 west, in April, 1872, and brought his family in the fall of the same year coming overland in a "prairie schooner." As he was a minister of the gospel as well as a

farmer he preached from house to "soddy" and dugout, swam streams and slept on the broad prairies, while his colts ate the grass growing so plentifully. As the settlers at that time seemed so poor, and he so "rich in the faith that God would care for him" could not ask for the "needful" but obeyed his God with trusting faith. With his trusty fowling piece he killed the meat for his family, increased to ten by the addition of four daughters in Nebraska. Geese, duck, quail, rabbit, and chickens were plentiful and and they who cared to hunt could have them for the killing of them.

He was school director in his frontier days in Illinois, and was also now school director in his new home, and built the first school house in his district, Waco township.

With the help of his sons he farmed four hundred acres of land in addition to preaching the gospel. They said it did not rain in Nebraska but that first Lord's Day, after he preached the first gospel sermon in York, it did rain until the water was several inches deep over the ground where our court house now stands. The Lord helped him to build up six Churches of Christ in York County.

When on his first trip to see the country, he picked up an Indian arrow head, near where the court house now stands. He thought "if the Indian can live here, the white man can." This thought has proven to be true as present prosperity shows.

When he looks back to the Anderson-Ford wedding he thinks the roast turkey tasted as good in that nice dugout as now in the most modern dwelling. At that time when hungry it was easy to get together a few dry sticks, toast a quail, some corn or some rye bread. Then after he had a nap the black horse Jim would neigh and be ready to take his master on to the next appointment.

He later moved to Waco, then in 1901, went back to his childhood home with his wife, leaving the children scattered over the west. After six years Nebraska appealed to him as of old and at the earnest wish of his friends and loved ones, he returned to York in 1907 and there is settled in his own home. He has found that York County is the garden spot

of God's creation, and that deep and abundant faith in his Heavenly Father has increased till it is his greatest comfort in his later days and he hopes to meet his friends where partings are no more.

J. W. Gilmore

Glimpses of Other Days

The people who came to Nebraska in the years of '65 and '66 and later, can look back and see that since that time the hand of evolution has been busy changing the vast prairies that were at one time considered part of the Great American desert to a fertile farming country and homes for thousands. The prairies in those days had a different appearance and one looking over them could see as far as the vision of the eye could reach. The monotony was only broken sometimes by a herd of deer or antelope or elk and sometimes buffalo. The grass on the prairie at that time was short and in bunches and where now plenty of hay can be made, then it took a hundred acres to make a ton. The streams were visited by friendly bands of Indians trapping the beaver and other game which was to be found in abundance. The first Indians the writer ever saw were camped in a grove where now the K. P. park is located and there were about one hundred in the band. An Indian squaw came to our home; she could talk English very plainly and told us where they camped farther up the river. The band had lost a child which was never found. They thought it had fallen in the river and gotten under the ice.

The Ponies and Omaha Indians always had their annual buffalo hunt in the latter part of the summer. They formed an alliance and hunted together so they would be strong enough to fix the Sioux. Their custom was to go west and get around the buffalo and draw them east from the Sioux. This would cause trouble and sometimes there would be fighting. Sometimes the buffalo would be driven as far east as York county and that is the reason some of the first settlers here saw the Indians hunting buffalo on these prairies.

The first buffalo I ever saw was in 1868 when I was but a boy, I got on my pony to visit friends near where the Fil-

more mill now stands; and when I had gone as far west as the present location of the town of McCool, I saw on the opposite side of the river what I thought to be black cattle, but later learned were buffalo. There were thousands of them and as they ran the vibrations of their hoofs sounded like distant thunder.

There is one other thing that the early settler can never forget and that is the sod house. It was a strong factor in helping to settle this country and if it had not been for the sod house it would have been almost impossible for some of the homesteaders to have lived on their land. The settlers along the streams were anxious to see the prairies settled and when they saw a new black spot on the prairie, they knew there was another homesteader. Yes the sod house was the dwelling, the barn, the church, the school house and dance hall. I have often thought Nebraska should build a monument in honor of the sod house.

Elias Gilmore

Interesting Reminiscences of Time When Redskins Were Many and White Men Few

Early Settlers

In 1865 Elias Gilmore, in company with his eldest son, Jacob Rush Gilmore and Wm. Taylor, left Livingston county, Illinois, for Nebraska, traveling overland with team and wagon. They were delayed at Sidney, Iowa, for some weeks, while waiting for the ice on the Missouri river to become sufficiently strong to drive over, consequently did not arrive in York county until the latter part of December. Leaving the old freight road at the Fouse ranch they followed a dim wagon track westward along the Blue, finding John Anderson with his family already located near the eastern line of the country. Coming west they ate Christmas dinner in Camp on section 6, range 1, just north of the river from where the K. P. camp is now located. After locating their land they returned to Nebraska City, homesteading the same January 1st, 1866, then once again driving across the country to the new homes, began the work of improving them. The nearest postoffice was Camden, twenty-five miles away.



ELIAS GILMORE

Located in York County in 1865. Built first frame dwelling in York County.

They spent the winter in a small dugout near the river, surrounded by Indians; Mrs. Taylor remaining there alone at one time while J. R. Gilmore made the trip to Nebraska City from which place Elias Gilmore returned to Illinois. The winter proved to be very fine until about the fourteenth of February, when they were visited by a regular blizzard, the snow completely covering both house and barn. In April, J. R. Gilmore, wife and little daughter, Ella now Mrs. S. J. Dutton, of Davis Creek, Cal., arrived and to them was born June 3, 1866, their second eldest daughter, Lily M., now Mrs. J. E. Hunt, of Bayard, Nebraska. Elias Gilmore had shipped to Nebraska City, meat, flour and such farming implements as were needed in the new country. During the summer of 1866 David Bussard, A. J. Gilmore, Cris Hollock, A. Deams, Fernando McFadden and Jerry Stanton came from Illinois and located along the river, Jerry Stanton having homesteaded the land upon which McCool is now located.

David Bussard was one of the first County Commissioners and A. J. Gilmore was for some years blacksmith for for the entire county. November 3, 1866, Elias Gilmore with his family arrived, having brought fourteen head of cattle and six head of horses. Afterwards he bought two small hogs from a ranchman on Salt Creek southeast of the present city of Lincoln. This was the beginning of a stock industry that has yielded an abundant harvest. The winter of '66-7 was a very severe one with an immense fall of snow. Food had to be hauled from Nebraska City. Prairie fires had destroyed the already limited supply of hay. Those who remained on their farms during the winter had a hard time but crops were exceedingly good the following year, thus giving encouragement to the somewhat discouraged ones.

A Pioneer Home

A description of the dugout in which the Gilmore family lived a few years will not be amiss, as it is only from the pages of history that this kind of a house will be known to this and coming generations. Dug into a sidehill near the river with a front built of logs, the bank growing deeper towards the back until it was about seven feet. Upon this a few more logs were placed. The floor was made of hewn

slabs somewhat smoothed, known as puncheons. The roof was covered with the same over which a few inches of dirt was thrown. A huge fire-place in the end had a chimney built of sod plastered with mud. Rough boards overhead made a low sleeping room for the men. This house was 24 by 10 feet in size and was indeed a home for many land seekers at that time. Sixty-nine found many settling along the river and the prairie lands were also being taken. The timber was used for fuel and sometimes corn stalks were utilized for the same purpose. This was a very wet summer and as the dirt roof failed to keep out the rain a new house became necessary. Mr. Gilmore had raised an abundant crop of both barley and buckwheat. The latter was first taken to the Camden mills, converted into flour, then hauled to Nebraska City and sold for eleven dollars per hundred. The barley also taken to Nebraska City brought one dollar and seventy-five cents per bushel. The wagons were then loaded with lumber for the new house, this being, we think, the first frame house in the county. Native trees taken to Milford and sawed into rough lumber were used for the framework. The price lumber brought in Nebraska City cost there \$90 per thousand feet. The building consisted of an upright part 24 by 14 with a 16 foot ell and is yet in fair condition on the farm now owned by Boss Gilmore.

Shingles for the school house in district No. 1, were brought from Nebraska City and the first school opened in April, 1870 with Lizzie Lowery as teacher. This district was in later years annexed to district No. 7 and thus lost its identity to some extent. During the summer of 1868 a postoffice was located at McFadden and a year later the Old Blue Valley postoffice opened with J. R. Gilmore as postmaster. Mr. Gilmore also ran a general store until 1873, when he sold out to the firm of Creech & Armstrong, who built the old storehouse yet standing, in 1874, having then to haul lumber from Lincoln only.

Social Life

Social and religious life was not neglected in those days. The young people from the Fouse ranch to Mr. Waddel's ranch in Hamilton county were well known to each other and frequently met to enjoy a country dance with a zeal

unknown today. Perry Caldwell, a United Brethren preacher, living on a homestead in Saline county rode horseback to his appointments and in 1868 organized a class in the home of David Bussard. This class has had an uninterrupted history and yet meets in Bethel church which was built in 1870. R. S. Manney, Ezekiel Evans and Elder Kilroe organized the Christian church in a school house until 1883 when the present church house was built.

J. W. Rush, whom we think is now the oldest homesteader living in York county, drove through from Illinois in 1872, locating on section 12, range 1. Mr. Rush is a veteran of the civil war and has lately celebrated his ninetieth birthday.

A Mysterious Guest

Hospitality was everywhere in evidence in the days of which we write. Doors were never locked; white men and Indians could alike walk in unannounced, the latter often frightening women and children very much. In the early seventies a man riding a beautiful thoroughbred horse stopped at Elias Gilmore's and asked for entertainment over night, which was, of course, granted. He was a well dressed man, keen and alert, differing in many ways from the travelers of that time. It was noticed that his right hand was usually held under the left side of his coat and though he was a good talker and well informed on current events he was reticent regarding himself.

The sleeping apartment in the house consisted of one large room for the men, containing several beds. The late S. N. Creech and other boarders occupied beds in this room and were startled when the stranger upon retiring unbuckled a belt containing several revolvers, one of which he calmly placed under his pillow and laid the belt on the table near his bed. The unarmed men in the room made no remarks, but passed a sleepless night. The stranger was up early and after paying liberally for his entertainment, rode swiftly away. Mr. Gilmore remarked, "Boys, there's something wrong with that man," a fact which became evident when they learned later that they had entertained the noted Jesse James.

Fish and game were abundant in the early days, many deer being killed during the winter of '66-7 and also during '68. After that they became scarcer and only a glimpse of antelope could be seen. Elias Gilmore brought to Nebraska what was perhaps one of the largest breaking plows in the state, being a 26-inch lay. To this plow he drove from four to six yoke of oxen with one or more drivers. Mr. Gilmore broke prairie from near Camden, Neb., west for many miles, for which he got from three to five dollars per acre. The first threshing outfit that came into York county was owned by M. Brown of Middle Creek, Neb. He bought the machine in Nebraska City and threshed along the westward road as far as Hamilton county.

Mary A. Gilmore

In the Spring of 1866, A. J. Gilmore, David Bussard, Wm. Whitaker and Wm. O. Bussard, came to Nebraska in search of land; they came in covered wagons. After hunting and finding land that suited them they had to return to Nebraska City to homestead said land; then the fall following Wm. O. Bussard, and Wm. Whitaker returned east for their families traveling in the same covered wagons. David Bussard remaining on his homestead but in the meantime he had purchased a very good chance of one Mr. Hall, which consisted of a very good two-room log house, a lot of potatoes and a large sorghum patch, which sorghum was later made into molasses furnishing sweetening for all purposes. With buffalo, elk, venison, antelope and prairie chickens, without number, sorghum cake made a very good dessert.

David Bussard and A. J. Gilmore located along the Blue river in York County, Whitaker and William O. Bussard going to Fillmore. For a short time after settling, A. J. Gilmore had his blacksmith shop on the old freight road near Fouse's ranch and the next spring took his wife and little daughter, now Mrs. W. T. Decious of York, and lived in a covered wagon on his claim until he broke prairie and planted sod corn, after which he built his house, which was a story and half high, dug in the bank on three sides, built up in front of nicely hewed logs 16x18 with dirt floor and roof, but later on there came a portable sawmill near and



REV. C. S. HARRISON

Pioneer preacher and York's successful florist and grower of ornamental trees and shrubery.

he had native lumber sawed for upper and lower floors after which the house was known as the "Astor" house on account of its palatial appearance; it also being the stopping place of land seekers and people coming from a great distance to get their smith-work done.

Indians were very plentiful, I remember on one occasion, Mr. Gilmore having gone to mill at Milford, which trip required three days, his wife and baby being alone there during his absence there came to the house an uncommonly large and ugly Indian, demanding something to eat, saying; "You no give me eat, me shoot," taking his gun in his hands and looking very savage. Trembling in every limb, I quickly filled a plate with eatables handing it to him, after eating he left saying, "you heap good squaw, good-bye."

Now I will tell you about religious matters: We were without religious meetings until two horsemen rode up to David Bussard's door, which proved to be two preachers, W. T. Caldwell and E. J. Lamb of the United Brethren church. That evening Lamb preached in Bussard's house and the next night Caldwell preached in A. J. Gilmore's house, after which we had preaching every four weeks. The first class was organized in David Bussard's house by Caldwell. To show you how the people enjoyed meeting I will relate a little incident which is as follows: Caldwell had left an appointment for preaching at Elias Gilmore's, when the Sunday came, the Blue river was overflowing its banks but A. J. Gilmore and family wanted to go to church so he tied the wagon bed on, put the spring seat on helped his wife up gave the little girl to her mother and hitched the oxen to the wagon, drove to the river and plunged in, the oxen swimming up stream. The entire congregation coming to the river to see them come over and did the same when they returned home.

C. S. Harrison

Was born in the State of New York, Nov. 24, 1832. In '44 he moved with his parents to Illinois. His father was sick when they landed in Chicago, and he had to hunt the dirty village of Chicago over for a peck of potatoes. In 1857 he commenced preaching on the frontiers of Minneso-

ta. For four years he had to endure the privations of a new country. Sometimes he was nearly frozen. He often was obliged to ford swollen streams, and once his horse sank with him three times in a swollen river. Having had some success in church work he was called by Land Commissioner Geo. S. Harris to take a colony into York in 1871. It was called the May Flower Colony. He induced several hundred people to come to York County. He preached the first sermon in York in an unfinished store building. There was an audience of 14. The country was new and the people very poor—most of them living in sod houses. In the spring of '72 the Congregational church was organized through his persistent efforts. York grew rapidly though off the line of the R. R. For seven years the people had to haul lumber and goods from Fairmont. But handicapped as they were, and without a R. R. they outgrew every town on the B. & M. all the way from Crete to Hastings. The class of people who came to York shaped its future. They made and kept a clean town. A good academy building was put up, it arose as a strong hope out of the despair of the grasshopper days. Then came the great liquor war, when they threatened to kill Mr. Harrison who was the chairman of the executive committee which was very much alive. His life was often threatened and one day two men loaded up with liquor started out to kill him. But they were knocked lengthwise by Henry Seymore, one escaped and the other on complaint of Mr. Harrison lay three months in jail and found it did not pay to be a saloon hench man. The war was fought to a finish, and the people found that decency paid. As soon as it was known that saloons were to be kept out of York, traveling men and others moved in where their boys could be safe. There are but few manufacturers in York, people seemed to live on the reputation of the town and how the city grows—beating other towns which had a better start and a better location two to one. Mr. Harrison started a nursery in 1871 and '81 he went to Pueblo, and left it with his sons. And here let me say that these sons bearing and honoring his name have done more to help the city than any two men who have ever lived here. They keep an army of workmen and of agents. They spend most of their money where they make it and last summer put up a fine \$10,000 building.

When about 67 years old Mr. Harrison's health failed. His church nerves were worn out. He had been nearly 42 years in active work in the ministry—had built 16 churches and received many hundreds on confession of faith—had helped found two academies and raised about \$100,000 for church and educational work. He had a right to be tired, but he had been too busy to make money. When he might have been worth \$100,000; he had saved in these long busy years not enough to build a comfortable home. So he started an ornamental nursery on two of the weediest lots in the city. This grew to cover 28 lots. When after ten years he sold a half interest to H. S. King. Since 70 years of age he has published five works on Horticulture, and has another now nearly ready for the press. He has at great pains gathered the best things from Europe and America and now the C. S. Harrison Select Nursery has a reputation reaching from ocean to ocean, and Manitoba to the Gulf. He is still in active work and enjoys his glorious flowers which keep up a procession of beauty from Spring to the hard frosts of Autumn.

At a ripe old age he is now waiting on the hither shore for the coming of the boatman to bring him to the other side. Most of the co-laborers of former days have already gone over, and at times he is lonely. But he lives among pleasant memories and in glad anticipations of reunions beyond.

C. J. Carlson

C. J. Carlson was born in Sweden, November 19, 1841. In the year 1871 he came to America, reaching Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, on August 7 of that year. Here he remained until February, 1872 when he started to Nebraska, traveling by wagon. He took a homestead on section 34, township 11, range 3, where he lived for nearly thirty-five years. He was married to Miss Carrie Kaliff on March 19, 1877, who died in March, 1904. On May 14, 1905, he was married to Mrs. Lottie Burke. In September 1906 Mr. and Mrs. Carlson moved to York where they now live at 803 Academy avenue.

Mr. Carlson passed through the usual pioneer experiences and endured the same hardships as all early settlers,

but he has never regretted coming to the United States for he found much better opportunity for advancement in all ways than in the old country.

Foster J. Parris

Foster J. Parris was born a Vermont soldier. He enlisted at the age of 17, in Co. K, 14th Vermont Vol. In 1872 he came to Nebraska, and homesteaded on section 6, township 12, range 2, west, and afterwards bought a quarter on Sec. 7 from the U. P. railroad Co. He stood at his post faithfully, through all the hardships of those early days, contending with blizzards, grasshoppers, drought and hail, and succeeded in improving his farm and making a comfortable home for his family. In 1875 he was elected Justice of the Peace and was instrumental in helping to distribute the aid that was sent to the needy at that time. In the spring of '75 Mrs. Parris taught in a room of her sod house, the first school that was held in Dist. No 59, and in the spring of '76 the first school that was held in the new school house in that District. In the spring of 1897 Mr. Parris sold his homestead and moved to York where he remained until his death May 30, 1905.

WHEN THE GRASSHOPPERS CAME

By Mrs. D. T. Moore

One afternoon during the harvest season of 1874, our family consisting of four members and two visitors, making six altogether, went from our home, in the valley of Lincoln Creek, to the home of Mr. Charles Keckley on the hill, where we were invited to partake of the hospitality of Mr. Keckley and his sister, the late Mrs. Bonar. We were feeling in just the right spirit for a good social time and a rest as our harvest was over and we were ready to help our neighbors even to the extent of taking supper with them. While still lingering at the table, we noticed that it was growing darker in the west than the time of day would warrant. Fearful of a sudden storm which often took us unawares, the men went to investigate, nothing indicated a storm, except the

darkening of the western sky and an ominous roaring which was alarming. The men climbed to the roof of the house—did I say it was a sod house?—to farther investigate. And there there they came, by the millions, the undesirable newcomers! We learned a day later that devastation lay behind them. The harvest was especially good that year but harvesters were few in number and even though a few had utilized Sunday to save their crops, many fields were still uncut—these the grasshoppers laid waste, then ate the growing corn and the garden leaving nothing but tomatoes and tobacco behind them. But here they came, and as we saw them settle upon our neighbor's cornfields and gardens, our heart sank within us, for we knew our fate was the same. As we proceeded on our way home, much sadder than when we left a few hours before, we saw every stem of grass, every garden plant—our splendid garden which had been our pride and source of supply all summer—and the cornfields and trees all covered black with the army of grasshoppers, where they had settled for the night and for so long as there was anything for them to eat. It was little use to try to save anything but a few trees in the front yard to which much care had been given and which if saved would be permanent, were chosen for the experiment, and no sooner were they well settled than a bucketful of cold well water, from the hands of the man of the house would disturb the repose of that particular bunch, and by persistent effort a few of our little shade trees were saved to grow another year. It was almost more than we could believe possible, where everything had been growing and green was the prevailing hue, in a few hours to see here black stems and corn stalks, and those who lost their ripened grain were worse off.

We do not like to dwell upon the hardships but the grasshopper year was one of those which tried men's souls and the courage of many deserted them, and rather than see those dependent upon them suffer they gave up and went back to their old homes. Those who remained and "stayed by the stuff" were well rewarded. The following winter was a hard one for man and stock, no vegetables of any kind were saved and for a farmer's wife to cook a meal without potatoes was almost impossible, but we did it the grass-

hopper year. One substitute was whole wheat much fried brown and eaten with milk. The wheat was taken to the mill and ground coarsely as feed for the stock, horses, cows and hogs, all seemed to thrive upon it, and I know we never tasted more tender or sweeter meat than our hogs produced the "Grasshopper Year." But to go back to our own rations, from this coarsely ground wheat we sifted the finer portions and used it as a variation from the white flour. We did not even have corn meal as I remember, there were "Yankee" or "Navy" beans as plentiful then as they are now. But the potatoes were the most missed vegetable. I remember when we went to take a Sunday dinner with Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Read and I saw the dish of mashed potatoes placed upon the table I could scarcely wait, and I have no recollection of the other dishes which were accompaniments to and no doubt all as good in their way as were the potatoes. I do not know where they got their potatoes either.

We lived through the winter and when spring came were ready to begin over. Only there was no seed of any kind at hand, and this was the time and place to ask and take assistance from any who were able and willing to give it; and there those who, no doubt, could tell the story better than I.

We were in fear of a return of the grasshoppers as of the horde of young ones which might hatch out, but every precaution was taken and crops were raised again, and we were glad we were citizens of Nebraska.

James D. Houston

James D. Houston was born at Tullbardine, Scotland, in 1841, and enjoys the unique distinction of being able to trace his ancestry, by printed records back to the Romans and Britons of the Eleventh century. His ancestry were owners of large estates in Scotland, the estates descended for for many generations of the same family, and many were Barons and Knights, in Knighthoods golden days, and the tombs of his ancestors with their letters in marble furnish much interesting history of the family, and with all these helps Mr. Peter Houston, who spent a season in Scotland

had very little trouble in getting a complete history of the family back to the origin of surnames; some of the names of inheritance he found were so long it would be hard to get an American, in these swift days, to take the time to say, let alone, to learn; for instance we find one that seems to be "Reginaldo filio Hugonis de Padvinan Terarum de Kilpeter cum terra illa quam Bodricus & Arkenbaldus, fratres ejus tenure. His Testibus; Allano Dapifero Regis Scotiae Waltero Filioso, Roberto Croc Reginaldo de Cathcart & multis aliis." Which being interpreted, reads:

"To Reginald son of Hugh of Padvinia, of the lands of Kilpeter with that land which Bodrick and Arkenbald, his brothers, held. Witnesses to these things Allan Dapifer king of Scotland, Walter his son, Robert Croc, Reginald of Cathcart and many others."

The Houston Coat of Arms was a Chevron Chequie, Azure and Argent; betwix three Martlets Sable; supported by Hinds, and for Crest, a Sand-glass, with this motto, "In time." Mr. Houston is proud of his Scotch ancestry, and has a Highland suit he brought with him from his native home, with sword and dagger; he uses a carving knife on state occasions made from a sword taken by a Banner man in a battle with Oliver Cromwell in the 16th century, the sword was made into carving knives about a hundred years ago and the one used by Mr. Houston was given to his grandfather and came into his possession, the blade can be sprung double without harm.

Mr. Houston married Mary Lidington, an English lady, in England, February 21, 1867, they came to this country in 1870, first settled in Wisconsin, and in 1871 moved to York County, Nebraska, took up land in New York township, and now own a fine farm of 240 acres, well improved, and the value of his farm and his present surroundings prove the wisdom of his choice. They are the parents of six children, five boys and one daughter, now living.

During the early days in this county they had some interesting experiences. Built a frame house where their son W. B. is now living on Sec. 8 in New York township, hauling the lumber from Lincoln. One day while Mrs. Houston was home alone, and up stairs, she heard some noise down stairs,

and on going down to see what it was, first saw two big Indians peeking in a window, she looked in the other direction for a place to escape and there were three big Indians peeking in the other window. O MY! But just then a neighbor came in and Mrs. Houston would not let him go till he persuaded the Indians to go with him. Mr. Houston says that during the great Easter storm several cattle drifted over the banks of Coon Branch and perished in the snow, and a band of Pawnee Indians discovered them and immediately went into camp and feasted as long as the cattle lasted.

There were many wild animals; Antelope, Elk, Buffalo and Wolves roaming the country when they first settled on their farm, but the most interesting experience Mr. Houston had with the wild animals, was one night he heard his chickens making a fuss, and going out in his night clothes discovered a skunk having a feast on chickens. He picked up a sythe snath and hit the animal in such a way that it landed right on him, he finally killed the animal, but had to go off and bury himself a while before Mrs. Houston would let him in the house again.

Mr. Houston says the homesteaders were always willing to help each other, tells of claim-jumper jumping Mr. John H. Parker's claim, and Mr. Parker coming to his father to get money to prove up to hold his land. News of the claim jumping soon spread along the creek, and the settlers gathered at the homestead and moved the jumper out, goods and all, and he was glad to skip with his life from so determined a looking crowd.

J. B. Meehan

J. B. Meehan came to West Blue during the summer of 1871, and was the first squire in the precinct. W. H. Taylor being elected at the same time as constable. The first case in Squire Meehan's court was in the summer of '71. At this time large herds of cattle were driven each summer from Texas north to various points, sometimes to Yankton, S. D., and again to points along the U. P. railroad where they were shipped east.

The drivers were of the usual Texas "cowboy" variety, wild and reckless, and always an expert in the use of his revolver, an accomplishment he was always willing to demonstrate upon the least provocation. They drove their large herds fearlessly over prairie lands and the homesteaders farms, paying but little attention to the growing crops. A large herd being thus driven over Peter Hellers's field of sod corn, he brought suit against the foreman of the drivers and Mr. Taylor was ordered to arrest him. The herd had passed north and being uncertain as to the man's willingness to return peacefully, Mr. Taylor took with him several men of the neighborhood. They overtook the herd men near Beaver Creek, setting his men to keep from sight in a ravine, Mr. Taylor rode on alone, making his errand known to the man who, of course, swore and said he saw no corn and at first firmly refused to go back, but after talking the matter over with Mr. Taylor he ordered the men to camp and they started on the return trip. Presently, he stooped and drawing a revolver from his bootleg proceeded to show his skill in the use of the same, finding Mr. Taylor not easily frightened he began to look for other game. Presently they came to A. J. Corey chopping wood alone on his homestead. "Watch me scare that man," he said and riding furiously up to Mr. Corey he pointed the revolver in his face and prefacing his remarks with a volley of oaths, cried, "what do you want?" Mr. Corey looked at the man for a moment and coolly told him he wanted nothing. Returning to Mr. Taylor the man was then requested to turn over his weapon, which he did willingly, then stooping once more, drew another weapon from his bootleg, remarking "now we're both armed." Fearing danger if the man should have the weapon when they came to the other party, Mr. Taylor proceeded to argue the case with the man who finally said, "we will ride up to where my wagons are; you throw your gun into the wagon first and I will do likewise. This Mr. Taylor did and the man was true to his promise.

Coming on, they rode through the ravine where Mr. Taylor's men were hidden, who remained quiet until Mr. Taylor and his man had passed, then rode up behind them. This incensed the man from Texas who seemed to think he had been tricked. He stopped for a few moments, then

remarked with the usual oath, "If I'd known this you never would have arrested me." But being unarmed and one against several he evidently thought it best to show no fighting disposition at that time. Coming to Squire Meehan's a crowd of interested farmers had gathered. This was to them an important case. All had suffered from the depredations of the herds and now it would be decided how their fields should be protected in the future. The man gave testimony that he was only an employee of the cattle company and the case was dismissed, but it served the purpose for coming herdsmen were more careful to avoid cultivated fields, and this ended what was, perhaps, the first litigation in West Blue Precinct. Another one occurred in a few months wherein a man living near the southeast line of the county was arrested for taking a saddle from Mr. Brower, who lived in Fillmore County. More than ordinary interest was taken in this case from the fact, that Geo. Post, a young attorney, lately located at York, had been employed to defend the accused. Although the day was bleak and cold many had assembled to hear the trial, and were surprised as well as disappointed when the lawyer informed the squire that the case was not in his jurisdiction, the property having been taken from Fillmore County. The man was set free and whether or no he took the saddle has never been determined.

J. W. Rush

J. W. Rush was born in Fayette county, Pa., in 1822, coming to Ill. in 1854, when that state was thought of as "away out west." In 1862 at the age of 40 he enlisted in the 129 Reg. Ill. Vol., going with Sherman in his famous march "to the sea," and engaging in active service in the last battle of the civil war. In 1872 he again determined to try his fortune in a new state, consequently landed in York county in June of that year, under the law lately coming into effect giving the soldier 160 acres of land. He homesteaded that amount on Sec. 18, Twp. 9, R 1, W. When he and his wife and children proceeded to make a home in the best sense of the word. Mr. Rush had brought with him from Pennsylvania, a love for the fruit tree, and his was one of the first orchards in the county. Several years ago

he moved to McCool and now lives at Blue Vale with his daughter, Mrs. S. S. Deffenbaugh, his wife having died some years ago.

Mr. Rush celebrated his 90th birthday recently, and is, we think, the oldest homesteader living in the county at this time.

S. S. Deffenbaugh

S. S. Deffenbaugh with his wife and two children came from Wyoming, Ill., in 1874, arriving just a few weeks before the grasshoppers made their first destructive visit to the homesteaders, this little army, no doubt, had often rested on the plains of York county, when their sustenance was only greens and the bark and leaves of the few trees that grew only along the rivers, but now conditions were changed, delicious corn and vegetables were awaiting them, and it took only a few hours for the devastating army to destroy all that the hopeful farmers had in store for the the coming year.

That was one of the dark pictures of Homestead Life. It meant suffering for many fathers and mothers who had sacrificed much for their children, and now perhaps, they must hear them cry for food, and here allow me to say that such would have been the case more frequently if it had not been for the relief sent from the East; but even this visit from a destructive enemy did not discourage Mr. Deffenbaugh and his worthy companion. They had come west to get a home; the spirit of progress and enterprise was a rich heritage to them. The beautiful home in which they now live, tells its own story, and speaks in stronger language than can the pen of the writer of the valiant industry of Mr. and Mrs. S. S. Deffenbaugh.

Among those who settled along the Blue during the summer of 1866 was Nicholas Nye, an eccentric man who delighted in being called "Old Nick." Going one day into the home of Mr. Ong, he found no one home but Grandma Ong, quite an aged lady. "Madam," he said, "did you ever hear of the Old Nick?" "I certainly have," she replied. "Vell den, here you see him," he said, in his quaint Pennsylvania Dutch accent.

Mr. Nye came from Philadelphia with the Fouces, and homesteaded on Sec. 10, R. 3, W; the farm now owned by Mr. Hagerman.

Mr. Nye always claimed that cooking food was an unnecessary trouble, and therefore ate his vegetables raw, with meat and fish as a desert, in the same condition.

Hiram Schnebley

Hiram Schnebley arrived in West Blue in 1873, and located on the same section with Mr. Rush. Mr. Schnebley's coming to Nebraska was purely accidental. When a young man living near New Salem, Ohio, he caught the western fever everywhere prevalent at that time and joined the tide of emigrants pouring into Nebraska and Kansas. Coming to Lincoln, then nothing but a village; with a future, he found his money gone and proceeded to walk westward, arriving at E. Gilmore's he learned of the one homestead still vacant, which, because it was a rough 80, no one had taken it. Immediately returning to Lincoln, he filed on the land, thus gaining time in which to earn the money necessary to homesteading, by working during the summer months and teaching school in the winters. He improved his land upon which he still lives.

Mr. Schnebley is known throughout South York county by the name of the Berry-man, he having what is probably the largest small fruit farm in the county, which he values about ten thousand dollars.

W. H. Taylor

W. H. Taylor, who had raised a small crop of oats during the summer of 1867 found the same unthreshed in the spring of '68. Clearing off a small spot of ground he called his neighbors in and proceeded to thresh in a primitive way, that is by putting the oats on the ground and driving the horses over it—not much like the steam threshers of today. Towards evening two men rode up and informed them that they had followed a band of Indians, who had stolen their horses, from Kansas, and that the Indians were in camp

about one mile east. The men had run their horses, and now they wanted Mr. Taylor and his threshing outfit to help get their property.

Knowing it was best for settlers to keep on good terms with the Indians, the men hesitated to go, but after several more men had joined the band they proceeded to the Indian camp. The men from Kansas were evidently used to dealing with the Indians. The leader left all the men but the one who had come with him hid in the bushes, with orders to remain quiet unless they should hear shooting, then to be ready for action. The other man was placed with a gun behind a tree and the leader advanced unarmed to the camp. Calling the Chief aside he explained his mission and demanded his horses. The Chief turned and spoke to his tribe, instantly four warriors came out with bow in one hand and an arrow held between each finger of the other. This meant fight. The man behind the tree stepped out with his gun aimed; this was enough for the chief, it frightened him into submission, he ordered his braves back and told the men to get their horses. The men in ambush were told to watch lest the Indians follow, but no attempt was made to do so.

The Indians who came through the country at this time had no desire to have trouble with the homesteaders. They frequently passed with horses which they claimed to have stolen from the Sioux, and it is supposed that they sometimes captured some from the whites. If so, perhaps they were only doing what the white men sometimes did with them; only repeating a lesson too well learned from their dealings with the "Pale Face."

In the main the Indian tribes who frequented this section of the country were honest, and treated the homesteaders fairly.

Levi Dean

Christmas, 1866, was a great event in the pioneer home. No doubt memories of by-gone days, with far away friends, made the people lonely, and somewhat homesick. But the children must have their pleasures, and the Christ-

was dinner must be prepared. A fowl for the festive occasion seemed an absolute necessity, but the chickens who had made the journey from Illinois, in coops fastened on the hind part of the wagon, must not be sacrificed, so they were dependent on the wild turkey for the Christmas dinner.

Levi Dean, (Father of Mr. N. A. Dean of York), had come west during the summer and was making his home with Elias Gilmore, he was an expert marksman, having learned to shoot game among the hills of old Somerset county, Pa., and to him the family looked for the Christmas turkey. Early on the morning of December 24, he took his gun, an old fashioned rifle, and started in pursuit of his game. Soon finding a large flock of turkeys, he shot and killed two birds with one bullet; we mention this fact because we think it has never been excelled, and rarely equaled in the county, even by the modern sportsmen with their improved guns. Thus the Christmas was a success. Other delicacies may have been absent, but the turkeys were the one important factor. The old dugout decorated with wild berries gathered from the timber; with the bright fire in the huge fireplace, took on quite a festive air. The candy brought from Nebraska City, for the children supplemented by taffy made from the sorghum that had been brought from Illinois, made the children happy, and the families of J. R. and Elias Gilmore remember this "First Christmas in Nebraska" as a happy one.

Mr. Dean did not lose his reputation as a hunter after that Christmas feat was accomplished and shortly afterwards he killed a wild cat, the only one the writer ever saw, and perhaps the only one ever killed in York county. It was a magnificent animal, symmetrical in form, and beautiful in coloring. Christmas time also brings to us a memory of the first Indians we ever saw. Soon after the holidays a band of Indians camped west of the house; the coming of the Red Men had been the event most dreaded by the children. We had heard Indian stories, gazed on Indian pictures until even our dreams were colored by visits from them. Father had gone to Nebraska City for supplies thus adding new terror to the situation. "There comes an Indian, crossing the river on the ice," someone

said, mother with a pale serious face went to the door, determined to show hospitality even to an Indian. Even now, in thought, we can see our youngest brother, W. C. Gilmore, as his chubby form disappeared under the bed, while we were trying to decide if it would be better or more safe to hold on to our mother's dress skirt or follow our brother, but finally decided that the dress skirt or mother's presence offered the most protection. The Indian proved to be an intelligent squaw who could talk English fairly well, and our fear of the Red Men was overcome to such an extent that we enjoyed their frequent visits thereafter. Although their custom of entering the house unannounced often frightened the women folks. In the absence of J. R. Gilmore at one time during that winter, his wife and two small children and Mary Gilmore, now Mrs. A. G. Corey of Fairfield, Nebr., were alone, suddenly the window was darkened, and a big warrior Chief was calmly looking into the room. Seeing that he was observed he opened the door, walked in and sat down by the fire. Noticing a butcher knife on the table he asked for it—of course his request was granted—then he took out a whetstone, and began carefully to sharpen the knife. The women were badly frightened, but knew it was best to remain in the house. After getting the knife in a satisfactory condition he went to the mirror and proceeded to cut the whiskers from his face. This was his way of shaving.

Elias Gilmore

In 1865 Elias Gilmore in company with his eldest son, Jacob Rush Gilmore and Wm. Taylor left Livingston county, Ill., for Nebraska, traveling overland with team and wagon. They were delayed at Sidney, Iowa, for some weeks while waiting for the ice on the Missouri river to become sufficiently strong to drive over, consequently, did not arrive in York county, until the latter part of December. Leaving the old Freight Road at the Fouce Ranch, they followed a dim wagon track westward along the Blue.

Finding John Anderson and his family already located near the eastern line of the county; coming west they ate Christmas dinner in camp on section 6, range 1, just north of

the river from where the K. P. Camp is now located; then locating their land, returned to Nebraska City, homesteading the same Jan. 1, 1866. Then once again driving across the country to the new homes began the work of improving them. Their nearest P. O. was Camden, 25 miles away. They spent the winter in a small dugout near the river, surrounded by Indians. Mrs. Taylor remaining there alone at one time, while J. R. Gilmore again made the trip to Nebraska City, from which place Elias Gilmore returned to Illinois.

This proved to be a very fine winter until the 14th of February, when they were visited by a regular blizzard, the snow completely covering both house and barn. In April, J. R. Gilmore, wife and little daughter Ella, now Mrs. S. J. Dutton, of Davis Creek, California, arrived and to them was born, June 3rd, 1866, their second daughter, Lily M., now Mrs. J. E. Hunt of Bayard, Nebr.

Elias Gilmore had shipped to Nebraska City, meat, flour and such farming implements as were needed in the new country. During the summer of 1866, David Bussard, A. J. Gilmore, Chris. Hollock, A. Decius, Fernando McFadden and Jerry Stanton, came from Illinois and located along the river. Jerry Stanton having homesteaded the land upon which McCool is now located. David Bussard was one of the first County Commissioners, and A. J. Gilmore was for some years blacksmith for the entire county.

November 3, 1866, Elias Gilmore with his family arrived, having brought 14 head of cattle, 6 head of horses with him, and afterwards buying two small hogs from a ranchman on Salt Creek, southeast of the present city of Lincoln. This was the beginning of a stock industry that has yielded an abundant harvest. The winter of 66-7 was a very severe one, with an immense fall of snow. Food must be hauled from Nebraska City. Prairie fires had destroyed the already limited supply of hay. Those who remained on their farms during this winter had a hard time, but crops were exceedingly good the following year. This giving encouragement to the somewhat discouraged ones.

A description of the dugout in which the Gilmore fam-

ily lived for a few years will not be amiss, as it is only from the pages of history that this kind of a house will be known to this and the coming generations. Dug into the hillside near the river with front built of logs, the bank growing deeper toward the back until it was almost seven feet, upon which a few more logs were placed. A floor made of hewn slabs, smoothed, sometimes called 'puncheons' the roof was also covered with the same, over which a few inches of dirt was thrown, a huge fire place in the next with the chimney built of sod, plastered with mud. Rough boards overhead made a low sleeping room for the men. This house was 24x16 ft, in size, and was in truth a home for many land seekers at that time. '69 found many settling along the river, and also prairie lands were being taken, the timber being used for fuel, and sometimes corn stalks were utilized for the same purpose.

This was a very wet summer and the dirt roof failed to keep out the rain, a new house became necessary. Mr. Gilmore had raised an abundant crop both of barley and buckwheat, the latter was first taken to the Camden mills, converted into flour, then hauled to the city and sold for \$11.00 (eleven dollars) per hundred. The barley also taken to Nebraska City, brought \$1.75 per bu.

The wagons were then loaded with lumber for the new house, this being, we think, the first frame house in the county. Native trees taken to Milford and sawed into rough lumber was used for the work. The pine lumber bought in Nebraska City costing there \$90.00 per thousand feet. The building consists of an upright part, 24x14, with a 16 ft. ell, and is yet in fair condition on the farm now owned by Boss Gilmore. Shingles for the school house in Dist. 1, were brought from Nebraska City, and the first school opened in April, 1870, with Lizzie Gowery as teacher. This district in later years was annexed to Dist. No. 7, and thus lost its identity to some extent. During the summer of '68 a postoffice was located at McFadden, and a year later the Old Blue Valley P. O. opened with J. R. Gilmore as P. M. Mr. Gilmore also run a general store until 1873, when he sold out to the firm of Creech & Armstrong, who built the old stone house yet standing in 1874, having then

to haul the lumber from Lincoln only. Social and religious life was not neglected in those early days. The young people from the Fouce ranch to Mr. Waddle's homestead in Hamilton county, were well known to each other and frequently met to enjoy a country dance with a zeal unknown today. Perry Caldwell a U. B. preacher, living on a homestead in Saline county, rode horseback to his appointments, and in 1864 organized a class in the home of David Busard. This class has had an uninterrupted history and yet meets in the Bethel church, which was built in 1879. Rev. S. Menny, Ezekiel Evans and Elder Kilroe organized the Christian church in 1872. This congregation met in the school house until 1883, when their present church house was built. J. W. Rush, whom we think, is now the oldest homesteader living in York county, drove through from Illinois in 1872, locating on sec, 12, range 1. Mr. Rush is a veteran of the civil war and will soon celebrate his 90th birthday.

Hospitality was everywhere in evidence in the days of which we write. Doors were never locked; white man and Indian could alike walk in unannounced, the latter often frightening women and children very much.

Albert B. Chatterton

Albert B. Chatterton was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 1st, 1857. Came with his parents to Nebraska in October, 1865. His father, Henry Chatterton, in December of the same year, homesteaded a quarter of land in section 8, township 9, range 1, in York County.

Here Albert grew to manhood, working on the farm in the summer and attending school in the winter, in the first schoolhouse built in the county in District No. 1.

In the fall of 1875 he went to Battle Creek, Michigan, where he attended college for two years, after which he returned to York County where he farmed and taught school.

December 16, 1881 he was married to Anna E. Shannon, they lived on the old homestead for about two years



A. B. CHATTERTON

Settled in West Blue, Spring of 1866, now City
Clerk.

when with his wife and little daughter moved to Cheyenne, Wyoming. Mr. Chatterton run a grocery store in Cheyenne for about two years, when he sold out his business and with his family returned to his father's old homestead in York County.

In the spring of 1892 he moved with his family to York, which has been his home ever since.

Martin Polzin

In the fall of '69 Martin Polzin drove from Milwaukee, Wis., and homesteaded on the divide between the river and Beaver Creek, on section 4. This family began their pioneer life with great misfortunes. While building his house, Mr. Polzin with his wife and seven children lived in the house with Charley Scholtz, a German who was then living alone on his homestead. The house being completed in February, Mr. Polzin started to move, no bridges being on the river. He intended to cross on a ford on Henry Chatterton's farm. The snow was going early that spring, the river was high. Mr. Polzin was not aware of danger, and drove into the swollen stream, the wagon overturned, family, horses and goods were floating down the stream. Fortunately Mr. Chatterton was nearby, and somehow heard their cries and came to the rescue. The youngest child, a little boy about two years old was drowned, and the household goods badly damaged.

Mr. Polzin was an industrious man and soon had his little farm improved. In the spring of 1873 he drove to Lincoln with a load of wheat, arriving late in the evening. He proceeded to buy his supplies in order to start home early the next morning. The streets were not lighted and Mr. Polzin fell into an excavation on Q street, between 8th and 9th streets, and received injuries from which he died in a few days after returning home. Thus leaving his wife and children to face the problems incidental to a pioneer life alone.

By economy and industry they have been successful and are among those who have done a part in making the

York County of today possible. Many states have contributed to the county, thus bringing in different ideals for every state sends her people into a new land with the impress of herself upon their character.

From Wisconsin also come the first settlers along the Beaver Creek. A. G. Corey and R. Clark drove from Kekoshin, Wis., during the summer of '68. They, in common with all who came at that time were looking for land with timber and water, so located near the creek. Mr. Clark left Nebraska some years ago, and Mr. Corey is now living at Fairfield, Nebr.

Isaac Ong

(Along the Blue in 1866-7.)

Isaac Ong, with his family came from Illinois in the fall of '68. He also homesteaded on sec. 18, near McCool. Mr. Ong proceeded to dig his house into a bank, as was the custom. The summer of '69 was a season of much rain, great heavy rain storms that brought floods of water down the ravines, and also demonstrated the fact that the Nebraska farmer must provide a better roof for his house than a few slabs covered with dirt if he would keep things in the dry.

Mr. and Mrs. Ong were awakened one night by a rushing of water at the door. Soon the house was covered with two feet of water, they sat on the beds watching for coming events. Mr. Ong had brought him from Illinois, a decoy duck; as it was the custom to stow many things not in use under the bed, that decoy duck was placed there. The water ran high, when out from under the bed the duck came swimming serenely around, apparently perfectly at home. This time the water having come from a rain storm, quickly subsided, leaving only a very muddy floor which, being of Mother earth was sometime in drying.

Mr. William Ong, quite an aged man had also come west with his son. He was the first squire in York county and did quite a business in the matrimonial line, in fact, with Judge Moore to issue the license and Squire Ong to perform the ceremony, south York county people began

to think this was the most opportune time for beginning the new home life.

Dentists and doctors were absent for some years, but people did have the ague and tooth ache, the first must be cured by patent medicine or endured for long weeks, and it was usually endured. Of course people could go to Milford, where lived a doctor, to have a tooth extracted, and so the tooth ache was also endured.

Mr. Levi Dean had a very painful tooth, one of the kind that keeps jumping, for days and for weeks he had no rest. A big swede by the name of Peter Johnson was living with Mr. Dean. He was a jolly fellow, full of jokes and persuaded Mr. Dean to allow him to pull the tooth with a pair of bullet molds. Of course, a local anesthetic was at that time an unheard of thing, even by professional "tooth-pullers" and Johnson had but one idea, and that was to get the tooth out, he was much stronger than Mr. Dean, he knew he could hold him and extract the tooth at the same time. He put that bullet mold into the tooth with a grip firm as steel. Mr. Dean tried to scream. He kicked and rolled onto the floor, but that swede was bound to conquer, the tooth came at last, but Mr. Dean always thought that the cure was worse than the disease.

During the summer of '69 Dr. Dewese located on a homestead near Mr. McFadden's and was for many years the family physician for the people. During the fall and winter of '70-71 the typhoid fever became prevalent, several deaths occurred, and many families were afflicted. Everyone was glad to have in the community a doctor so competent as was this kind unassuming Dr. Dewese, who made long trips over the prairies regardless of the storms, and very often with no prospects of any fee. He was truly a doctor of the people and for the people, in full sympathy with their sufferings and privations.

William D. Purcell

William D. Purcell came to York county, September, 1870. There was only one frame store 10x12 ft. here then.

He went back to Lincoln, to work, not being able to find any land then to homestead. He had two friends who had homesteaded the southwest quarter of sec. 24, township 11, range 2, west. They relinquished their right in his favor and he homesteaded it in the spring of '71. Moved out in September into a sod house 10x12. In December with a foot of ice on the floor they put down straw with carpet over it and lived very comfortable, keeping one boarder.

The next spring he built a sod house on his homestead which was 12x24 and lived there through the grasshopper raid and big April blizzard, had a nice field of corn shooting for ears when the grasshoppers came, like a great black cloud by night and left it not a foot high. They took everything but sweet potatoes and rutabagas and potatoes. He had to drive to Lincoln for everything to live on. In the April storm had to take the cow, chickens and turkeys in the house. However, we were a happy family, one baby was born November 11, 1871.

Jerry Stanton

The long cold winter of 1866-7 with the deep snow leveling the entire country into a white unbroken plain, was a lonely one to the two homesteaders in what is now McFadden township. Jerry Stanton and his son-in-law, Fernando McFadden, who had located near the present location of McCool, during the preceeding summer.

Mr. Stanton was so commonly called "Uncle Jerry," that we can hardly recognize him by any other name. His dugout (house and stable) were dug into the bank just north of the road that now comes into McCool from the east; probably near where Mr. Wright's poultry yards are located. Mr. W. H. Taylor was visiting Uncle Jerry when the snow began to melt. One night they were awakened by the sound of rushing water, and soon discovered that the river had risen to such a height as to make it impossible to remain in the dugout. Uncle Jerry's furniture was not of the kind that would be greatly injured by the flood. His bedding and provisions could even be carried on to a higher plain, but he had something more valuable than furniture

stacked in the corner of his home, and that was several bushels of red wheat, which he had recently purchased at the "Mills Ranch" near the present town of Row, Nebr., paying two dollars per bushel for it and hauling it about sixty miles. That wheat must be saved, it represented money and labor and spoke prophetically of coming wealth. The river ran rapidly but the men worked heroically. The wheat was loaded into the wagon, provisions and bedding were piled on top. Daylight did not reveal a promising landscape. Every creek and ravine had become a rushing torrent—to cross the river to McFadden's was impossible, to go east to Gilmore's was also dangerous, as the swollen creek could not be crossed with a wagon.

They started north after reaching the divide, Mr. Taylor went east, reaching Gilmore's in safety, while Uncle Jerry with the precious burden landed at the old Millspanch ranch, near sundown, where Mr. John Harris was at that time living alone, selling a few supplies to the travellers along the old road.

A bountiful yield of wheat richly repaid Uncle Jerry for his trouble, but the old dugout was so nearly destroyed that he soon built a nice little log house. Uncle Jerry was a true nobleman, he loved company, and his mind was a storehouse from which he could draw many an interesting tale of his trip across the plains to California in the Fifties, and the days when he was a "Waggoner on the Old Pike" in Pennsylvania. Truly a country should become great, whose pioneer age was developed by characters like this, and the best monument the present York county could erect in honor of the past deeds worthy the memory of such men as Uncle Jerry Stanton and his companions, would only be a fitting tribute to them.

Death came even in the pioneer age and we think that perhaps, the first white woman buried in York county was Mrs. Eliza McFadden, youngest daughter of Uncle Jerry Stanton, and sister of Mrs. Kate Stark who now resides in McCool, a sweet delicate young woman who was beloved by many. Her death occurred in November, 1868, having been sick many months with tuberculosis of the lungs.

The kindly interest of the early settlers in each other was evident from the fact that often during her long illness many went from Beaver Crossing to Mrs. McFadden's home to help care for her. Neighbors were few, doctors and nurses far away, but those kind-hearted pioneers were so incessant in their care that the sick one wanted for nothing. On a bright November afternoon the funeral services were held. The pine casket had been made lovely by sympathetic hands, and as the November sun was sinking in the west, friends carried her tenderly from the home she had helped to rear, and laid her to rest. The old house has long since become a thing of the past, but the traveler who crosses the river on the old McFadden bridge can see a little grave on Mr. Kountz's farm, just south of the river. This marks the resting place of Mrs. Eliza Stanton-McFadden, the first among that great number to pass away. Women of whom we think, with a becoming reverence for their sacrifice and toil, has given to us the beautiful country of which we are so proud.

Sometimes in thought we erect a granite monument on which in letter of gold we can behold the names of the women of that age. The Mesdames Henderson, George, Dixon, McFadden, Bussard, Hollock, Deems, Gilmore and Anderson; but the monument is not needed, their names cannot be forgotten, for they did their part so well that their lives are inseparately woven into the history and character of York County.

H. W. Hoffmaster

H. W. Hoffmaster was born in Jefferson County, Virginia, September 17th, 1853. He remained with his parents until the spring of 1876. His father, John W. Hoffmaster, who died in Benedict some years ago, was in the Confederate army, under the great chieftain, Stonewall Jackson, and so it was that the young Horace saw much of the movements of the two armies in the Valley of Virginia. First the Grey and then the Blue, would sweep up the Shenandoah Valley leaving death and destruction in its wake.

Mr. Hoffmaster came west to Ogle County, Illinois in the year 1876, where he stayed but three years, coming to

York County, Nebraska in 1879. Here he purchased 80 acres of land on the southwest quarter of section 20 T. 12 N. range 2, W. now lying in Thayer township.

In 1882, he returned to his old Virginia home and brought away his bride, in the person of an old-time school-mate, Miss Alice O. Albin, and here he has lived happily ever since.

In 1897 he sold his farm and bought the residence of S. P. Striker in Benedict, and has been one of the prominent figures in this community for the past sixteen years. In his earlier years among us, he was a thresher, and is credited with having consumed more tough old chickens than any other man in the county, and always seemed to thrive on the diet.

He has lived to see the old sod-house disappear, and the land increase in value from \$5.00 an acre to \$200.00 per acre. This he considers to be the most wonderful thing in his experience in this state. He has a family of six grown children, having lost two in infancy. And here it is no more than just to him that we should say that he has reared as nice and respectable lot of young people as is to be found anywhere. As long as he lived on the farm, he was kept in the office of school director. In the great McKiegan year he made the political mistake of his life by running on the republican ticket for supervisor of Thayer Tp. After the ballots were counted, it did not appear that he had been running so you could notice it.

For two years he had the key to the strongbox holding the cash belonging to Morton Township, and will likely hold this position as long as he cares to. Like all good men he has one weakness—he does love a good joke, and there is never a day passes over his head that he does not rake up something to be used in keeping his old neighbor, the P. M. in mind that H. W. Hoffmaster is yet among the living.

William V. Powell

The subject of this sketch was born at an early age in Fayette County, Ohio, March 20th, 1836, on a farm near the

present county seat, Washington Court house. Mr. Powell's grandfather was a Welchman who came to this country many years ago, and finally located in Virginia, where his father, John Powell was born and reared. Mr. Powell's father and possibly his grandfather moved to Ohio in the last century, where his father married a German girl by name of Polly Miller, and William was the last of six children, he being the only boy. When about one year of age he lost his mother, and really never knew a mother's loving care, but had the good fortune to be taken by an excellent family, that of Hugh Rankin, with whom he lived until he was 14 years of age. At that age he ventured out into the big world to do for himself still making his home with Mr. Rankin when out of employment. When Powell had reached the age of 13, Mrs. Rankin, (her husband had died) sold her farm in Ohio, and removed to a farm near Peru, Indiana. At the age of 15 he got employment as an engineer in a steam sawmill, and worked at this vocation until the breaking out of the Civil War. On August 25th, 1861, he was mustered into Company A, 39th Indiana Vol. Inf., Col. T. J. Harrison, with Orris Blake as Captain of his company.

He participated in the battles of Mumfordsville, Shiloh, Berryville and Stoneriver or Murfreesboro, as it is best known. This great battle was fought December 31, 1862, and January 1st, 1863. There was a heavy cold rain falling the first day and night, and the exposure at this time was too much for many of the boys and they suffered from bad colds and pneumonia. Among those who went down with pneumonia was Mr. Powell, who was a very sick man for weeks, and when once convalescent was discharged as totally disabled, and it was a close call for him as he did not recover from the effects of this illness entirely for ten years. On reaching his home near Peru, Ind., he found himself just in time to hear his funeral sermon preached at the country church. He had been reported killed at the Stone-river, and his old friends at home were about to do the last honors to his name. They were very glad to change the sermon to one of thanksgiving for his safe return.

Mr. Powell's health improved so slowly, if indeed, it improved at all, that his physician advised him to go fur-

ther west into a higher and dryer climate, and so, he moved to Iowa, stopping in Jefferson County, near the little town of Batavia. He was so much helped by the change (this was in August, 1863) that by September 20th, 1864, he had mustered up courage to marry. The bride was the comely widow, Mrs. Sarah A. Marlowe, whose husband had died in battle at Prairie Grove, Arkansas. Mrs. Marlowe had one child, a little girl, Edith, who lived with Mr. and Mrs. Powell until her marriage to Edward Radley, and was well known to all the old settlers in northern York county.

For the first eight years of his married life, Mr. Powell farmed in Iowa, but in 1872, in company with J. H. Daggy, he came to York county, and homesteaded the northeast quarter of section 6, in town 12, range 2, in Thayer township. Mr. Daggy selected the N. W. quarter of the same section. They returned to Iowa and making sale there, packed up what they cared to keep and loaded their families into covered wagons took to the road leading to York county, where they arrived about Nov. 25, 1872.

Mr. Powell rented a farm of the late Captain J. B. Read, who though a Confederate Veteran, proved to be a good neighbor and friend. During the following winter, the neighbors took Powell and Daggy with them to the Platte river, some thirty miles to the northwest, for loads of wood. It was one of those trips that one of Mr. Daggy's horses broke loose in the night. Hank heard the animal making tracks away from their camp and whiningly complained to Bill, "There is that dratted old fool of a Jim-horse, he is going straight back to Iowa, and will swim the Missouri river and snag his fool-self to death, and then what will I do for a horse to put in my crop with." Old Jim, however, did not go far but returned to his mate, and he was a glad sight to Daggy, when he went out the next morning.

The one event that remains the clearest in the memories of the old settlers is the Great Easter Blizzard of April 13-14-15, 1873. For three days the storm was so severe that Mr. Powell was unable to reach his stable and care for his live-stock. He expected to find them all dead, but upon reaching the stable after the storm had some-

what abated on Wednesday afternoon, he found them alive and not much the worse for their long fast.

After the snow had all gone Powell and Daggy built sod-houses and moved upon their own land in June, 1873. They had put in a little wheat and a little sod-corn, which yielded very fairly, and they were much encouraged, but the following summer the Grasshoppers came down upon Nebraska, and cleaned up the corn and all the garden stuff, and that was the blow that "almost killed father." The "Hoppers" laid millions of eggs in the ground and this looked as if it were not possible to raise anything another year. One Sunday during the fall, Mr. M. Sovereign and family were visiting with the Daggy's, and Milt and Hank were walking out over the place, they stopped and made an estimate of the number of grasshopper eggs to the square inch, the number was near 4,000 to the square inch.

This settled the matter in their minds. The next week they pulled back for Iowa, but on counting the eggs over there, they found as many if not more, and so it was the next spring found them both on their Nebraska claims again. The "hoppers" came twice more, but did not injure us so badly as in 1874, and in a few years all had thrown off the grasshopper scare, and we have not seen them since.

Mr. Powell is the father of eight children—all of them living—and now having passed the three score and ten, he is taking life easy in his comfortable little cottage in Benedict with his good wife at his side.

Wray—LeCount.

Charles LeCount, whose French ancestors settled in this country in colonial times, was born in New York State, June 9, 1827. Amanda Jane Littlefield was born in Vermont, August 20, 1834. Her grandmother, Lois Stark Littlefield, was a relative of General Stark, and members of the family served in the Green Mountain and Ticonderoga campaigns of the Revolutionary war.



ARTHUR G. WRAY

Probate Judge of York County, York, Nebraska.

Charles LeCount and Amanda Jane Littlefield were married in Dodge County, Wisconsin. Four children were born to them: Adelaide A. (born July 17, 1855), John C., Charles A., and Laura M. The family moved to York County, Nebraska, in 1869, and homesteaded on section 24-10-1. Afterwards, Charles LeCount moved to York and engaged in the hardware business. He was elected a member of the town council, and served as chairman of the board during the early temperance fight. Some of the sessions of the council lasted all night and the women brought the men their breakfasts in the morning. Charles LeCount stood firm for temperance and was one of those who led in the fight to make York a clean city. He was also treasurer of the York School district for many years and laid out the addition to the city of York which bears his name. In 1885 he sold his business and settled in the south. He and his wife died in Waycross, Ga., aged 79 and 77 years respectively.

His daughter, Adelaide A. LeCount, was educated in the common schools and at Doane Academy, Crete, Nebr. She taught school in York County and was married to William Wray March 18, 1875. William Wray was born in Janesville, Wis., February 3rd, 1852. He was the third son of John Wray (a stone mason, born in England) and Hannah Glendenning Wray (born in Scotland). At the age of fourteen he was apprenticed and learned the blacksmith trade. When 20 years of age (in 1872) he came overland to Nebraska and established a shop of his own in the east part of York County. He moved his business to York after his marriage and worked continually at his trade until his sudden death, which occurred October 20, 1906 while at work in his shop. He was a good workman and a man of exceptional qualities of mind and heart.

Charles LeCount Wray, the oldest son of William and Adelaide A. Wray, was born in York, Nebraska, January 22, 1877. He graduated from York High School in June 1897, and completed his education at York College, the state University, and Northwestern University. He began teaching in the country schools of York county, later became principal of the Utica schools, then assistant in York High

School, and is now teaching in the schools of Salt Lake City.

Arthur G. Wray, the second son of William and Adelaide A. Wray, was born in York, Nebraska, March 14, 1880, and graduated from York High School, in June 1898. He won the state high school declamatory contest for York in May 1898. Afterwards studied law and attended the Baptist College at Grand Island, making his way by teaching in the preparatory department and boarding himself. When twenty years of age he passed the bar examination before the supreme court. Although the youngest in a large class, he was in a close race for first place. The supreme court withheld his certificate until he was of legal age, and he continued in college in the meantime. A year later he began active practice of the law in York and was in partnership with Merton Meeker and Frederick C. Power. He held positions under appointments of the state senate and the supreme court in 1905 and 1906, and was elected judge of York County in 1907. Re-elected in 1909, and again in 1911, and is now serving his third term as county judge. He was married June 30, 1909, to Miss Clara R. Gifford (a graduate of the class of 1898 Y. H. S. and one of the teachers in the York schools). They have one boy, Merton Gifford Wray, born December 10, 1911. In 1912, Judge Wray was elected chairman of the first state convention of the progressive party; a delegate at large to the national convention at Chicago, August 5, 1912; and represented Nebraska on the national platform committee of the progressive party. In June 1913, he was elected a trustee of Grand Island College, and the first president of the York Church Federation.

William B. Wray, the third son of William and Adelaide A. Wray, was born at York, Nebraska, June 23, 1884. He did not complete his high school course but left school to learn a trade. He moved to Cass County and is now in business for himself at Elmwood, Nebr. He married Miss Myrtle Gustin of that place, and they are the parents of three boys: Bruce, Arthur G., and Wallace W.

Esther J. Wray, the only daughter of William and Adelaide A. Wray, was born in York, Nebraska, September



MR. AND MRS. P. J. RUCH
Early Settlers in Arborville Township

21, 1893. She is now completing her high school course and makes her home with her mother in York.

Philip Ruch

Philip Ruch was born in Strassburg, France in the winter of 1855. When but a boy of fifteen he decided to heed the solicitation of an older brother in America and also leave the home land.

After a storm tossed voyage lasting eighty-eight days he was finally landed in New York, March 4, 1856. A stranger in a strange land, weary and disappointed that the brother did not meet him. He had grown weary of waiting for the vessel so long overdue and left the city, but the same kind hand of Providence that has many times since protected him placed him among friends who gave him work and helped locate his brother in Buffalo. From here he worked his way westward until in the spring of '61 he was working on a farm where the city of Alpha, Ill., now stands. When word reached the farm that Lincoln had called for 75 thousand volunteers, without a moment's hesitation he threw down his ax and said "I am going." Accordingly in May, '61 he enlisted for three years in Co. D., 17 Ill., where he served until the battle of Vicksburg. Here he was wounded in the left side a little above the region of the heart. As soon as he was able he was given a furlough and sent home. He was only down but not out for before the wound was fairly healed he had reinlisted for three years more or until the close of the war. At this time his regiment was consolidated with Co. E of the Eighth, Ill., where he served until he was mustered out in May, 1866. Some of the important battles in which he participated were the battles of Fredricks-town, Ft. Donaldson, Shiloh Corinth, Mobile, Spanish fort, and many others. After receiving his discharge he returned to Illionis and went to work on the same farm from which he enlisted. He was married January 14, 1868 to Miss Mary E. Calkins of Viola, Ill., where they lived until 1872, when they decided to take Greeley's advice and "Go west." Late in the fall he hitched a span of well matched iron grays to a covered wagon and started for Nebraska, finally

locating a quarter section on Section 8 in the northwest part of York county. After filing his homestead papers he drove back to Illinois to stay until spring. Again in February he started overland for his Nebraska homestead, crossed the Mississippi and Missouri rivers on the ice and traveled for days with the thermometer at 15 degrees below zero. On reaching the homestead he at once began preparations for the dugout, hauling what lumber he used from Fairmont, the nearest railroad station at that time, and wood for fuel from the Platte River, then he drove back as far as Plattsmouth to meet the wife and children, a son and daughter. Reaching the homestead once more just the day before the memorable April Blizzard. This was a trying time, but not so heartbreaking as when the grasshoppers literally devoured everything a few years later. Another son and daughter came to bless this union. The younger daughter was called to her last resting place when she was about 23 years of age. The younger son has been living on the old homestead in a substantial farm house, built many years ago to take the place of the old dugout. Since Mr. and Mrs. Ruch moved to their home in Bradshaw, where they now reside, their daughter living near them and the oldest son lives on a farm near Arborville.

H. C. Kleinschmidt

York has no more loyal citizens and no truer lover than H. C. Kleinschmidt, the veteran merchant. He has lived here since 1871 when he came as a boy in search of health. He was in at the beginning and knows York as it has been and as it is now and it suits him, even though it has faults. By accident pure and simple Mr. Kleinschmidt was led into the land of reminiscense the other morning and though he will probably be surprised to know that some of the things he said have found their way into print he will not regard the fact as a breach of confidence when he realizes how deeply interesting the tales of other days are to the generation of later comers to Nebraska.

Mr. Kleinschmidt has a good memory for things which happened many years ago. He recalls vividly the experiences of his childhood when his father, a minister in the Ger-



MR. AND MRS. H. C. KLEINSCHMIDT
Oldest Residents in York

man Methodist church, was obliged to travel a four weeks circuit leaving his wife and children alone in a little home on the banks of the Missouri river in Missouri. He remembers how beautiful the woods were and how full of game, and the deer that used to come to the house at night and gaze in at the candles standing lighted by the windows. He remembers how when five years old he, with his brother, was lost for two days and two nights in the forests near the great river and wandered cold and hungry until found by their distracted parents. With such a pioneer bringing up it is no wonder that as a young man Mr. Kleinschmidt sought a home on Nebraska prairies. In the fall of 1871 he and his partner, Mr. Bramstedt, paid twenty-five dollars to the South Platte land company for a lot on what is now the west side of the square. There the young men erected a two story frame store building. This stood about midway in the block. The lumber was hauled from Lincoln. It cost \$60 a thousand and the price of hauling it to York was \$12 per thousand more. Later the same material could have been purchased for \$25 per thousand on the ground, but Mr. Kleinschmidt found that settlers were regarded as an easy mark by dealers at the sources of supply in those days. The land office and Mrs. Wilson's millinery store were other buildings on the street with the new general store and the county court house was a sod building located west of where the First National bank now stands. J. H. and F. O. Bell kept a store on the Hannis corner too.

There proved to be more trade than money in the new country. People were obliged to eat and be clothed whether they had the where-with-all or not. The new firm had the goods and let them go to supply need, taking in return what they could get. When Mr. Kleinschmidt wants to indulge in day dreams he speculates as to what he would do if he had the \$17,000 which he estimates he donated towards the support of the first settlers of York county.

"I loaned one man the money to square up with Uncle Sam for his claim," he said. "Now he owns five quarters of York county land and I am still selling prunes."

But Mr. Kleinschmidt does not seem to regret the money or the help he gave in those days. The people were grate-

ful and the spirit of helpfulness and brotherly kindness was alive. The neighbors knew each other's joys and sorrows in a much greater degree than is possible now and everybody was sociable and friendly. On the arrival of a stranger from that indefinite place known as "the east" the business men and residents in the little town were wont to gather about the new comer and give him a hearty welcome without questioning too closely into his past. When trouble came everybody joined hands and kind hearts found ways of showing sympathy.

The people did not have money to spend for luxuries then. Mr. Kleinschmidt bought a box of oranges in the early summer of 1872, thinking that the settlers would enjoy them as a "treat" for the Fourth of July. But half that box of oranges spoiled because the demand was so light. One kind of fruit never failed to sell. Dried currants were a staple. The grocer bought them by the barrel. The homesteader took them out by the dollars worth. Currant pie and currant sauce appeared on the tables of all men from the northern to the southern limits of the county and everybody liked currants.

In 1877 Mr. Kleinschmidt built the cottage on north Lincoln avenue where he now lives. When he bought the land on which his home was placed he paid at the rate of five dollars a lot. He does not want to sell his home, but if he did, the price would be a trifle higher. During his forty one years in York Mr. Kleinschmidt has had experience in the merchandise business, in banking and as deputy county clerk. He has had a hand in the making of the community and whether he ever gets all the credit belonging to him for his share in the good work or not he is satisfied with results, and when he goes away from York for a visit declares he is always glad to get back.

David Henderson

David Henderson, one of the sturdy pioneers of York county, came to Nebraska in the year 1866 in company with his family and located in the extreme south west part of the county.

He was a native of Scotland, born 1813 in Perth-shire, often referred to as "the fairest country in all Scotland." When a youth he served an apprenticeship of seven years, as cabinet maker, and like Adam Bede, "became a workman of skill." When nineteen years of age he went to Liverpool, England, and worked with the large firm of Miller and Blakie. In 1837, was married to Helen Brown of Glasgow Scotland. The three eldest children; John, Mary and Janet, were born in Liverpool. In the year 1844, in company with his brother-in-law, John Brown, and others, he emigrated to America. They settled in and near Janesville, Wis., where he took contracts for buildings, leaving many land marks. The times offered some inducements to buy land. He then bought a farm in Green county, Wis., where he lived until coming to Nebraska. His children, Agnes, Robert and Nellie were born in Janesville; Elizabeth in Green county.

On being questioned why he came west so late in life he might have said, "how far the strings of love do pull us." His son-in-law, Daniel George, was preparing to go west. This meant a separation of the family as Mrs. George and her sister, Janet, were soon to follow.

Soon the farm was sold and preparations were made for the long journey. He, the most eager to start. Five families were soon on their way, crossing the Missouri river in a ferry boat. The last of June found them camped at West Mills, near Camden for a few days rest and recreation. Here they spent the first 4th of July in Nebraska. Soon the men of the party made a trip farther west, leaving the freight road and following the Blue river. Here they found well known early settlers who kindly helped them locate claims where wood and water were plentiful. Nebraska City being the nearest land office, it was necessary to make a return trip to secure their land. This being accomplished, they resumed their journey, via., of the Jack Smith and Jack Stone ranches, since made historic. After traveling some distance west of these places they left the freight road and went south west, over trackless prairies. No bridges in sight! Forging streams became a pastime. When near the close of a hot July day, the travelers sighted

trees, and soon the camp fire was lighted for the night." "Under our own vine and fig tree."

After this, frequent trips were made to Nebraska City and Brownville for the purchase of provisions and stock for the new farm. Soon a hewn log-house of no mean proportions was built and by the 5th of December all were comfortably housed. Autumn weather was beautiful as it always is in Nebraska. Strolling bands of Pawnees were frequent visitors in their bright picturesque garb, riding fleet footed ponies. It made a sight at once novel and interesting. Never harmful or troublesome, and were really missed when they came no more. The following spring began the realities of opening up the soil, and planting trees. Civilization began to dawn after the advent of a few more families.

The Rev. Davis, a Baptist minister and old friend from Montecello, Wis., preached the first sermon in the new log house. The latter became a hostellery for all. From far and near, came the tide of immigration, all were made welcome if not comfortable. First school was kept in a small house belonging to E. D. Copsey and taught by Mrs. Jarvis Chaffa. David Henderson built the first frame school house with a promise of help by the neighbors. Sunday school was held in the houses, people attending from a long distance. Mrs. Henderson, though never quite reconciled to the idea of bringing her family to the frontier, was ever ready to lend her time and talent for the good of the Young people. Her hearty greetings and kindly ways enlivened many occasions.

She made firm friends of people in search of new homes and often, as David's teams were the only ones available, they made long pilgrimages with them to locate some new homesteader.

Suffering and hardships were unknown, trials and enbarrassments were many. He came quite well equipped for farming; six good horses, money enough to tide him over for a few years. For an example of the high cost of living, Robert and the present Mrs. E. D. Copsey went to Porcupine station for the mail and to bring a fresh supply of groceries. A small store was kept by two brothers by the



MRS. E. D. GOPSEY
First York County Girl Married



E. D. GOPSEY
First York County Young Man to Marry

name of Higgins. They bought a sack of flour which cost nine dollars, and a piece of very dark complexioned bacon, which the less sagacious brother said "had been kept on the roof of the sod house," and for which they paid 40c per pound.

Often such men as F. A. Bidwell, Fred Roper, and Moses Sydenhom sojourned with them, partaking of their hospitality—such as it was—and gave a helping hand in organizing her beloved Sunday school. At one time the late H. T. Clark of Omaha, when passing through the country gave her the first S. S. library.

Time changes were rung in and Mr. Henderson in his 75th year, made a voyage to Melbourne, Australia, to visit a younger brother. This seemed to round out and complete the last years of his life as he had a pleasant voyage and most delightful company. After returning, lived like a patriarch of old, surrounded by his children and grand children. But it was not long for either to live. They had the "courage of their convictions." This was indeed a great country which they saw develop beyond their highest expectations.

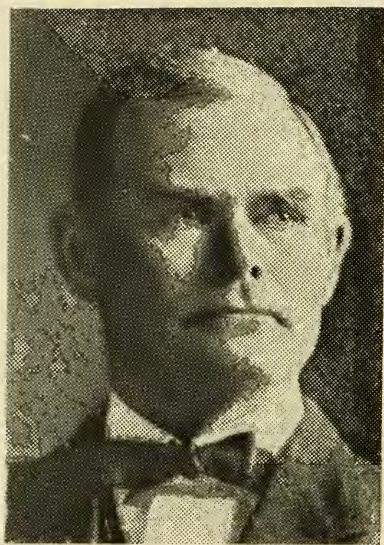
NELLIE H. YOUNG.

E. D. Copsey
In York County 1866-67

E. D. Copsey was born at Litchfield, N. Y., April 1, 1841. Came with his parents to Crawford county, Wis. Enlisted in the 8th Wisconsin Reg. in '61. Served three years; then re-enlisted in a N. Y. regiment where he served one year. At the expiration of his service he went back to Wisconsin where he engaged in farming for one year, but the "call of the wild" was stronger than the broken home ties, and in the spring of 1867 with a party of friends and their families he came to York County, Nebraska and filed on a homestead in the southwest corner of the county near the Blue river. Oct. 26th he was married to Janet Henderson, daughter of David Henderson, the senior pioneer of that township. From that date begins the story of We, I & Co. In addition to our homestead, we bought a quarter section of R. R. land at nine dollars per acre on ten years

time, our first house built of logs was neither roomy or elegant, but we "builded better than we knew," and it soon gave place to a commodous and comfortable frame dwelling, which we occupied for 25 years, and left it with some regrets. "Into all lives, some rain must fall." We had our share, but on the whole there was more of sunshine than shadow. Life did not always flow along like a song, but we were young; had strong hearts and willing hands. We had reverses; sometimes a little discouraged, but never waded so far in the "Slough of Despond" that we could not wade back. We were too busy. We did not have the time. Time went on, and many of our old frieinds and neighbors followed us, and met with a warm welcome. Strangers came and ties of friendship were formed that were only broken when one by one many dropped by the wayside. Our four children, three sons and one daughter, grew up and are following the trail we blazed for them so long ago. I cannot close this short bit of history without a word for my father and mother. Past middle age when they came here, my father went bravely to work to improve his land and make a home. We younger people little appreciated the fact that he was sowing for others to reap. With the help of his two sons, and my younger sisters, a fine farm home was built and belongs to the family yet. Mother was very homesick the first year, but the next summer brought her sister, Mrs. Waddle and family and other friends. Then it began to seem like home. She was happy and contented. Their hospitality was only bounded by the size of their house, and many were the strangers that were housed and feed at their home. Father, mother, one brother and one sister have crossed the bar. Five are left of a family of seven who came in '66. "Soon, we too will hear the last strong call" and hope to meet them again. After a lapse of forty-seven years, we can look back to the time when we stood, like children playing by the bank of a river, watching the golden sand as it floated by but, never realizing that it was golden. We, unthinkingly, were making history. Other hands are taking up the work where we are laying it down, and making York county as it has always been, the best county in Nebraska.

Mrs. JANET HENDERSON, COPSEY.



T. W. SMITH.

T. W. Smith

Thomas William Smith was born at Ormstown, Province of Quebeck, Canada, Nov. 12th, 1853, and immigrated to Grundy County, Ill., April 1869, married Fannie Lincoln at Morrison, Ill., in 1873 and moved to York County, Nebraska, April 18, 1874, and purchased the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ 21-9-3 from the B. & M. R. R. Co., and began his pioneer life by building a sod house and buying a yoke of oxen, and has "grown up with the country" and now not only owns his own original farm, but owns 500 acres of improved farms in York County, besides one of the best residences in York.

Mr. Smith has also interested himself in public affairs, was a delegate to the first Democratic Convention ever held in York County; this convention was held in 1878, William Armstrong was Chairman and John Etherly, Secretary. The delegates were Elias Gilmore, John P. Cook, Ed. Bates, Peter H. Pursel, Josiah Lichtenberger, Dick Brabham, Phil Bohl, Ben Willis, Bert Campbell and T. W. Smith; of the 12 members of that convention only three are at this date (May 1913) living, Ben Willis, Ed. Bates and T. W. Smith.

Mr. Smith was a member of the Board of County Supervisors 1885 and 1886, and was chairman of the Board the last year though a large majority of the Board were republicans.

In 1887 Mr. Smith, G. W. Post and Lee Love bought the Blue River Bank at McCool and he was elected Vice President and has held that position in the bank ever since, and for the last seven years has been a Director in the First National Bank of York.

In 1887 Mr. Smith was employed by the K. C. & O. R. R., in buying its Right of Way through York County and it was through his influence the road was built from Henderson east to McCool, and he secured the location of the village of McCool Junction (the road was first surveyed direct from Henderson to York). Mr. Smith was the first to place the town lots on the market.

After the town of McCool was established he moved to the place and for 17 years was engaged in the grain business, and for 23 years was the popular auctioneer in York County, in the mean time he moved to York and in 1905 was elected a member of the City Council and served on the council for two years, the last year, 1906 he ably assisted in securing the first paving district for the city.

In 1909 Governor Shallenberger appointed Mr. Smith warden of the State Penitentiary and his administration was commended by both political parties, he, for the first time in the history of the institution, put it on a paying basis, and when Mr. Smith made his final report, its showing of the successful management of the penitentiary awakened an interest in other states, and a second edition of the report had to be issued to supply the demand.

Daniel George

Daniel George was born in Hampshire, England, Nov. 25th, 1835, and came to America with his father, mother and six brothers in the fall of 1839. They settled in Green County, Wis. He and his brother grew to manhood in what was then a wild new country. They walked four miles to school, the school house being a log building; and as lads, drove freight wagons drawn by oxen, hauling lead ore one way, and merchandise the other between Chicago and Milwaukee. Chicago at that time was a few shanties, and the conveyance that met the traveler at the landing on the lake shore, was drawn by an ox. When Dan grew to mans estate he followed farming as an occupation. He was married to Mary Henderson Dec. 31, 1859 and in the spring of 1864 he went with his family to Crawford County, Wis., where he had an 80 acre farm of poor hilly clay land. He lived there until he enlisted in Co. K 46 Wis. Vol. Infantry. He was honorably discharged in Sept. 1865 and as "Uncle Sam" had promised his soldiers a farm, thought it a good time to go after it. Accordingly he sold his hilly farm, packed his family and belongings into a prairie schooner, drawn by two yoke of oxen and started out to find a new home in the county drained by the Big Blue River, that had been described in letters written by two

brothers, who had gone to Pikes Peak early in the year 1860.

The little company of twenty people, six men, five women, five children, three young ladies and a lad of sixteen years started from the old home in Wisconsin, May 19, 1866, traveling in wagons drawn by horses and oxen. They landed near the site of their future homes in the southwest corner of York County, July 8 of the same year. When the county was organized, Dan, with his relatives, came across the prairie to be at the organization. There were no roads and twenty miles seemed farther than twice that many over a road.

He carried his rifle, thinking he might see something to shoot, an elk, antelope or deer, and got back home sometime during the night following the day of the organization. He lived on the farm "Uncle Sam" gave him thirty-six years lived to see the treeless prairies dotted with groves and covered with comfortable farm homes, towns and cities. On account of failing health he sold the farm that he considered too good to rent, and moved to the city of York, where he died October 21, 1905, being survived by his aged wife and three daughters.

ROSE GEORGE WRIGHT.

The girl that came with the oxen and the covered wagons.

Hon. J. B. Steward

Hon. J. B. Steward, son of Isaac Steward (who on May 2 1913 celebrated his one hundredth birthday at Selma, California) was born in York County, Pennsylvania on April 14, 1850, where he grew to manhood on a farm, attending the country schools during the winter. Shortly before he reached majority he was united in marriage to Miss Mary Meads. The young couple saw clearly that if ever they were to have a home worthy of the name, it would be necessary to go West where land was both cheaper and better, made up their minds to lose no time. So, in the Autumn of 1870, they came as far toward sunset as Columbus Junction, Iowa. Here Mr. Steward worked on a farm as a hired man for two years. At this time there

was a stream of "Movers" trekking across Iowa to the Government lands of Nebraska. Again the Stewards concluded that it would be wise to go West and finally grow up with the country. It was now pretty well along in the winter of 1872, but they loaded up a covered wagon and with a cow or two they started "for the promised land." March 8th, 1873, they halted upon the identical piece of land now occupied by Mr. Steward, and which has been his home ever since. Here he took off his covered wagon-box, and in this he lived until his house was completed. On the morning of the third day after his arrival, he noticed a wagonload of men driving along the west line of the section and going North. In an hour or two later, he noticed two wagon loads of men coming down from the North and they drove onto his land and up to where he was camped. They constituted the Vigilance Committee, so they said, and he had squated on a piece of land that was claimed by another man. He must vamoose, and that quickly, for they would not tolerate claim jumping. Mr. Steward called their attention to the fact that there was no filing on this land on record at the Lincoln Land office, and he would not vamoose a little bit. He was no claim jumper and they had not better accuse him of that again. It was plain to these gentlemen that they had run against a snag, and they changed tunes, now saying that he had best go peaceably for none of them would neighbor with him. The change was so sudden and so great that J. B. smelled a mice, and smilingly told them as tough as it would be to live without neighbors, he would try to get along without them, perhaps other people would come after awhile who would not be so particular. This little speech convinced them that Steward meant to stay, and here they hauled down their flag and said they might as well all be friends, and one of the party sold him a ton of good hay, and getting his pay in cash departed in the best of spirits. The facts were that a certain family in which there were four men were trying to keep all the land on this section covered up until they could legally enter it either as tree claims or pre-emptions for there was but one Soldier in the family and the others could only homestead eighty acres each. Strange to relate there never was any further trouble with these men, and every one of them became fast friends of

J. B. Steward and so remained as long as they lived in York County. Of course the Steward family had their share of grief in the Easter storm of April 13, 1873. They had been located less than five weeks when this new sort of snow storm hit them, and the flour was all gone, no cornmeal and not a great deal of coffee left in the can. It was starve or eat potatoes, and for four days, John says, they had nothing but potatoes, salt and coffee. For years Mr. Steward could not see potatoes brought upon his table without weeping, and even to this day, he regards the Irish potatoes as the most sacred thing in the vegetable kingdom.

They prospered as did their neighbors, had their pleasures and hardships, and rejoiced in the possession of a spot that they could call "home."

But a cloud fell upon that happy little family, the wife and mother sickened and died. You who, today, are possessed of every comfort that money can buy, little realize what that death meant to a man with three small children living in a sod house on these, then bleak prairies. Mary Steward was buried on the plat of land now owned by Dist. No. 43 in Polk County, but was removed later when the Benedict cemetery was laid out.

A year later in 1878, Mr. Steward was married to Mrs. Margaret Bobo who for all these intervening years has been a faithful wife to him and a good mother to all of his children. There were three children by the first wife and four by the second. Two of his first family have died, but all of the second wife's children are yet living.

Like most ambitious men, Mr. Steward thought he would like a flyer in politics and so when McKeighan ran for Congress in 1890, Mr. Steward made the race for the legislature and was elected to the lower house from York County. Here he served on the Finance, Public Lands & Buildings, Penitentiary and Miscellaneous Committees, making a good record. One hitch at politics satisfied J. B. that it was no place for an honest man, and he straightway quit the deal, believing that he could make more money on the farm and make it easier. In 1892, Gov. Boyd appointed him as one of the eight commissioners to represent Ne-

braska at the Chicago Exposition, and for two years he gave much of his time, serving as one of two men who built the Nebraska building. As soon as the State building was completed, the Chief Commissioner for Nebraska sent out appeals to the various counties to send in Exhibits of their farm and manufactured products. Not more than half a dozen counties had responded until Chief Com. Garneau realized that the building was too small by half and called his entire committee in to consult as to what should be done. He was in favor of sending out circular letters to the other counties that there was no more room and that they should not send their exhibits. This he thought, would be all that was necessary. Understanding human nature, Mr. Steward here craved a few minutes to make his say, which was to the effect that such a letter would surely bring an exhibit, and a large one, too, from every county in the state. The majority of those present agreed with Mr. Steward and thanked him for saving their lives. It was plain that the only course was to not say a word to anyone about lack of room but take chances on any more coming in. This proved to be the solution of the matter for not another county reported. In 1908, Mr. Steward was elected President of the Nebraska Mutual Life Ins. Company, now located at Hastings, Nebraska., which he had helped organize in Stromsburg some ten years before. He has been twice re-elected to this office, and has had the satisfaction of helping to build up one of the most creditable of our State companies. Mr. Steward yet lives where he unloaded his emigrant wagon in March, 1873, and if he attains the age of his good old father, will be with us nearly forty yers. Here's hoping that he will.

Robt. Henderson

Robt. W. Henderson came to Nebraska with his parents in 1866 when but a youth. Having left schools and boyhood companion far away he began a new life on the frontier. Owing to the very different surroundings, time seemed to pass away very quickly. His experience proved quite conclusively that all learning is not found in colleges and schools. The one boy on horseback was often found



ROBERT HENDERSON

Raised the first crop in York Precinct, on the
Jack Stone Ranch, 1866.

available for making hardy trips back and forth to Milford and Camden for the mail until arrangements could be made with the stage drivers to bring it from Porcupine Station, a distance of twelve mile. For some time he served in the capacity of guide to the traveler and friend to the women and children. Game was plentiful; elk, antelope and wild turkey. On two different occasions buffalo were seen from the door. The winter of 1867 D. George, R. Fairbank and Robt. when on a hunting tour shot a fine elk near where the town of Stockham, Neb. now is. A noteworthy instance when neighbor Chaffees fine young team, strayed away and he had searched in vain for days with the help of other men, until strength and means were nearly exhausted. As a last resort he asked Robt. to assist. They quickly mounted horses and started in a northeasterly direction and after reaching what is now called the Baker farm, near York, they struck a trail made by a lariet rope, drawn by one of the horses. This formed a slight ridge in the snow which they followed as far as the Platte River when just at dark they found the horses grazing through the snow. Here they started a camp fire, intending to spend the night by it, when finally a light glimmered faintly in a window some distance away. They again started out, on the way to the house. Here they found two young men living, who bade them come in, and they were given comfortable lodging and a place for their horses. This was near where Central City now stands. The next day they reached home, tired and hungry, but victorious. Later on, when funds ran low, it became necessary for the young men to find employment on the Platte. On one occasion James Cummings, Robt. Waddel, Robt. Henderson and an "old timer" by the name of Harris, wishing to cross the Platte near Grand Island when the water was very high, they constructed a raft which was to carry their clothing. John Harris being a good swimmer, engaged to pull the raft by a rope held by his teeth, they to follow after by holding on behind. They were stranded on an island for several hours. Cummings saw his boots float away in the waters of the Platte never to return. However, they succeeded in reaching shore, none the worse for their experience. When the Sioux made the memorable raid on the Campbell ranch he went to the Platte on horseback. He

saw while there the desolated homes of settlers. A mother lying dead, her infant child playing in her blood. Another occasion while herding cattle for Fred Evans of Grand Island it was rumored that a great gathering of Indians were on the Blue river. He became anxious for the safety of the folks at home and abandoned work and started alone on horseback, well armed to be sure, thirty-five miles of treeless, trackless prairie, momentarily expecting to meet a band of red men but on reaching the settlement, found that several hundred Indians had been there, but were gone and had been friendly to the whites. Among them being the great chief, Peta-le-sharu. As farms grew more productive he turned his attention to stock raising, buying and shipping, as well as feeding, being his chosen vocation. He has filled offices of trust and honor, both County and State, with credit to himself and constituents. Here through privations and deeds of noble daring, men found character of high standard, they need no other monument than these, their works, the wonder of the West.

Mrs. Cap. J. B. Read

For answer to a request for my experience during the pioneer days in York county, I will say, it was not that we were intending to profit by Horace Greeley's advice to "Go West and grow up with the country" that brought us to Nebraska. We drifted in, as it were, intending to go on to California. We drove from Omaha by way of Fremont, over the Prairie from which the grass had recently been burned, and late one Sunday afternoon in April, 1870, we stopped at D. T. Moore's and asked for shelter for the night. It set in for a good rain, which continued for three days and during that time my husband, J. B. Read decided he would settle here. We pre-empted one hundred and sixty acres three miles north of York, built a two roomed sod house, a sod stable, dug a cave and had a well dug. We had to go to Lincoln for our housekeeping outfit and I tried every place while there, to buy feathers enough for two pillows, but not an ounce could I find, so when I returned home I made hay pillows and a hay bed which we used until we could get our bed and bedding shipped to us, which was a long tedious task, owing to our lack of mail

facilities and so far from a railroad. We received our mail at Beaver Crossing and only once a week, and it was there we sent our letters to be mailed. Upon one occasion when I was so anxious to get that precious bed and bedding here, I found myself without letter paper, but a letter must be sent, so it was written on light brown wrapping paper.

Prairie chickens were numerous and my husband, being a good marksman, we enjoyed many a feast on wild game. And here, I will relate my own experience in the "chase." One day, seeing a deer enter a ravine and her fawn by her side, I was filled with a wild desire to capture that baby deer. So I started out with a dog, and when I came to the ravine the old deer bounded away over the Prairie with the dog in pursuit. After searching the weeds for a while I saw this little deer had slipped out and was going in the direction its mother had gone. Then came a race that I realized must be a "home stretch" from the beginning and I threw off my bonnet and bent every energy to the task. When within a few yards from it the little animal seemed to realize its danger and dropped in the grass to hide. I took it home and it became my companion in many rambles over the prairies.

When we had been here a year, grief came to us in the death of our three months old babe, our first born. No coffin could be procured nearer than Plattsmouth, so we sought the service of a carpenter, and that it might not look so much like a pine box, I sent a broad cloth cloak to cover it, but there were no tacks with which to fasten the cloth in place; none to be found nearer than Seward. Pins were cut in two and by crossing them made to do service. Another difficulty arose when time to close the coffin, there were no screws with which to fasten the lid. Judge Moore took one of his doors from the hinges that the screws might be used.

After paying for our hundred and sixty acres, we homesteaded an eighty two miles farther north and virtually began again at the bottom of the ladder to build, break prairie and plant trees.

Then the grasshoppers came, but we were better prepared to meet the disaster than in previous years. We had

saw while there the desolated homes of settlers. A mother lying dead, her infant child playing in her blood. Another occasion while herding cattle for Fred Evans of Grand Island it was rumored that a great gathering of Indians were on the Blue river. He became anxious for the safety of the folks at home and abandoned work and started alone on horseback, well armed to be sure, thirty-five miles of treeless, trackless prairie, momentarily expecting to meet a band of red men but on reaching the settlement, found that several hundred Indians had been there, but were gone and had been friendly to the whites. Among them being the great chief, Peta-le-sharu. As farms grew more productive he turned his attention to stock raising, buying and shipping, as well as feeding, being his chosen vocation. He has filled offices of trust and honor, both County and State, with credit to himself and constituents. Here through privations and deeds of noble daring, men found character of high standard, they need no other monument than these, their works, the wonder of the West.

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plenty of wheat, fattened two hogs on wheat and raised potatoes enough to last all winter and for seed at planting time.

Of the hardships and privations that were the common lot of all who came in the early days, I will not write, it is too well known to those who stood so loyally together on the bleak, black waste of the York County of that day.

MRS. CAP. J. B. READ.

Alfonso D. Wyckoff

Alfonso D. Wyckoff, son of Asher and Armarilla Wyckoff, was born in Brown County, Ohio, June 17th, 1830 and in 1838 removed with his parents to Putnam County, Illinois, where he spent his early life, being apprenticed to a cabinet maker when he was sixteen years of age. He joined the early gold seekers making the trip to California by the way of the Nicaragua Route in 1852. The sailing vessel on which he took passage on the Pacific being blown out of its course, finally put in at Honolulu where Mr. Wyckoff remained for six months, afterwards working his way to California as ship-carpenter on a sailing vessel. After working in the mines and at carpentering in California he returned to Illinois in 1855 and spent four years in acquiring a collegiate education at Wheaton College; he then entered the ministry, and was ordained in the Congregational church in 1863. He entered the army as Chaplain of the 64th. Ill., Vol. Inf., serving until the close of the war; returning to Illinois he served as pastor at different places until 1872, when his eyesight having failed he was compelled to give up the ministry, and after engaging in the furniture business for a year or two he went into the drug business with his brother in the town of Chebanse, Iroquois County, Illinois. He moved from this place to Roberts, Ford County, Illinois, and from there came to York in 1880, purchasing the building and drug store of Dr. W. H. Geer. In 1883 he erected the brick building now standing at No. 103 East Sixth Street, which was one of the first brick buildings to be built in the city. Mr. Wyckoff retired from active business in 1888, disposing of his interest in the drug business to Dr. A. J. Ryan.



JOHN H. PARKER

Pioneer Settler of Thayer Township

He was mayor of the city of York in 1888-1889. During his term of office the City Hall was built and the system of water works completed.

Mr. Wyckoff was married in 1852 to Lovina Beresford, who died in York in the year 1890. His children are Helen L. Wyckoff, who has been a teacher in the Omaha schools for nearly thirty years; W. W. Wyckoff, a well known resident of the city of York; Flora M. Cameron, who died in 1894, and Rilla L. Boynton now residing with her husband, C. M. Boynton, in Kansas City, Missouri. Mr. Wyckoff was married to Mrs. Sarah M. McGraw in 1893, and in 1894 removed to Southern California where he is now living in Escondido, San Diego County.

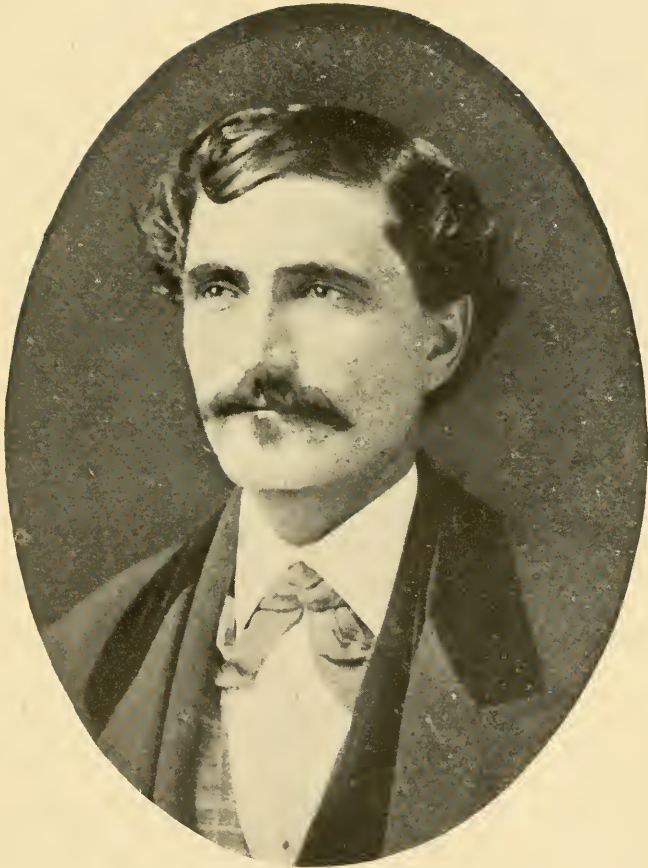
John H. Parker

The writer of this sketch was born in Woodford County Ill., May 18th, 1832; in 1846 moved to McClean County, Ill., with his father, who was an M. D., and who died in 1849 with cholera. On September 8th, 1859, the writer was married to Mrs. Sarah Price Stillwell, the mother of three children; two boys and one girl; the boys both having died in infancy, the girl (now Mrs. C. S. Hesser) lives in York, Nebraska. To Mr. and Mrs. Parker were born seven children, three girls and four boys, one girl died of whooping cough at five weeks of age, the others are all living. Mrs. Parker died March the first 1901, aged 66 years. She was a member of the Christian church and lived a Christian life. Mr. Parker enlisted in Co. H. 94th Ill. Inft., August 1st, 1862 and served in the army until August 9th, 1865. He moved to Iowa in the fall of 1865, and in 1868 moved to Nebraska and settled on Sec. 34, Town 12, N. Range 2, W., April 14th, 1869, where he still resides. At the organization of the county, one precinct voted at his house, there were cast in said precinct, 71 votes. This precinct (No. 3) embraced the entire north half of the county. Mrs. C. S. Hesser of York still has the old ballot box used at that election. The writer thinking York was too far away to go there for the mail, concluded to have a P. O. nearer, so he and Mr. Chaney Akin petitioned for a mail route from Seward to Mr. Akins house, asking for three Post Offices;

one at a place called Palo with A. H. Rogers as Postmaster, one at Parkers, called Thayer with Parker for Postmaster, and one at Akins, called Akins Mills with Chaney Akin for Postmaster. The petition was granted. When the C. & N. W. R. R. was built in 1887 the village of Thayer was laid out and named after the P. O. nearby. The village has a population of 200, but is too near York to grow very large, is a good business point, has one water mill, two elevators, one lumber yard, one flour house, one implement house, one drug store, two hardware stores, two general merchandise stores, one cream station, one butcher shop, one barber shop, one blacksmith shop, one livery barn, one bank, a good depot, good electric light plant, good school building, and schools that include the 9th grade. The village also has three churches; the M. E. Church, German Lutheran and Presbyterian. The village also has a public hall, a M. W. A. Hall and the Township Hall is located in the village. Our Dr. Douglas looks after our health and we think him a good Dr. and a fine citizen. We have no saloons and our citizens being of high moral character, we never expect a saloon. The village has never been incorporated, but there is some talk now along that line.

Harvey Pickrel

Harvey Pickrel was born at Galesburg, Ill., Dec. 31st, 1842. At the age of 20 he enlisted in Co. A., 14th Ill. Cav., and served through the war, participating in the battles of Knoxville, Tenn., Macon, Ga., Atlanta, Ga., Look-out Mountain and several smaller fights. On returning from the war he remained at Galesburg till 1872. He came to Seward county, Nebraska, and the same year came to York county and homesteaded the N W. $\frac{1}{4}$ 20-10-1 and owns his old homestead together with enough land adjoining to make a farm of 400 acres, besides land in other places. Mr. Pickrel was always fond of horses, enlisted in the cavalry, and in an early day shipped into this county more than 300 head, buying and selling continually. He engaged in the fine trotting stock business and still has some of the best horses in York county. He, early, made a good race track on his farm, had a good speed barn and blacksmith shop, has had great sport in racing horses and has enjoyed the sport so well he is



HARVE PICKREL
York County Pioneer Horseman

still at it. Says he has lost many good race horses, but thinks they will come to him in the next world. He raced the first horses over the York race tracks, Osceola race tracks, and Seward race tracks; constructed and run the first race horses over the David City race tracks. Mr. Pickrel, in an early day used Lincoln avenue from the bridge to where the depot is for racing. Frank Southworth, an old sport, used to join with him in the fun. Mr. Pickrel also fed cattle in connection with his farming. His home, in an early day, was quite a resort for dances, says the dances drew big crowds and they frequently used the barn for dances. Says that one night while the dance was going on two Irishmen, Dawson and Keefe got filled up a little too much and got into a fight over religion, one was a Catholic and the other an Orangeman, the fight did not interfere with the dance but was a kind of a side show, the fight went merrily on till Keefe got licked and the Orangeman wore the ribbon and that ended the scrap. In those days they had no money to pay lawyers so did not appeal to the courts, but fought it out. Mr. Pickrel says when the country was being settled, he met a woman on the prairie carrying a bucket of water. He asked her what she was packing water for? She replied they had no well, and was getting water for dinner, said the nearest well where she got the water was two miles away. Mr. Pickrel has retired from active farming and lives in his nice home in York, but still owns and operates a horse barn, and says he intends to stay in the horse business as long as he lives.

Horton M. Detrick

Retired farmer, York, Neb., is a native of Wilkesbarre, county, Pa., where he was born October 26, 1835, son of Jacob and Hannah (Hannis) Detrick both of German lineage, and the former a contractor and builder, who moved to Iowa in 1856 and engaged in farming. Horton M. Detrick enlisted in the Civil War in September, 1861, in Company D, 4th Iowa volunteer cavalry. In 1863 he reenlisted in the same regiment and served until the close of the war. In the last battle of the war at Columbus, Ga., he was wounded. He was mustered out at Atlanta, Ga., August 10, 1865. He resided in Iowa until the spring of 1870, when he moved to

Nebraska and homesteaded in York county. Mr. Detrick is a republican in politics. He served for six years continuously as a member of the York county board, representing the city of York; as a member of the York city council, and as postmaster of York from 1890 to 1895 by appointment of President Harrison. In 1902 he was elected to the lower house of the state legislature from the 38th district and was reelected in 1904. During the first session he served as chairman of the Soldiers' Home committee, and as a member of the committees on public lands and buildings, the judiciary, and county organization. During the second session he served as chairman of the committee on claims and a member of the Soldiers' Home committee. Mr. Detrick is a member of York lodge No. 35, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and of the G. A. R., Robert Anderson post 32, of York. Mr. Detrick was married in Iowa October 25, 1865 to Miss Jennie C. Andrews, a native of Vermont. They are the parents of five children: Effie E., a graduate of Wesleyan University, is now Assistant Registrar in said University; Jesse W., who has been in the U. S. Mail service for 13 years, is now assistant to Chief Clerk in the Railway Mail Service, with headquarters at Los Angeles, Cal.; Estella N., who was City Librarian at York for nine years, is now married to R. E. Lynds, their home is at Los Angeles, Cal.; Hiram E., now of the firm of Jerome & Detrick, Druggists, York, Neb.; and Lulu, who was deputy, County Superintendent for four years, is now married to M. S. Hargraves. Their home is at Alliance Nebr.

Mr. Detrick is now retired and lives at the corner of 7th St. and East Ave., York, Nebraska.

George F. Corcoran.

George F. Corcoran, was born at Rockford, Illinois, January 13, 1862, and settled with his parents in York county in February, 1879. The home place was on section 27 in what is now Leroy township. Here he assisted on the farm for a few years and taught district school. During busy times he assisted in the office of the county treasurer at different times during the time J. W. Bennett was county treasurer, commencing in 1882. Shortly thereafter he became interested in the York Democrat and indentified

with its publication, and in 1886 became its owner, and has been identified with it ever since.

Was active in the organization of the volunteer fire department in the city and was for many years its chief, and also served as a member of the city council.

Was appointed Court Reporter by District Judge Robert Wheeler in January 1892, and served four years, and in 1896 was engaged in practice of law in York, and for a part of that year identified with the first national campaign of W. J. Bryan for president.

In January, 1897 was appointed stenographer to Attorney General C. J. Smyth, and later appointed by him to the position of Assistant Attorney General, which position he resigned in 1900 to again become Court Reporter with Judge B. F. Good, in which position he remained for eight years, and in November 1907 was elected to the office of Judge of the District Court of the same district, and in November, 1911 was reelected and is now serving his second term as judge of the district.

Has been prominently connected with the organization of the York Commercial Club, York Chautauqua, the York Base Ball club, the Elks, and other similar organizations.



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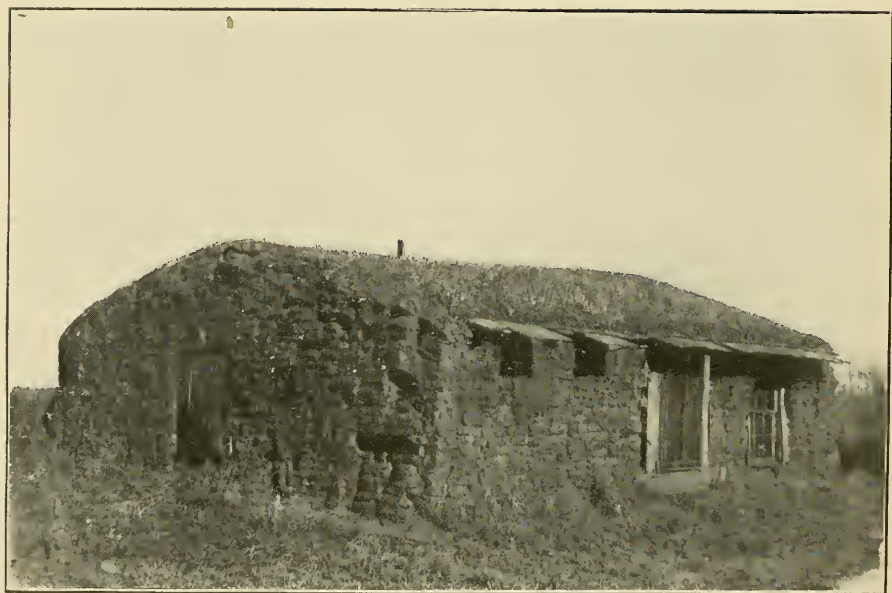
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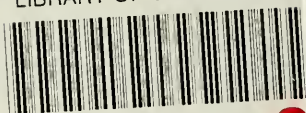
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