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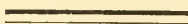
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GENERAL HISTORY
OF
SEWARD COUNTY,
NEBRASKA

BY

JOHN H. WATERMAN.



BEAVER CROSSING, NEBR. 1914---'15.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

In writing history of Seward County it has been my desire to produce a work of interest to the public and value to the county. All matters of history have been truthfully portrayed so far as I have been able to present them. I have not aimed to make it a high grade scholarly production, touching only the high places in the public attainments and official life of the past, but endeavoured to give an unadorned narration of the real modes of life and progression of the county from its infancy to full growth and maturity. Trusting the worth of the work to stand upon its merits rather than upon its flattery of popular sentiment, no church, society, political party or enterprise has received advertising reading space in it, while all have been fairly and impartially dealt with.

Like other authors I feel that my work is not above, but subject to criticism and ask that such be made with an honest purpose alone and that the value of the work be considered above its faults. I do not disown my errors in writing and printing—there are many to be found in this history—but I am glad to say I have endeavored to make everything plain, readable and comprehensible.

Many people expect to find, in a history of any part of the once "Wild and Woolly West," reading matter in line and spirit with the day and age covered by the narration. And not wishing to disappoint any one I will say: do not open this history expecting to find accounts of blood curdling Indian depredations, buffalo chases and other exciting events. There never was any Indian troubles aside from begging and stealing in Seward County and of course there is no story of them in this book. There were a few buffalo, elk, deer and antelope in the county at the date of its earliest settlement, but they were driven out by the freighters and early settlers. However Indian scares were of frequent occurrence during the period from 1860 to 1870, but I find it difficult to record scares as history. They are not

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tangible although real, unavoidable and discouragingly disagreeable to the early settlers.

In mentioning the passing away of early settlers it was not my intention to publish obituaries, nor mention the church, lodge or society deceased belonged to nor the previous military service of any comrade soldier, but merely to mention that part of their life that is connected with the history of Seward County. And I trust there will be no disappointments in regard to this memorial feature of the history. I feel that my neighbors who shared with one another the trials and hardships of pioneer life in that honest, honorable and patient endurance which characterized nearly every early settler of Seward County, has won a brighter crown than can be given by any lodge or church.

I wish to thank all who have kindly assisted me in gathering items of historical interest for this book. With my forty-six years residence in Seward County, during which time the pioneer period has passed and modern conditions are speeding well along in years, I have many times felt myself unable to bring before the public a collection of the historical events which are worthy of record and remembrance, and in conclusion of this introduction will say my work has been a day and night task which I hope may meet the requirements of the most exacting as a history of Seward County.

AUTHOR.

THE PRAIRIES OUT WEST, OR THE HOME OF MY CHILDHOOD.

PART I.

O, who that e'er come from a woodland home—
Shut in by dark forests like birds in their nest,
Unmoved by the sight, could look upon the bright
And boundless prairies spread out in the West?

Where ethereal blue ends the far distant view—
As though the dim future had ope'd to our sight,
And we viewed all the space to the end of our race,
The dark Vales of Sorrow and Hills of Delight.

Where light zepthers race o'er earth's verdant face,
With coolness refreshing, when weary, to feel,
Treading waves in the grass and flowers as they pass
O'er prairies untamed by a husbandman's zeal.

Where shadows flit by of clouds in the sky—
And darken an instant, grove, valley and hill;
Like a fugitive thought that's gone ere its caught,—
That enters the mind, but escapes from the will.

PART II.

O, of all the lands, I ween, that ever I have seen,
I yet love my native prairies the best;
Where I played by the rills, and rode down the hills,
In the days of my childhood, afar in the West.

By day or by night, there are scenes of delight,
For lovers of Nature, with hearts good and free,—
But if darkened within by grief, care or sin,
No pleasure in Eden's sweet bowers we'd see.

There are sanctums secluded, where few have intruded,
And cool, waving meadows, of flowers profuse,
Deep valleys, bright glades, and beautiful green shades,
Where poets might sweetly commune with their Muse.

There are rivers, and rills, and grass carpeted hills,
Like billows that roll on a storm troubled sea—
Wild nature is there, in forms the most fair;
'Tis a land of delight, 'tis the home of the free.



John H. Waterman, Author.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory. The Vast Plains Area. The Path Finder and his Path the Artery of Civilization on the Immense Prairies West of the Missouri River. Finding Gold in California Establishes the Public High-Way Through the World's Richest Agricultural Region. The California Trail.

Of the country forming the present central portion of the United States, but little was known a half century ago, and going back a century we find its immensity in area and agricultural wealth buried in a gloom of ignorance. The large rivers had been discovered and in a manner partially explored. And some idea of the Rocky mountains had been gained, their range vaguely supposed to be impenetrable, flanked to their base by arid plains and impassible gulfs. While immense herds of buffalo and other wild beasts lived and fattened upon the rich grasses of the land, the Indian, regardless of the wealth hidden in the rich soil, trod its surface as lord and king, in search of game. Mountain ranges with their peaks capped with perpetual snow frowning down from their lofty heights, cast their shadows back from the setting sun upon the rich soils covered with luxuriant vegetation while imaginary deserts hid the grand panorama from the vision of approaching civilization.

To the first trip across the continent may be charged the error forming the illusionary opinion that the brightest region in America, or the world, amidst which were the great state of Nebraska and its region where bright springs and flowing wells abounded was a baren and impassable desert. What other foundation for this delusive theory, taught by

the standard geographies and maps of the country, has never been made clear to the mind of humanity. It may have been given to the intelligent world by Indians, but such information would form poor grounds upon which to base the instruction and education of the children of a great nation.

Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark made an exploring trip under the auspices of the United States government, from the eastern settlements to the Pacific coast, in 1803 and as government employees undoubtedly outlined the "Great American Desert." This hazardous trip, accompanied by untold suffering and hardships, required two years and three months of time. And while the problem of possible continental transit was solved by this test of endurance, it could not be considered an overland trip, as the route was mostly along the large rivers, ascending the Missouri to the mountains in the north-west and then descending the large streams to the coast, leaving the interior regions unexplored and unknown.

The Light Along Fremont's Path.

The birth of real knowledge of the agricultural wealth of the western plains came in 1842 when John C. Fremont first penetrated the so called desert in search of a route to and across the Rocky mountains to the Pacific ocean. On this mission the great "Path Finder" made five trips, covering a period of eleven years, on which he and his companions endured all manner of hardships, at one time subsisting upon a diet of horse flesh for fifty days. But in spite of all difficulties the world renowned path, which was destined to become the greatest wild country highway ever known, was established, and over which, for a period of twenty years, many thousands of home and fortune seekers made their way to the new found Canaan.

With the constant extensive increase in population of the United States, and the needs of it and the world together,

the opening up of the coming bread fields of the world, on the western plains, was a mere matter for the work of time. But the discovery of gold in California in 1848 and the grand rush on the over-land route to the rich fields in 1849 brought forward advanced settlements and new discoveries in regard to the value of the country through which the route passed. And while the "Path Finder" had established a way in advance to reach the new gold fields, along that path the traveling public were taught that the myth desert contained the richest and most productive soil upon the face of the earth.

Fremont's route through the state of Nebraska was along the valley of the Platte river, passing about forty miles north of Seward county. It was reached by inlet routes starting at different points along the Missouri river, Nebraska City in the freighting time, being one of the larger shipping points. From this city the route in general use ran north-west, striking the Platte river about thirty miles above its mouth, then following the California trail up the valley. But this route was found to be unnecessarily a round about way as by it a big bend around the counties of Saunders, Butler and Polk must be followed in traveling the Platte river route. And to avoid this and save many miles of travel a cut-off route, running nearly due west from Nebraska City to the West Blue valley, following it in a north-west course and striking the Platte river trail about forty miles east of Fort Kearney was surveyed and established in 1860 by enterprising citizens of the aforesaid city. And along this route the fertile valleys, plains and hills of Seward county were first viewed by civilized people, and along this route are the foot-prints of early settlement and the transformation of the wild and desolate plains to progressive civilization.

CHAPTER II.

Nebraska. Territorial Area and Organization. The State. Area, Rivers, Land, Counties Etc. Admission to the Union. Immense Increase in Population. Public School System the Best.

Nebraska was the name given a vast portion of wild country, organized and admitted as a territory by the United States government in 1854, under the administration of President Franklin Pierce. It comprised the present states of Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. And under the conditions which Uncle Sam assumed the guardian-ship of this great tract of land laid the smoldering embers of the civil war, in as much as the organic act permitted any portion, or all portions of it to be admitted as a slave state or divided into different slave states. It must be remembered that it was not slavery as it existed, but the extension of that un-Godly system that formed the "bone of contention" between the North and the South. And the bills admitting Kansas and Nebraska territories under the same possible and probable dark prospects, opened and stirred up the strife until it culminated in that great, deadly conflict without a parallel in the history of the world. History of the territories would be incomplete without giving this unwelcome feature a place, and yet it is not to be considered only as a legislative blunder. We have frequently thought that it would be an act of kindness to the citizens of those two states, "Kansas and Nebraska," to re-

move the harrowing memories which the mention of their name suggests to every one familiar with their record, by an entire and positive change in their names. Kansas was the senior territory, and was settled by more Southern people who deemed it a part of their religion to prevent Northern emigration into the state by any method of intimidation and murder, resulting in a border ruffian war, in which John Brown's three sons were wrongfully slain, their bodies mutilated and shipped to their father in the old home in the east.

The state contains 77,510 square miles of territory. Numerous inland and non-navigable rivers flow through it, the larger ones being the Platte, Loupe, Elkhorn, Republican and Blue. These streams water as well as drain the state and add to its agricultural resources their extensive valleys, in fertility not only unsurpassed, but unequaled by any other vegetable producing land in the world. It has a frontage upon the eastern end, along the Missouri river of over three hundred miles. It contains ninety large counties. Four of which, Lincoln, Custer, Holt and Sheridan, each has about as much territory as the state of Delaware or Rhode Island while both of those states might be set down inside of Cherry county and not be crowded for room.

At the time of its admission as a territory, within the limits of its present borders, Nebraska had, perhaps less population than any one of its counties at the present time. In 1860 it had a population of 28,841. It was admitted to full fellow-ship in the union of states in 1867, the civil war having wiped out all possible chance for any further contention over the matter of slavery. The 1910 census shows a population within the state of 1,192,214. which at the rate of its previous increase would undoubtedly bring its population up to 1,500,000 at the present date.

Begining with its first settlement, a great interest was taken throughout the entire domain, in the cause of public

schools, and a general advance has been made all along the line in that direction until the state ranks foremost in education, and the dark days in its history, when the shadows of illiteracy as a well known companion of slavery, hung like a pall over its bright land, have passed to oblivion.

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CHAPTER III.

Seward County—Its Boundries, Territory, Population Etc. Beaver Crossing and Vicinity—Its Name,---From What Derived. The Freight Route. The Historical Steam Wagon Road.

Seward county Nebraska, is located in the third tier of counties west, or about sixty miles west from the Missouri river, and the third tier of counties, or sixty miles north of the Kansas state line. It is bounded on the north by Butler county, on the east by Lancaster county, in which is the state capital, on the south by Saline county and on the west by the county of York. It is the best watered and drained county in the state of Nebraska, or perhaps any other state. The North Blue river, a stream of considerable magnitude, resplendent with abundant pure water, enters the county in C precinct, in the north-west portion, passing entirely

through it in a south of easterly direction, passing the south line of the city of Seward, through the villages of Milford and Camden. It has several tributaries, of which one only may be termed a living stream of water. Lincoln creek is a mill stream. It passes into the county from the west, in D precinct, or about six miles south of the north-west corner of the county, and flows south-west, passing through twenty miles of the county's territory and joining the North Blue river just west of Seward. Plum creek and other so-called creeks, reaching the uplands, furnish excellent drainage and carry away surplus water in wet seasons, after which times their mission seems to end and they remain dry. In addition to the North Blue river, with its tributary, Lincoln creek, watering and draining the north half of the county, its counterpart, the West Blue river enters the county from the west, at the north-west corner of M precinct, six miles north of the south-west corner of the county and flowing with but little variation from a due east course, traverses the entire breadth of the county from west to east, joining the North Blue in P precinct in the south-east corner of the county. Like the former mentioned Blue, it has numerous drainage tributaries, one of which, Beaver creek, approaches a tendency of a living stream. But the tributaries of the West Blue, like those of the North Blue, furnish excellent drainage for the south half of the county in wet seasons while they do not sap the ground in dry seasons. Taking the two rivers, passing as they do through the county, with their tributaries no better system of water and drainage could be planed for any county.

In the early days Beaver Crossing and vicinity comprised the four precincts in the south-west quarter of the county, K, L, M and N, with a considerable portion of east York county. The name, "Beaver Crossing," was the first name given to any point or locality in Seward county a name derived from

a natural cause, or matter of fact, forming next to the freight route, the second historical object in the county. Beaver creek was undoubtedly named by Indians and trappers long before there were any settlements of white people near its banks. It rises north-west of the city of York in York county and flowing south-east enters Seward county in L precinct, about two and a half miles north of the south line of that precinct and there taking a more southerly course joins the West Blue river near the line of L and M precincts about two and one-half miles east of the York county line. The next important feature in connection with the naming of Beaver Crossing is the previously mentioned cut-off freight route from Nebraska City to its junction with the California trail. This route had a due west course from Nebraska City to the North Blue river just east of Camden where the first bridge in Seward county was made across the North Blue. And here the valleys of the North and West Blue rivers unite, the latter valley forming the road-bed for one of the greatest wild country highways ever known, over which thousands of home and fortune seekers were destined to pass, a few to success and many to bitter disappointment. After following this valley a short distance the route was forced to make a detour to the north on account of the impassable condition of Walnut creek on the bottom lands. This creek is one of the wet weather tributaries of the West Blue river, and although it is dry during dry seasons, its value to the sections it traverses is beyond estimation. It rises in L precinct and joins the river in N. A crossing of this creek was found about three miles above its mouth, on the line between K and N precincts, from which point the route continued west along the divide in L, re-entering the West Blue valley one mile east of Beaver creek. In direct line with this trail an excellent fording place for this stream was found, where the banks were as naturally adapted to

the passage of heavily loaded freight wagons, or prairie echooners as they could have been made. The water was shallow and the bottom, composed of coarse gravel, was as solid as rock and this was Beaver Crossing.

The historical "Steam Wagon Road" was established in 1864. It was roughly worked and prepared for the passage of the "steam wagon" which was to cross the great plains, conveying a forty horse load of merchandise. But misfortune seemed pre-eminent in the career of this first iron horse for Nebraska and on its trial trip it was wrecked in the ditch by the side of the road a short distance west of Nebraska City, its starting point, where it was abandoned, being later desected for the metal there was in it. And although the said iron horse, which had caused the building of so many groundless hopes and expectations "sleeps the sleep that knows no waking," the road that bore his name lives and will continue to live in history as long as historians write and people read history, as one of the great highways across the western plains. But in reality the steam wagon road was not an independent and distinct route or road. With the exception of a very few miles through Seward county it cannot be called by any other name than the original freight route or road. It followed the 1860 freight route west from Nebraska city to near the Seward county line where it left the route and made a cut-off of a few miles by crossing the North Blue river where the city of Milford was shortly after located, instead of continuing south to the bridge at Camden. It forded the river at this place, continuing west ten miles to the Walnut creek crossing where it again united with the freight route, continuing as a part of the same, or as might properly be said, lost its name. It has never been known as the "steam wagon road" west of the Walnut creek crossing in Seward county.

CHAPTER IV.

Seward County's Name. Its Climate. Homestead Law—General Homesteads, Soldiers' Homesteads and Railroad Land—Amos Reed's Tract. The Water—Springs and Flowing Wells.

From an examination of geographies and maps of the territory of Nebraska, published about 1860, and about the time of the clearing away of the myths of superstition which had previously given the whole area a place upon the maps of the world as a baren desert, we find that the territorial legislature had given that part of the territory now known as Seward county the name of Greene county. It has been stated that the county was named Greene after the name of one of its early settlers, but this is undoubtedly a mistake as the county was named previous to any settlement within its borders. In his history W. W. Cox says that the county was named Greene in honor of a Missouri statesman by that name who proved to be a "rebel," and that as an unorganized county it was under the control of the legislature, which decided to prohibit the naming of any of the "sacred soil under its control after the name of a rebel," and the name Greene was deliberately dropped and the honored name of Seward, the grand war secretary of state, who as the great assistant and adviser of the martyred Lincoln, helped to steer the ship of state through the dark days of the rebellion, was bestowed upon the county. While the acts of territorial legislatures like the acts of all legislatures are open to criticism, the act that gave this county the name of, and erected thereby an everlasting monument to the memory of one of the nation's most able and worthy statesmen was one for which the citizens of the county should feel thankful. whatever may have been the cause for changing the name.

The climate of Seward county, in common with that of the south half of Nebraska is mild. It is 1,500 feet above sea level. This altitude gives it a light, dry atmosphere. There is a gradual ascent from the Missouri river to the Rocky mountains and the nearer approach to them the less there is of rain-fall, which is quite discernible in Seward county although only about sixty miles west from the river. And while this is true in regard to rain-fall it is the same in regard to the snow-fall. Many winters have come and gone in the past forty-five years during which scarcely enough snow has fallen to cover the ground at any one time which has disappeared as quickly in sun-shine as it came. Snow is not a natural element in Seward county. The snow of the county's most severe snow winters was not a native production, but was driven in by strong winds, generally from the snow fields of the north-west. And from this quarter comes the greater portion of the county's cold weather. The mild winters are those of mild winds, more equally divided in the course of direction, the least from the north or northwest. The generally light, dry air affords relief many times to those suffering with lung troubles, cases of consumption coming from the lower and more damp atmosphere of the east being entirely cured by a residence in Seward county. One case of this kind well known to the writer, was that of J. J. Ainsworth who came from Ohio in 1870 and settled on a homestead in N precinct. Mr. Ainsworth was suffering with, and supposed to be in the last stage of hereditary consumption when he left his native home in Ohio with his wife and several small children, bound for Nebraska by the "prairie schooner" mode of travel. He arrived in Seward county in thirty-three days and from the date of his arrival until the end of a long life in Nebraska he was free from his former affliction. As a matter of comparison we will mention a case closely connected with the preceding

one, being that of J. J. Ainsworth's younger brother who was suffering with the same dread disease when his older brother induced him to try the treatment of Nebraska atmosphere. He did so and during his stay in Seward county seemed to be on the road to recovery, but becoming discouraged and homesick he returned to Ohio where he succumbed to his affliction in less than one year. Here is the evidence of two as reliable men as ever came to Nebraska, one on his death bed, lamenting the fact to his brother who visited him that he had not taken that brother's advice and remained in Nebraska, while the older one declares: "I would not go back to Ohio to reside for the whole state of Ohio."

HOMESTEAD LAW AND HOMESTEADS.

The homestead law enacted by the United States government in 1862 permitted any person 21 years of age, the head of a family or single to enter 160 acres of government land as a homestead, and at the end of five years continued residence upon said land it should become the real estate property of the person making such entry. And it was generally understood that government land could not be secured under any other condition or consideration than by actual settlement and improvement upon it. That these requirements were for a protection of the land from speculators and a reserve of it for equal distributaion among present and future settlers. But this understanding was undoubtedly a delusion as the government, after the law was enacted, granted the C. B. & Q. rail road company every odd section, or one-half of the land in a strip forty miles wide through the unsettled portion of Nebraska, which grant took in the entire county of Seward. And as a further evidence of the "delusion," Amos Reed, a prominent lawyer of the city of Washington, secured a grant from the government of 2,000 acres of Seward and York county government land. This tract laid along the West Blue river, commencing about three

miles east of Beaver creek in Seward county and extending west into York county. While this grant was small compared to the one to the railroad company, it detracted more from the homestead privileges, as far as it extended than the latter, as it was an unconditional grant, covering the said number of acres of some of the best land in Nebraska, taking in the timber along the river the entire length of the tract, and not one foot of it being reserved for homesteads. In the matter of the railway grant it was made on condition that the company construct a railroad through the grant, and every other section was reserved for homesteads. It is supposed that this deal was made to better the living conditions of the homesteaders by providing them with markets and transportation advantages, but the government did the dealing and then robbed the settlers of one-half of their homestead right to pay for it, leaving them only 80 instead of 160 acre homesteads. However this did not effect the privileges of soldiers of the war of the rebellion who were permitted to enter a homestead of 160 acres. And in this we see another half honest and half dishonest deal of the government with its private citizens. The right made to the soldiers to enter a homestead of 160 acres was no more than a blind to cover up the government's failure to do with them as it had agreed. We very well remember the flaming posters that were stuck up all over our city of Warren, Ohio, offering inducements to get men to enlist to go in defense of their country, and one of those inducements standing out in very large red letters which could be read at a distance said: "One-Hundred and Sixty Acres of Land will be Given by The United States Government, to every able bodied man, eighteen years of age or over, who will enlist in the military service of the United States for three years or during the war." And we also remember that one of those posters decorated the east wall of the room in which we placed our name upon the roll of

Uncle Sam's defenders and took the oath to serve three years or during the great war. Of course the fault was in the promise. Had it been fulfilled there would have been but little land left for homesteads. And to give the soldiers an advantage in the homestead deal was unavoidable and about the only way out of keeping a rash promise. The nation's liberality was shown in the right given the soldiers to homestead 160 acres where the general homesteads were but 80 acres, and also in permitting a deduction of the time of the soldier's military service from the time required for him to reside upon his homestead, and yet it was short of being a fulfillment of a legitimate contract.

After the close of the war a large number of soldiers became home-seekers in the west, many of whom took advantage of not only the homestead privilege granted them, but the fine land and promising future, and settled upon the prairies of Seward county. Some of those comrades are here yet, some have passed on to other fields while many are "tenting upon the eternal camp ground," beyond the last river where we must all join them in the near future.

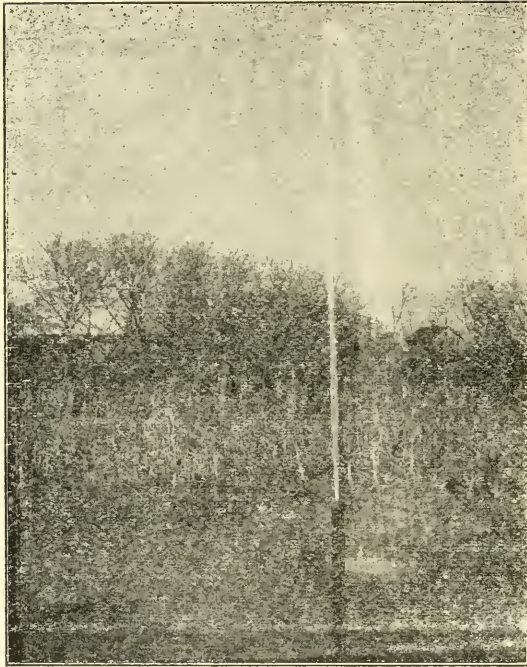
Straggling settlements were made in different localities of Seward county all through the sixties, but the grand rush of home-seekers came in 1869 and 1870 during which period nearly every available homestead was taken and settlement made upon it. The pioneer settlers were sanguine of their ability to make homes of comfort and value. They built sod houses, made dugouts, and occasionally a house of logs or lumber. And it was no uncommon sight in those days to see smoke coming up out of the earth where some enterprising family had fixed up a home. But "vanity of vanities." The notion to improve their homesteads deserted many of them and as soon as they could do so they sold their claims and drifted to other quarters or returned to the "old folks" at the old and longed for home. In that period homesickness

was the most prevalent and troublesome disease in Nebraska, and it laid its cold fingers upon some who could not resist it.

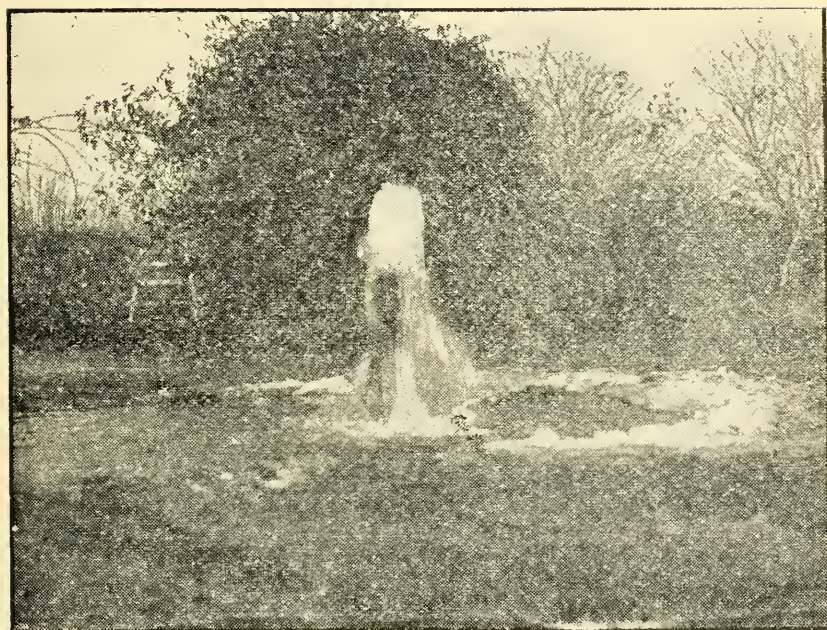
The water of Seward county is hard. Even that of the streams and springs is hard, but is of an excellent grade. There are a number of springs of very fine water along the West Blue river. One of the largest of these springs is an "old land-mark" almost in the center of the village of Beaver Crossing. It is located near where Daniel Millspaw's ranch buildings stood, and without doubt furnished many thirsty travelers, in the days of prairie schooner emigration, the first good water they had tasted after leaving the settlements.

The first flowing well of the county to establish any interest or faith in the existance of flowing water in the vicinity where it exists, was discovered in Dewit Eager's store in Beaver Crossing by mere accident. That such a discovery should be made within the precincts of a village store may seem strange, but Mr. Eager had a well in his store for the accomodation of his customers and the water had become impure and bad, therefore he employed Ray Virgin of Utica to sand pump the well and sink it deeper to find better water if possible. The work progressed, but the quality of the water did not improve. The well kept getting deeper and deeper; finally the bottom seemed to drop out and the water rushed up with such force that the store cellar was half full of it before it was realized what had happened. This discovery created quite an excitement as it was made in the dry season of 1895, and several parties were soon on the anxious seat to try their luck for a well. T. J. Foster was so anxious to see the water shooting up out of the earth at his place that he could not sleep nights, and went around day-times dreamily talking about a flowing well. In a few days he succeeded in securing the services of C. C. Evaus to make him a two inch flowing well. The work on the well commenced early in the morning and flowing water was struck

just a short time before night, and although the well was fully piped, flowing well construction was new business to Mr. Evans. The well was of the large size, the flow very strong and the necessary precautions to prevent an outside flow which came up around the outside of the piping, had not been taken and as a result a nice little river soon sprang into existence. Unfortunately the river was not all water, being about half quick sand which failed to run off, constantly settling in the passage way and daming the water which shortly formed a small sized lake in the midst of which was Tom's house. Tom had lost sleep over the matter of getting a well and as he shoveled sand that night to keep an opening for the water to run off and save his house from being a Noah's Ark, he might have been heard praying for one glimpse of God's token, the rainbow, and that the destruction of the earth by fire might commence while his part of it was too wet to burn. Tom Foster never swears and whether his thoughts on this occasion were solemn or otherwise he certainly had a wonderful well, and one which drove away all doubts in regard to the existence of flowing water under the ground in the locality of Beaver Crossing. This well, when the stream was finally reduced to the size of an ordinary flowing well, threw water to a height of twenty-five feet, but the numerous wells which were almost immediately made in the vicinity, reduced the force of its flow to a considerable extent. However the water in most any of the numerous wells in existence today on land on a level with it will rise from ten to fifteen feet above the top of the ground. The territory upon which these wells may be procured extends over the entire width of the West Blue valley and for a distance up and down the valley of about fourteen miles. This seeming to be the extent of the under ground reservoir of flowing water.



The above represents a flowing well on the farm formerly owned by Henry Cast, east of Beaver Crossing. There was a reduction made in the flow after which the stream of water, as it appears here, was forced twenty-seven feet above the ground where it is located.



One of the first flowing wells of Beaver Crossing. It was located on the old picnic grounds, near the river, known as "Dimery's Park." The well was one of the attractions that drew many people from various parts of the county and state and was viewed by thousands as one of the wonders of Seward County. And it was not a deception. Those wells here represented have proven, in the past, to be of inestimable worth to the localities where they exist, while there is a broad field for the future development of their many possible advantages to the county which are as yet untested and untried.

CHAPTER V.

The Soil of Seward County. Indigenous People, Wild Game, Fish and Pests. All Disappear Before Approaching Civilization.

The soil of Seward county is immensely rich and extends to such a depth as to appear inexhaustible. Dirt taken out from six to ten feet below the surface will produce any kind of vegetation that is climateable; that upon the bottom lands running to a greater depth than the up-land soil. A peculiarity is noted in the fact that the last shovelfulls of dirt thrown out from a cellar or dugout seven or eight feet deep in vegetable growing weather; will shortly produce more weeds than can find standing room—the seed from which these weeds spring having been drifted into the earth, possibly a half century ago.

If there is anything in the way of mineral in the earth of Seward county it has not yet been developed. However mineral water is said to exist in some of the springs at Milford. In the days of earliest pioneer settlement an excitement was created by the circulation of a report by several citizens that an abundance of coal existed within easy reach of the people in the earth at or near Milford. And Josiah White, a near neighbor to the writer, declared in such emphatic and positive language that he knew there was no mistake about it and that the coal was there as stated, that we took his words, as we should a good and kind neighbor's for undefiled Gospel truth and did not miss an opportunity to tell others about the coal at Milford. But noticing the general incredulous smile that those to whom the matter was mentioned wore upon their faces, an investigating inquiry

was made, resulting in the disclosing of the fact that one Mr. Iler, a homesteader at Pleasant Dale, on Middle creek, in the eastern part of the county, a spiritual medium and an evangelist of that creed had been holding meetings and had converted Mr. White and several others, and about the first information the spirits of departed humanity conveyed to the faithful of Seward county was that there was coal to be had for merely the digging at the place named, and near the surface. In their eagerness to roll out a few car loads of the greatly needed fuel, they went to work with shovels, picks, muscle and "elbow grease," which was unsparingly applied for several weeks and until some spirit, perhaps told them that the informing spirits were viewing the locality of Milford, Nebraska, from China, on the other side of the earth, when they discovered coal "near the surface." Now, whether this is a true supposition or not, they abandoned the work, but clung to the faith.

A few years farther along in the seventies the second fuel excitement sprang up in N precinct over the discovery of what was supposed to be peat, on the farm of Chris. Lesenby. And so positive was Mr. Lesenby that his peat-bog would boost a large city into existence that he squandered considerable of his wealth in laying out a city and building business houses that were never used. The statement of A. E. Sheldon in a letter to Cox's history that the name of this phantom city was "Pittsburg" and that he had mail delivered to him for his neighbors in the post office in that city, is undoubtedly a hallucination of a boy's mind, as Mr. Lesenby named his city "Peatsburg," and not "Pittsburg," and there was never any post office established there. And whether there was any peat there or not remains a matter of serious doubt. At least the city and the material from which it received its name have both passed into history as a delusion.

INDIANS, WILD GAME, FISH ETC.

While there was a time when Indians were the lords and kings on the prairies of Seward county, there never was any record of Indian hostility to white settlers within its borders. Strolling bands of the red beggars frequently passed through the county on begging expeditions until as late as 1876, but the government corralled them about that time and sent them to their reservations. In the early sixties Indians no doubt raised some hair of white women and children in the county, but it was hair that raised through fright. And in those days the redskins were not only beggars, but were thieves also, and the daily passage of white travelers, in armed bands of several hundred along the old freight route through the county, undoubtedly prevented them performing acts of murder. They do not like civilization and when they cannot drive it out of a country they will shrink from it and disappear if there is possible room to do so.

Wild game occupied a prominent place and was one of the great beneficent factors in the settlement of the whole "wild and wooly west." And Seward county had its share until about 1882. Buffalo was quite plentiful in the early sixties, and elk, deer, antelope, jack rabbits and prairie chickens were numerous all through the seventies in some localities.

The living streams of water in the county were stocked with fine native fish. Cat fish, bullheads, pike and sunfish or mountain bass. But like the Indians and the game, civilization aided by the state government with its deposit of rapid increasing and worthless German carp, have about driven the natives out of the streams. And as compensation for this act of folly the state taxes every male person over 21 years of age one dollar for a season's license to sit on the bank of one of the streams and watch a cork dance over the rippling waves. Of course catching fish is not

considered in this game of "solitarie," as a carp won't bite nor let a decent fish do so.

In addition to the wild Indian, wild game and native fish the ground was alive with native pests which remained until civilization became well settled when they disappeared in similar manner to the Indians and game. Rattle-snakes were so fearfully numerous as to be more dangerous than Indians, but they left the county about 1890 and it is not to be regretted in the least. Fleas were indigenous pests and torments. It was no uncommon thing to see a man stop on the highway and turn up his pants leg and his sock leg down and pick a flea. Our first homestead residence was a log mansion twelve feet square. It had one door and two windows, shingled with Nebraska shingles dug out of a clay-bank near by, and the floor and carpet were of the same kind of material. And when we got out of bed with our bare feet upon that dirt carpet the effect upon our nerves made by those little hoppers jumping upon them and wrestling for the best places is indelible yet not forgotten. A flea's teeth are not more annoying many times than his back and a little bite will not make a fellow feel like swearing half so much as it does to have one crawl up on the inside of his clothing from the bottom to the top with his razor-back turned in while he is listening to a preacher telling what to do to be saved. But this was one of the conflicts of pioneer life in Nebraska, and while its reflections at this late date are unpleasant if not sad, the early passing away of the redskins, rattlers and fleas should fill the land with joy.

CHAPTER VI.

From What Did the Great American Desert Gain its Name?—Drouth,
Dust or Sand Storms—Rain and Snow Storms—Wind Storms.

The opinion formed by a few persons and accepted as correct by the general public that the whole vast area of territory, extending from the west shore of the Missouri river to the foot-hills of the Rocky mountains, was a bare desert, without doubt resulted from a mere glance at the great plains during an unfavorable period. There must be many residents of Seward county who can remember the desolate appearing outlines of the "Great American Desert" which marred the face of the maps in the school geographies fifty or sixty years ago. And the laws of the land and the powers that were in those days would not have permitted an author of school maps to outline and describe Seward county nor any other portion of that desert as the most productive land in the world. Had a child in school advanced such an idea he or she would have been summarily punished with the small end of a beech limb and declared too lazy to learn the lessons taught in the books. And here in Seward county today people are inclined by vast reasons to question the sanity of those who everlooked facts and placed a myth or deception before school children in regard to the country they lived in. But in looking up facts they reveal something of a reason for such errors. In those wild times when the buffalo, elk, deer and antelope had full sway, roaming at will over the prairie, they tramped and eat the grass, during the drouth seasons, until the ground in large tracts was as bare as a floor. Especially was this so on the up-lands bordering upon the Missouri river. And the land being of a

sandy nature with no timber and nothing to be seen but the bare and parched earth as far as the eye could reach, there was little else to be thought of but a desert. Again the absence of moisture to keep the dust down together with the prevalent winds of that period resulted in almost constant sand storms or dust blizzards.

Although the tilling of the soil and the planting of millions of trees by the settlers aided in drawing moisture, breaking the winds and keeping the land more settled, those desert appearing sand storms were of frequent occurrence up to as late a date as 1880. Dust blizzards were similar to snow blizzards excepting that they followed a drouth or dry spell while a snow blizzard follows a wet season. They were in early times both of three days duration and seldom cut their stay one minute short of regulation time. The clouds of dust which were formed frequently had so much appearance of rain clouds that a person not acquainted with them would expect to see the rain pouring down in torrents in a few minutes. These phenomenal disturbances were many times augmented by the addition of lightening and heavy thunder. There has been many such storms in Seward county and many days when the air was so impregnated with fine, white sand that it was difficult to get a breath of air that was clear from dirt. And this latter condition seemed to have come from other localities as the sand would fall like dew, unaccompanied by high wind.

In the spring of 1879, shortly after seeding time, the most disagreeable and destructive dust blizzard ever witnessed by the earliest settlers, raged throughout Seward county for the usual period of three days and nights. It had been a very dry year. In fact there had been but little moisture for eight months, the earth being so baked and hard that there was but a small amount of fall plowing, as it was almost impossible to keep a plow in the ground where it was baked

and in fields where it was not baked the soil was so dry and light that a plow as smooth as glass would only push the furrow over without turning it. It is said "there is no great loss without small gain," and in the fact that it had been too dry for weeds to grow, was its blessed reminder. But with the earth in this condition the wind came and the billowy clouds rolled from the earth to the sky, and the frequent flash of lightening and peal of thunder caused many hearts to beat with rapture over thoughts that it would rain; and it did rain, but not the kind that required the token of God's promise that the world should not be destroyed again by water. And it entered the houses regardless of the tightest walls. Wherever the air went the black dirt accompanied it, blanketing beds and tables and carpeting the floors. The soil was swept from plowed fields as with a broom to the depth of the plowing, and drifted into ridges in hedges and in the high dead grass at the sides of roads similar to snow drifts, many of the drifts of dirt being visible at the present time. The misfortune caused by this storm consisted not only in the seed grain which was swept entirely from the fields, but the labor of sowing together with the lost time, or backset to crops which were re-sown, in all not easy to estimate. Fortunately there has been a gradual receding from those desert conditions until there has been only a few small reminders of them in the past thirty-four years.

While Nebraska is a dry state it is frequently visited by unpareled downpours of rain, turning the draws into raging torrents and swelling the rivers until their valleys resemble lakes. While Seward county is like a duck's back and surplus water soon runs off, those precipitations of moisture are generally followed by continued drouths. Snow storms of any great magnitude have occurred only occasionally, and each one can readily be recalled to mind by most any of the earlier settlers. W. W. Cox, in his history, gives an ac-

count of a disastrous snow storm in the winter of 1864-65, but it appears that the thawing off of the snow accompanied by a forty-eight hour downpour of rain was the greatest cause of misfortune to a few families who had settled upon the river bottom land. But the winter of 1866-67 seems to have been the crowning period for snow storms of which Mr. Cox says: "Of all the hard winters we have experienced in forty-five years of residence in Nebraska, that was by far the most severe. It began to snow on the first day of December, and from that time to the first of April it was a succession of storm after storm, and many of them was regular blizzards of the most ferocious character. The snow became very deep and was drifted into such huge drifts that communication was entirely cut off between distant settlements." It is evident that the little settlements at that time were sorely distressed for the want of food and fuel, and also for feed for stock, being almost reduced to a point of starvation. Their scanty supplies had run out almost before there was an opening through the great banks of snow by which they might replenish their stocks, and then the floods following the sudden melting of the snow cut them off from relief for several days. This was, of course, a condition incident to earliest pioneer life in Seward county.

The spring of 1873 was very pleasant and people had made gardens and prospects were so fine for early summer that the ordinary straw stables for stock had been neglected and permitted to become open, the sides having been blown away by the wind, and in fact all precaution and care for the protection of man and beast from the cold blasts of a winter storm had been forgotten. It commenced raining on the tenth of April, the wind blowing gently from the southeast, the rain and wind continuing until the night of the twelveth, the clouds thickening at times would be accompanied by lightening and thunder. We were living in our

twelve foot, pioneer residence with two windows. On that memorable night of the twelfth of April we were awakened by an unusual roaring of the wind and glancing at the windows thought the moon was shining, but soon recalled the fact that there was no moon. We got up and opened the door and were a'most instantly made aware of the source from which the disturbance and the light in the windows came. The wind had veered to the north-west and seemed to have the force of a cyclone while the air was so full of snow as to produce an appearance of moonlight. In fact the most terrifying blizzard we had ever witnessed was before our drowsy eyes in all the horrors that could be depicted. We did not tarry long to view the panarama as the ruling elements seemed to dictate that we retire and shut the door. This blizzard continued for three days and nights without abatement for an instant and the doleful tones that were ever present in the ears were not relieved when in the refreshing embrace of slumber. And there was scarcely a minute during the seventy-two hours that an object of any dimension could be discerned ten steps distant, and two minutes exposure to the full force of the storm would cause vacant places in a person's clothing to fill up with the celebrated but not appreciated "beautiful snow." While several of our neighbors saved their cows, horses and mules by taking them into their houses we saved three out of four small hogs and about thirty hens by dividing our twelve foot space with them. We did not bring these animals in until the second day and one of the hogs died in fifteen minutes after being brought where it was warm. Charles Emerson, living in a sod house on a hill in L precinct, had his horses in a dugout stable at the foot of the hill, perhaps six or eight rods from the house, and the storm was so severe and blinding that he did not venture to go and attend to them during the three days, and after the storm had passed by his

heart almost failed him when he opened the half closed door of the stable and found it packed full of snow and not the least sign that his faithful horses were alive. He secured a shovel and after digging a while came upon the horses both standing up, the snow having filled in around them so close that they could not lie down, the warmth from their bodies melting the snow sufficiently to give them breathing room, and both were alive. This storm raged during the 13th, 14th, and 15th of April, the latter being Easter Sunday, and would justly pass to history as the greatest Easter storm on record.

The winter of 1879 and 80 was a record breaker for snow, and the first and only winter when runners superseded wheels on all conveyances in Seward county. That winter sledding came to stay and during three months it was almost out of style, and impossible to run wheel vehicles. The foundation of this continued sledding came about the middle of December in the way of several inches of snow upon which there was a heavy fall of sleet, forming an unusually stiff crust, and upon this crust there came a heavy fall of snow. This stormy condition lasted about ten days, and although there was a little too much of it for the many that had corn to gather, no one thought much about it, as snow never remained on the ground long in Nebraska. But there came an unlooked for change on the night of December 23d the wind raising to a force of about sixty miles an hour, swept the loose snow on top of the crust into drifts ten and fifteen feet deep at the south and east sides of buildings, hedges and in draws and low places in roads; corn fields were full almost to the top of the stalks, and these great banks were pounded and packed so hard by the force of the wind that horses and cattle could travel over them and not break the crust. And while the drifts would bear the hoofs of those animals they would not bear the wheels of wagons.

While these conditions cut the farming community off for a time from their source of supplies and mail, there was but little if any suffering for want of real necessities. Our house was short on bread stuff, but we had a good coffee mill and an abundance of wheat and corn and got along fine. The greatest suffering in our neighborhood was due to the fact that nearly every man used tobacco and all had been stretching their plugs to make them reach to the end of corn picking time and were out when the roads became blockaded. And if there ever is a time when a man who uses tobacco can't get along without the stuff it is when he is snowed in.

On the 12th of January, 1888 occurred the fatal blizzard that caused so much suffering among children having caught them at the hour of going home from school. The wind was mild from the south-east all forenoon, and until about three o'clock in the afternoon. The snow fell very fast all day, being in large flakes and light. Between three and four o'clock the avalanche of snow driven by a terrific wind from the north-west, poured in upon every exposed quarter with blinding fury. The snow came so thick as to be impenetrable to vision, and many children became blinded, bewildered and lost, wandering for hours in the extreme cold. However the storm abated about sun down and the sky became clear. Had it continued the usual time of three days the prairies of Seward county might have been strewn with the dead bodies of children and the story too horrible to tell. As it was a few lost their lives throughout the state resulting from exposure to the cold, and a few having their limbs frozen were rendered cripples.

And this sums up the severe snow epochs covering a period of fifty years in Seward county, and the severity of those storms was due as much to the unprepared conditions of the country as to the storms. The great Easter blizzard of 1873 was disagreeable in the extreme, but had the settlers been

prepared with comfortable quarters for their stock it would have carried a much less formidable aspect. The first, second and third storms mentioned would seem like small affairs in New York, Pennsylvania or Ohio. The last one mentioned as "the fatal blizzard" of 1888, was severe, but of short duration and had it occurred at an earlier hour in the day, or when school children were safe at home, it would have soon been forgotten. And we venture the assertion that there is scarcely a section of country in any of the snow zones of the world the size of Seward county that can compare with it for mildness in the matter of snow storms during the fifty-two years mentioned. We are not saying that it does not snow every winter in Nebraska, but storms of any great magnitude and worthy of note have occurred on an average of about one in ten years. Snow seldom amounts to even fair sleighing in Nebraska, and has been known to remain as such over three days at a time only once in sixty years. In the winter of 1879 and 1880 there was sleighing from Christmas till the middle of March and the many sleds and runners to take the place of wheels on wagons and buggies that were made during that time have become rusty, rotten and covered with moss from lack of usage.

That Seward county is located in a windy state cannot be gainsaid, and until recent years, wind blowing at a rate of forty to fifty miles an hour was only a gentle breeze, and some times it came with force enough to shake the foundation of a sod house. But there has perhaps been as little damage and inconvenience from that source in the county as many other sections of the world. And its disasterous wind storms cannot be attributed to the prevailing tendency of the element. They would undoubtedly have occurred in the balmy precincts of Switzerland had the storm conditions been the same in that realm. However the storms are limited to such small numbers that had it not been for the fatal

tornado of May 14th, 1913, there would be but little of occurrence in that line worthy of mention since the earliest settlements. In June, 1875, a wind storm of violent force swept the entire county, coming from the north-west, doing considerable damage to buildings although there was no loss of life. This was a straight wind and might properly be called a cyclone. Living on the prairie where the approaching storm in all of its horrible features could be viewed for many miles, while its appearance was fearful to look upon, it was as grand a picture of the living but destructive element as could be produced. A great, black cloud seemed to be rolling along upon the ground while it reached up to the sky. The fastenings upon our door were not very strong therefore we took the precaution to hold it shut which proved to be a task requiring our entire strength. The main force of the wind lasted but a few minutes, during which time the room was filled so full of black dirt that we could not see any one of the family nor even the windows in the walls. A similar storm occurred in September, 1876, coming in the middle of the night with a violent thunder storm. Hay stacks, grain stacks, wind mills and small out buildings were blown down, wracked or damaged in numerous sections of the county. Extending over a period from this date to May 14th, 1913, there were but a few minor disturbances by unusual winds. The tornado of the date just mentioned placed a dark blot upon the pages of the county's history, always to be read with deep sorrow and sadness. The storm came from the south-west, entering the county three or four miles north of its south-west corner and passing north-east through the entire county, destroying farm residences, barns and everything in its path. It struck the west portion of the city of Seward, passing through it, leaving death and desolation in its wake, the dead numbering eight residents of the little city, as follows: Mrs. Edward

Edmonds, aged 63 years; Mrs. Wm. Haßsinger, aged 73 years; Gustav Schulz, 32 years, and daughter Elma, 3 years and 10 months; Samuel Crim, 43 years; Mrs. David Imlay, 63 years; Mrs. C. L. Wasserman, 34 years; and Mrs. David Hoover, 58 years. This sad occurrence fell heavily upon the sympathetic spirit of the city of Seward, its citizens being almost prostrated with grief for many days, in which the entire county joined their sympathies. There were no fatalities out side the city of Seward, due to the course of the storm which passed through the fields on an angle thus avoiding contact to a great extent with dwelling houses. Again people residing in the country districts had an opportunity to see the approaching storm and secure a place of safty.

The property loss in the county from this storm is believed to be conservatively estimated at \$100,000.

The relief fund raised for the benefit of the Seward sufferers amounted to \$9,451.35. All but \$1,473.30 of this fund was contributed by Seward county citizens, outside contributions not being solicited, but accepted when sent. The relief committee appointed to disburse the relief fund consisted of Hon. Wm. H. Smith, Wm. Rosborough and W. Q. Dickinson.

CHAPTER VII.

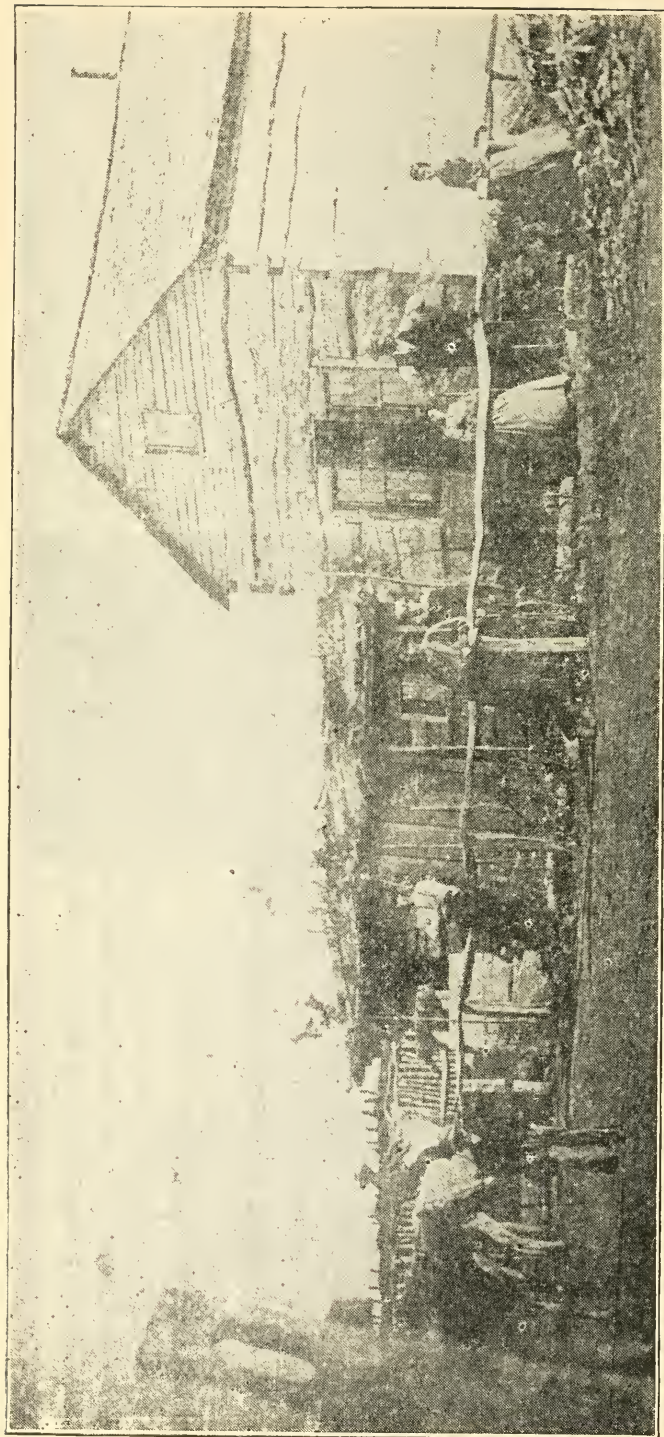
The First Settlement a Result of the Civil War. The Ranchers—John E. Fouse, Daniel Millspaw, William J. Thompson and Roland Reed.

BEAVER CROSSING'S FIRST SETTLER.

Early in the summer of 1862, John Leonard passed over the freight route from Nebraska City with a wagon loaded with freight and drawn by two yoke of oxen, bound for the distant west. After leaving the freight at its destined place John made his way back over the plains, reaching Beaver Creek in the evening he camped for the night. It will be remembered that at this time the great civil war was the main topic of the day, excitement and fear running high and causing a greater extent of anxiety than at any later period during that terrible conflict. This matter being well embedded in young Leonard's mind it needed but little refreshing, and shortly after going into camp, parties from the east arrived to share his lodging place. During the course of conversation they told Mr. Leonard that the United States government was drafting men back in the states for the army. John's sleep was some-what disturbed and in his wakeful hours that night he thought the matter over and came to the conclusion that the place where he was then spending the night was good enough for him, and he would stay there, and there he remained, his nearest neighbor being the West families, twelve miles east on the West Blue river. Some time after his settlement his cattle strayed away and in his search for them he became lost and after wandering for several hours he fortunately came upon some settlers on Lincoln creek north-west of the present location of the city of Seward where he received refreshments and

the proper directions for returning home where he arrived in due time, finding that his cattle were there waiting for him. In this trip he made a discovery of the second boundary of his vast neighborhood, the extension being from twelve miles east to eighteen north-east and not a living soul between them excepting himself. The matter of a young man preferring a life apart from civilized humanity, among wild Indians, ravenous wild beasts and reptiles, to shouldering a musket and keeping step with comrades in defense of his country, illustrates the awful war signs of that time and the fearful view people took of them. But John Leonard made the best of his situation and by industry and enterprise in deals with the freighters and early settlers he accumulated quite a fortune. He built a ranch which he afterwards sold to Amos Reed, and which was occupied by the latter's brother, Roland Reed. Mr. Leonard informed us that he put up about one hundred tons of prairie hay the second year after he settled on Beaver creek, selling it at large prices to people traveling across the plains who bought it in small quantities, paying as high as one dollar for one feed.

John E. Fouse was the next settler at Beaver Crossing, coming in the fall of 1863, or a little more than one year later than Leonard's settlement. He built a ranch, or more properly, a wild west tavern. It was made of logs, the doors being double—one swinging in while a heavy plank door swung out. The windows were protected also by heavy plank door shutters, all arranged to be instantly closed. It was covered with the ordinary covering, poles, hay and dirt. From three to five heavy timbers were usually placed lengthwise of the building, one in the center and the others at equal distances between the center or ridge pole and the side wall of the building. Upon these timbers small poles would be placed close together and on the poles a thick covering of hay or straw would be made and all cover-



The above is a picture of a high toned ranch, built by John Leonard in 1864 who undoubtedly hewed the logs and possibly made the shingles, as it was unusual in that day to see a roof shingled with anything but clay. It was later bought with a tract of land by Amos Reed, and was conducted as a freighters ranch by Roland Reed from 1866 to 1869. It was Uncle Sam's first postoffice in Beaver Crossing and stood about half a mile east of the original Beaver Crossing, Roland Reed being the postmaster. Although it was that gentleman's home for three years it did not occupy any portion of his homestead. The Roland Reed family appear in the picture. From right to left. Mrs. Reed, Rolland, Eva, John in door, Alice, Charles, J. G. Anderson, Horatio, Will.

ed with from one foot to two feet of clay. And it might as well be said right here that this kind of roofs made the settlement of the west possible. Had the settlers been obliged to procure shingles to cover their temporary dwellings of sod the settlement of the prairies would have been many years behind the times. The covering was not handsome and sometimes a pioneer would crack a tooth on one of the shingles that had accidentally slipped through the hay and dropped into his johnney-cake, but it was the best in the market and made a warm roof. Its greatest fault was occasionally manifest when there was a continued rain for a few days when it would commence to leak and continue several days after it had quit raining. And Fouse's ranch was covered with an extra heavy roof of this kind. The structure was located on the south-west side of Beaver creek, about six or eight rods from the bank which was quite high at that point. There was a cellar made under it, and from the cellar a secret underground passageway was dug leading to the creek, permitting the inmates to escape from the building unnoticed. These precautions were undoubtedly taken as means of safety from Indians, whatever they may have been afterwards used for.

Shortly after Fouse's settlement Daniel Millspaw arrived and erected a ranch four and a half miles south east of Mr. Fouse's and about three miles south-east of the Leonard ranch, the former being on ground now occupied by the western portion of the city of Beaver Crossing.

Mr. Millspaw was soon followed by Wm. J. Thompson a former settler of Otoe county, who raised his tent in the way of a half dugout and half logs at the Walnut creek crossing, four miles east of the Millspaw ranch, at the junction of the steam wagon road and the freight route.

Roland Reed, the last one of the ranchers to arrive on the scene, did not leave the old native state of New York

until after the close of the civil war, in the spring of 1866, when he took possession of the ranch built by John Leonard which he conducted until the end of that kind of ranch business.

The ranch mentioned by Cox in his history as that of Dan Millspaw, located in York county and conducted by that gentleman in 1862 while he was conducting one in Seward county was, without doubt a ranch belonging to and managed by Jack McClellan, a son-in-law of Millspaw's. Mr. Cox mentions an incident which occurred in this dug-out ranch while Dan Millspaw was cooking his supper when a dare devil jumped down the chimney into the fire-place scaring Millspaw. It is a very nice story, but any one well acquainted with Uncle Dan, as Mr. Cox calls him, would brand it as an untruth because Uncle Dan would starve before he would cook or do any other kind of work. And besides all of this he had an excellent wife who was an excellent cook. But the whole story is absurd as Millspaw never lived in York county and his ranch was a double log house in Seward county.

While we have mentioned the ranchers as early settlers they were not such in the full sense of the term. They did not locate particularly to take land and make homes in the new country, but more to speculate in trade with the traveling public. Their mission was to feed the hungry and lodge the weary, and in return expected and received enormous prices and profits. Had it not been for this consideration, with the exception of John Leonard and Roland Reed, none of them would have been known as "first or early settlers." John Leonard's object in settling, as was told by himself to the writer, has been mentioned, and could not be considered as a sufficient reason to hold him as a permanent settler. His attention was entirely turned to speculation in deals with emigrants and freighters and it was not until late in the six-

ties that he pretended to make a home upon Uncle Sam's domain. The gift of one hundred and sixty acres of as fine valley land as there was in Nebraska, with abundance of timber, made to him by his brother Amos, together with the homestead privilege was sufficient to induce Roland Reed to settle in Seward county regardless of the consideration named, yet he took advantage of the ranch opportunity as the only one open at that time to make a living for himself and family, which was natural and almost unavoidable. J. E. Fouse, Dan. Millspaw and W. J. Thompson were Seward county settlers for no other purpose than ranch keeping and paid but little if any attention to home selections or home building. They all prospered in their chosen line until the last spike was driven that joined the Atlantic and Pacific by iron rails, cutting off the freight traffic by wagon and the overland travel along the historical routes, thus robbing the ranchers of their patronage. The result of this was that they all turned their enterprising attention to securing homes and benefiting by the grand opportunities which were then within their reach and all came to the front as model pioneer farmers. All of these land marks except John Leonard have long since passed to their final rest.

CHAPTER VIII.

Agriculture in Pioneer Days. Hazardous Experiments Improve Productions of Grain and Vegetables. Disadvantageous Early Markets.

The matter of agriculture and the markets in pioneer days in Seward county could scarcely be depicted more accurately than is illustrated in R. G. Ingersoll's portray of when he was a farmer. Mr. Ingersoll was not a Seward county homesteader and knew nothing of the trials of pioneer farm life in Nebraska, but his story is a true representation of the way things were done in those days of long ago. Here it is---old homesteader---read it and see if there is anything left out:

"When I was a farmer they used to haul wheat two hundred miles in a wagon and sell it for thirty-five cents a bushel. They would bring home about three hundred feet of lumber, two bunches of shingles, a barrel of salt, and a cook stove that never would draw and never did bake.

"In those blessed days the people lived on corn and bacon. Cooking was an unknown art. Eating was a necessity, not a pleasure. It was hard work for the cook to keep on good terms even with hunger.

"The rain held the roofs in perfect contempt, and the snow drifted joyfully on the floors and beds. They had no barns. The horses were kept in rail pens surrounded with straw. Long before spring the sides would be eaten away and nothing but roofs would be left. Food is fuel. When the cattle were exposed to all the blasts of winter, it took all the corn and oats that could be stuffed into them to prevent actual starvation.

"Women were supposed to know the art of making fires without fuel. The wood-pile consisted, as a general thing,

of one log, upon which an axe or two had been worn out in vain. There was nothing to kindle a fire with. Pickets were pulled from the garden fence, clap-boards taken from the house, and every stray plank was seized upon for kindling. Everything was done in the hardest way. Everything about the farm was disagreeable. Nothing was kept in order. Nothing was preserved. The wagons stood in the sun and rain, and the plows rusted in the fields. There was no leisure, no feeling that the work was done. It was all labor and weariness and vexation of spirit. The crops were destroyed by wandering herds, or they were put in too late, or too early, or they were blown down, or caught by the frost, or devoured by the bugs, or stung by flies, or eaten by worms, or carried away by birds, or dug up by gophers, or washed away by floods, or dried up by the sun, or rotted in the stack, or heated in the crib, or they all run to vines, or tops, or straw, or cobs. And when in spite of all these accidents that lie in wait between the plow and the reaper, they did succeed in raising a good crop and a high price was offered, then the roads would be impassable. And when the roads got good, then the prices went down. Everything worked together for evil."

This is only one side of an exaggerated picture of facts. While it is true that plows, wagons, reapers and other farm implements stood out in all kinds of weather the year round throughout Seward county it is also true that they were indispensable articles for which it was impossible to provide covering. Fuel supply was a besetting and difficult problem that required years to solve. However Seward county was fortunate in the line of timber along its many miles of streams well distributed in different localities. But the story about living on "corn and bacon" is carrying that point altogether too far for Seward county pioneers. To tell the unadulterated truth we leave out the bacon. Had the old settlers been

fortunate enough to have an addition of bacon to our bill of fare we would have been in fear of gout from too high living, and eating might have been such a pleasure that other matters would have been lost sight of. Soup made of water, salt, potatoes and a few wild onions for seasoning was a luxury we remember yet, while johnney-cake with gravy made of salt, water and corn meal made up the everyday bill of fare. In those days the most interesting and comforting book, next to the Bible, to read was the history of the travels of Sir John Franklin and his comrades in search for the north pole. The story in this book was especially interesting where it gave the account of those men feasting upon soup made from strips cut from the soles of their rawhide shoes, an every day diet, changed to a feast by the addition of an extra strip of shoe. After reading this our "grub" tasted delicious. And in those times we didn't have dyspepsia because we eat only when necessary and didn't eat too much.

But no person could charge this condition to the country. The real fault was discernable in the fact that so many people with little or no means were trying to make a start upon raw land. It should be remembered that humanity creeps before it walks. And memory carries us back to the great, delicious squashes, pumpkins, mellons, and wild onions the country produced to add to the scanty eatables, the finest of their kind ever known.

It is natural for man to want to follow the methods, not only in farming, but in every other occupation that he learned in youth. If he was raised in a country where it never quits freezing till after the fourth of July he will hang to his overcoat till after that date on the sunny coast of Florida. Many of the first settlers in Seward county were New England people. Those who were not from the far east were generally emigrants from more northern states of the west. And

they all had their special way to raise farm products. They would not plant corn until the twentieth of May, and some of them would wait till the "old of the moon in May" to plant potatoes. These rules strictly adhered to in Seward county, Nebraska, resulted unfavorable for the crops, especially in dry years as the planting was done too late to get the benefit of the usual early rainy period. The corn was planted with hoes, and it was only an ordinary sight to see five or six persons covering corn with hoes while three or four were engaged in dropping it. Corn planted in this way usually made a light crop, but it was the way "father raised good corn." And it required the running of a risk to learn that corn planted with a planter made a better crop than corn planted in the old way, with a hoe, the same as it required an experiment, or an accidental disregard of old doctor theory to teach that a patient, sick with a fever would not die, but rather be benefitted by drinking cold water. Occasionally a patient who the doctor said would die if he drank any cold water, would become reckless and thinking he was going to die anyway, would drink a gallon or two of water and surprise the doctor by getting well. And a few fellows got reckless and thinking they would not raise much corn anyway, took the easiest way to plant it, with hand planters, and the corn grew so even and yielded so much better that the hand planters became popular for a few seasons when they were superseded by horse planters, and as some one had become reckless and planted his corn a little earlier in the season than the schedule time, the opinion formed during the hoe planting after the twentieth of May period, that Nebraska was not a corn country, was reversed and farmers began to look upon it as the greatest corn country of all corn countries. Corn proved to be king, and although it failed occasionally on account of grasshoppers and drouth, it has been and is today the grain that has made

Seward county land the "jewel" of the world.

After a period of sixteen years of almost entire failure to raise spring wheat, the only wheat said to be productive in Nebraska, some reckless fellow, thinking no doubt, that he couldn't raise wheat anyway, "took chances" on the fall variety, and so deeply embeded had the delusion become that fall wheat could not be produced in the country that this benefactor shut his eyes to keep out the vision of failure his folly had projected. But the grain continued on its mission to reverse the former hobby and show that while spring wheat could not be successfully raised fall wheat was the stuff to promote the wealth of Seward county.

During the period when efforts to raise spring wheat brought nothing but heart rending dissapointment to the hard laboring and ever economizing, destitute farmers, other products of grain were tried as substitutes. Barley and flax came to the front for a short time, the latter being resorted to by many farmers that become destitute through the failure of their spring wheat, of seed to sow, the flax dealers furnishing the seed "on time" under contract that the said dealers should have the crop at so much per bushel. But barley and flax soon disappeared from the list as main crops being found difficult to handle on account of the usual wet harvest time and the lack of barns and sheds to cover such productions.

Vegetables were bountious products to raise in Seward county. Potatoes yielded enormously, but a market for more potatoes than the producer's own use was entirely out of sight. And along about 1874 the Colorado beetle or hard shell potatoe bug made its advent into the potatoe patches, and as there was no remedy known at that time for the destructive pests, farmers labored under grave difficulties to save enough potatoes to supply their own tables with this kind of food staple. But after a few years of suffering some

reckless fellow made another beneficent discovery by spraying his potatoe plants with a solution of the deadly poison, paris green and water.

Seward county early settlers did not draw wheat two hundred miles to market, but their first market for grain was at Lincoln, thirty-five miles away from many of them, and the lumber to build Ross Nichols' house, standing yet in the east part of the village of Beaver Crossing, was drawn by team from Nebraska City, a distance of ninety miles. And that lumber was freighted by steam boat up the Missouri river from Kansas City. With the approach of the C. B. & Q. Railway into Seward county, in March 1873, a market for that year's crop was assured at Seward. And this proved to be the principal market for Seward county, and for a considerable portion of York county. Although the market had come nearer home, all the inconveniences immaginable for handling the thousands of loads of grain that were drawn to the Seward market that and the following season, were prominent and disheartening features for the early grain producers of Seward county to bear and remember. There were no elevators nor dumps of any kind for several months, grain having to be unloaded by hand from the farmers' wagons either to small warehouses or to the cars for shipment. There were only three or four buyers with limited capacities for storeing grain, many times being unable for various reasons to secure cars the market would become clogged and prices cut in two nearly in the middle. We have seen five thousand bushels of shelled corn piled up on the ground and the snow drifting onto it and around it in the Seward market for the want of store room. Many times buyers would all excepting one declare their room for grain all filled up and refuse to buy when the one would cut the price all the farmers would bear and take all the grain that appeared upon the market. We have drawn loads of wheat eighteen miles to

market on such days, and after being forced to take a cut price for it were obliged to take our place at the end of a long string of wagons and wait from the middle of the forenoon until nearly sun down, our poor, tired horses going without food or water, for our turn to unload. Of course grain buyers were not tricky and didn't want to make any more money when buying wheat than the farmers made when raising it. But it did seem a little strange to us that one buyer with no more room than his competitors should have store room to unload forty or fifty loads of wheat after the said competitors had their houses all full. But time solves many mysteries. In 1875 the honest grain buyers in all the small town markets, wishing to be on the safe side, introduced a system of testing and grading wheat. This was all right, but there was another mystery to it in the fact that with the rich, grain producing soil of Seward county farmers could not raise number one wheat. It all graded number two, three or "rejected." We recollect taking a load of wheat to the Seward market in the fall of 1875, when the elevators, warehouses and grain market were just east of the present location of the B. & M. depot. We crossed the bridge almost into the grain market and were met by two young gentlemen who offered us twenty-five cents a bushel for our wheat, saying: "That is all it is worth today." We thought it might be as well to take it up to the city and see what people there thought of it. We drove up and halted in front of Beaty & Davis' store and Mr. Beaty came out, looked at the grain and said: "That wheat is worth fifty cents a bushel today." We told him he could have it and he directed us to his grain house where the same gentlemen who made the first bid for it unloaded it. They wished to buy it for rejected wheat, the lowest grade; Mr. Beaty did buy it and pay for No. 3 wheat when it really should have brought the price of No. 2. But if there was an honest grain

dealer in the country J. N. Beaty was his name. In those days farmers went a long distance to market with their grain and before leaving home had, as a rule, planned with the other half of the family upon what necessaries must be purchased with the receipts from the sale of the produce, and felt obliged to accept just what they could get for it in order to avoid rehauling it back home and to be able to take home the articles needed there. This established a system of continual forced sale of farm produce. It is a well remembered fact by many early settlers, some of whom tell the story in an almost lamentable tone, that at some future date, corn "sold for ten cents a bushel." This is a reflection, not of any market time, but of a time of no market, and represents "forced sales." Producers needed other things so much more than they did corn that they were forced to accept the price they could get at that time. While this was not a market price, being merely an occasional individual deal, it is only a fair representation of low prices on farm products as a result of pioneer needs. And corn in those days at ten cents a bushel brought as fair a price as good wheat which we sold shortly afterwards in the market for twenty-five cents a bushel. And taking into consideration the difference in the tax rate on land at that time, being on a greater portion not any, and the tax rate at the present time, together with the low price of living at that time as compared with the high prices now; and again taking into consideration the difference in the cost of production of corn during the different periods, ten cents at that period was as good a price as some of the more recent prices.

CHAPTER IX.

Breaking Prairie—Sod Houses, Dug-Outs—How to Build Them.

One of the important matters for consideration after a homesteader had located a home on the prairie was to break a few acres of sod and prepare to raise something to "keep the wolf from the door" when he got a door, and frequently the breaking plow was started before there was anything like a dwelling place provided—the family living in a tent or prairie schooner while the breaking season lasted---generally during the months of May and June. And in those days everybody wanted breaking done, thousands of acres of prairie being turned over in Seward county and made into crop producing land almost simultaneously with the rush of emigration to the county the first two years of the seventies. But prairie breaking was no child's play. While it is called and supposed to be plowing it is vastly different from any and all other kinds of plowing. The earth under prairie sod is solid and hard. The grass roots run deep and are so compact as to form almost a solid mass of very tough, woody fiber, requiring a sharp plow and one that runs under and cuts the whole mass together. The breaking plow must be skillfully adjusted or it will not run and do the work required of it any more than a clock or watch will run without proper adjustment. And the next requirements after the plow is in proper shape are first a good, strong team to draw it, and then a file to keep the plow sharp, a hammer and an iron wedge, old axe or other solid utensil to keep the "lay" or shear bent in proper shape. After these requirements have been supplied the work may progress under difficulties.

During the few years of the breaking period in Seward county there were many different kinds of schemes brought

forward to facilitate the work and lighten its burdens. Many new inventions were put upon trial and had the breaking continued and with it the spirit of invention until the present time the sod might be rolling over by the force of electricity, and with an Edison attachment reproducing the music of Gilmore's band. But it was all cut short for the want of sod, and at the present time it would be difficult to find enough good prairie sod in Seward county to build an ordinary sod house.

In the first place the old fashioned steel moldboard was used, but many plowmen thought that the suction of the sod upon the long, solid steel surface caused the plow to run very heavy and the rod moldboard was brought into extensive use. Then a plow with a moldboard made of small rollers which were expected to roll under the sod and turn it over was introduced. But this plow was not a success as it was soon discovered that the fine sand worked into the roller bearings and cut them off. Still another invention for easier work was the box plow. It was made in the shape of a box without a cover. The bottom of the box was the shear and run under the sod upon a level and cut the roots while the sides were the cutters to part the sod up and down. This box was made of sheet steel, a rod moldboard following the box turned the sod. These plows were used by many people who pronounced them very good. And in their design the greatest burden in prairie breaking, the penetrating of the solid rock like earth and cutting the mass of tough roots in the most practical manner was aimed at more directly than in any new moldboard invention.

The motive power in front of the breaking plows in the breaking period was the main object for consideration, but with all of the difficult and heavy tug for it the work went on steadily until it was finished. A majority of the settlers did their breaking with but two horses while others used three or

four. And occasionally a team of three or four yoke of cattle would be seen drawing a large breaker, the furrow being so wide it would appear like wide top tables turning over. Those large ox breakers were so constructed as not to require guiding, the guiding of the cattle and keeping the plow sharp and in order being the principle part of the manual labor attached to the business.

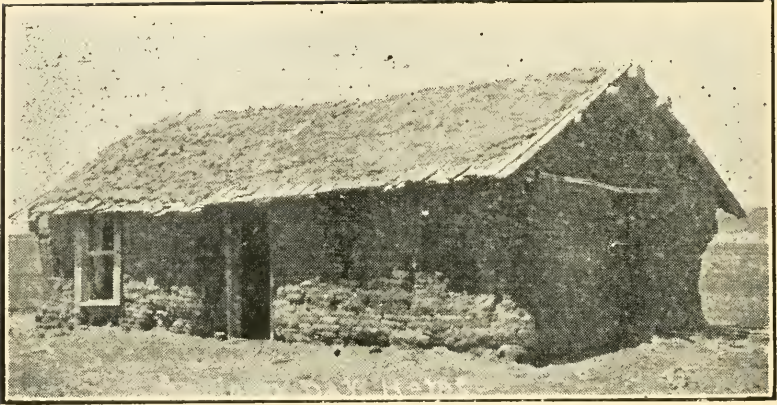
SOD HOUSES AND DUG-OUTS.

While the prairie section, covering more than one-half of this continent, was handicapped in its early settlement by the lack of timber for fuel and building log houses with clapboard roofs and puncheon floors the difficulty was largely overcome by the use of sod instead of logs to make pioneer dwelling houses, covering them with dirt roofs and using the bare ground for floors. And the prairie land being generally of a dry nature, where there was a convenient hill, very comfortable dwelling places were made by digging what was called dugouts. It did not require much of a mechanic to make a sod house or dugout, and yet there was a difference in the skillfully made ones and those more carelessly and roughly constructed, both in appearance and the length of time they would last. Sod houses were short lived, becoming almost uninhabitable in from ten to twelve years, but dugouts, with occasional recovering and repairing, were as permanent as the earth. The best sod to make houses of was found upon basin, or low land, where there was a kind of fibrous bunch grass, forming a lighter, tougher and more durable sod than that found upon up-land. The sod was first turned over with a breaking plow, from twelve to fourteen inches wide and three or four inches thick. It was then cut into three or four foot strips or blocks with an axe or a sharp spade. The walls were laid with these blocks of sod just the same as walls of brick, stone or cement, with the exception that the sod house walls were made

four feet thick, the windows and doors resembling railroad tunnels in a hill at a distance. The roofs were made by raising the end walls to a gradual pitch from each side to the center, placing heavy logs or timbers, one in the center and one on each side between the center and the side walls to support the roof and then laying poles close together, reaching from the timber in the center over the side walls to a sufficient projection for eaves, covering these poles with just enough straw or hay when pressed down to hold the dirt and not enough to give mice room to work in, laying a thin wall of sod along the eaves to hold the dirt and then covering the building with a coat of dirt about a foot and a half thick. While this was not a very handsome roof it was good to keep out the rain and was unsurpassed by any other roof made by the hand of man to keep out cold in winter and the hot rays of sun in summer. In fact sod houses and dugouts were very warm dwelling places in winter and cool in summer, their walls being almost impenetrable by cold or heat. Dugouts were missnamed. They should have been called dugins as they were generally dug in a hill, knoll or ridge of land. After digging the room the size desired the front of the dugout would be made of sod, logs or lumber in which all windows and doors were made. After the digging and work on the front of the dugout was completed the roof was made in the same manner as that of the sod house.

Although the sod house home may have been lonely to some people, its pleasures and enjoyments rank foremost among the rich rewards of memory, stored by ninety-nine out of every hundred of those who partook of its blessings. Although the sod house was not a handsome structure to look upon, it occupies a place among those things mentioned by the old adage as "handsome is that handsome does." It certainly did the "handsome" part with its ever ready place of comfort and the greatest contentment possible. It

certainly must be remembered by many as "Home, Sweet Home" in the fullest sense of that sentimental term. It was the childhood home of many and the home where many spent their youthful days—the happiest days of their lives. In fact a majority of the early settlers were young people who making a start spent their happiest days in the sod house or dugout homes. And it is scarcely probable that many of the pioneers can look back upon the free and happy sod house period, now gone forever, without feeling a tinge of real homesick loneliness. To understand the cause for the heartfelt regrets for the passing of those homely days of many deprivations we review the social equality, the ever present sense of independence and freedom from care together with the cheerfulness of the homes, made doubly so by the absence of other attractions. Every man, woman and child were as good as their neighbors and their sod homes were the abodes of cheer, good will and friendship, unsurpassed and unequaled in any day or age of the world.



The above picture represents an oldtime residence in Seward county. The structure has the appearance of being ten or twelve years old and in a state of decay, but there were many such homes occupied during the pioneer period and their occupants were reluctant about giving them up to go to ruin—it seemed like parting with a dear old friend, which was about true. The last one of those early abodes to shelter a family in Seward county stood in -N- precinct and was occupied until about 1893. It was one of the closing scenes of the pioneer period, and might have been twenty years old. Looking at one of these grand old homely things, one beholds one of the stepping stones to, and greatest assistants in the settlement of the wild west. No building—we care not how grand—had a greater mission in the upbuilding and settlement of any country than the sod house had in the settlement of Nebraska.

CHAPTER X.

Amusements.—A Popular Song by Two Popular Young Men.—A Fourth of July Celebration of Pioneer Type.

“All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy” is an old adage and as true as Gospel. And it never suited the conditions of any place, at any time more than it did those of Seward county in the days of its early settlement. There were no public halls nor even churches where people could meet for social entertainment and a rest from the hum-drum monotony of every day tug at life's steering wheel. It is true there was plenty of out-door sport, hunting and fishing, but this class of amusement became a form of labor, and the many sad reflections that crowded upon the over-worked body and at that time, seemingly unrewarded spirit caused a heart-braking loneliness to overcome many who gave up their new homes and moved to other states. And looking back upon these matters it seems that no class of people can live, prosper and enjoy life in any country devoid of some kind of amusement—some place where stern realities of life, thought, care and bodily strain may be reversed and those sad reflections and continual depressing cares forgotten in a spirit of refreshing joyousness.

Even wild Indians have their regular amusements, and it might seem that they pick a fight, one tribe with another, in order to have a “war” or “scalp dance.” And monkeys will collect in large numbers in the top of a tree and conduct some kind of a moving picture show, and dance in real time if they do not have any tune.

With the pioneer settlers the problem of “what shall

we do for amusement" was one of the despairing dilemmas of the day, but was solved and largely overcome by the sod house dances which became popular and pleasant diversions. Those entertainments were not for the display of fashionable style, but overflowing with cheer and good will, the real enjoyment reaped could not have been surpassed in any day and age of the world. Even the sawing of his fiddle strings by the fiddler to tune his fiddle was a pleasant opening overture to the occasion and a general tuning up of spirits and disbursing of weary cares were immediate results. Then "on with the dance; let joy be unconfined" was the sentiment with "no sleep 'till morn," that chased "the glowing hours with flying feet." And on it went, the dust flying out of the cracks in the old sod house floor until it appeared as though a thrashing machine had been in motion in the room. But with all of their homeliness there was nothing that could be supplied to fill the breach, or "missing link" in the chain of successful contentment like the sod house dances.

While these old time dances were social events among neighbors, enjoyed by old and young, amusing incidents frequently occurred in connection with them. Some of the quickest stepping chaps would imagine they were upon a race track and put on full steam and "throw off the breaks" coming in at the end of the change a few jumps ahead of the music and everybody else. They were proud of their quick movements and generally called for "something quick and devilish." What they really meant by this we were never quite able to comprehend, but they frequently expressed the limit at nothing slower than the "Arkansaw Traveler," which they whistled from morning till night from the end of one engagement to the opening of another, interspersing a few promptings such as: "First four right and left; ballance four; ladies change; alamand left; grand right and left; once and a half around, and keep a hook'n on, a hook'n on" as happy

as a lark singing its sweetest strain. But with all their simplicity those days appear in the far distant past, through gathering tears, as the brightest and happiest of all, now gone forever. The old time tunes and dances have about all "passed in their checks" and gone to slumber with the closing scenes of their days of usefulness on the prairies of Seward county, but they must not be forgotten.

A POPULAR SONG.

A little rime suited to its time became, by the addition of music, a popular pioneer song. It would be out of place to mention this song without also mentioning two popular young gentlemen of Seward county who, although both of them were single, and one of them is still enjoying the blessings of bachelorhood, Henry and Fred Bridenball, frequently sang the song as a duet at social gatherings.

As near as we can get the poetry it ran like the following under the title of:

IN THE SOD HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE.

In the sod house on the prairie
 Where I took my little wife,
 We couldn't think but that we'd love it
 For there's naught but toil through life.

CHORUS:

Here we are, naught but chilling winds around us,
 And no better we can do
 But toil on though some be discouraged,
 For 'tis God 't will help us through.
 We are lonely but we are happy
 There are better times before:—
 Hark! I hear a friend a knocking
 At our lonely sod house door.

CHORUS:

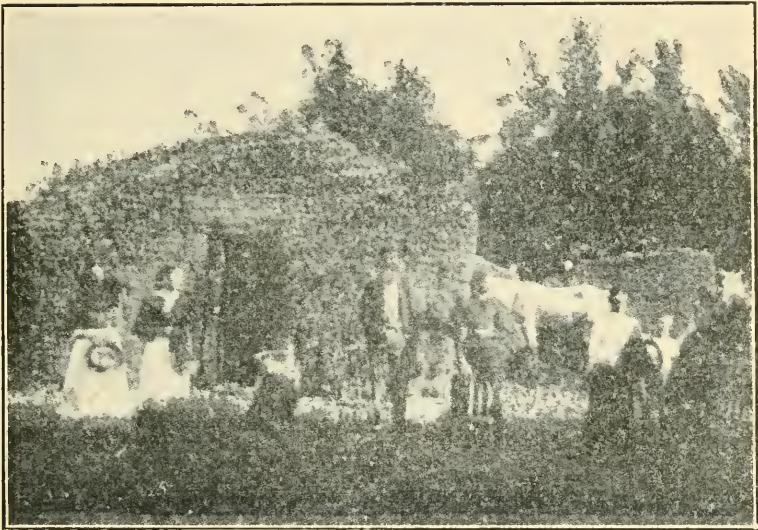
Here we are, naught but chilling winds around us,

And no better we can do,
 But toil on though some be discouraged
 For 'tis God 't will help us through.
 'Tis toil for those who are here—
 And toil for those who roam;
 Welcome! welcome friend and stranger,
 To our lonely sod house home.

CHORUS.

Independence Day Celebration, July 4th. 1872.

What seems to have been the first 4th of July celebration in Seward county was held on that day 1872 in what was then called C. D. Clark's grove, about one mile south-east of the present location of Beaver Crossing. It was an event which had been talked of for several weeks, the principal mode of advertising, but was thought, by many, to be a premature undertaking which would fizzle for want of interest and patronage. But when that bright morning arrived, on the roads in every direction, there were scenes of activity. It appeared as though there had been a great awakening of people throughout the entire county and they were responding to an important call for their presence. Milford sent a delegation of several wagon loads of people which were met by Beaver Crossing people, just over the hill, and escorted to the grounds, and before the time for opening the exercises the woods were full of people. Elder W. G. Keen was the principal orator of the day, whose eloquence on that occasion is seldom surpassed on a 4th of July platform. This was followed by a brilliant address by Dr. J. H. Woodward, and timely addresses by Daniel Millspaw and W. J. Thompson. The program was interspersed with music by a male quartet composed of S. G. Merriam and son George A. Merriam, and George Smiley of Milford and William Livesley of the Walnut creek district. And this part of the program was



Pioneer scene. This sod house is represented in an end view of the structure, showing a window. The growth of weeds and grass that have sprouted and grown from the shingles of the roof are visible evidence that there has been previous growing weather in that vicinity. Where this old time abode was located we are unable to state, but it represents a general spectacular appearance on the western frontier. And the character in the front view call up memories of the good old times when vent to happy thoughts were frequently expressed in the following feeling stanza.

Oh, the hinges are of leather
And the windows have no glass,
The roof lets in the sunshine and the rain,
But I'm as happy as a clam
On this land of Uncle Sam
In my little old sod shanty on the claim.

of a high grade, seldom, if ever equaled on such occasions in this vicinity. In addition to the vocal music instrumental music was furnished by "Anderson's string band," consisting of two violins and cello, by William Anderson, John Anderson and Boone Anderson, three brothers. They made quite a musical display along the road from their homes in York county to the celebration ground, adopting the soul stirring manner of a circus band on parade. They were conveyed by a four horse team of which James G. Anderson, an older brother was the driver. And they stirred up the dreary spirits all along their route by delivering the "Devil's Dream," "Money-Musk" and such popular tunes of the day in artistic style while they stood up in the wagon. The exercises closed with a grand ball at John Osborn's new hotel.

CHAPTER XI.

The Timber Craze of the First Settlers. Wind Breaks for Orchards—
Fruit.

The greatest and most depressing need felt by a large majority of the early settlers of Seward county was timber for fuel. Some of the very early ones were fortunate enough to secure homesteads with enough timber to supply their own wants and some to spare their less lucky neighbors. But many of those who had been thus fortunate shared the prevalent timber craze of the time, and fearing a timber famine before they would be called to a warmer place, refused to part with a stick of their wood for love or money. And those who didn't share the fear of freezing to death if they let their neighbors have a little of their surplus wood placed as much value upon it as if it had been obtained in the same manner as dust of the precious metal, panned out. Scraggly cottonwood trees, twisting once and half around in an ordinary stovewood length, the only way of getting it small enough to go into a stove was to hew it---it couldn't be split---sold for from five to ten dollars each, according to the size. And four foot wood of the same timber was valued at from six up to ten dollars per cord, the price being governed by the locality. If in a locality where one or two, modernly called "tight wads," had a monopoly the higher price prevailed. And it required about four cords of this high priced fuel, for heating or cooking purposes, to equal one cord of hickory, oak, beech or hard maple. In fact willow timber or basswood when seasoned is better fuel than cottonwood.

But the price of the fuel was not always the greatest obstacle in the way of having something to keep warm with and cook the wild onions and potato soup—very many of the settlers' homes were so far from timber that it required as much time to get a wagon load of poor wood from the woods as it does at the present time to get a car load of coal from the coal bank. In accordance with the real conditions of the time and the apparent future situation, the existing pinching necessity was viewed by nearly all with apprehension if not with alarm. The prospects for relief from the ever present burden of providing fuel was so discouraging that a general opinion prevailed that the country was worthless unless timber could shortly be produced upon the baren land. In view of this idea there was a general rush for young trees to set out. Cottonwood was the most rappid growing and the only kind of native timber that would do to saw into lumber therefore young cottonwood trees were in great demand. Some of those fortunate ones who had secured homesteads with a little timber along the rivers entered into speculation in the tree trade and started cottonwood nurseries by breaking patches of ground near the timber to catch the cottonwood seed and after it sprouted they sold the sprouts to their later arriving neighbors for from fifty cents to one dollar per hundred; price being governed by the size and age of the trees. But after two or three years the bottom was knocked out of this speculation by the discovery that cottonwood limbs stuck down in the ground would grow faster and make timber quicker than the little trees. This new discovery lightend the labor and expense of tree planting to such an extent that cottonwood groves soon sprang up all over the prairies of Seward county, and rows of that timber were growing on homestead lines. There was no discount on the rapidity of the cottonwood's growth. It had one rival in that line---the wild sunflower---which also rivaled

it in point of value. It ruined land for the production of other timber or vegetables and nothing would grow within a circle of several rods around it, and timber so greatly desired proved to be an undesirable nuisance. Farmers were raising an abundance of corn, the cobs being better fuel than cottonwood, and the rail roads were bringing coal so cheap and plentiful that it did not pay to chop poor wood for fuel. It made poor fuel and shaky, warpy lumber not worth the expense of sawing. Many of the over zealous homesteaders to plant cottonwoods were at a loss to know how to get them out of the way fast enough. Some cut them down and some girdled them and let them stand until they rotted down. But there are thousands of them remaining and robbing the farmers of many acres of very valuable land. The catalpa, soft maple and white ash, where they have been cultivated are making fine growths of valuable timber and do not rob the soil.

The early homesteaders were greenhorns in the matter of fruit production in about the same degree as they were in growing timber. And by misconception of the requirements of the country for fruit growing were placed several years behind in that industry. There was a general opinion formed among them that fruit could not be produced in Nebraska unless there was first a good "wind break" of growing timber at least on the north and west sides of the orchard ground. While this caused a delay in getting the young fruit trees started it was not the greatest discouraging feature to a large majority. They made their "wind breaks" of cottonwood trees and after a time and the cotton trees got well rooted apple trees would be set out close up to the "wind break." Then after the cottonwoods had sapped the ground and killed the apple trees frequent expressions of doubt about "raising fruit in Nebraska" were heard. But the truth still remains as solid as a rock that while oranges,

lemons, bananas and such southern fruit cannot be produced, fruit that will grow in any northern state will grow and do well in Nebraska. No state in the United States produces finer apples, pears, peaches, plums, cherries and all kinds of berries. The first doubts and half-hearted efforts to raise fruit in Seward county, gave it such a backset it was "side-tracked" by farmers for other more easy raised, and perhaps less profitable productions, while other portions of the once Great American Desert, no better for fruit production, are banking thousands of dollars for their apple, pear and peach crop every year, Seward county barley produces its own fruit. While farmers can make quick and profitable crops of corn, wheat, oats, hogs, cattle, horses and hens' eggs they prefer to buy their fruit instead of taking the time to raise it. But the fault for its non production cannot be attributed to the soil, climate nor wind.

CHAPTER XII.

BEAVER CROSSING. Pioneer Postoffices and Postmasters—The "Star Route" Served on the Back of a Broncho.—Beaver Crossing Moved. Its Location and Name a Missfit—A Story.

Although Beaver Crossing was perhaps better known through the country in early times than any other locality in Seward county, there was nothing to indicate a town nor village, the name originating, as has previously been stated, from the freight route crossing of Beaver creek. But early in 1867 Roland Reed succeeded in getting a postoffice established under the name of Beaver Crossing, he receiving the appointment as the first postmaster, located the office in his ranch, about one-half mile east of Beaver creek. Mr. Reed served as postmaster two years, resigning the office to move upon his homestead when Daniel Millspaw was appointed, becoming Beaver Crossing's second postmaster. About the time of Mr. Millspaw's appointment Thomas H. Tisdale arrived from the state of Wisconsin and established a general mercantile business in the John E. Fouse ranch, a short distance west of Beaver creek, Mr. Fouse having retired to his homestead. And in this store Mr. Millspaw located the postoffice, and appointed T. H. Tisdale his clerk. In connection we will quote a paragraph from W. W. Cox's history which is somewhat misleading. On page 260 of that work in the general write-up of M precinct Mr. Cox says:

"Smith & Ingals opened a little store in 1871 and Mr. Smith built the flouring mill the same season. At this time Thomas Tisdale had a little store at John E. Fouse's ranch at the crossing of the Beaver creek in the corner of L precinct. Mr. Tisdale had secured a postoffice which was supplied by a star route. Mail was carried on a broncho and

was weekly; some said it was a weakly affair."

Mr. Cox practically makes the opening of the "little store" by Smith & Ingals the starting point of Beaver Crossing and gives no previous account of it. As has been seen, Roland Reed secured the postoffice two years before T. H. Tisdale opened his store in 1869. The postoffice had been established four years and six months, at least, before the "little store" mentioned as being opened by Smith & Ingals was built. Mr. Smith, who was in the flouring mill business at Pleasant Hill, Saline county, built the mill in the spring and early summer of 1871, and in the fall of the same year he built and stocked the store as an adjunct to the mill. But the firm of Smith & Ingals was scarcely known in the locality as the store was opened and conducted under the management of Ed. Nye, a brother-in-law of Mr. Smith. And Ed. Nye was really the only person interested in the success of this "new store" as it was commonly called. The writer had the honor of sawing on an old fiddle while neighbors and settlers from several distant points "warmed" the floor of the new store before the interior was fitted for merchandise.

Smith's flouring mill was built upon a portion of Ross Nichols' farm in M precinct, four miles south-east of Beaver Crossing. And every indication pointing to that locality as the coming business center for the surrounding country, the determination to select a permanent location for his business while the opportunity was favorable, was soon settled by T. H. Tisdale and securing sufficient real estate from Ross Nichols he erected a new and commodous store building upon the site of the proposed town. And to these new quarters he transferred his mercantile stock. At the time he opened his "little store at the Fouse ranch" he was not yet a resident of Nebraska not having resided long enough in the state, and therefore was not eligible to appointment

as postmaster; therefore could not have had anything to do with getting or securing a post office as stated by Mr. Cox. But having become a citizen in due time, Daniel Millspaw resigned his postmastership and T. H. Tisdale became the third postmaster. Of course when the store was moved the postoffice had to go too or remain without a postmaster and it went with the outfit and Beaver Crossing was thus moved from L precinct four miles south-east and set down in M precinct where it remains without any other reason on earth for being called Beaver Crossing than that Tom Tisdale was postmaster and wanted to move his store to another part of the county. But there is not the first thing in sight to justify the name it bears. It is not even on or near Beaver creek and is merely a namesake or shadow of the old matter of fact name established many years before the new village was thought of. In regard to the "star route, served upon the back of a broncho" as a "weakly affair," we will illustrate the facts in a recital of a little personal experience of the writer in

A True Story of Marriage Under Diffiulties.

In the fall of 1869 my "best girl" emmigrated with her parents from Harrison county, Iowa, to the wild plains of Seward county, Nebraska and located in a little log house on the West Blue river bottom a mile and a half west of the site of the present village of Beaver Crossing. By a little dilligent inquiry I learned that her post office address was Beaver Crossing. And to and from that place the back of the broncho was heavier laden each week for a period of six months at the end of which I concluded to ride the broncho myself. In accordance with this determination I left Logan, Iowa, on the 20th day of March, 1870, bound for Beaver Crossing via Council Bluffs. As there were no railway accommodations in the direction I wanted to go, I had planned to cross the Missouri river from the Bluffs to Omaha

and take stage passage to Lincoln where I would connect with the "star route" to the Crossing. I stopped at the old historical Pacific House in Council Bluffs for dinner and told the landlord where I was going and how I wished to get there. And I was very much surprised when he told me that there was no connecting line either by stage or any other way between the city of Omaha and Lincoln, the capital of the state. He said my only way to get to Beaver Crossing and avoid a week's lay-over was to go by rail that evening to Nebraska City and take the stage which would leave the next morning for Lincoln where the hack for my desired destination would leave the following morning. I boarded the south bound train on the Hannibal & St. Joe road early in the evening for Nebraska City, fifty miles down the river and arrived at what was then called East Nebraska City, on the opposite side of the river from the city proper, at about ten o'clock. A young gentleman representing the Sherman House in the City met the train and as he was checking baggage to be delivered at the Sherman House I permitted him to check my valise. In the morning when the stage was ready to leave for Lincoln I presented my check at the baggage room in the hotel and found that the highly prized article had been left on the other side of the river. This caused me more trouble than can well be imagined. The stage would not wait a minute, and I either had to go with it or miss the hack from Lincoln to Beaver Crossing which meant a lay-over for one week. but in that satchel was a forty dollar wedding suit which I expected to need as soon as I reached my journey's end. I made up my mind, in a hurry, to leave the valise and get married in the clothes I had on, which were middling fair. Boarding the stage I found three traveling companions bound for Beaver Crossing, the trio consisting of a gentleman, lady and little boy. The gentleman was Mr. McCall, the lady his wife

the boy his step-son, well known in more recent years in the vicinity of Beaver Crossing as A. E. Sheldon, now the husband of Margaret Thompson, a pioneer girl of ranch days. The kid was about five years old and annoyed his mother and step-father by insisting in climbing out of the stage every time it stopped to run a race with it, a race in which the boy would certainly have been winner. Leaving Nebraska City at about eight a. m. the trip of fifty miles to Lincoln was completed at seven p. m. Stops were made along the route to change horses and mail. There were no metropolitan hotels in Lincoln in those days, but I found a very fair place to stay and where I eat my first buffalo steak, a much better and more digestible meat than is served at many up-to-date hotels of the present time. In the morning I realized for the first time that the loss of my satchel had deprived me of a clean shirt at least, and that my chance to meet my girl and get married in a dirty shirt was very much too apparent for pleasant thoughts and looking down the street, which I think is now O street, saw a sign-board across the sidewalk which displayed the words in large letters, "Clothing Store." It didn't require a second suggestion—I was soon within the portal of that establishment and if my voice shook a little when I asked the proprietor if he had any laundried white shirts it must have been caused by the flight down the street. But the shirt with a box of paper collars were purchased and I hurried back to the postoffice where I was to meet Mr. Adams, proprietor of the Adams back line to Beaver Crossing. Stepping into the postoffice a peculiarly giddy sensation passed over me and glancing down to the floor I discovered that it was composed of wide cottonwood boards which had not only shrank, leaving wide cracks between them, but had perhaps warped some making the floor rough and a little shaky. There were a number of full mail sacks laying by the side of the postoffice door and to the in-

quiry of where they were to go Mr. Adams replied: "With us; the most of them to Beaver Crossing." He then loaded them upon his spring wagon and started with his mail and one passenger on a two day's journey to Beaver Crossing, and while I assure the readers of this sketch that I did not ride a broncho they may rest assured that if the mail that was loaded onto that wagon had been laid on the back of a broncho the animal could not have moved a foot. The load consisted of mail for Milford, Camden, West Mills and Beaver Crossing. I took dinner at Milford, supper, lodging and breakfast at Camden. Leaving Camden the next stop was at West Mills of a half hour while the postmaster changed the mail. Continuing the journey Daniel Millspaw's ranch was reached in time for dinner. Here, after enjoying a little amusement at the expense of the star route man, I met a surprise almost equal to the one over the loss of my satchel. There was a very fine appearing lady visitor at the Millspaw ranch and the amusing feature was brought up by the mention, in some way, of whiskey from which the lady took occasion to denounce the wet goods and every one who used it. And the star route driver, Mr. Adams, joined in and gave vent to his hatred of the vile stuff and denounced its use in terms so plain that a "way-fareing man, though a fool, need not err therein." He assented to everything the lady said and in the language of card players, "went several chips better." But he failed to state that he had a gallon jug full of the "oh-be-joyfull" under the seat in his hack which he had been "sampling" at the corner of every section on the road from Lincoln. I imagined at the time that she had noticed the perfume of his breath, but perhaps not. After this interesting conversation the grand surprise in store for me was next in order, and after I had donned my overcoat and buttoned it up to continue my journey to the little log house of John D. Salnave, about one mile further west, the

fine temperance lady advocate stepped up to me and without the least sign of a doubtful thought, extended her hand, saying: "Mr. Waterman, we would be pleased to have you visit us before you return to Iowa." Following her came an elderly lady---God bless her kind heart---and grabbing my hand she shook it till my teeth rattled, calling me by name and wishing me much joy; and then came the third lady, grand enough to grace the finest habitations of a prince and giving me cheering welcome to the community she congratulated me in a very kindly manner. Well, I didn't faint, but did forget where I was at and didn't come to my right mind sufficient to try to learn the names of the ladies until I got started with the hack and Uncle Dan Millspaw in the back seat, who gave the name of the first lady as Mrs. Ross Nichols, the second, his wife, Mrs. Daniel Millspaw and the third their daughter, Mrs. Rosa McClellan.

The facts are, I had been expected to appear in person in that neighborhood about a month before and business matters had forced me to postpone the trip. And as the young lady had made all necessary arrangements for the wedding, with guests invited her disappointment at my non-appearance was thoroughly understood by sympathizing neighbors. Those ladies knew this and perhaps had heard of the second proposed trip, and as the travelers over the star route to Beaver Crossing were limited in number, they felt sure that I was the man they were expecting to see.

Here I wish to mention Daniel Millspaw, because connected with his name is a memory which remains and will remain with me until my time passes to eternity. He is the one who as justice of the peace, pronounced the ceremony uniting myself and life companion in holy wedlock at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Salnave, near Beaver Crossing, March 26, 1870. This occurring a few days after the experience at his house and also following

other difficulties, similar to the loss of the satchel, by which the wedding was delayed. Business affairs in Iowa demanding my immediate return, as we could go with William Collier who was going to make a Sunday drive to Lincoln we were married on Saturday. Sunday morning broke with a raging, blinding north-west blizzard of the old time grade and we were corralled for four days. But we finally got off, spending two days and one night on the route to Nebraska City where I found the satchel at the hotel. Crossing the river in the morning to take railway passage, having run short of cash I presented a bank draft to pay for tickets, but the ticket agent said I would have to be identified to get tickets with that. Here was the worst appearing dilemma I had met, but fortunatly my wife had an uncle, Judge Ed. Reed, also an aunt and husband, Mr. and Mrs. Royal Buck residing in the city and we recrossed "old muddy" and spent twentyfour hours in a very pleasant visit with the uncle and aunt and their families. Judge Reed cashed my draft and the journey was completed without further trouble. I trust that the narration of the difficulties incountered on this short trip and the marriage, illustrates the condition of the country in regard to travel and the transit of mail in those early times in a more comprehensible manner than in any other way of presenting them. The railway fare from Logan to Beaver Crossing at the present time is two dollars and twenty cents, and the time required to make the trip is five hours. I was four days and three nights making the same journey. And the expense of the round trip, including the cost of the shirt and box of collars, wedding fees and return fare for the bride was ninety-five dollars and fifty cents.

The Beaver Crossing Mail.

Regarding the Beaver Crossing mail in pioneer time being a "weakly affair" there is a greater reason than Adams' jug to say it was a strong one. It is true it came by what

was called star route. only once a week. but for this reason it was too heavy for the back of a broncho, at least as early as the spring of 1870. Beaver Crossing was the terminus of the mail route and mail was brought there for settlers on an area of territory reaching into York and Fillmore counties, and the fact must be apparent that with the rush of settlement in the years of 1869 to 1870, inclusive, there must have been a large and increasing demand for mail service. Communication between the homesteaders and their recent old homes was a matter of absolute necessity to the progress of the country's settlement. While there was not such a vast amount of second class and ordinary mail matter in those days as at the present time, it can scarcely be denied that mail to and from Beaver Crossing of the first class, or letters, was heavier then than at the present time. Although the postoffices at Camden and Milford were served by the mail route three times a week in 1870 the heaviest mail to be delivered in any postoffice in Seward county at that time passed through those offices to Beaver Crossing.

PIONEER POSTOFFICES AND POSTMASTERS.

The first of the pioneer postoffices was opened with James Johnson as pestmaster at Camden in 1865. This office served the people of the entire county of Seward and many settlers in Saline county and counties further west, for a period of about two years when an office was opened with J. L. Davison as postmaster at Millford, and almost simultaneously with this postoffices were established at West Mills, on the West Blue river, west of Camden and at Beaver Crossing and the star route was extended from Lincoln via Pleasant Dale, Millford and Camden to West Mills and Beaver Crossing. Thomas West was the posmaster at the Mills and Rolland Reed at the Crossing.

About the time these latter offices were opened the enterprising little settlement in the vicinity of the proposed town

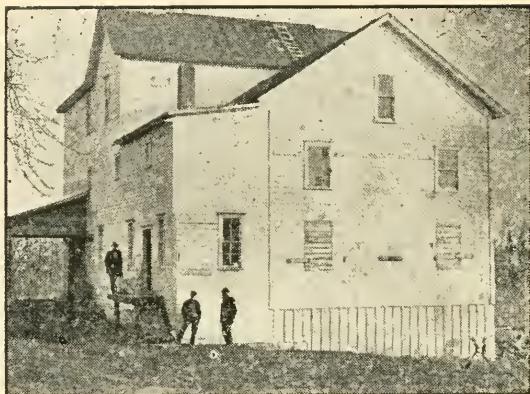
of Seward resolved to get a postoffice and after making an ineffectual effort to induce Lewis Moffit to accept the position of postmaster an application was sent to a Nebraska representative in congress to have the honor of postmaster bestowed upon Mr. Moffit as a pleasant surprise regardless of his determination not to accept it. He was the only available man, being the only resident of the site of the proposed town and his house the only suitable place for the postoffice. The application was duly considered, the appointment made and Seward had a postoffice and postmaster. But the patronage was so small that the government declined furnishing it with a star route. With a brand-new postoffice and postmaster the people of Seward were not going to be nonplussed for the want of a mail agent and they contracted with E. L. Clark, a one armed soldier, to carry the mail to and from Camden once a week for one dollar and fifty cents a trip, funds for the purpose being raised by subscription. The distance from Seward to Camden was about fifteen miles and Mr. Clark made the trips on foot and carried the mail in an old army haversack.

Several postoffices were established in the northern precincts of the county in pioneer days. A postoffice was opened in Milten Langdon's house on section 21, at Oak Groves in 1869 with G. B. Harding as postmaster. It was first served by "buckboard" star route and later the mail was carried by stage. A postoffice named Orton was kept in a farm house in D precinct in the late sixties, Stephen Phillips being the postmaster. There was also one maintained at Marysville in C precinct for several years. The German-town postoffice was established after the advent of the B. & M. rail road in 1873, with John Westerhoff as postmaster. The postoffice at Pleasant Dale was established in 1870 with James Iler as postmaster. The office was located in Mr. Iler's residence, and if our memory serves us correctly it was

a structure made of small stones which undoubtedly had been gathered along Middle creek, Pleasant Dale being in the Middle creek valley, in the eastern portion of the county. There is an abundance of stone along this valley. The Utica postoffice, established in the fall of 1877, was the last one in the list of what might be called pioneer postoffices of Seward county. T. E. Standard was its first postmaster, through whose efforts the office was shortly advanced to a money order office.

The foregoing postoffices of the pioneer period were small and perhaps as Mr. Cox says "weakly affairs," but their mission was great and grand. And we feel safe in saying that there never was the same number of mail deliveries to serve the same number of inhabitants that did the real good to the patrons and the country in which they were located that those offices did.

And the benevolent pioneer postmasters whose labors in the performance of service to their neighbors was, with the exception of the reward of appreciation, practically an unrewarded act of kindness to the patrons of their offices, to them and their offices is due the credit for having assisted the pioneer settlers in the civilized settlement of Seward county.



This picture represents an "old land mark," undoubtedly remembered by many hundred pioneer settlers as the place where their bread material was manufactured. It was built just south of the present location of Beaver Crossing in 1871 by Smith and Ingles. It was sold to Wm. J. Thompson in the fall of 1872, and he conducted the mill for several years, finally selling it to J. F. M. Dimery who later sold it to George Winand. It was again transferred in a short time to Mr. Dimery who permitted it go out of use. It shortly afterwards become the property of John Martin who repaired it and placed it in working order. His son, Robert Martin has conducted its business several years and is still the miller. There was a politically historical event connected with the sale and transfer of this mill to William J. Thompson. He had just been elected, after a hard worked campaign, to represent his district in the state legislature and just about the time for him to assume his duties at the state capital he made a deal for the mill when he absolutely refused to serve as one of the state's law makers on the grounds that he could not afford to leave his business.

CHAPTER XIII.

Pioneer Towns—Stores—Saw and Grist Mills—Bridges and Highways.

Camden, located in the intersecting vallies of the North and West Blue rivers which unite a short distance below, and also at the freight route crossing of the North Blue, was the first place in Seward county to present an appearance of a village or town. It was a beautiful locality with its expanse of bottom land, the sparkling rivers with their winding beds bordered with rows of timber and the distant hills on either side. This attracting the attention of the public travelers upon the freight route induced early settlement and the formation of a town began as early as 1866. A postoffice had already been established. The first store of the county was opened here in 1866 by Wm. Buckhannan and a saw and flouring mill was erected by H. W. Parker and Fordyce Roper at an expense of \$15,000 the same season. The mill was first class and an enterprise of inestimable value to the town and general public throughout the county. A hotel soon followed and then the second store. A blacksmith had located a shop early and engaged in shoeing freight teams, and added to the ringing music of the hammer and anvil was heard the duller rattle of the carpenter's hammer, adding many dwelling houses. In March 1870 we were a guest over night at the Camden hotel, the name of which with the name of the proprietor we have forgotten, but we remember that he was a very busy business man, having, besides his hotel to oversee, the responsibility of the office of justice of the peace. There were two stores and both were kept in log buildings, and one of them carried a line of

drugs and patent medicine in addition to its general merchandise entitling it to be classed as a department store. There were a collection of dwelling houses surrounding the business center, the place appearing like a town of two or three hundred inhabitants. And it is probable that it had about reached its growth limit as it gradually decreased from about that time.

Nine miles north of Camden, where the steam wagon road crossed the North Blue river, the second village in Seward county sprang into existence during the period from 1866 to 1868. Davison & Reed started a grist and saw mill in 1866 and as this mill was located just above the old ford crossing of the river the town was named "Milford." But while the mill was in line of progress the ford passed into retirement by the erection of a bridge, the second one to span the North Blue river in Seward county. This bridge was what might be called a "wild west bridge." It was a true representation of pioneer art and called to memory the truthful adage, "necessity is the mother of invention." It was made by sinking large piling into the earth upon which stringers of logs were placed reaching from the bank to the first pile and continued from one to the other until the opposite bank was reached. Upon these stringers small poles were thickly lain and then covered with a matt of hay and dirt. J. L. Davison built the bridge to accommodate the travel upon the steam wagon road while he was in the business of keeping a ranch at that place. Milford was located in an attractive area of Seward county territory. The North Blue river here was superior to the Nebraska streams in general, being imbedded in rock. The bottom of the stream was composed of large flag stone, from which we took several perch of flag stone in 1874 for a foundation to the Beaver Crossing school house. This condition of the river affords the place one of the best water power sites in Nebraska and

it has been improved. The settlers were progressive and as early as 1868 had made apparant signs of future advancement. Doom & Etherly opened the first mercantile store, being followed by S. G. Merriam & Son with the second one in a short time.

In March 1870 we were at Milford and took dinner at the Milford hotel, kept by L. D. Laune. We became acquainted with the two professional men of the county capital, D. C. McKillip, attorney at law and Dr. Band who occupied a building perhaps twelve feet wide by about sixteen in length with an assortment of drugs and medicines, and we believe he called it his drug store. He did not remain long at Milford, but moved to Crete when that place was first founded. Dr. J. H. Woodward settled at Milford in 1870 and Dr. G. W. Brandon and Dr. Mitchell came to the place about two years later. Dr. Woodward and D. C. McKillip moved to Seward shortly after the location of the county seat at that place. They were both Union soldiers in the war of the rebellion.

One of the two first newspapers published in Seward county, The Blue Valley Record was started at Milford in December, 1870 by Culver & Parsons. It was a neat and enterprising little local newspaper and appeared regularly every week until 1873 when the publishers moved it to Lincoln and consolidated it with a paper in that city. However Mr. Culver did not remain in Lincoln, but returned to his former home after about one year.

A contention over the matter of the county seat sprang up between Camden and Milford in the early period of their existence, and as Milford was located nearer the center of the county it won the contest. While this was a brief and temporary stimulus to Milford it seemed to be almost a death blow to Camden. However Milford retained the prize but a few years when it was relocated at Seward. Milford's

pioneer postmasters were changed several times, the emoluments of the office undoubtedly being the honor more than the salary the desire to hold on to the position was limited only to the time the next fellow would take it. J. L. Davison, the first postmaster, was appointed in 1867 and was succeeded by Mr. Etherly in 1868, J. H. Culver succeeding him in 1871. Two years later, in 1873, Thomas A. Healey was appointed and held the office till 1876 when he resigned to accept the office of representative in the state legislature, his wife succeeding him in the postoffice, and was succeeded by S. D. I. Emerson in 1879, who held the office six years when it passed from the pioneer period.

Still farther up the North Blue river Seward, the third place to enter upon the stage as a town, became a pretentious village early. The first step towards the formation of a town was taken in 1868 when Thomas Graham was employed by Lewis Moffit to survey the first section of the town-site and lay it out in lots. In the same season Beaty & Davis opened a store, W. H. Tuttle built a small portion of what later become the Commercial Hotel, Dr. L. Walker added a small residence and with prospects of new recruits, in the fall of the same year Seward was marshaling its legions to capture the county seat. And a contest was soon in "full blast" between that place and Milford, the one to gain and the other to retain the seat. The contest was waged with furious energy by both sides, mixed with a little wild west trickery for a long and bitter period. Seward had the advantage of being located nearer to the center of the county, and Milford was burdened with the dissatisfaction of Camden on account of the previous county seat contention and when the proposition to relocate the county seat at Seward was finally submitted to a vote on October tenth, 1871, it carried by a safe majority and Seward was on the map as a county seat town. And its developement as a village

was rapid. With the assurance that the county seat question was permanently settled new industries began to appear. Professional men—lawyers and doctors were soon mingling with the pioneer homesteaders. And added to the former important feature in the up-building of Seward the B. & M. rail road reached the place early in the spring of 1873. With this enterprise came the establishment of a standard market for farm produce which stimulated other branches of business and the new town, scarcely four years old, could begin to view its future prospects above the support to be obtained from the county seat. Energetic and substantial grain buyers were soon upon the scene of future operations and ware houses were erected in view of handling the coming fall's business. Among the resident grain buyers Beaty & Davis took a prominent part, and as a special grain dealer who came to Seward to make that line his business, E. C. Carns was the most prominent of the early dealers. Whatever may have been the general impression of thought entertained by the public of Mr. Carns, he was an able man in his line of work and was a pillar of great strength to the city of Seward, holding the confidence of the farmers in the purchase of their grain he was an attraction which drew the rural patronage from the entire county. A brick yard was placed in operation the same year. Joel Tishue erected a large brick store building and opened a general mercantile store which was followed in a short time by the opening of stores by Herman Diers and S. Adler. A store was opened by the Grange along about 1874 which later was made the headquarters for the distribution of aid to the grasshopper sufferers throughout the county. E. A. Polley was an early time jewelry dealer and Cyrus Chapin entered into the music trade about the same time, dealing in organs, pianos, and sewing machines. Phil Unitt opened a meat market, in 1873 and in the same year the State Bank of Nebraska, the first

bank in Seward county, was established by Claudius Jones. A court house was an early enterprise. It was an inexpensive structure, but cost more than it was worth to the county as a court house. It stood just west of the present business portion of the city. It passed out of use as a court house before the close of the seventies and court was held in the opera house and other rented rooms. And the rooms for county officials were also rented in one of the business blocks. Whitcomb & Williams were prominent figures in the early business of Seward, in the line of livery, feed and sale stable which they conducted for several years. The Seward County Bank, the second bank in the county, was founded in 1876 by S. C. Langworthy. This bank merged into the First National Bank later on. Among the early business we recall to memory A. J. Calender, coal dealer. Dunbaugh Brothers, dealers in drugs and medicines. S. D. Atkins, dealer in and manufacturer of harness etc. J. W. Dupin, a prominent citizen of Seward in early days, and an early homesteader, we first remember as a clerk in the Grange Store in 1874, afterwards in the county clerks office, postoffice and county judge. J. A. Fallen, contract builder for many years, located in 1872. J. P. Gannon, paper hanger and decorator settled in 1875—a comrade soldier in the war of the rebellion. W. B. Barrett, one of the first lumber merchants in the county, came in 1872. Mr. Barrett was a Union soldier in the war of the rebellion. J. A. Sheely, a bridge carpenter, settled in 1871 and followed his line of business throughout Seward county for many years. Wm. Shultz, boot and shoe merchant came to Seward and entered business in 1875. Wm. H. Wait, a stone mason, settled in 1875 and worked at his trade for many years. He was another comrade soldier in the war of the rebellion. Chas. K. Humphrey, a carpenter and builder was a settler in the early seventies. He was a Union soldier in the war of the

rebellion—his son, Orson Egbert Humphrey, a Seward boy born July 28, 1877—shared his father's patriotism and enlisted in Co. M 1st Nebraska volunteers and served in the Philippines where he was severely wounded in the battle of Quinga, April 23, 1899. He was brought back to the home of his childhood where death claimed the young soldier boy, from the effects of his wounds, after several months of intense suffering, November 17, 1899. August Richman, who was for many years a drygoods and clothers salesman, settled in 1875. Jeff Ogg, an 1870 pioneer, was for a long time a gentlemanly clerk for Joel Tishue, and a traveling salesman later for an eastern wholesale house. He was a Union soldier in the war of the rebellion. Edmund McIntire, B. & M. railway land agent, settled in 1871. L. G. Johns, city treasurer and twice county treasurer, an 1870 pioneer. He was a Union soldier during the war of the rebellion. J. W. Gladwish, one of the earliest settlers and the most conspicuous figure in Seward county, has served the city in different official capacities, and is now serving the twenty-seventh year of continuous service as police judge, in the eighty-sixth year of his age. He was a Union soldier in the war of the rebellion. J. F. Goehner as one of the later pioneer business men of Seward, opened a grocery store in 1875.

The early professional settlers of Seward were R. S. and T. L. Norval, D. C. McKillip, George W. Lowley, William Leese, and H. Lewis, attorneys. Doctors L. Walker, J. H. Woodward, Dillon, Beechly and Reynolds. Five of these were Union soldiers during the war of the rebellion; Dr. J. H. Woodward, Dr. Beechley, attorneys D. C. McKillip, G. Lowley, and Wm. Leese. In regard to this we will say that the city of Seward will never again have as large a percentage of veteran soldiers on its list of business and professional men as it was honored with in its pioneer era. However we hope and trust that comrade Gladwish may remain

with it until he has rounded out his five score years at least.

A saw mill, which was the fifth one in the county, was built at Seward by H. L. Boyes in 1867-68. To this Mr. Boyes added a flouring department in 1870. This mill was a beneficent enterprise to the pioneer settlers along the North Blue river and through northern portions of the county. It was a popular bread-stuff factory and was known throughout the county as the Banner Mills, being decorated in the national colors. But its foundation seemed to have been faulty and becoming overloaded with farmers' grists the bottom fell out one night in 1871, letting the scores of grists, loose grain and mill machinery drop into the river. This was an unfortunate loss to the proprietor of the mill and also to its patrons. In those times of limited supplies the loss of a grist meant to many persons almost a calamity, and the loss of the services of the mill was no small item in the misfortune. Mr. Boyes did not become entirely discouraged, but went to work with energy and perseverance and soon had the burrs in motion again.

What might be termed the second Seward flouring mill was built on the North Blue river two miles below the city, in 1874 by Cooper & Henderson. Captain Robert T. Cooper was a resident of Seward, a veteran of the war of the rebellion.

Seward's pioneer postmasters were frequently changed, the position undoubtedly becoming burdensome was resigned whenever a new one was found that would take it. Lewis Moffit was appointed in 1867 and was succeeded by W. R. Davis in 1868. Mr. Davis held the office three years and resigned when E. L. Clark, the one armed mail carrier was appointed, and was succeeded by L. G. Johns in 1873, and Mr. Johns held on to the office four years when Wm. Redford was appointed, being succeeded by Chas. VanPelt in 1881. During this period the increase in the mail handled

was extensive and the increase in the postmaster's compensation may be marked by the seeming increase in the postmaster's inclination to hold on to the office.

The first bridges to span the Blue river at Seward were somewhat in the line of architecture with the Milford bridge and were relics of pioneer ingenuity until along in the seventies.

Going back from the early settlement of the three first towns in Seward county to 1864 the first saw and grist mill of the county appears, nine miles west of Camden on the West Blue river, and known as West's Mills. It was small in size, but great in the minds and hearts of the people of the scattering settlements of Seward county. Upon the proprietor of this enterprise, Mr. Thomas West, they looked with overflowing gratitude and their patronage was sufficient to make it a financial success. While there was never any town at West's Mills Mr. West kept a general supply store in early times before other stores were opened.

Twelve miles farther west at Beaver Crossing a store was opened in the fall of 1869 by Thomas H. Tisdale, and the present village of Beaver Crossing was formed in 1871 with two stores, a hotel built by John Osborn, a blacksmith shop under the management of Edward Maule, a sod school house and residents to the number of about fifty people. Smith's flouring mill was built the same season. The pioneer postmasters were Roland Reed from 1867 to 1869; Daniel Mills-paw from 1869 to 1870 and T. H. Tisdale from 1870 to 1884.

The pioneer bridges in the vicinity of Beaver Crossing were similar in construction to J. L. Davison's bridge at Milford with the exception that they were generally made in one season and washed out the next, being the main damage the community sustained by annual high waters. During the high water seasons citizens residing south of the river experienced much difficulty in crossing the river for mail and other

necessaries at the stores in the village. One season about 1872 or 73, there was a continued high water for several weeks and some enterprising genius substituted a wagon box for a ferry boat. This ferry became quite popular and occasionally transferred young ladies from one side or the other to attend dances and other entertainments. Two young ladies were being transferred on one of those pleasure trips by a young gentleman and when the craft got about to mid-stream one of the ladies lost her balance and fell overboard. She could not swim and as she was pretty solid in make-up the young man had extreme difficulty, requiring all of his strength and endurance to rescue her. But strange as it may seem the hero did not marry the girl and it is doubtful if she ever crossed the ferry with him again, but she is still a resident of Beaver Crossing.

One of the prominent and familiar objects that is certainly imbedded in the memory of all early settlers of the vicinity of Beaver Crossing is the form of T. H. Tisdale in his accustomed appearance mounted upon a dry-goods box or other elevation upon the arrival of the mails, with his hands full of letters and a crowd of anxious settlers surrounding him on all sides and silently waiting while he calls the name of the one each missive is addressd to and at the reply "here," tossing it into the audience in the direction from which the response came. At first this was a weekly attraction, then a tri-weekly and a little later on one of daily occurrence. The mail route to Beaver Crossing was from Lincoln and was served weekly until after the arrival of the rail road at Seward in 1873 when it was changed and delivered from Seward three times a week for a time and in due course of time was increased to a daily. Where Mr. Tisdale got his novel mode of delivering the mail we have never been able to learn, but it certainly had some commendable features. It was convenient and with the limited room in all

business buildings of that date the modern way of delivering mail to a crowd of anxious patrons was a difficult matter. It had one advantage, at least, of the later manner of distribution in country postoffices—the quiet which should prevail around the office during the distribution of mails was not disturbed by hoodlums or (?) ladies—everybody attended to their own business and listened to hear their name called.

Marysville in C precinct was a pioneer town early in the seventies with an excellent grist mill built by Luke Auger in 1870. Also a store, postoffice, school and church. A Lutheran church was established here early, making it a popular place for members of that denomination to gather with their families.

The first and only exclusive saw mill and the only mill to run by steam in Seward county was built at Oak Groves in 1868 by Kirkham & Hughes. This was in H precinct, there being within the precinct an abundance of oak and other excellent saw timber which was an inspiration to the projectors of the saw mill enterprise. In addition to its fine timber supply, Oak Groves were noted for superior lime stone from which lime was made and sold in different localities of the county and state.

Gormantown, in H precinct, on the line of railway from Lincoln to Seward was surveyed and platted into village lots in 1874 by Hiland Fraisure. F. Bick was the first store keeper but was shortly followed by Charles Howland as a mercantile competitor. Its school and postoffice were early establishments. The early postmasters were John Westenhoff, Benjamin Walker, Charles Fetterman, Charles Hans and L. S. Callahan. An early grain market was opened which was followed by the erection of two elevators.

Utica, in E precinct, fourteen miles west of Seward on the B. & M. rail road is the last village or town in the county that might be termed a pioneer town. It was founded in

1877 upon the completion of the railroad to the place. The business and future prosperity of the town seemed settled upon advanced lines from its first introduction to the public. The town was laid out by Hon. Geo. A. Derby upon a part of his homestead. Geo. Liggett was an early grain buyer and Oscar Ragan helped this business in the new town. T. E. Stanard was the first postmaster and Joseph Jones opened the first store in 1877. Following closely upon the introduction of these business enterprises George Goodbrod built a hotel, Fritz Beckard started a lumber yard, Goehner & Wilkens established the second store and C. C. Turner built a blacksmith shop.

THE SEWARD COUNTY HIGHWAYS.

The established roads of the pioneer era were "high" almost any way the greater number cared to travel. And to stop, or turn that travel to other lines was somewhat like stopping or turning the course of a tornado. Roads on section lines or straight in any direction were problems to be considered upon the fundamental basis of whether that was the best road or not. Of course the practice of selecting the most choice routes for roads insured as good roads as the country could afford. And it would have been about as difficult to convince a settler that highways would be forced to run on section lines in the near future as it would to convince a wild Indian that the world is round. It didn't appear to be to the interest of any one in those days, to discontinue the short cuts across sections to town, especially when the cross cuts were the best roads. We made a drive from Beaver Crossing to Fairmont in 1873. After we had traveled, as we supposed, so far that the town we were looking for ought to be in sight, we met a gentleman near the corner of a section and asked him if he could tell us the road to Fairmont. He said he thought he could and pointing to the sec-

tion corner said: "You angle cater cornering across that section and then go west a quarter of a mile and angle cater cornering across the section south-west," and this "angling cater cornering" was the continued instruction until he had us angling about twenty sections. And before we got to our journey's end we concluded he was about right. We have seen teams plowing in fields and trains of loaded wagons "angling cater cornering" right through the plowed ground, and no change could be made for growing crops or blasts of winter. If a farmer had the temerity to place an obstruction in the track to turn the travel in some other direction the teamsters would either get off of their wagons and throw it out of the way or drive around it. While this may seem to be a lawless procedure, in reality it was right. In the wild state of the country when the first settlements were made there was no established system of highways and they become established by general usage. People traveled long distances to mill and to market and were many times in strange localities and to be forced to leave the established road bed and hunt a new way was very discouraging and unjust. Many times in trying to pass around a plowed field the route would prove to be impassable. In those days of "pioneer highways" there was no such thing as road funds, road tax nor work on the roads, but there were no bad roads.

"God made the forets," God made the plains and pioneer roads.

"Man made the towns," and Man made the pioneer bridges.

The pioneer storekeepers are worthy of more than a passing notice. Their stores were all, as W. W. Cox invariably calls each one, "a little store," but little as they were, their mission for wide spread good to the early settlers was as large and boundless as the prairies upon which their enterprising hands had placed them. They formed one of the strongest links in the chain that connects the settlements of the savage wilds of Seward county with their modern civiliza-

tion. No department store of the present day so unselfishly supplies the general needs of the public as did those "little stores" in the almost disparing dark days of pioneer life. They were large enough to supply the needs of their patrons and many times supplied more needs than those patrons had sufficient means to pay for. We have just one of those benefactors to the needy homes of Seward county to consider and firmly believe that the one represents the others. Thos. H. Tisdale was never known to turn a customer away empty handed of needed goods regardless of inability to pay. He helped any and all who needed his help and it is to be regretted that he so many times suffered loss as a reward for his kindness that he was crowded to the limit of his resources to keep the wolf of dispare and distruction from closing the door of his business. This partially apparent failure was not on account of lack of business ability. Mr. Tisdale was the ablest business man Beaver Crossing ever had and by his wise and careful management extricated himself and business from the troubles brought upon him by his kind hearted treatment of others with a clean record and good credit. He did more to aid the early settlement in his locality than all others combined and while he reaped a very small reward in this world it is to be sincerely hoped that he has reaped the full measure in that eternal world to which he passed July 7th, 1888. There were no class of men in pioneer times more deserving of kind and thankful remembrance than the early store keepers, now all gone to their final rest.

CHAPTER XIV.

PIONEER SCHOOLS OF SEWARD COUNTY.

The settlements of Seward county during the sixties were scarcely condensed enough to form school districts or build school houses. However, regardless of this condition the prevalent desire of the settlers to have their different localities placed upon a firm foundation for the expansion and growth of knowledge through the channels of public education seemed to have been bred and born in the mind of every individual homeseeker. In fact the school appeared to be an indispensable part of the home necessities. And we find efforts were put fourth for the forming of school districts and the construction of school houses as early as 1865, and the success gained in the establishment of a school at Camden and at West's Mills that year mark the beginning of Seward county schools. And the establishment of these two first schools also mark the advanced settlement in the foremost localities along the great western highway, the "old freight route." In the great rush of immigration from 1866 to 1872 schools and school houses sprang into existence in every precinct in the county. The greater number of these attainments were not gained through acts of state legislatures nor by the aid of public school funds, but through the determined will of an enterprising and public spirited class of citizens. They did not wait for the decrees of government to furnish funds to build school houses, but applied their muscle and ingenuity to the task of erecting their own places of learning and following this with subscription funds to pay teachers. The school houses were rude and homely, but they bore all the assuring signs of the times, pointing onward to the com-

ing advancement in the future. "Where there is a will there is a way," and the will and the way were both put into effective practice in school matters in those early days. In view of these facts official records of the amount of money paid, either by the state or county for school purposes, furnish but a very small amount of information of the true condition along this important line of western civilization. The first appropriations were not fully supporting for the small number of schools then in the county and the public funds could not increase in proportion to the increase in the number of schools. The development in the school system in the county was so rapid that twenty-six organized schools were officially reported in 1870, while several others had been established and not officially organized sufficient to draw any support from the public school funds.

As near as we have been able to learn, the first school in the county was, as previously stated, held at Camden in a frame school house in 1865 and was taught by Thomas Graham. It has been stated, however, that Miss Agnes Baily, (afterwards Mrs. Cornelius West) taught a term of school near West's Mills in 1863, but this was perhaps a private family school as there is no definite knowledge of any public school organization at that early date. Again there is a question of doubt about the priority in the schools as Miss Englehaupt has the record of having taught the West Mills school in the winter of 1865-66, this leaving but one chance for the Camden school to be recorded first—that it may have been a summer term. In those times a school term was supposed to be three months.

In 1866 the little settlement just north of where Seward is located, consisting of thirteen families had mutually determined that they needed a school and a meeting was called late in the summer to make necessary provisions for its establishment, and as W. W. Cox was one of the principal

charactures in this enterprise we will let him tell the story of that pioneer school meeting and its results. "We met on the prairie near Mrs. Spears' present home. We had no school officers, no school fund, no money and no credit. We voted no bonds, but we voted a school house. We taxed ourselves each four round logs to be delivered on the ground. Lewis Moffit taxed himself one acre of ground, worth one dollar and a quarter, and we taxed ourselves with the necessary labor to construct the edifice. We searched our primises to find a few 8x10 window glass and a few rough boards to construct a door and a few benches. We made wooden hinges to hang the door. We used the virgin prairie sod for a floor. We cut willows along the river to cover the structure, then we plowed sod with which to shingle it, and soon rejoiced that we had a place to send our children to school, and that we had a meeting house, a court house and an election booth all our own and not a cent in debt." It is understood that this was Seward's first school house and W. W. Cox was the first teacher.

Another small school house was built upon the present school grounds at Seward in 1870 and H. M. Coleman was the first teacher. The city's first high school building was an artistic brick structure built in 1874.

The first term of school in Milford was taught in a small school house by Geo. B. France in the earliest days of the village's settlement. With the rapid increase of inhabitants the school soon outgrew its house and one of the church buildings was used for school purposes, and the school was advanced to two grades, Mr. France being the principal and Miss Courtright his assistant. At this time Milford had the largest school attendance of any school in the county.

A log school house was built at Oak Groves in 1867 and the first term was taught in it by Miss Sarah A. Scott in the same year. A sod school house was built on the south-east

corner of section 32 in B precinct in the fall of 1869. It was the first school house in the precinct and was built upon the donation system, each resident of the locality donating his share of the labor in breaking, hauling and laying the sod. And the door, windows and covering for the building were picked up wherever they could be found in the neighborhood and it required a general search of premises to find them. Seats and desks were furnished by the patrons of the school as their needs required. F. M. Timblin taught the first term of this school and his salary was raised by subscription.

The first term of school in F precinct was taught in a cabin in 1868, but a school house was soon after built which became known as "the Slonecker school house."

The first school house in H precinct was built in 1869 on section 28 and Thomas Cowen was the first teacher. A second sod school house was built in this precinct in district No. 32 in 1872 and Miss Kate Miller taught its first term of school. A school house known as the "Hi Brisbin sod school house," was built in N precinct in 1870. The first term of school in this precinct was taught by Mrs. P. J. Goodrich. A sod school house was built in E precinct in 1870 and Miss Clara Derby taught the first term in it.

A sod school house was built in the John W. McCaulley district, one mile south-west of the present location of Beaver Crossing in M precinct in 1870. Several terms of school were taught in this house and it was also used for a justice's court house and town hall. We were in attendance at one legal trial there in 1871 which was held at night, commencing in the evening and continuing till about one o'clock the next morning. Justice J. W. McCaulley presided. D. C. McKillip was the prosecuting attorney and Wm. Wilson conducted the defense. Hot shot was exchanged by those two pioneer attorneys so incessantly that all thoughts of the fleeting time were laid away in the back-ground and the

session of that court became as interesting as an old time camp meeting.

A sod school house was built in the village of Beaver Crossing in the fall of 1871 which served for school, church, lodge room, elections, political caucuses and all public meetings until the completion of the frame school house in 1874. The district of Beaver Crossing raised the necessary funds to build this new house by a unanimous vote of bonds. The building was completed ready for the seats and desks just before the 4th of July and T. H. Tisdale being the school director and manager of the construction of the edifice, gave an Independence Day ball in the new school house to raise money to buy a school bell. The dance was a success and the bell which was bought with the proceeds has rang over forty years for school and is still serving that purpose. For several years following the placing of this bell, as the first of its kind in Seward county, it rang for church as well as for school in as clear tones as if it had been purchased from the funds of church donations. It is a fine bell and should last until the end of time.

A sod school house was built on the south-east corner of the south-west quarter of section twenty-two, on Norman Casler's homestead in L precinct, known as the "T. J. Foster school house," in 1871. It was used for school, elections, political caucuses, church and other public meetings for a number of years when it was replaced by a frame which was built on Minyard Foster's homestead half a mile farther east. A second sod school house was built in the north part of L precinct in 1872 which was used for two or three years when it was replaced by a frame. This house served but a short time when it was destroyed by a prairie fire. The school was then returned to a sod house where it was taught until the completion of the second frame.

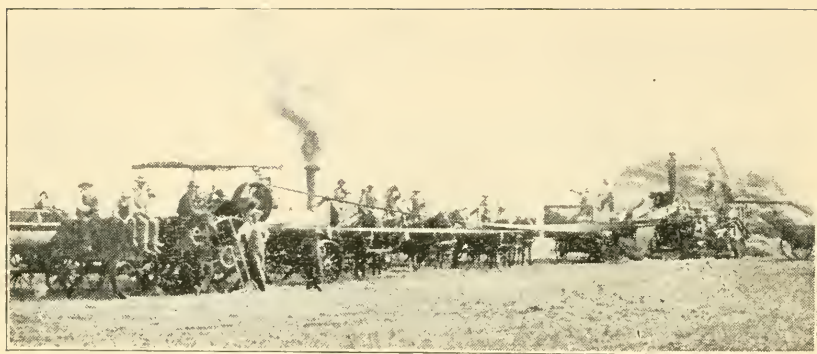
A sod school house was built in K precinct in 1871, and

was known as "Mound Prairie school house." It was used for school, town hall, church, elections and other public meetings until as late as 1881.

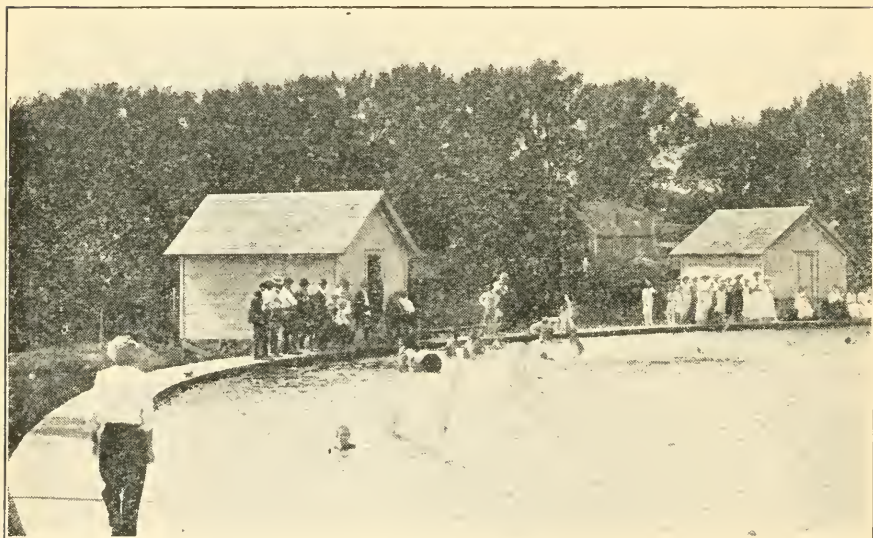
Upon the opening of the Beaver Crossing school the McCaulley school was consolidated with it and the old sod school house in that district went to decay.

This sums up the earliest of the pioneer schools which were mere outlines of the system which followed in due time. School districts were formed in all precincts in rapid succession and houses of pioneer architecture were constructed for their accomodation. They were of sod, logs and dugouts, all of which have disappeared from view.

While the foregoing list of the pioneer schools of Seward county is incomplete it is perhaps sufficient to display the dominant spirit of those early settlers in the time of their difficult trials in making homes. The number of school houses in the county in 1870 has been unofficially estimated at twenty. Six reported as frame, four logs, seven sod and three dugouts. The number of school children in the beginning of 1870 has been reported at 782, and in April 1871 there had been an increase of 465 making a total of 1,247 children of school age in the county.



A Seward County Thrashing Scene.



Bathing in the Picnic Park at Deaver Crossing. This Pond is Supplied with Water From a Flowing Well.

CHAPTER XV.

Ordinary Customs, Habits, Dress and Foods of The Pioneer Citizens of
Seward County, Nebraska.

It seems difficult to picture in words the customs and general characteristics of the early settlers in the west. A Wagoner or a Mozart might picture themes in song and classic music with greater vividness. It is a well established and understood fact that settlers upon any portion of the western plains were all traveling towards the one and same objective point in the same sphere and were therefore united in interests as brothers, well as neighbors, in the present and future enjoyment and welfare of each other. And with very few exceptions the customs and habits became established along certain lines almost in advance of settlement. All being poor with limited comforts and no luxuries a social sameness prevailed which might be thought providential in transforming pioneer loneliness to universal contentment. As might be supposed there were a few selfish exceptions to this, but so few that their presence or absence was scarcely taken into consideration in that onward rush with mingled good will and cheerfulness which made life worth living upon the wild frontier.

THE FRONTIER HOMES.

Our abodes consisted, in general, of a parlor, sitting room, dining room, bed room, kitchen and pantry all in one. And this was also used for a smoking room and it was one of the greatest tokens of peace and friendship, when entering a neighbor's mansion, to load a cob pipe out of the said neighbor's tobacco box and have a social smoke. There

was nothing offensive about tobacco smoke in those days. Everybody was accustomed to it, and its perfume assisted in driving away dull care.

THE FASHIONABLE PIONEER ATTIRE.

The high prices established during the war of the rebellion upon all kinds of dry goods, hats, caps, boots and shoes were still dominant during the pioneer period in Seward county, and of course the pioneers did not dress in silks, satins and fine linens, nor in broadcloth or fine cashmeres, but they managed to replenish their wardrobe occasionally in a very satisfactory manner. Calico was very rich in appearance as well as price, was a fashionable fabric and when made up in the pioneer style of the day, was very attractive. In fact the ladies gowns of calico were beautiful in those days. The calico dress patterns were printed with border trimming along the selvage on one side of the cloth which matched about like border on wallpaper. And the girls made pretty dresses of this material. Balmoral stockings and calfskin shoes were popular additions to the ladies attire while gentlemen felt fortunate to have a jeans suit, with blue overalls, cotton socks, wool hat and a pair of cowhide boots. Our better half made us one pair of pants from a white bed blanket and colored them with sumach bobs. The blanket was brought from the east when we came to Nebraska and cost six dollars, so we had a pair of six dollar pants and they proved to be worth it. With these conditions prominent among the people the fact was well established that "dress does not make a man nor a woman."

FOODS OF THE EARLY PIONEERS.

There can be no reason to complain about variation in the daily bill of fare—it was varied enough—a feast being as a rule followed by a famine. Game was plentiful and with expert hunters there was meat in plenty. But during the earliest years breadstuff was the most difficult to obtain. In

those days settlers were forced to face all manner of disadvantages to get their grain to a mill to be ground into meal or flour, it requiring in many cases from one to two or more weeks to make the round trip to mill and back, many times encountering all kinds of rough weather and bad roads. But during the early seventies with an abundance of mill facilities nine tenths of the settlers were too poor to afford the luxury of wheat flour, corn meal being the standard bread product. Coffee, tea and sugar were substituted by the use of browned wheat, sage and sorgum molasses. Sometimes a neighboring family would make a day's visit with another expecting to get white wheat short cake and be treated to johnney cake. Gravies and potatoe soupes were substitutes a greater part of each year for butter. And it is not to be thought strange that the butter production during the winter seasons was very scanty in view of the quality of the feed the milk cows got. It certainly was not of the kind to produce good, rich milk. Prairie hay was the food for cattle and horses and while it was excellent for the latter it was poor stuff for milk cows.

But with all the deprivations of both food and clothing, pioneer settlers got enough to eat such as it was and did not get dyspepsia by eating too much of it. And they had sufficient clothing to keep them warm and enough to feel that all were dressed as well as their neighbors. When we wanted to go to a dance or other entertainment we were not ashamed to go with "our girl with a calico dress," nor to go dressed in jeans or blue overalls.

There were no automobiles in those days, and settlers were considered a little high-toned who had even a spring seat to their farm wagon to ride on.

CHAPTER XVI.

Pioneer Horses, Mules and Work Cattle.—Grasshoppers.

Man can talk and write of the hardships and trials of the first settlers upon the wild prairies of the west, but the trials, hardships and never ending toils of the unrewarded dumb beasts passes unremembered into unwritten history. But the fact that their share of the burdens and deprivations were fully as great as those of their human companions, if not greater, cannot be denied and should not be forgotten. While the latter looked forward to a future reward the poor domestic animals were scantily rewarded with sufficient food to maintain strength to perform the tasks required of them. Food for work animals was, to a great extent, food for men and in times of scarcity of supplies the dumb pioneers' privations were augmented by the appropriating of the food by their more favored and intelligent associates. And many times they performed their labor without food excepting such as they could pick upon the prairie. We have seen animals engaged in the heavy task of breaking prairie with no other food than that which nature had produced in a short growth of prairie grass, and we have seen those starved bodies grow so thin in a short time that they would scarcely make shadows in the sunlight. And after the work animals had completed the seasons heavy burdens they stood during the the cold and stormy season in pole pens, surrounded and covered with straw, the water leaking down upon their unprotected backs while they rested their weary limbs in mud and water every time it rained. And many times those pole pens were unprovided with doors to shut out the winter

blasts, the faithful, but helpless animals standing and shivering with cold from night till morning and morning till night.

Flesh and blood could have done no more for the comfort, welfare and future prosperity of the homesteaders than was done by the pioneer "horses, mules and work cattle." And flesh and blood could not have made greater, and more unselfish sacrifices to animate the most discouraging period of pioneer life and bring the county of Seward as well as the state of Nebraska to its present unparalleled prosperity than was made by those domestic animals. Many of those faithful friends to humanity passed from time to eternity without receiving a reward from their owners of kind treatment or even kind words and the time may come when many will be required to answer the question "what hast thou done for me?"

Among our kindest friends of pioneer days, long since passed to rest, we hold in memory a pair of obedient horses, Jim and Charley. A glance back into the dim past reveals to us the shining coats, curling manes, elevated heads and kindly eyes of Jim and Charley. And again we see them in many difficult performances of duty, straining every nerve and muscle to accomplish the purpose required of them and we again look back in vain to see the reward we gave and sigh for lost opportunities. It was not only the labor of a faithful pair of horses or of one horse or other animal, but also their companionship that is to be remembered with gratitude. We well remember a dismal ride of eighteen miles from Sewad to our home north-west of Beaver Crossing when the night was so dark we could not see the horses with no companion but Jim and Charley, they performing the duty of guide and conveyors. From the start upon that never to be forgotten trip we gave up all thoughts of guiding our companions and wrapping the lines around the standard

on the front endgate, gathered our garments around us as closely as possible, sat down in the wind and rain and trusting in the intelligence and care of those horses, silently waited until they came to a halt within ten feet of our door.

George T. Angell, the great advocate of the rights of those who cannot speak for themselves in a short article in his paper, "Our Dumb Animals," says: "Among the very best society in this world we count good horses, good dogs and good cats, and we are quite sure that four-legged donkeys are much better society than two-legged ones."

THE GRASSHOPPERS.

Here is neither an animal, bird nor insect that Mr. Geo. T. Angell could call "good society." They belong to that class of living things of which there are none good excepting the dead ones and there is no faithful service they could perform for humanity but to turn over and die. While they are not birds they can fly perhaps farther without eating than any other winged bird or insect. They will emigrate clear across the United States and into the frozen zones of the north with one meal stowed away in their stomachs. We had our first experience with the immigratory breed in Harrison county, Iowa in 1869. For many weeks during the summer a glance with the naked eye towards the sun on any and every clear day would disclose seeming millions of the winged pests flying towards the north-west. They did not travel in single tiers but in masses extending from about one hundred feet above the earth to an almost invisible distance towards the sun. Where they all came from and were going to was a difficult problem to solve, but it is probable that they hatched in the southern sand banks along the southern coasts and immediately commenced a flight to death in the frozen north. Their mission seemed to be a continuous flight and there are but few instances recorded where they have halted in any civilized country and those halts

have borne unmistakeable evidence of having been forced by hunger. In that year of our first experience with the pests, along in August when the corn had about passed out of the roasting ear state and began to dent a few millions of that great continuous army got hungry and concluded to take a meal out of the Iowa corn fields and they came down in such great hosts that the earth seemed to be a living mass of creeping insects. Hard as the corn was they eat a lot of it and chewed the weather beaten wood off from the siding on houses and barns and the boards on fences. The wells of Harrison county were the dug by hand kind and generally stood open and the hoppers fell into them in such immense numbers that they were ruined for some time.

This same continuous stream of flying hoppers was known to be flying over Seward county, Nebraska, every summer from 1869 to 1876, making their first descent upon the fields of Kansas and Nebraska in August 1874. There was scarcely a day in summer seasons during that period of seven years when those flying pests could not be seen in motion like a stream of drifting snow by looking towards the sun. Their 1874 raid upon this state and Kansas was undoubtedly due to a general desire among them for something to eat. And whether they got as much as they wanted or not they were guests, feasting upon the drouth stricken fields of Seward county corn, potatoes, cabbage, onions, tobacco and the decayed sides of log houses about two hours and having eaten up everything eatable they rose into the air in such numbers as to appear like black clouds of smoke. Wheat, oats and other small grain was about all harvested and was too hard for the hoppers' teeth. The corn crop of Seward county was almost a failure if the hoppers had not touched it, but the short time it required for those grasshopper to change the appearance of the fields of corn and make them resemble fields of fishing rods furnished good grounds

for charging them with having destroyed the corn crop.

Two years after this raid, a little later in the season of 1876 the second and last visit of the flying breed of grasshoppers was made to the drouth stricken corn fields of Seward county. But they found the fields which bore any corn at all too hard for their grinders and left without doing any material damage. On this occasion they deposited a few of their eggs in the earth in different localities which hatched out the next spring, but the young ones followed their natural inclination to fly and left as soon as their wings grew without doing any damage.

It has been said that "it is no worse to kill than to scare a person to death." The grasshoppers did not kill anybody, but they scared some people "nigh unto death." A few seemed to think that by the loss of a little sod corn and parched cornfields that would not have made ten bushels of corn to the acre worth ten cents a bushel, life had become so miserable it was not worth living especially in a country subject to grasshoppers. And many of them abandoned their homesteads in short order and fled out of range of the great scourge, carrying with them harrowing tales of the suffering calamity in Kansas and Nebraska. The story spread with rapidity and enlargements all over the United States and a portion of Europe, sinking deep in the sympathetic hearts of the people and a well defined system of aid for the sufferers was shortly inaugurated. Old clothes, old shoes, salt meats, lard, beans, corn meal and everything imaginable was sent into Seward county to relieve the needs of the destitute.

We had rented a farm in L precinct and moved onto it in the fall of that first grasshopper disaster and in a few days a neighbor called at our house,—it was his first call—and surprised us by stating that he had entered our name at the aid headquarters in Seward as grasshopper sufferers for two tons of coal, some lard and corn meal. We told him that

we were doing all right without any aid—perhaps as well as we ever had since settling in Nebraska—that we would be very much pleased if he would withdraw the request for us. He undoubtedly did so as we never heard any more about it. This man was undoubtedly a kind hearted neighbor, but he was unnecessarily alarmed the same as those who were scared out of the state. Undoubtedly he would have joined in the flight of nonsense if he had not had so much Nebraska products to carry—about a dozen head of cows and young cattle, a good team of horses, several hogs, his bins full of wheat and oats and was on the list for aid. Added to the wild rumors of the grasshopper calamity put afloat throughout the nation by such exaggerating people the Nebraska state legislature placed another advertisement in support of it by appropriating fifty thousand dollars to aid in buying food and seed grain for the hopper sufferers. As to who, among the real sufferers, got any aid from the appropriation after the distributing and other “red tape” officials got through with it is not definitely known. But the state got the benefit of a name for charity to its citizens if it did blight many of its brighter attainments and blessings.

Of course the hoppers did a lot of damage, but the settlers had faced more difficult prepositions and prospects and lived through it without any aid. Since the grasshopper scare we have witnessed several almost entire failures of the corn crop and no aid has been offered or thought of. It was a little unfortunate that a little hopper excitement was not mingled in with those failures to facilitate the tumbling in of a few car loads of aid. But the grasshoppers are dead.

Some idea of the immense numbers of the flying grasshoppers may be gained from the hosts that dropped down upon the earth on the three occasions we have mentioned. They were not of a special gathering, but just the number composing the regular ranks that almost constantly winged

their way across the country. And in support of our theory that in this flight they were committing suicide, we submit the following facts: In the first place there was a vast and unlimited number of them continually going one direction, and no information had ever been received by civilized people as to any stopping place while their journey must end somewhere. Again their numbers were so great that had they stopped anywhere short of eternity to feed and live upon the grain and vegetable producing area of the world they would have starved humanity and depopulated the earth. Those that did stop and feed upon grain fields and then rise and fly away were never heard of again. If they did not go into the ocean or frozen north they would have made a record somewhere. The last but not least reason to consider in the matter is that their breed has become extinct. The rear guard of that great flying army passed beyond view soon after their last visit to Seward county. To briefly state the fact, they are dead and if they did not kill themselves by indulging in their natural inclination to fly, it is difficult to determine what did end their existence. God is the only power outside of their own that could have destroyed their lives and saved the human race, and it may be that he in his wisdom provided their self destroying nature.

CHAPTER XVII.

Rail Road Bond Exciting Campaign of 1871.

In attempting to present the ruling features of the contention among the pioneer settlers of Seward county upon the greatest public question that has ever confronted them—the rail road bond issue—we are met with thoughts of a tripple headed monster in the interests of which certain localities were arranged against others in a bitter strife. The B. & M. rail road company had taken one-half of the land in the county as compensation for the construction of a railway on a certain line passing through the center of the county and after receiving the grant made the road twelve miles south of the proposed route. After the completion of the road and the opening up of farms throughout Seward county the B. & M. company made an effort to again bleed the county, coming before the people under an assumed name with a proposition to make a rail road through the county from Lincoln to the west line of the county by way of Germantown and Seward under condition that the citizens establish a contract by vote guaranteeing the issuing of bonds by the county to the said rail road company to the amount of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars; bonds to run twenty years and draw ten per cent interest per annum. To many of the settlers this had the appearance of being a premeditated scheme to take advantage of necessity and rob the settlers in the time of their poverty. The greater number of them were at a loss to understand even how they were ever going to be able to provide comfortable homes for themselves. They were living in sod houses and dugouts upon

unimproved homesteads on which the proposed bonds were practically a mortgage for a large part of their then present value while the interest would, to a great extent, offset the advance in value from the improvements. And while the southern precincts would receive no benefit from the railway they were to be held for an equal portion of the indebtedness with the northern precincts through which the line was to run. The rail road company in constructing its line of railway through the southern portion of its land grant instead of through the center of it established unmistakable signs of premeditating its scheme to force bonds from the northern settlements of the grant. Those who viewed the proposition from these points were aroused to indignation against the establishment of such a contract with such a diabolical party, therefore a well outlined system of opposition to it was established. On the other hand, with a great many, the anxiety to establish better transportation facilities was the ruling sentiment. The disadvantages were so great that they felt that it was time to sacrifice almost any amount of money and credit to bring about better conditions. And they did not only think it was time to do so but seemed to think it was the only time and did not want to wait a minute for a better one. They viewed but one side and saw only the benefit on their part and gave the unjust exactions of the proposition side no attention at all. With a greater number of this class not only the transportation advantages were considered in favor of the bonds, but the increase in value of their property and the business of their town through which the road was to run furnished a large share of their enthusiasm in favor of it. Had it not been for this estimation of the proposition there would have been no need for the general uprising that was inaugurated in other parts of the county against it and the proposition would not got the support of one-tenth of the votes of the county. with the

foregoing lines opposing each other the campaign opened up in earnest vigor all over the county. Bond meetings resembling the old 1861 war meetings were held by both sides and the most eloquent speakers of the county were drawn into service in the controversy. W. W. Cox, a strong advocate and supporter of the bond proposition, says in his history of Seward county, that speakers were brought in from other counties to help our people settle the matter, but he was mistaken unless there were some brought in by the rail road company, which Mr. Cox would not have mentioned. In fact we do not know what counties the opposition side of the controversy could have went to to get more able speakers than our home talent among whom were Hon. Benjamin Hunkins, Elder W. G. Keene, Hon. D. C. McKillip, W. J. Thompson and others. Bond meetings were held in sod school houses, sod dwelling houses and dugouts. We attended one bond meeting in the residence of Mr. Overman, father of Elder E. N. Overman who was then a little boy. The house was a sod cabin with a sod floor and sod roof, but it held upwards of seventy-five people. Bennie Hunkins and Elder Keene were the orators and held the attention of the crowded house till well towards the middle of the night. And although this meeting was held in a sod dwelling house enthusiasm could not have ran higher in any place. And if a lisetner had closed his eyes to the surrounding scenes and listened to the wit and eloquent wisdom that flowed from the tougue of Uncle Benjamin Hunkins he might have imagined he was sitting in a metrapolitan theater listening to an Ingersoll or a Garfield and would never thought of sending out of the county for speakers.

The citizens of Camden and Milford took a hand in the fight against the bonds and Gen. J. H. Culver opened fire upon the proposition from the batteries of his paper, The Blue Valley Record and when the final test came in February of

that year, the bond proposition was snowed under by a majority of seventy-seven votes. We copy the precinct vote as given by W. W. Cox.

Seward	For Bonds	232	Against Bonds	5
North Blue	“ “	136	“ “	0
Lincoln Creek	“ “	109	“ “	9
Oak Grove	“ “	47	“ “	60
Milford	“ “	5	“ “	147
Camden	“ “	6	“ “	138
Walnut Creek	“ “	10	“ “	130
Beaver Crossing	“ “	2	“ “	135
TOTAL	“ “	<u>547</u>	“ “	<u>624</u>

This shows the division of the county upon this question. Seward, North Blue and Lincoln Creek were directly on the proposed line of rail road while Oak Grove was only partially to be benefitted. Milford, Camden, Walnut Creek and Beaver Crossing were southern precincts that would not receive any benefit from it, not even so much as to hear the locomotive whistle.

Although this bond proposition was defeated at the poles by an honest casting of ballots, trickery was on the alert as the last resort thought of to burden the tax payers and the Camden returns were filched and concealed from inspection when the canvas of the votes was made by the canvassing board. But this scheme failed of accomplishing its purpose. Indignation ran high and even the citizens of Seward who were so anxiously interested in the county's accepting the bond proposition, held an indignation meeting and passed resolutions condemning such dishonoring of the elections of the county. Injunction proceedings were commenced to restrain the county board from issuing the bonds, which were sustained by court and the bond question passed on to a second hearing.

Again the rail road company which called itself the Mid-

land Pacific, came forward with a proposition, a little more liberal, being twenty-five thousand dollars below the former requirement, and placing twenty-five thousand dollars of the burden directly upon the precincts to receive the greatest benefit, fixing the balance to be paid by the county at large as follows: seventy-five thousand upon the completion of the road to Seward and twenty-five thousand when it reached the west line of the county. Seward at that time was booming with a rapid increase of population and of course all new comers to the place meant that many votes for the bonds and during the intervening period between the elections its voting strength had increased eighty-one votes. With this gain with perhaps a few changes on account of the new deal favoring the bond proposition the returns from the election, in October, 1872, showed that it had carried by a safe majority. The work on the road was pushed with rapidity and it reached Seward the next season, exhausting the name of the "M. P. Rail Road," not leaving it strength enough to run one car over the road with that name on it.

While this election established the road through Seward county it did not satisfy the B. & M. rail road company. In the first place the company had selected a desirable route passing up the Middle creek valley to Milford and from there up the North Blue to Seward. But with the unconcealed determination of the Milford people to oppose any proposition to incumber the county with debt the rail road company was forced to make its proposition to the sections where it was more sure of support therefor it had laid its track along an unsatisfactory route leaving the desired one open to competition. And taking into consideration the fact that the B. & M. had got its route established, its road-bed made and tracks laid from Lincoln to Seward there were but a very few people in Seward county that were prepared to meet the proposition of the second B. & M. offspring under the name

of "The A. & N. R. R" as coming only from a competing line. The company had waited five years for the jealousy between Seward and Milford to soften, and in 1878, a good year for suckers, it made a proposition to establish a competing road over the aforesaid B. & M's favorite route to Seward and from there north to the Butler county line for and in consideration of the issuing by the county of bonds to the amount of seventy-five thousand dollars to be paid in similar manner as the previous ones voted to the M. P. Milford and the Middle creek sections and many of the voters in the south part of the county had a change of heart being converted to the support of "the competing line," and when the election came off the bond proposition was endorsed by a large majority. As Seward was not so very favorable to this deal it is to be noted that it got its main support from those who had opposed the first proposition. The summing up of the result of Milford's firm stand against the rail road company's effort to get its support to a bond proposition to open a road through that place thereby forcing the company to take the unsatisfactory route may be made with a short pencil and a scrap of paper. Had the company been assured of support it would have asked for bonds to make the last road it did make in the county first on the desired route and been satisfied, the bond question would have been settled and the county fifty thousand dollars ahead. The company would only asked for one hundred and fifty thousand dollars in the first place to make the road where they wanted it whereas the county gave them two hundred thousand after many of its citizens had rode over the county and froze their noses and frosted their toes that cold 1871 winter to fight the bond issue. They might better remained at home by the fire.

W. W. Cox was a Seward resident, very much interested in the success of the first bond issue and in his history attrib-

utes the first proposition to the Midland Pacific rail road company, never mentioning the true source from which it came, the B. & M. rail road company, but just read his lamentation after the voting on the A. & N. "competing line."

"As time rolled on, it developed that the people had been victimized, and that they had given seventy-five thousand dollars, or at least had agreed by their votes to give that amount to another B. & M. R. R. For a few months only did the A. & N. maintain control of the road when it passed in its checks and we awoke to find ourselves sold, and with two B. & M. roads on our hands."

Mr. Cox failed to mention the full amount given to the said road and the several times the people had "found themselves sold." The first one cost one-half the land in the county, the second, one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars with ten per cent interest for twenty years and the third, seventy-five thousand dollars with ten per cent interest for twenty years, and they just got one road. Surely the notoriety of Seward county ought to be extensive with a rail road costing that much. But these events were attributes of pioneer days when many homesick lads would have given their last dollar for the old, familiar home like sounds of the locomotive whistle.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Church Conditions of Pioneer Times in Seward County.

We view any endeavor that we could make to delineate the progression of any church or churches under the many different opinions, dogmas and creeds as wholly unsatisfactory in its results and altogether out of place in this work. One of the most difficult problems for the solution of the early settlers was that of church organization. The settlements were generally composed of those of different denominations and unbelievers and to get them interested in church work only along their line of thought was like performing a miracle. And with this predominating condition the formation of churches dragged along through the pioneer period. Occasionally there would be a movement bordering upon church union and congregations would be formed, but generally proved to be only temporary formations. One of this kind was formed at Beaver Crossing early in the seventies under the name of the Congregational Church, but lost its cognomen shortly after its formation, the members meeting and holding forth the banner of Christianity without a name. This congregation was partially claimed after a short time by the M. E. church, but during the entire time from its formation till along in the eighties there was no permanent church organization at Beaver Crossing. The Methodist Episcopal, Protestant Methodist and Congregational churches were generally foremost in pretensions of church organization, but there were but few church houses and the societies were not permanently located. A Congregational church was organized in Milford in 1869, and also an M. E. church about the same time, both of which became permanent organizations. Rev. C. E. Phinney, a homesteader in L pre-

cinct, organized a Protestant Methodist church in 1871 and through his efforts a sod church house was erected in 1872, six miles north of Beaver Crossing in L precinct. A Lutheran church was organized in H precinct in the fall of 1872. Also a church of the same denomination was organized on Lincoln creek in 1873. An M. E. church and also a Baptist church was formed in Seward in the early seventies. A Catholic church congregation was formed in the northern part of the county in 1876 and also at Seward about the same time. An Adventist church was organized near where Ruby is located in 1875. An Amish Mennonite church congregation was formed west of Milford in 1873. The Oak Groves M. E. church was organized in 1875. While this may not be all it is undoubtedly the greater number of pioneer churches in Seward county.

There were a few preachers of various denominations, a majority perhaps being of the M. E. faith, traveling and holding meetings in various localities throughout the county, but permanent congregations and church homes were limited until well along in the eighties. One peculiar character who undoubtedly is remembered by many of the early settlers, at least in the south half of the county, was Rev. Goss, a young M. E. minister who made many trips to different localities in what might be termed a pioneer vehicle with a pioneer horse that traveled at a three mile an hour gait, advocating the cause of Methodism. He couldn't preach much, but held meetings in school houses, sod residences and dugouts, getting some exhorter to talk for him when he could, and in this way did the church a great deal of good. But there was a lack of able effort in the matter of church work during the first twelve years of Seward county history. There were members of all denominations among the early settlers and it is just as loyal to truth to say that all churches came with the advance guard of settlement as to say that any one of

them did as there was no organized system followed by any of them.

The foregoing brief mention of church work we believe represents the pioneer period. With the approach of more favorable conditions advancement commenced all along the entire line and was led by such grand christian motives that the cause has advanced in Seward county until it stands today upon the highest eminence of modern times. There are representations of the greater number of christian denominations of the universe in Seward county and the many magnificent and expensive structures erected in nearly every locality of the county and dedicated to christian worship at the present time as compared with the period of seeming indifference is indicative of the predominating power of christianity throughout the enlightened world. In viewing the advancement that has been made in the cause of christianity in Seward county since the beginning of the changed era a person is apt to forget the real conditions of pioneer times. And we are tempted to say that the cleansing power of christian endeavor is much more needed in these later days than it was in the time of the humble sod homes with the pure atmosphere untainted with the fumes of modern corruption. In considering the wildness of the country in its earliest period of settlement many people class the early settlers in the wild grade with the country. But experience has taught us that this is erroneous and that the tamer the country is the wilder the people are. And we only have to point to Europe in this enlightened day and age in the wild struggle of its people to see which set can make the largest display of inhumanity and murder as proof. And so wild have they become that they would murder any and every chronicler of their deeds who dares to give a reduced account of their mad acts. The prairies of Seward county in pioneer days teemed with christian spirit, peace and kindness.

CHAPTER XIX.

Past and Present Political Events and Conditions in Seward County.

While this is not a political work and we do not care to hold up the banner of any political party upon its pages we will endeavor to present the political policies of the people of Seward county during the period that has passed into history in as clear and comprehensible a manner as possible in a spirit of unbiased candor. Of course there has been many things connected with and controled by politics that have made the world better, but there has been perhaps just as many influences over people and events controled by party politics that have made the world worse. While the record of the former may be freely dealt with and discussed, that of the latter will bear a well defined system of evasion as too undesirable and corrupt for thought or discussion. We are well aware that there is offensive matter of past politics which some people might consistently expect to see fully treated in this history, but we prefer to avoid contaminating its bright pages with accounts of low systematic, long continued work of spite, abetted by the sway of party politics, trickery and falsehood. The political demagogue, or "dead beat" together with his supporters always drift to their level and become known as unworthy of mention.

In the consideration of pioneer politics we are constantly reminded of two amusing incidents which somewhat illustrate the general "free for all" partisan spirit of those early times.

At a republican caucus in the sod school house on the Norman Casler homestead in the Foster district, L precinct, in 1873 there was a young gentleman present who had the appearance of a recent arrival from the Emerald Isle. He took a great interest in the proceedings, making suggestions,

motions and nominations. All went along smoothly until the business was finished and the caucus was about to adjourn when this young politician made a very firm objection. He said he was a democrat and had left his work to come there and he was going to see fair play. He had helped the republicans nominate a ticket and it was not fair for them to adjourn without nominating a democrat ticket. He displayed so much earnestness and determination in his attitude and manner that it seemed as though the republicans were "in for a scrap" with a lone democrat. But George Hurlburt got up and made a little speech in which he told the young gentleman that as he was the only democrat there and nobody present knew enough other democrats to fill a ticket it would be impossible to nominate a democratic ticket at that time, advising him to announce a democrat caucus when the republicans would turn out and help them nominate a ticket. Pat made the announcement and the republicans were permitted to depart in peace.

The old style of voting was the only way in those early times, each party furnishing its own tickets printed upon slips of paper, the party name being displayed at the top and the candidates' names with the office for which each one was running printed along down the slip. And it was deemed a part of safety for the tickets to have one or more party members remain at the voting places to guard the party tickets from trickery and see that voters were supplied with the genuine and unadulterated article. At a presidential election, we believe it was in 1876, in the T. J. Foster school house in L precinct, the writer was a member of the election board. There was a generally conspicuous figure at all elections present during a greater part of the day. He was an old comrade soldier and an uncompromising republican. Along toward the middle of the afternoon there was a lull in the voting and hangerson had about all left, seeming as if

all had voted. We noticed this conspicuous character quite busy around the room but did not discover what he was doing and he finally disappeared. Just before time to close the poles three democrats came in to vote and there was not a democratic ticket in the house. They undertook to write their tickets, but it was slow work and they could not remember the names of the candidates and finally gave it up and went away without voting. Those two occurrences not only illustrate pioneer conditions but also the difference in the old manner of nominating candidates and system of voting as compared to those of the present time.

From the time the county was organized the republican party has been the dominant or majority party. However there has been a marked degree of independent voting in county and state elections, and in so far as the democratic party has placed able and good men in nomination for official positions it has been comparatively successful. This indicates a universal disregard among intelligent voters of partisan rule which, many times, effected an advanced condition along political lines. It is a matter worthy of note that the minority party seldom elected an incompetent man, not because it had no poor ones, but because upon the sterling character and worth of the man alone stood his chance for election. And while the minority party seldom elected any but able and strong men it has been demonstrated in Seward county politics that the majority party has occasionally elected a very incompetent and weak one. As an illustration of these facts we refer to Hon. Thomas Graham, a democrat and a minority party man who was elected once county superintendent, five times county clerk, once state senator and once mayor of Sewrdr. His election was based upon the grand and honorable character of the man and not upon the strength of party politics. On the other hand we refer to Martin W. Dimery who was once elected state sen-

ator as a republican and majority party man wholly upon the strength of party. And the contrast as displayed in a comparison of the two, the way they were elected, the number of times each was elected and the character of the two men solves the problem of the varying politics in Seward county. In St. Matthew xxv, 14-30 a parable of the talents is mentioned of which we are reminded in considering the elections of those two gentlemen. While Mr. Graham added to his talents until he had received eight elections upon the strength of his honorable character the other gentleman buried his so deep in personalities that he could not have received one such election. The many honors bestowed upon Hon. Thomas Graham by his fellow citizens were not results of party favoritism, political boss schemes nor spending his entire official time of the first position he was honored with in working up an unbounded system of spite at some one who dared to think and refuse to support him. Had he did so his "talent" would have been buried too deep for resurrection. Thomas Gruham's life was spent from his earliest manhood in Seward county and he sleeps in death beneath its sod, not a demagogue politician, but one of God's grand, honorable and noble men. And there were many others of Seward county's grand characters who were always found upon the side of right regardless of party or selfish noteriety.

Although the republican party has been the dominant party the conditions as shown have made a fair division of official positions between the parties. Six democrats and six republicans have represented the nneteenth senatorial district, composed of Seward and Butler counties, in the state senate from 1876 to 1916.

Eight democrats, five populists and twenty-seven republicans have represented Seward county in the state legislature from 1865 to 1916. Prior to 1878 the county had but one representative and since that date it has had two.

Five democrats and seven republicans have served as county judges for Seward county from 1865 to 1916.

Eleven republicans, two democrats and one populist have served as county treasurer from 1865 to 1916.

Eight democrats, four republicans and one greenbacker have served as county clerk from 1865 to 1916.

Nine republicans, five democrats and one populist have served as sheriff from 1865 to 1916.

Four democrats, seven republicans and one populist have served as count superintendent of public schools from 1867 to 1916.

The office of clerk of the district court was established in Seward county in March 1879 and was supplied by appointment the first four years when George A. Merriam, a republican, was elected to the position and by re-elections, served sixteen years. He was succeeded by James Calder, a democrat, who was followed by Don C. Gwartney, a republican, who died in office, J. F. Gereke, a democrat being his successor, is still serving.

The office of surveyor has been in the hands of the republicans all but about four years, and the office of coroner has been about equally divided between the republicans and democrats.

There has been four state officials elected from Seward county. Hon. E. C. Carnes was twice elected and served as lieutenant governor, Hon. T. L. Norval served two terms as supreme judge, Hon. Wm. Leese served two terms as attorney general, and Hon. Wm. H. Smith is now serving as state auditor. The first three being republicans and the latter a democrat. All of them were residents of Seward.

CHAPTER XX.

Criminality—The Nathan Clough, George L. Monroe and Other Murders Committed in Seward County.

Of all the undesirable topics to engage the attention of either writer or reader, murder stands foremost. But with all of its ghastly horrors it is an unavoidable subject for consideration in the past events of Seward county. However the earliest settlers of the county cannot be classed as criminals nor abetors of crime. The first settlers were a law abiding, industerous and honest class of homeseekers and it is a matter worthy of note that no terrible crime was placed upon the court records of Seward county for upwards of twenty years after its first settlement. And those convicted of crime later on were invariably more recent arrivals in the community.

MURDER OF NATHAN CLOUGH.

In regard to this tragedy we are partially at a loss to give exact conditions, having nothing but our memory for a great portion of the details as a guide. There were two brothers, Nathan and Warren Clough residing in the city of Seward. Warren Clough was engaged in keeping a hotel and his brother, Nathan, was a horse breeder and made his home at his brother's hotel, keeping his horses in the hotel barn. The hotel keeper was a married man while his brother was single and it was reported that jealousy existed between the two brothers. One bright spring morning, in the month of May, 1874, Nathan Clough was found dead in the hotel barn, having been slain sometime during the night or morning with an axe. This created a great excitement and people's tongues ran wild. Everybody laid the blame for the bloody deed upon Warren Clough and like everything

else that becomes matter of fact by continual wordy speculation the coroner's jury brought in a verdict charging Warren Clough with the murder of his brother. The prejudice against the accused had been worked up to such a pitch in the city of Seward that a change of venue was granted and the trial took place in the neighboring city of York—not very greatly removed from the scenes of the crime nor the exciting prejudice it had created. And outside of this prejudice which seemed to be based upon opinion more than proof, there was none but circumstantial evidence against the man and the strongest of this evidence was reported to have consisted in the conduct and actions of the accused. But he was convicted of murder in the first degree, was sentenced to be hung and all preparations were made for executing the sentence. On the evening before the execution was to take place Governor Garber commuted the sentence to life imprisonment. After serving fifteen years of his sentence he was pardoned by Governor Thayer. Whether Warren Clough was or was not guilty no one but himself knew, and if innocent no one but himself and the guilty one knew. Jack Trent, a notorious character who was afterwards convicted of burglary at Seward and sentenced to serve three years in the penitentiary, died before his sentence had expired and was reported to have made a statement on his death bed that he killed Nathan Clough, but the confession received no attention or credit, although it was possibly true.

MURDER OF GEORGE L. MONROE.

Orlando J. Casler was a criminaloid. His father served in the New York state penitentiary for manslaughter having killed a man in a quarrel, with a fence stake. Before Orlando came to Nebraska he served a part of a sentence in the Wisconsin state penitentiary for stealing a team of horses, but was pardoned by the governor of that state before the expiration of his sentence. Having a brother, Norman Cas-

ler, a homesteader residing in -L- precinct, Seward county, Nebraska, and a sister, Mrs. T. H. Tisdale, of Beaver Crossing, when he was released from prison in Wisconsin, in 1874 Orlando came with his family to this county. He made his home for a short time alternately with his brother and sister. Gilbert White, a young, unmarried man had homesteaded the east half of the north-west quarter of section 34, -L- precinct and had made a dugout on the claim and as Orlando Casler wanted a place to live White permitted him to move into his dugout. Shortly afterwards young White sold his homestead to B. F. Salnave, but could not give any title other than relinquish his claim and Casler, hearing of the deal, slipped in ahead of Salnave and homesteaded the land. The writer owned the quarter adjoining the said eighty on the east and was intimately acquainted with Casler. He was a soldier in the war of the rebellion, had been severely wounded in the right shoulder and was drawing a pension of fourteen dollars a month which together with the rent from the improved land on the White-Salnave homestead provided him with a fair support as compared to other homesteaders, but the all prevailing mania for horses was still with him as it had been in Wisconsin. In the early part of July, 1878, a stranger, a comrade soldier by the name of George L. Monroe, of Missouri, came into the neighborhood driving a plug team of horses hitched to an old style, wide track wagon, the whole outfit perhaps not worth over a hundred dollars. He wanted to sell his team and unfortunately fell into the company of Orlando J. Casler who took him in as an old army comrade. He remained at Casler's dugout two or three days and was seen by several of the neighbors. Finally Casler proposed to buy his comrade's team, but said they would be obliged to go to Seward to get the money. (This was taken from a statement made at the house of the writer by Mrs. Orlando J. Casler after the murder.) This proposition was

accepted by Monroe and on the morning of July 7th the two men got up early and hitching up the team drove to Seward where Monroe was to receive the money for his outfit and go on his way rejoicing and Casler was to take the team. But unfortunately Casler could not get the money in Seward therefore he induced his companion to return home with him. The next link in the chain of Casler's "cussedness" was to get Monroe to camp for the night in the timber on the North Blue river bottom, just outside the city limits of Seward on the road to Beaver Crossing. After they had got settled for the night some other parties came and camped near to them which disturbed Casler and he again induced his companion and they moved farther up the river. This was the last act of George L. Monroe and the last time anybody except Orlando Casler saw him alive. In the morning Casler had some difficulty in catching the horses as they had got loose and while looking for them was met by parties on the street of the city with his clothing all wet. He stated that he had got his clothes wet while running after the horses through the wet grass. But he got the animals and hitched up and drove them home, telling everybody he saw that he had bought the team and that Mr. Monroe had gone on to California. Two or three days later some boys were fishing near the bridge below the two comrades' camping ground and saw the body of a man lodged in some drift wood. They went up to town and reported what they had seen and the officials went and got the body. The man had been shot in the heart, the ball having passed entirely through the body, and a terrible wound had been inflicted upon the side of the forehead, apparently by a blow with a revolver, the cock of it striking and cutting a frightful gash. T. J. Foster, an L precinct citizen and neighbor, happened to be in Seward that day and saw the body which he recognized as that of the man who had been in company with Casler.

About three o'clock the next morning we were awakened by a terrific pounding upon our dugout door and when we asked who was there, were both surprised and somewhat frightened at the reply that it was the sheriff of Seward county. Well, we didn't believe him and told him so. We also told him that the sheriff of Seward county had no business coming around our house in such a way at that time of night. He said there had been a murder committed and we were only one of several persons he wanted to see before daylight. We told him there was no murderer in that part of the country, and he said that he guessed there was. He said he only wanted to subpoena us as a witness before a coroner's jury. We then opened the door and he came in and served his subpoena and told us to be ready to go at daylight, that there were several teams going and we could ride with some one of them. We got a "rushed" breakfast just in time to climb into the wagon with Roland Reed and sons, Charley and Horatio. Our dugout at that time was about forty rods west of Casler's and the witnesses who had been notified to go were requested to tarry a little until the sheriff and his deputy had got Casler started on the road so we waited a few minutes and saw Casler drive out towards Seward. The sheriff had schemed to keep Casler in ignorance as to what he was wanted in Seward for and permitted him to drive his recently acquired team and take his wife with him. But the sheriff and deputy were very careful to ride in their buggy just behind and close up to Casler's team while the string of witnesses followed along in the rear. While Casler in the leading conveyance sat as if in deep meditation the entire journey to Seward, the attitude of the two men in the buggy displaying a feeling of reverence, and the escort of neighbors with solemn and blanched faces following as stated we were constantly impressed with thoughts of a funeral. And such it seemed to amount to so far as Casler was con-

cerned. It was the last cortege of sorrowing neighbors to follow him, and if not to his last resting place, it proved to be to the place of his just doom. On that trip his doubts and fears were, no doubt many, but he did not realize its real meaning until he arrived in Seward where he was immediately arrested and placed in jail.

It has been said that "murder will out," and if this one didn't "out" in every way it would be difficult to find one that did. It was a very bungling job of crime. Casler had undoubtedly made an effort to sink the body in the river, but excitement had caused him to make practically a failure of it. The wet condition of his clothing in the morning points directly to this conclusion. It was evident that he had shot and killed Monroe with the man's own revolver, and shot him while sleeping in his wagon as there was a bullet hole in the bottom of the wagon box. He had Monroe's revolver hid in his stable. He had also his victim's pocketbook and private papers hid in his bed. Monroe's satchel containing clothes and other things was found, hidden in a hedge fence at the side of the road leading to Beaver Crossing. In his effort to conceal his guilt Casler made the blunder of telling his wife all about it and permitting her to know even the hiding place of the stuff. When officers searched his home for evidence she told them where to find the pocketbook, papers and revolver. This lady was a frequent visitor at our dugout and came there as soon as she returned home after her husband's arrest and her talk removed every doubt from our mind in regard to his guilt. She did not pretend to say that he was not guilty. In fact she did not make any effort to conceal his guilt. She said that he hid Monroe's things and that she told him when doing so: "Why Lant, They Will Find You Out!"

While this crime was committed in July, 1878, Casler was not tried until in February, 1879. The case was a plain

one, but the usual indispensable formalities together with the presentation of all the evidence in the matter which would aid the jury in coming to a just and impartial conclusion required several day's time. But with a very short deliberation the jury returned a verdict of guilt against Orlando J. Casler for the murder of George L. Monroe. He was sentenced by Judge Post, of York, before whom the trial was conducted, to be hung on the 20th day of May, 1879.

On the morning of the day Casler was to be executed it seemed that everybody excepting the writer was on the road to Seward and there was an immense throng gathered in the city early in the day. And the precautions the sheriff had taken to observe the law and exclude the public from witnessing the revolting scene were, in the hands of that host of excited citizens, many of whom were lawless, as frail as chaff before a tornado. He had erected an inclosure of boards around the gallows and outlined a limited space, placing an equiped corps of dupities as a guard, warning people not to pass the limited line. But just before the fateful hour arrived a general rush was made, upon the line of deputies and the board inclosure, which swept everything out of the way of a complete and general view of the gallows and the proceedings about to be enacted there. It was the general impression among the people that Orlando Casler deserved to be hung and the prevalent desire to know that it was done impressed many with an idea that seeing it done was the only way of knowing it had been done. And this seemed to be the only way to satisfy the public demand for the execution of a bad and dangerous character. Had Sheriff John Sullivan failed in the performance of the terrible duty set before him, the mob would have performed it for him. But he did not shrink from his duty and Orlando J. Casler paid the prescribed penalty for his crime at the appointed time in accordance with the law so far as the mob had permitted him

to do. Of course a public execution was contrary to state statutes, but the sheriff had no other alternative. He had to strain the law to obey it and to prevent a greater violation of it by the mob than had already been enacted.

The last words of Orlando J. Casler at the closing scenes of his life were reported immediatly after the execution by several of his nearest neighbors who witnessed the entire proceedings at the execution as follows: "Before God and man I am innocent."

THE BATES--THOMAS TRAGEDY.

In March 1880 a terrible tragedy occurred at a school house in B precinct near where the village of Bee is located. A protracted meeting was being held at the school house and there was a family by the name of Bates residing in the locality who were very much enthused with the spirit of the meeting and were taking a prominent part in the exercises. There were also some rough characters in the neighborhood by the name of Thomas who were harboring a grudge against the Bateses, and to satisfy their wrath they vented their spite upon the meetings. Being allaround toughs they had no difficulty in enlisting others of the same lawless spirit in making an effort to break up the meetings by a system of lawless disturbance. This kind of overbearing conduct was continued until patient forbearance upon the part of the church people ceased to be a virtue and violent threats were made as to what would be the result if the rowdies did not cease to disturbe the exercises. Preparations were made and one night the church people went to the meeting armed to defend their rights and the toughs went prepared for trouble which it seems they were looking for. An exchange of angry words was quickly followed by blows. Revolvers were brought into action by both sides resulting in the death of William Bates and the fatal wounding of Hillard Thomas.

James Thomas received a wound in the hip, Isreal Bates was wounded in the thigh and Luther Bates received a severe wound in the head inflicted with a spade. What brought the row to a close without further bloodshed has not been fully determined, but it was probably on account of the disabling of the principal leaders in the affray. Certainly it brought about the desired purpose of the toughs and broke up the meeting. And it seems strange that such a shamefully outrageous violation of law and order upon their part, resulting in the murder of a respected citizen, was permitted to go without punishment or even satisfactory investigation. We fail to understand that the law would hold those toughs guiltless of murder on the theory that the church people prepared to defend their rights. They were in their own home and should have been as free to defend it as a private citizen would be to defend his home and he would have a right to be prepared for that purpose with a dozen or more Gatling guns if necessary. And if a citizen was killed in the defense of home with those Gatling guns the party who committed the deed would be guilty of murder just the same as if he had killed that citizen while sleeping. There is scarcely room for a doubt that several of those meeting disturbers should have been forced to account for the willful murder of William Bates.

THE SAMUEL BOWKER--GRANGER TRAGEDY.

In the matter of the above named tragedy, which as near as our memory serves us, occurred in the fall of 1880, there were five persons involved. The Grangers consisted of father, a daughter and two sons, the fifth being Samuel Bowker, the whole terrible affair being the result of a loose tongue on the part of Bowker about the Granger daughter and sister. The daughter had recently been married and Bowker engaged in the use of disrespectful language about

the young lady and her marriage in presence of her father who resented Bowker's insulting manner with a strong protest which brought on a quarrel resulting in Bowker, who prided himself on his pugilism, striking Mr. Granger and knocking him down. These parties resided near Milford and the two brothers, Milton and John Granger were in the mercantile business in East Milford, now Grover. A few days after the assault upon their father Mr. Bowker was passing the sons' store and they came out and invited him to get out of his wagon. He immediately accepted the invitation and taking off his coat announced himself ready for the two brothers. With angry and violent words the fight commenced, Milton Granger soon drawing a revolver fired two shots at Bowker who knocked the revolver from his hand when John Granger drew a revolver, firing five times at Bowker. Two of these shots took effect, one of which struck near the shoulder and passing to the spine caused Mr. Bowker's death. The Granger brothers were indicted for murder and on trial plead guilty of manslaughter which was accepted by the court. They were sentenced to serve ten years in the penitentiary which term they served.

Had the Granger brothers went into the fight without the revolvers and accidentally got hold of a weapon and killed their antagonist their plea would have been more plausible and they would perhaps received a lighter sentence. But the fact that each was armed with death dealing weapons was evidence of premeditated intent to kill Mr. Bowker. His violent conduct following up and defending a cowardly vocal assault upon a young lady's name reaped its reward and had much to do with mitigating the sentence and public opinion of the Granger brothers.

MURDER OF MRS. PATRICK.

A resident of B precinct by the name of Patrick, whose

given name we are at this time unable to state, and family seemed to be very rough and lawless. They frequently engaged in family strife and one day in the early part of April, 1882, Mr. and Mrs. Patrick and two sons were returning to their home from Seward when a family quarrel was commenced between the boys and their father. This seemed to go from bad to worse until it resulted in a revolver battle. In trying to stand between the combatants, Mrs. Patrick, the wife of one and mother of the others, was killed by a shot from her husband's revolver. He was indicted for murder, was tried, found guilty and given a sentence of life imprisonment in the penitentiary. After serving several years of his sentence he was pardoned by the governor.

MURDER OF THE LEAVITT CHILDREN.

As W. W. Cox was a member of the grand jury which investigated this, the most brutish of all Seward county murders, we will quote his account of it. It occurred in 1889.

“In the southern part of D precinct there lived a family by the name of Leavitt. They were old residents, but unfortunately they were not popular with their neighbors. There had been much trouble about their stock and various matters. Mr. Leavitt was a man in general bad repute and it made against him in this terrible trying hour. As appeared in the evidence before the grand jury, of which the author was a member, Mr. and Mrs. Leavitt had an errand one evening at Gresham, about five or six miles distant, leaving their two young daughters in charge of the house. Upon their return late in the evening, they found the two little girls, one about eleven and the other thirteen years old lying in the yard with their throats cut. Suspicions were aroused against different parties. A grand jury was speedily summoned. The jury was in session ten days and every avenue was searched diligently. It developed that there

was a deadly enmity existing against Leavitts in the community and some were ready to believe that the old couple had murdered their own children; but there was no evidence to justify such a suspicion only that their general reputation as citizens was not of a high order. There was no evidence of any possible motive to commit such a deed. Some of the neighbors seemed very little concerned in the matter, according to their own testimony. We will give a few questions and their answers.

Ques. "Mr. — where were you when you heard of the murder?"

Ans. "Attending to my own business."

Ques. "How did it affect you?"

Ans. "I didn't care, it was none of my business."

Ques. "Did you go down there?"

Ans. "No."

Ques. "How far do you live from the Leavitts?"

Ans. "About three-quarters of a mile."

Ques. "Why did you not go down and see the murdered children?"

Ans. "I did not care, and was busy at my work."

"This is the way the evidence ran with one neighbor, and yet scarcely no suspicion was placed at his door, only a suspicion that he was brutal.

"On an adjoining farm was a man by the name of Gerd Stienblack who had had much trouble with Leavitt about unruly stock, and there was much bad blood existing. When he was told of the murder he did not care enough to go and see, although he lived less than half a mile distant. However he seemed agitated, but gave vent to the idea that it was no concern of his. Stienblack was summoned before the jury and when closely and sharply cross questioned he became much excited and as the old saying is, "He danced like a chicken on a hot griddle." He was on the witness

stand a half day and became so frightened or maddened that he went home and hanged himself in his own barn.

“There was a wide spread suspicion in the jury room and among the people that he knew all about the murder, but the jury was not able to agree or to fix the awful crime at the door of any person, and with many it remains a mystery to this day. But now after the long years have passed, we are free to say that we have never had occasion to change our mind that at least one of the guilty parties met his God before that jury closed its session. Below we give a letter left by Mr. Stienblack, in German, but translated by Rev. Father Gruber. The letter is without date and reads as follows:

“I do not want to have spread my name town. Therefore, greeting once more. I am not guilty of the deed. This my wife and daughter know as well as I, for I dared to tell the truth. But it is too late now. And so has the deed been attributed also to me, of which nevertheless I am quite innocent. My beloved wife and daughter, God will give that we see each other in eternity again. Gerd Stienblack.”

This is Mr. Cox's story, of that murder, as a juror who investigated the crime. In view of what did develop before that grand jury, according to his statement, the truth of which there is no room for a doubt, the Leavitt family, whatever they may have been, good or bad, had some terrible bad and dangerous neighbors, leaving out of consideration the murder of the little girls. That the murder of those two little girls without a possible motive, was the act of a mad or insane person seems apparant. And the whole conduct of Gerd Stienblack, leading up to and including his almost incomprehensive letter and his self destruction point him out distinctly as a mad-man. Whether he was responsible or not, if he committed the murder, is a matter of grave doubt. Again his insanity may have resulted from excitement and

fear that he was in danger of having to account for the crime. But that he was insane there is no room for doubt. No sane person ever committed suicide.

MURDER AND SUICIDE AT SEWARD.

The citizens of the city of Seward, and in fact of the whole county of Seward, were horror-stricken on the evening of June 25th, 1902, by the report that the murder of one and the suicide of another of the city's well known business men had been committed that evening. A. D. Lange shot and killed John Hand on the street and after walking one block to his home fired one shot into his own body and one shot into his head. All of the physicians in the city were soon in attendance, but he was out of the reach of human assistance and passed away in a short time.

The cause of this terrible tragedy is the same one that has prompted more such shocking homicides than any other one thing in the world—a fickle wife and a foolish man. John Hand had been paying illegitimate attention to Lange's wife for over two years which had brought about a muscular encounter between the two men about a year previous to the final end, and yet Hand foolishly persisted in his attentions to the lady. And the result, with all of its heartrending features, was not surprising to many of Seward's citizens who were well aware of the conditions as they had existed for a long time.

The men were both in business in Seward, Lange being a dealer in groceries which business Hand had just previously sold out of to engage in the sale of pumps and windmills. Hand left a wife and several children, some of them grown.

JACOB VOTAVA MURDER.

Jacob Votava was a Bohemian who resided alone on a farm a short distance east of Milford. On Sunday afternoon,

October 29th, 1906, one of the workmen on the B. & M. rail road grade through that section, discovered Mr. Votava lying on his bed in his house and after a time became satisfied that the man was dead. He gave the alarm and an investigation showed that he had been dead several days. A coroner's jury was summoned and rendered a verdict that he had been murdered by shooting. Indications pointed to the fact that two persons had occupied the house the night of the murder, but no clue was learned as to who committed the crime. Votava was supposed to have some valuables and just before his murder had sold some hogs and suspicion was prevalent that he was murdered for his money. Everything of value that could be carried away had been taken from the place. Mr. Votava was about forty years old and had no relatives in Seward county.

THE BERT PICKREL TRAGEDY.

A shocking and terrible tragedy occurred in the city of Seward, January 9th, 1913, when a young wife was shot to death by a jealous husband of only five weeks. On an acquaintance of only two weeks Bert Pickrel married a young girl, became jealous on account of her conduct with other men, and procuring a loaded shotgun entered her sitting room, and with the pretense that he was going hunting stepped behind the young woman and discharged the contents of the gun in the back of her head, literally tearing it to pieces. This case involves love, marriage, jealousy and murder in the brief period of seven weeks. This lover, jealous husband and murderer possibly was mentally unbalanced which would form the only basis for even a partial excuse for his horrible crime. He was placed in jail where he waited until the convening of the district court when he plead guilty of murder in the second degree and was sentenced to serve twenty-five years in the state penitentiary.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Precincts—Their Location by Government Survey—Range and Town Numbers. Precinct Representation on County Board—Its Changes.

In the original plan of township division of Seward county there was no such thing as name or letter for the precincts. The government survey described or located each township by town number and range east of the principal meridian and homesteads were entered by section number, town number and range. While this was the established system for the government to divide up the wild land belonging to it and was the most accurate way of keeping track of that vast real estate, it was unhandy for general business among the residents of the different townships therefore a revision was shortly made and the sixteen townships established as precincts to be known by letter after the first sixteen letters of the alphabet, running from A to P. In the location of the townships by town number and range there are but four town numbers and four range numbers in Seward county, the ranges being numbered one, two, three and four, east of the principal meridian, range one being the county's western tier of townships. They run north and south and include four towns. The town numbers run east and west, each town number representing four townships or the same town number in each different range. The towns are numbered nine, ten, eleven and twelve, from the south. We have drawn a diagram of the county by precincts, giving the location of each and showing the town number, range and precinct letter. By leaving out the letter the location of the township by the government survey will be easily understood. However for the benefit of school pupils who might desire a clear understanding of the system adopted

by the United States Government to designate sixteen different towns in a county by the use of only four town numbers and four ranges we refer them to the fact that there is but one of the same town number in each range. For instance while there are four townships designated as town twelve, which are the north tier of townships, there is only one town twelve in each of the four ranges.

Town 12 D Prec't	Range 1	Town 12 C Prec't	Range 2	Town 12 B Prec't	Range 3	Town 12 A Prec't	Range 4
Town 11 E Prec't	Range 1	Town 11 F Prec't	Range 2	Town 11 G Prec't	Range 3	Town 11 H Prec't	Range 4
Town 10 L Prec't	Range 1	Town 10 K Prec't	Range 2	Town 10 J Prec't	Range 3	Town 10 I Prec't	Range 4
Town 9 M Prec't	Range 1	Town 9 N Prec't	Range 2	Town 9 O Prec't	Range 3	Town 9 P Prec't	Range 4

Each precinct contains thirty-six sections, being six miles square, the sixteen precincts amounting to five hundred and seventy-six sections or that number of square miles. One section contains six hundred and forty acres of land therefore the county is composed of 368,640 acres. In the original plan of the government to divide these sections into

homesteads of a quarter section each, which was supposed to be a farm, the area of Seward county would have made one thousand, eight hundred and four farms. But that plan did not succeed after the rail road grant of every other section was made. And this deal cut the size of homesteads down one-half and in the final sale of the rail road's land the object aimed at by the government in the homestead act, to make an even division of the land among actual settlers, proved to be a failure. Not only did speculators take advantage of an opportunity to get a hold of tracts of land, but homesteaders who had got a start, purchased rail road land to more than twice the amount of the original homesteads. This enlargement of farms reduced the number of farms and also the number of settlers.

Section one is the north-east section in each precinct and the section numbers run east and west as shown in the following illustration.

6	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
30	29	28	27	26	25
31	32	33	34	35	36

This little diagram illustrates the form and dimension of one precinct in Seward county. It is intended to represent

any one of the precincts designated by town and range number or letter. But the interests of the city of Seward, which is in G precinct, conflicted with the interests of the rural or farming sections and made it necessary to establish an independent and separate precinct of the city, which transaction occurred about 1886. However the original area of G precinct was not changed. In the rough and hilly precincts where the survey of the sections was made up and down hills the level area is shorter than in the more even surfaced precincts and some of the eighty and quarter section homesteads have been found scant of full measure from one to two acres. It is probable that those short tracts of land may have the full amount of tillable surface if tilled as they were surveyed.

In the organization of the county a commissioner system was enacted by which the interests of the entire precincts were placed under the control of three commissioners. They were generally selected from precincts in different localities, but there was no regular district system comprising certain precincts to be represented by each trustee. As the interest of the county was mutually shared by all the precincts this arrangement was, for a short time, acceptable. The first seeming cause for dissatisfaction with this plan of county government, whether it was so considered at the time or not, occurred at the beginning and during the contest between Seward and Milford for the permanent location of the county seat. A majority of the county board at that time was two and the system of representation left it more than probable that the majority would favor one or the other of the contestants as their own personal interests dictated, and considerable legal trickery was manufactured and a general contention was in progress with the board during the contest, some of them being arrested on false charges made by parties on both sides of the contest. From that period

on to the change to township organization when each precinct was represented by a supervisor, the three men county board was in disfavor. The change to the supervisor system was made in January, 1886 and each precinct elected a supervisor at the election in November of that year. But this system soon went out of favor on account of the expense for the salary of so many which was wisely considered unnecessary and in 1895 the system was revised and changed from the precinct supervisor to the district system which reduced the membership of the county board to seven. The districts under this arrangement are composed of and represent precincts as follows:

1st Dist. B, C and D precincts.	2nd Dist. E and F.
3rd " City of Seward.	4th " A, H and G.
5th " I, J and P.	6th " L, K and M.
7th " N and O.	

-A- precinct is broken with hills and ravines. The soil is mixed in many places with an unusual amount for Nebraska soil, with gravel and in some localities large stones or "nigger heads," as they are called in their native country, appear above the surface. Regardless of these seeming defects the soil is as rich and productive as any soil in the county. The early settlers of the precinct were favored with an abundance of oak and other valuable native timber. A saw mill was built at Oak Groves in -A- precinct in the early sixties where oak lumber was sawed out to supply settlers of a large portion of the country, some of it finding its way to the city of Lincoln. It was the banner precinct of Seward county for fuel timber. Springs of pure water abound along the ravines. Among the other natural advantages in -A- precinct was its deposit of lime stone from which lime was produced by the early settlers in sufficient quantities to supply the needs in that line of Seward county and adjacent towns including the capital city. The precinct has no village or

town, but is in proximity to railway stations on two different roads in that many different directions—Bee on the C. & N. W., and Raymond on the Union Pacific. Settlement began in 1864.

-B- precinct is much more level than -A- but is quite broken in places where draws or ravines extend from Middle Creek which heads just west of it. In the original organization of the precincts in the early sixties, -B- was known as Plum Creek precinct and comprised two and one-half towns being six miles wide north and south by fifteen miles east and west. Under these conditions the precinct caught a large percentage of the county's settlement in the early sixties. It has at present one market, postoffice and trading place—the village of Bee, established on the C. & N. W. rail road line in 1887.

-C- precinct is a North Blue river township, that stream entering it in section three flows to the south-east corner of the precinct. It also has Lincoln creek in the south-west quarter. While these two streams cause it to be rough they have added their fertile valleys to the agricultural wealth of the precinct and in early times furnished the settlers with needed timber of spontaneous growth along their banks. It had a post office and trading place at Marysville early in pioneer days. It has a railway station and market at the enterprising village of Staplehurst.

-D- precinct is located, as will be noticed in the diagram, in the north-west corner of the county. It is mostly up-land from the North Blue river and Lincoln creek. In regard to the quality of the land we can say that it needs no recommendation from any one. It is sufficient to say that it is Seward county land and as good as the best.

-E- precinct lies south of -D- and has perhaps the most level surface of any other precinct in the county, the southern portion requiring artificial drainage. The B. & M. rail

road passes through from east to west in about the center of the precinct. It contains Utica, the third largest village or town in the county.

-F- precinct is one among the best farming towns in the county. It is up-land that gradually slopes towards the North Blue river and Lincoln creek. And while it is not subject to damage during wet seasons it stands drouths as well as any town in the county. It contains Tamora, one of the later villages and an excellent market and trading place.

-G- precinct is more rough than the others named, having the hills and ravines leading from the North Blue river which passes entirely through the township in an angling course from north-west to south-east, also the breakes from Lincoln and Plumb creeks. It contains the city of Seward which has been transformed into a precinct within a precinct. There was a greater early settlement in -G- than in any other town in the county.

-H- precinct is on the east line of the county. It is broken with hills and ravines and springs and spring runs abound along which an excellent grade of native timber has added to its advantages. The precinct contains German-town, a grain and cream market, with two elevators and one of Nebraska's large creameries.

-I- precinct is hilly. The Middle creek breaks extend through it. Springs are numerous along the ravines and Middle creek valley. There is an abundance of very nice red sand stone along the creek which constitutes fine building material. The village of Pleasant Dale is located in the southern portion of the precinct.

-J- precinct lies next west of -I- and in many respects is a model township. The North Blue river traverses it from the north-west to the south-east, giving it excellent water and drainage advantages, and adding its rich bottom land to the agricultural wealth of the precinct as well as the timber

production along the stream. The village of Ruby is located in the precinct.

-K- precinct is one of the most valuable tracts of farming land in Seward county. There is scarcely a foot of waste land in the precinct, either from roughness or swampy basins. The village of Goehner is located in the western portion of the town since the construction of the C. & N. W. rail road. But in pioneer time Seward was the market for the farm produce of -K- precinct.

-L- precinct bounds -K- on the west and extends to the York county line. It contains considerable rough and broken land. Beaver creek cuts the south-west corner and Walnut creek rises in the north-west corner and passes through to the south-east. And in addition to the roughness from those two creeks, ravines extend to the south half of the precinct from the West Blue river. But regardless of this seeming defect -L- town is an up-to-date farming precinct and its hills and hollows are worth from one hundred to two hundred dollars an acre. There is no village in the precinct. It has the advantage of markets at Utica, Tamora, Goehner and Beaver Crossing; being almost surrounded by rail road stations near its borders.

-M- precinct contains a rough and rich tract of land. It is broken in the northern portion by the West Blue river which passes through it from west to east and Johnson creek passes through the southern half of the town from west to east, the ravines extending from these streams well over the land. There was an abundance of natural timber along the river in pioneer days which was nearly exhausted by the early settlers, but a second growth has about replenished the product. This precinct has more water than any other precinct in the county. In addition to the excellent water power of the West Blue river and its bed of running water there are a hundred or more flowing wells, from which

enough pure water goes to waste every day to supply a power to run the county's electric light plants and grist mills. In fact a water power could undoubtedly be constructed from the flowing well body of water that would excel any other water power in Nebraska and not injure the natural system. -M- is the only precinct in the county that contains two distinct villages and rail road stations—Beaver Crossing, a pioneer town, in the northern portion, and Cordova, established later, in the south-west corner of the precinct.

-N- precinct is similar to -M- in the land surface and is favored with the same water advantages. The West Blue river and Johnson creek extend through the sections from west to east and flowing wells exist along the river bottom to near the east line of the town. There is no railway station nor postoffice in the precinct. Its market places are Milford on the north, Dorchester on the south and Beaver Crossing on the west. In -N- precinct Seward county's last remanent, a memorable sod house was inhabited as late as 1892. This interesting relic of days gone by stood midway between what was termed "the two churches" in the south part of the precinct.

-O- precinct is watered by both the North Blue river, which passes through its northern sections, and the West Blue in the southern portion. As must be supposed the precinct contains a broken land surface from the two rivers, but there is no discount upon its agricultural value, it being one among the best in the county. It has a railway station and excellent market at Milford. -O- was singularly noted in the late sixties and early seventies by what will be remembered by early settlers as "Dobie Town." It was located about a mile and a half west of Milford and consisted in a row of five pioneer dwelling houses, composed of adobe brick from which it derived its name. These unique dwellings were the

results of the pioneer ingenuity of S. S. and John Atwood, Wm. H. and Lee Smiley and Ira Gallup who owned and occupied the structures in those early days of Seward county settlement.

-P- precinct is in the county's south-east corner and is the end of the alphabetical list of townships. It contains, undoubtedly, the richest agricultural tract of land in Seward county. It lays largely upon the river bottoms, the vallies of the North and West Blue rivers coming together here form an extensive plteau of level surface of rich, loomy soil. The precinct has no railway station and its nearest and best market places are at Crete and Milford. It has the distinction of having the first village, Camden; the first postoffice; first school and first bridge in Seward county all of which have received previous mention in this work.

In our brief mention of the precincts we have merely outlined in rotation and alphabetical order the sixteen localities which compose the whole area which we have had and still have under consideration—Seward county—therefore we pass from their separate mention to the general work which includes all sections and towns of the county.

CHAPTER XXII.

W. W. Cox and His History of Seward County—Its Dedication—His Daughter's Touching Portray of Her Pioneer Childhood Home.

The subject of this sketch was one of the grand characters of Seward county manhood. To speak of his greatness of heart is to speak of the man as his heart dominated every fibre of his body and soul. While there are those whose opinions may differ with his views there are none with kindly motives who can sustain a reproach to his good will towards his fellow man. As one among the earliest settlers of the county, he and his good wife were perhaps the only ones of that never to be forgotten advance guard called pioneers, who emigrated to its wild prairie in search of a home by the only mode of conveyance God had given them—on foot. They had been engaged in drying salt at Salt Basin, near where the city of Lincoln is now located, and the gradual decrease in the salt product gave them reason to think that the time had come when they must make a change, therefore one bright morning in 1863 they bade farewell to their cabin and struck out across the prairie in search of a home with nothing to guide them but the setting sun. After a weary day's journey they landed in Seward county and finding their ideal section, took a homestead near the present city of Seward, having for neighbors a few stalwart pioneers, the howling wolves and strolling bands of Indians. Here our former county historian and his faithful wife spent their pioneer period, sharing its enjoyments with its adversities, and later enjoying, for many years, the fruits of the advanced changes their hands had aided in establishing. After the death of that loved and loving wife, which occurred several years ago, he spent a number of his declining years in com-

piling a history of the county they had done so much to improve. And as a matter of respect to the memory of our worthy historical predecessor we here quote his eloquent expression of sentiment in the dedication of his work to the memory of his departed wife.

“To the ever kind and loving companion that walked hand in hand with me nearly forty-four years of life’s journey, sharing all the privations of frontier life, and lending cheer in all the dark hours and performing so nobly all the duties incumbent on her as wife and mother, as neighbor and friend, ever ready to lend a helping hand in matters of charity or public enterprise—she that walked so faithfully in the service of her Divine Master over half a century and when her work was all done passed over the dark river to dwell in the Heavenly home—is this book lovingly dedicated as a memorial to Rebecca Sampson Cox. AUTHOR.”—Cox’s History.

In regard to Cox’s History we wish to first speak by a reference to the work. It is a book worthy of a place in the library of any Seward county citizen. It has, as such works do, its merits and demerits, but perhaps enough of the former for sufficient redemption from the latter and enough to make it a valuable reference record.

Mr. Cox’s efforts to embody too many matters out of line of his theme and foreign to real county history forms the greatest point for criticism of his work. While it crowded his space, enlarged his work and gave his readers too much reading to get a little history, it taxed his ability to give impartial accounts of the many different lodges, churches, newspapers, etc., and prevent those matters crowding the real work under consideration. His history contains one hundred and eight pages of territorial matter, mostly devoted to memorable sketches of J. Sterling Morton, Gen. John M. Thayer, Dr. Miller, Nebraska City’s fire, some territorial newspapers etc., all of which are published under the head

lines of "Seward County History." It is not such in any sense whatever. He devotes forty-four pages to newspaper clippings, mostly incomprehensibly brief and without location such as "S. R. Douglas caught a coon." "Jan. 28th—The Baptist church was completed." "The Presbyterian church is raised." "July 2nd—Four fights in the streets are mentioned." Now these items are supposed to be newspaper clippings (only a very few however of similar ones published in his book) and as such will substantiate our statement that newspaper clippings are not history.

Private correspondence or so called "historical letters," some of them, like A. E. Sheldon's, written from the fanciful memory of a very small child, exaggerated to the grotesque desire of irresponsible and careless statements or air castles, made in disregard of public sentiment, are very far from true history. Fifty-two pages of Mr. Cox's history are devoted to letters from different individuals. While some of them are instructive some of them are scarcely worth the ink they are printed with and there is but little history in the majority of them.

He devotes two hundred and four pages to paragraphical sketches of individuals which were paid for by the parties receiving the notice, thus making his work a partial and not a general history of the county—it being general only so far as it was paid for. It might be said that while those paragraphs were paid for they were biographical sketches of the lives of Seward county people, but what has the history of any person, previous to his or her Seward county residence got to do with that county's history? But since we are investigating the injuries his history sustained from the public sentiment and opinion its own contents created we must recall the general tendency of his work to partisan politics and in this consideration we are brought face to face with two of those biographical sketches of at least two men who were

never Seward county citizens, one of them being none other than E. H. Hinshaw, one of the lowest down political demagogues Nebraska ever had and a disgrace to the party that honored him and fully as much so to Cox's history. The other, an honorable christian gentleman, J. H. Mickey, twice governor of Nebraska, but received space in the afore said history on account of party politics. While the foregoing matters were detriments to Mr. Cox's history they are damaging in their effects upon the minds of many people to any work which may follow in the line of county history. It is not easy to compete with the size of Cox's history and produce no other matter than historical matter of Seward county. We mention these things because they are true conditions in regard to his work and not to injure Mr. Cox nor the history he so diligently compiled. He is at rest and his book is out of print and it is beyond our power to injure or benefit them.

Among the several letters published by him as "historical letters," there is one we feel justified in reproducing. It displays a grand sentimentality and comes from the pen of not only Mr. Cox's daughter, but a Seward county daughter.

And her story seems, perhaps, more pathetic in view of the fact that the writer passed to her final rest while quite young, leaving a husband and one son one year old. She was born at Nebraska City in 1861. She was married to Frank P. Pingree, and with him settled at Colby, Kansas, but removed to Washington, D. C., in 1891, where she died in 1892. She was the second daughter of W. W. Cox and will be remembered at this date by many as a successful teacher in several Seward county schools, commencing her career as teacher before she was fifteen years old. She took a great interest in chautauqua work, and although never permitted to meet with a circle, she was graduated and received the white seal for proficiency in the work.

The Wilderness Home of My Childhood.

NETTIE M. COX PINGREE.

“The hills are dearest which our childish feet
Have climbed the earliest; and the streams most sweet
Are ever those at which our young lips drank,
Stooped to their waters o’er the mossy banks.”—Whittier.

“Though years have passed since our last visit to the old homestead, visions come to us of the woods and valleys by the sparkling waters of the beautiful Blue.

“The river winds its crooked way through the valley with many a curve, forming broad acres of woodland which were a perfect paradise to us during the whole year. There in the spring time the green grass and violets formed a beautiful carpet for our feet, while around us the alder and wild plum blossoms made fragrant the air with their sweet scented odor.

“Down the garden path bordered with moss roses and morning glories, we would speed away to the river, bait our hooks for fish, and cross the foot log and follow the path through the woods to the schoolhouse. That little rough board shanty, sodded all around, and the home-made, knife-marked desks have given place to new and better ones. The children upon the playground are strange to us, but the same games of “blind man’s buff,” and “drop the handkerchief,” are played by them as we played them long years since.

“The grape-vine swing must not be forgotten, for there, with choicest flowers, was crowned the queen of May, and also, in childish sport, were wedded two schoolmates, just twenty years ago.

“Under the welcome shade of the old walnut tree by the ford, we studied our Sunday-school lessons, and were often

lulled to sleep by the merry song of the wild birds.

“During the long summer days, wading around the sand-bars and gathering shells afforded us a delightful pastime, and as the sun was seeking the western horizon, we would mount old Ned, the family horse, ford the river and go to the farther pasture after the cows.

“Each land hath its shadows and each home hath its ghosts and ours was not an exception. The “Big grove” was the most beautiful of all the “bends,” on account of the heavy timber and heavy foliage. There the sugar maple trees abounded, and there grew the most berries, the latter being very important, for many a new dress and coat were bought with the profits realized from their sale.

“One evening at dusk something large and white, resembling a great bear, was seen to come out of these woods and although we afterwards learned that it was only a neighbor boy with a bed-tick over his head, we never ventured again into that grove without company.

“When the autumn sun changed the foliage and ripened the fruits, then was our harvest. It would be difficult to decide who worked the harder to store away the winter's supply of walnuts and acorns, we children or the squirrels. Perhaps we tired of the labor more quickly than our little forest friends, for frequently the restful shade of the great oaks would be too tempting, and we seated ourselves by their roots and wove wreaths of the brilliant-hued leaves, while the autumn winds sighed and rustled the branches overhead, making a beautiful accompaniment to our fancies. But when winter came with its hoary frosts and covered the earth with its blanket of snow and the cold winds whistled through the barren timber, then, like all the children of the woods, the most comfortable place for us was home. That little log cabin, with its great fireplace and clay-chincked walls, is the most cherished of all places. The dove-cote

upon its roof, the cave behind it, the box-alder and cotton-wood trees, and the old fashioned well will always be remembered.

It seems but yesterday that father brought in the huge back-log and built a brilliant fire in front of it, then popped the corn for our first Christmas eve in our new home. He took us children on his knee and told us of Santa Claus, and how he would come down the huge chimney and fill our stockings, if we would hurry off to bed. Mother tucked the covers carefully about us and resumed her knitting, while father read aloud, by the light of the blazing brushwood, the latest news of the rebellion, which was then raging with all its horrors.

We watched the shadows cast by the flickering light of the burning embers upon the hearth until we fell asleep, dreaming as all children do, of Kris Kringle and his wonderful sleigh full of toys. In the morning, when the sun's first rays peeped through the curtains of the one window in the cabin, with a bright Christmas greeting, we hastened to our stockings to find them overflowing with popcorn and doughnuts. Away down in the toe we found a stick of candy and a pair of lovely red mittens with little snowflakes all over them. We were a happy little band, and although many Christmases have come and gone, and Santa Claus has filled our stocking with a far more lavish hand, none will have the same place in our memory as the one of '64.

But now, far removed from those loved scenes of childhood and looking out upon the broad expanse of prairie and corn land, our minds will naturally wander back to the old homestead, and decide that, though home is home where'er it may be, yet that halo cannot be taken away from our father's hearthstone."—Cox's History.

The foregoing interesting letter was reproduced in respect and memory of the historian, W. W. Cox and family.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Seward County's Newspapers.

We are not here to give a newspaper history only so far as their history is connected with the history of our county. We mention this because we note the failure of W. W. Cox in his effort to publish the histories of the county newspapers embodied in his county history. Mr. Cox presented only a partial history of two or three of the county's newspapers, and let the ballance "go to grass." In this matter he made the error in his opinion that history of minor things within the county was county history and found it a "white elephant" which he was forced to drop, as he did some other things, on account of the immensity of the work. The newspapers are to be remembered among the prime factors which advanced Seward county towards the grand changes that have covered it with the luster of precious gems by placing a crown of inestimable valuation upon its natural resources.

The first paper in the county was published at Seward in March, 1870 by O. T. B. Williams, under the name of "Nebraska Atlas." The support to a paper in those days was very weak and the "Atlas" was forced to suspend after a short life of four years. In December 1870 the "Blue Valley Record," the second paper to make an appearance in Seward county, was started at Milford by Culver & Parsons. It managed to live on Seward county fare for two and a half years when it took its flight to Lincoln where it was consolidated with another pioneer journal and where one of its former editors, J. H. Culver, abandoned it and returned to Milford after a short period.

Following these publications came the "Nebraska Reporter." It was founded at Seward in the early seventies by

Charles Crony who was succeeded by O. S. Ingham who shortly turned its management over to Thomas Wolf. He kept the paper on a solid foundation for two or three years, or until 1876 when Frank Simons became its editor. Mr. Simons made a first class county paper of it and continued its publication till 1899 when it was suspended and the plant sold.

"The Advocate," Seward's third publication, and the fourth in the county, was started in 1877 by W. S. Walker who published it for a period of two years when J. H. Betzer purchased the plant and established the "Blue Valley Blade." Under Mr. Betzer's able management the "Blade" became a creditable journal, but age forced him to retire and turn the management over to his son who still conducts the business.

"The Seward County Democrat," Milford's second publication, was founded in 1882 by Alexander Brothers. When the "Democrat" was two years old it was sold to Prof. Geo. F. Burkett who renamed it "Milford Ozone." Shortly afterwards Editor Burkett took Horace Boyle as partner who soon sold his interest to H. C. Hensel. After two months Mr. Hensel purchased his partner's interest in the publication and changed the name of the paper, calling it the "Milford Nebraskan" and it flourished for three years under his management when he transferred it to H. A. Brainard. Mr. Brainard was succeeded in the business by Mr. Warner in 1893 and Mr. Warner established his son-in-law, L. O. Howard in the editorship of the Nebraskan after a few years and the paper was continued until a recent period. The "Milford Mirror" made its appearance in Milford in 1895. It was a bright, neatly printed local newspaper, ably published by W. L. Withrow, but did not receive the support it deserved and suspended after one year.

The first newspaper published at Beaver Crossing worthy

of mention, was printed at Milford by H. C. Hensel and issued at Beaver Crossing in 1886 under the name of "Beaver Crossing Bugle." This paper continued under Mr. Hensel's management about a year and then was issued by George H. Borden who continued it for a short time when it disappeared. Following shortly upon the terminus of this enterprise, P. C. Carpenter launched the "Beaver Crossing Journal," the first paper to be printed in the town. Mr. Carpenter published the "Journal" till the spring of 1891 when he sold it and the plant to Dewitt Eager who leased the plant to Ed. Miller and he established the "Farmer's Patriot." This paper was issued at Beaver Crossing one year when D. Eager sold the plant to J. H. Waterman who founded the "Weekly Review" and Mr. Miller moved his "Patriot" to Crete. The "Review" was published by its founder five years, at the end of which time Dewitt Eager re-purchased the plant and leased it to Harry E. Stout who continued the Review until he had collected all the advance subscriptions he could and then left for other fields. Beaver Crossing was then without a news dispenser for about six months when E. N. Overman came to the rescue and resurrected the old "Review." He continued the publication for three years at the end of which period Mr. Eager re-sold it to J. H. Waterman under whose management the life of the "Review" was extended until 1905 when F. C. Diers purchased it and opened up a surprise sheet under the stunning name of "The Pride Of Beaver Crossing." After a few issues of this paper its name indicated so much sweetness that Mr. Diers, through large hearted kindness to the citizens, changed the name, calling it "Beaver Crossing Times." F. C. Diers' "Pride" was such a "stumbling block" to his own success in the publishing of a paper that he soon quit and turned it over to his brother who shortly transferred it to Mr. Scaggs. The "Times" proved too hard for Scaggs and he

"flew de coop" one night for parts unknown, leaving the sad announcement that "this is the last of Scaggs." The second Diers was then forced to resume the management of the paper under a strong protest, stating his determination to discontinue the publication if he could not soon make a sale of it, offering it to the writer at his own price. In this dilemma, forced upon him by the slackened newspaper enterprise and support of the "prominent citizens" who had held out false inducements to get the Dierses to leave good and remunerative positions to come to the town to "run" somebody else "out" of a legitimate printing business, Mr. Diers scanned every avenue of escape. When he had about reached the climax of patient endurance on insufficient support, he succeeded in making a sale of the "Times," transferring with it the title to the "hard times" which were the legacies of Beaver Crossing editors, to E. A. McNeil, who has felt and still feels the squeezing grip of "tight wads" in the conducting of his paper. F. C. Diers was well aware of the scheme of boycotting spite work of those "business men" he choosed to call them, who had induced him to make a sacrifice upon their altar of folly and personal spite and therefore reaped from the "gang" just what he planted for somebody else. He was so carried away with the deceptive flattery of his solicitors that he imagined himself the center of attraction and named his paper "The Pride of Beaver Crossing." With the fall of his "Pride" he lost his job at Exeter and a good, comfortable home at that place.

About the time of the birth of the aforesaid "Pride," the writer established a paper in Beaver Crossing under the name of the "Independent Examiner." This paper was a success in as much as it went outside of Beaver Crossing for advertising patronage while it received a fine subscription support at home and a share of the better grade of home advertising. The plant was the best in its job department ever

put in the town and was over run with fine job work, making the enterprise a financial success, but on account of failing health we were forced to sell the business after eighteen months. J. D. Austin, of Bethany, Nebraska purchased it, moving the plant to Bethany where he started the "Christian Reporter. The writer again entered the publishing arena at Beaver Crossing by starting the "Echo," January 1st, 1913. This little paper run one year and was discontinued.

The second "Seward County Democrat" was started at Seward by H. E. McClellan in 1884. This "Democrat" was only four years old when it was sold to M. Meehan who renamed it "People's Rights." Shortly after this D. M. Smith established the Seward County Independent which was bought by Meehan and consolidated with the "People's Rights." This paper and plant was sold in 1893 to the Independent Publishing Company and the "Seward Independent" was its offspring. In 1891 P. C. Carpenter revived the name of "Seward County Democrat" under which he established and published a paper for five years when it expired. In 1897 Wm. H. Smith purchased the dead Democrat and the "Seward County Independent" and founded a paper under the consolidated name of "Independent-Democrat." Under Mr. Smith's management this paper has become one of the best and most popular local and county newspapers in Nebraska. Mr. Smith is serving as State Auditor, but still owns the plant and publishes the paper while it is ably edited and managed by R. W. Johnson.

The "Farmer's Zeitung," a German paper made its first appearance at Seward, Friday, April 12, 1901 under the management of Joseph Tagwerker. The paper has not failed to appear regularly every week since its first issue and has become a permanent Seward enterprise. It is non-partisan in politics.

The "Utica Sun" was founded at Utica by Frank Comp-

ton in 1886 and was published by him for some time. His successors in its publication at different periods were first his brother, Wm. Compton, who was followed by Stephen Lowley, E. W. Harvey, and again William Compton who died while its editor, his wife continuing its publication for some time. She was followed by H. M. Smith, Hunter & Harvey and finally by the present able editor, Dana R. Mutz. The "Sun" has reflected its rays from the pens of more different editors than any other newspaper in Seward county, but it is creditable to each of them that the name of the paper has not been disturbed or changed. The enterprise of Utica citizens in supporting their paper gave the place the credit by newspaper unions of being the banner country newspaper town in the state, whether this record has been maintained to the present or not we are not able to state, but trust it has.

The "Tamora Register" was founded at Tamora in 1892 and continued publication till 1909 when it suspended and F. P. Shields started a fire tinted, short lived paper under the name of "Shields' Tamora Lyre." We are unable to say what his object was for doing so, but he printed his "Lyre" on pink paper, but the "Lyre" went out of tune in 1913.

H. Sage started a paper called the "Journal" at Cordova in 1889. It was short lived. The "Cordova Progress" was started by Frank Dorsey in 1892. It was a bright little paper and continued publication two or three years when it suspended.

Now, we believe this completes the list of Seward county publications and is a creditable record for the county.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Early Official Conditions in Seward County—The First Election—First Board of County Commissioners and County Officers—Tax Assessments and Collections.

The Epoch in the official era in Seward county is recorded in the latter period of Nebraska territorial government. Like other matters of pioneer times it had a feeble beginning and would call to mind that memorable time in life when all humanity "creeps before it walks." Official spoils and rewards had no charms in those early times, the machinery of county government being run with little financial support, and without office salaries, the incumbents serving for the good of the country.

Under the provisions of the territorial law Seward county formed a part of Lancaster county, for judicial purposes, but at the october election in 1865 it was released from this compact and elected its first board of county commissioners which was composed of William Imly, of -G- precinct; W. J. Thompson, of -K- precinct and H. W. Parker of -P- precinct. At this election there were but twenty-four votes cast in the county. The newly elected board proceeded immediatly to legal business, meeting and organizing it canvased the votes and found the following canidates for the different county offices duly elected: Thomas West, clerk; C. J. Nieghardt, treasurer; J. L. Davison, probate judge; W. E. Chapin, sheriff.

To the credit of this pioneer board of county commissioners and those first county officials it may be said they laid the foundation upon which the future official welfare of the county was destined to stand. Notwithstanding the many difficulties of those ungovervable times the business of the

county intrusted in their hands was duly cared for and transacted. Contentions over the county seat location and other unsettled matters kept the board almost constantly between two fires. The meeting place of the board was at indefinite places and at the close of one board meeting the members scarcely knew what locality of the county the next meeting would be in. There was but a small amount of taxable real estate in the county, which was assessable at a low rate and did not afford much revenue. Personal property was limited and taxes upon it soon became delinquent and difficult to collect and the financial means to make both ends meet in the public expenses was an unsolved problem. But the record of official conduct is an unbroken evidence of the public enterprise that ever prompted our pioneer business managers to a creditable performance of duty.

The tax levy fixed by the county board for 1865 and 1866 was six mills on the dollar. Had this tax been fully collected it would not furnished an amount equal to one-fourth of the yearly salary of one of several of our county officials at the present time. The record, so far as we have been able to learn, shows amount of levy for 1865 upon all assessed valuations to have been \$175.95. The total amount of general fund collected was \$62.62 and the amount paid out by the treasurer on warrants was \$65.33 leaving a balance due the treasurer of \$2.71. The total amount of road tax collected was \$60.48, six dollars and forty-one cents being allowed the treasurer for collecting there was still in his hands 54.44. The amount of general fund delinquent, 25.45. Delinquent road tax, 27.50.

The tax levy for the two years of 1865 and 1866 amounted to \$423.34, penalties added bringing the total up to \$440-37. Of this amount \$319.91 was collected, leaving a delinquency of \$120.46, and with several unpaid warrants outstanding the treasurer had but eight dollars and fifty-seven

cents of county funds to pay them with. The only school fund was a dog tax amounting to eighteen dollars. And as there were no roads only such as had grown wild on the prairie we are unable to state what the road fund was for. Schools were all supported and sustained by private subscription and the dog tax may have been intended as seed for the propagation of other school tax. Our early settlers were very enthusiastic over school matters and perhaps thought the tax on dogs for school purposes would be a good start in the right direction, and would let the world know that public education was at least remembered and considered in Seward county. The eighteen dollars dog tax would have been sufficient capital to build one sod school house or with the aid of volunteer help, build several of them.

The official business of Seward county with unorganized counties west of it and attached to it for judicial and other purposes is not considered in the record of Seward county's business transactions, although the tax assessments in those counties seem to have been made by Seward county citizens who were allowed three dollars a day for their services.

From the beginning of county government in 1865 there was a marked degree of advancement in public affairs. As valuations in tax assessments increased tax collections became more easy, these conditions being advanced in perportion to the increasing settlement, general improvements, and increase in all kinds of stock. And there has been no period in the county's history when those attainments have been so rapid as they were in the period from 1865 to 1871. In that period the first county superintendent of public instruction was added to the list of county officials and school funds were raised by tax levy to support public schools throughout the county. And in some localities public funds had increased to such an extent that the citizens had advanced a scheme to build a railroad with county funds.

CHAPTER XXV.

Precinct Settlements and Pioneer Settlers.

We find it difficult to obtain, at this late date, names of even a majority of those who made homes in the pioneer days in Seward county. But we have gathered a number from each precinct which we are glad to record on these pages. Many names which are not mentioned here may be found in the list of those who have passed to their final rest, published farther along in this work.

A PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

Settlement began in this precinct in 1864, John A. Scott and John Owens took homesteads in section 22 in that year. J. D. Maine on the same section in the spring of 1865 followed later in the same year by Asa Munn and Warren Brown who located homesteads on section 20. John D. Olney settled on section 22 in 1866. John Darnell, S. M. Darnell and William Clapp on the same section, W. R. Waddles on section 18 and R. H. Dart on section 30 in 1867. G. B. Hardenberg, E. W. Olney and H. Hawkins were settlers in the late sixties. H. M. Brooks and Milton Langdon settled near Oak Groves in 1872. The former, H. M. Brooks was a Union soldier during the war of the rebellion. His son, Wm. J. sharing his father's patriotism served in a Nebraska regiment during the U. S. war with Spain.

B PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

Settlement in this precinct seems to have been made at a later period than in -A- precinct. J. D. Hickman settled on section 32, J. T. Poor on section 28, William Hickman and J. W. Hickman on the same section, and Joseph Hick-

man on section 30, all in 1868. F. M. Timblin and W. W. Moore on section 32, John Poor on section 8, Amos Coleman on section 28, William Knight on section 20, and L. G. Johns on section 30 in 1869. John Quinlan, Thomas Quinlan, John Varner, Peter Varner settled in the precinct in '68 being followed in 1869 by James Reid, E. H. Nixon, J. T. Davis, H. G. Dawley, Elias McClure, and others previously mentioned. Michael Dunigan settled on a homestead in 1871. Charles M. Gordon settled on railroad land in section 13 in 1875. Calvin S. Wright bought and settled on a farm near where the village of Bee is located in 1879. He conducted an extensive stock farm. Rev. Christian Bek settled on a farm in this precinct in 1877, but moved to Seward after a short residence where he organized an Evangelical church.

We are sorry that we cannot give a complete list of the homestead settlers who served in the Union army during the war of the rebellion. Soldiers who returned from the service at the close of the war had an ungratified love for the old land marks around the home of their boyhood and did not take the interest in making new homes in an unsettled country that they did a little later on, but we find a few mingled with the early pioneers. Michael Dunigan, was a Union soldier, served in an Illinois regiment from 1862 to 1865. Charles M. Gordon, another -B- precinct early settler was a Union soldier in the war of the rebellion, as was also L. G. Johns.

C PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

Settlement in this precinct began early. Frank Shields took a homestead in section 10 in 1863, being followed in 1864 and 1865 by William Reed, J. A. Durland, Judge John W. Shields, George Reed, Frank E. Pitt, Moses Mitchel, Sidney Pitt, John W. Pitt, and Walter Hoops. William Hornberg, John W. Gladwish, John Schoepp, Ed. C. Archer,

John Gillbanks and Thomas Carr located in 1868. George Leggitt settled on section 28, and August Deahling on section 34 in 1869. Martin Castle settled on section 34, Wm. Reid on section 34, Geo. C. McKay on section 28, Homer M. McKay on section 30 in 1870. Luke Agur settled on railroad land in 1871, erecting the Maryville flouring mill the same year. Martin V. Mitchell, Marian Graham, Geo. Streeter, Wm. Crosby and Robert Hitchcock were 1870 homesteaders. Those reported as Union soldiers in the war of the rebellion are John W. Gladwish, Edward C. Archer, Sidney Pitt, and Thomas Carr.

D PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

Settlement in this precinct did not begin so early as it did in some others. William Jackman and son, John Jackman settled on section 34 in the spring of 1867, and in the fall of the same year Charles Dack, Oscar Ragan, Henry Harris and Jessie Horton took claims on section 28, and Frank Bivins on section 22, James B. Reynold, Timothy Johnson and William Johnson on section 32. A. D. Hornberg homesteaded in 1868 and A. D. Ritchie in '69. Hon. W. E. Ritchie, son of A. D. Ritchie, homesteaded in 1870. Served one term in the Nebraska state legislature and one term in the state senate. C. Allen and E. B. Hatch were 1872 homesteaders. Hoadley G. Hosford came in '69. He was a soldier in the Union army during the war of the rebellion.

E PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

Settlement in this precinct began later than most any other precinct in Seward county which is evidence of the general desire among the early settlers to make homes upon bottom lands, and to shun the up-land precincts. There is no valley land in the precinct. Joseph Jones, Antius Keefer and Frank Johnson entered homestead claims on section 6

in 1869. L. E. Morgan settled on section 22, Elisha Babcock on section 20, Benjamin Colden on section 14, A. J. Oliver on section 10, Louis Larson on section 24, and James Mikleson on section 10 in 1870. Howard M. Coleman settled on a quarter of section 28 in 1871, Rev. Calvin E. Phinney settling on the same section in '70. Loren Thygeson homesteaded on section 12, and James E. Hibbard on section 10 in '71. Hon. George A. Derby settled on section 30 and B. F. Perry on a quarter of section 8 in '72. Fredrick Suhr, M. C. Wright, Samuel Gleason, and Mr. Greenwood all located homesteads in 1870-'71.

Of this number of settlers the following were soldiers in the war of the rebellion: Joseph Jones, served in the sixty-second Iowa infantry. Benjamin F. Perry, thirty-first Iowa infantry. James E. Hibbard, service not known. Rev. Calvin E. Phinney, and Howard M. Coleman.

F PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

Settlement in this precinct began as early as 1864 when Rev. E. W. Johnson built a log house on section 24, Thomas Skillman settling on section 13, Joseph Sampson on section 25 the same year. George and Russell Rogers and widowed mother each took homesteads on section 14 in 1866, and Charles Thurman and Joseph Thurman on the same section in '67. John W. Figard and Aaron Anderson settled on section 12, Henry Creighton, Charles Harvey, D. E. Lyon on section 34, Levi Hafer and Samuel Smith on section 26 in 1867. Samuel Pence, H. F. Mayland on section 10, and John Woods on section 18 in 1868. Marcus Reightmyer settled on section 2, George Slonecker on section 14, Samuel D. Dutton on section 10 and Samuel G. Mathews, section 22 in 1869, David H. Figard settling the same year. Lafayette Weldon settled on section 30, Joseph W. Dupin and Isaac McFeely on section 8 in 1870. Ebenezer Jull settled

on section 3, rail road land, in 1871. Alonzo Slonecker was an 1869 homesteader. John Slonecker bought a farm and Henry Slonecker a homestead and settled in 1875, Louis T. Bouchard in 1874 and W. S. Wallick on school land in 1876. Henry Shultz was an 1870 homesteader.

Of these early settlers who served in the Union army during the war of the rebellion were John Woods, Marcus Reightmyer, Samuel D. Dutton, and David H. Figard.

G PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

This precinct had a greater early settlement than any other town in the county. Robert T. Gale, said to have been the first homesteader in Seward county and who was without doubt, among the earliest homesteaders in the United States took out homestead papers on a quarter section of Uncle Sam's domain just east of the present city of Seward upon the morning opening of the land office in Nebraska City the next morning after the homestead act became a law, January 2nd, 1863. Stites Wooley was another early homesteader, locating on section 15 near Seward's townsite in the fore part of 1864. This pioneer and wife were without doubt one of the oldest couples that settled upon wild land in Seward county at that time, he having been born in 1807 and she in 1811. But still another couple of pioneer homesteaders who may be classed, not only among the oldest but as the oldest in the persons of David Imley and wife who settled on section 10 in 1864, he having been born in 1792 and she shortly afterwards. They were married in 1814 and settled on a homestead the year of their golden wedding anniversary. W. W. Cox was an 1864 homestead settler. Hon. William Imlay settled the same year; was a member of the territorial legislature representing Seward and Lancaster counties one term and served three terms on Seward county's first board of commissioners. Rev. E. L.

Clark, Seward county's first resident preacher settled on a homestead two miles south of Seward in 1865. Lewis Moffit entered and settled upon a quarter, and a half of the adjoining quarter of section 21, which became the townsite of Seward, the square upon which the county court house now stands being a portion of that homestead, in 1865. Lewis Anderson settled on the North Blue river bottom just west of Seward in 1866. Charles L. Lyon homesteaded on section 12, Levi Hafer three miles west of Seward and Wm. O. Pierce east of the townsite in 1868. Richard Sampson was an 1865 homesteader. Bayard Wickersham homesteaded the south-west quarter of section 14 in 1869. John N. Roberts was an 1865 homesteader and John Roberts sr., James Brown, J. F. Duncan, Roger Cooper, William Cooper and E. B. Shafer came in 1866. Orson Olmstead settled in 1870. The earliest entries of government land in G-precinct were a quarter of section 18 by E. L. Ellis in 1861, and a part of section 21 by George Hilton in 1862; but those gentlemen are not supposed to have been pioneer settlers.

Those named as pioneer settlers that served in the Union army during the war of the rebellion are Charles L. Lyon, Bayard Wickersham, and George W. Anderson.

H PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

The early settlement in this precinct was largely German and began when Louis Libroek settled on section 28, Conrad Grotz and Deidrich Grant on section 32 in 1866. Fritz Ropke and William Leppe settled on section 30, Jacob Indrana on section 20, Diedrich Wilkens on section 26, Conrad Rohrkasto on section 32 in 1868. Jacob Thomas and John C. Thomas settled on section 18, John Westerhof and C. C. Davis on section 8, and Charles Ruckstachel on section 20 in '69. Deitrich Brant, Andrew Shultz, William Lubber, Gillman Garland, B. W. Walker settled in '68. John

Ohlwiler, Joseph Loose, J. D. Luft and Henry Petrie were 1869 homesteaders. John Q. Ohlwiler and Benjamin Walker settled on adjoining homesteads and adopted a novel plan for complying with the requirements of the homestead law by building a house on the line, one half on one claim and half on the other, so they could live together and each sleep and reside on his own homestead. Hon. Henrich Beckman settled on section 12 in 1870. Served in the state legislature in 1889. Carl G. A. Koch settled on section 24 in 1870, and Charles Richenbaugh located on a homestead the same year. One of the last homesteads was taken in 1872 on section 24 by Ernest Seick. Herman Goecke bought a quarter of section 12, homesteaded land, and settled upon it, and Henry Seick bought and settled upon a quarter of section 11, rail road land, in 1872.

John Q. Ohlwiler was a Union soldier in the war of the rebellion.

I PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

Settlement in this precinct began in the sixties. It has no valley lands except the Middle creek valley which is narrow. Deidrich Dankers settled on section 26, Hon. George W. Fuller, James Iler, Abram Courtright, Steven Brown and John A. Raymer settled in 1869. Andrew Shultz took a homestead on section 14, and Syrenus Vanandel on section 12 in 1870. Thomas Best and Ezra J. Newton were 1872 homesteaders. John H. Merrill was an 1880 settler upon rail road land.

Hon. George W. Fuller was a Union soldier in the war of the rebellion. Some years after settling upon his homestead he moved to Seward where he engaged in the manufacture of brick and the brick laying trade. Served one term as mayor of the city, two terms in the state legislature and one term in the state senate.

J PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

This precinct seems to have caught the greatest early settlement of any other precinct in the county, due largely to the fine bottom lands and timber along the North Blue river which flows entirely through the precinct. Daniel Morgan and three sons, William, Thomas and Lewis preempted government land in section 26 in 1858. Job Reynolds settled on section 10, Thomas L. Rogers on section 22, Samuel Long and C. J. Niehardt on section 15 in 1863. Samuel Brown settled on section 35, Josephus Brown on section 26, William Hageman on section 10, G. V. Hageman, Berry Davis, and John Grabil on section 14, Peter Grabil on section 22, Henry Palmer on section 14 and G. W. Lazenby on section 26 in 1866. Matthew Hackworth on section 14, Henry Michaels on section 24, Joseph Michaels on section 12, John H. Atwood on section 32, Harold Chambers and Walter Chambers on section 2 in 1868. Willis G. Hazelwood settled on section 30, William Brockaw on section 14, and James Miller on section 20 in 1869. Frank Morton was an 1870 homesteader. Isaac D. Neihardt and William Alschweede homesteaded in 1871. Harper Miller settled in 1872, P. P. Hershberger in 1876 and B. W. Houdersheldt in 1868.

Isaac D. Neihardt was a Union soldier in the war of the rebellion. Was three times promoted, reaching the rank of major. Served two terms in the late seventies as Seward county's sheriff, was justice of the peace in Seward eight years and served several terms as police judge.

K PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

Settlement in this precinct began by the opening of a ranch on Walnut creek by William J. Thompson in 1864. Lemuel L. Allison settled on section 32, G. N. Perkins and Albert Norin on section 18 in 1869. James Hilleny, Wm.

Bivens, William Silence, Andrew Snider, Andrew Perkins, Ira Silence and Abram Winsor settled in the spring of 1869. A. C. Miller, C. C. Tunecliff, John Floren and K. B. A. Bonnam settled on section 20, William Wilson and widowed mother, George Pervis and James Roberson on section 18 Peter Johnson, Martin Madison and Ed. Jensen on section 32, Levi Graul, Charles Lyon, Al. Williams, and Allen Cross on section 8 in 1870. Clyne Rhodes, J. Ciscoe, William Livesley, and Jaseñ Williams were 1870 settlers. Wm. G. Keene purchased and settled on the Wm. J. Thompson ranch farm on Walnut creek in 1871, George Hoover settling on the same section the same year. James M. Smiley came in 1872, Henry S. Wise, and Nicholas Wullenweber in 1873. E. N. Wingfield purchased and settled on the widow Wilson homestead in 1873.

Those of the above who served in the Union army during the war of the rebellion were Levi Graul, K. B. A. Bonnam, Andrew Perkins and George Hoover.

L. PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

Settlement began in this precinct in 1862 when John Leonard made a home here on his return trip from the west where he had been with a load of freight. About eighteen months later, in the fall of 1863 John E. Fouse made the second settlement. Mr. Leonard and Mr. Fouse both built and managed a ranch, the former on the east side of Beaver creek and the latter on the west side and each one about the same distance from the ford of that stream, or Beaver Crossing. Roland Reed was the third settler in the precinct, coming in 1866 and purchasing the John Leonard ranch which he conducted until 1869 when he entered a homestead on the west half of the south-west quarter of section 34, John D. Sahnave settling on the east half of the same quarter the same year. Thomas J. Foster settled upon the east half

of the south-east quarter of section 22, John A. Knerr settled on section 14, Benaja Brown on section 14, Norman Casler on section 22, Samuel McManagel on section 30, William McManagel on section 28, Peter Peterson on section 28, in 1869. Those settling in -L- precinct in 1870 were: John Rumsey on the south-east quarter, John H. Waterman on the north-east quarter, Gilbert and Josiah White on the north-west quarter of section 34; Harvey Winchel on section 18, E. R. Johnson section 12, Paul Peterson section 20, Abner Ross and George F. Hurlbert section 8, Martin Hanson section 28, Henry Cross section 12, Jessie Small and James Hayward on section 28, John Todd and John Hesser on the north-east quarter, William Shuck and Thomas Starkey on the south-east quarter, John Burket on the south-west quarter and Charles Emerson on the north-west quarter of section 24, John Wheeler and William H. Walker on section 2, Mr. Stonecypher, Frank Horton, Minyard Foster and mother, Sarah Foster on the north half of section 26, Evans Reed the south-west quarter and Elam Rumsey the south-east quarter of section 26, Lewis Bazinge, John Palmer and John Hodges on section 14, John Phelps, John Logan, Elijah W. Gleason, Thomas May and John Bray on section 30, Daniel Smith settled on school land in section 36, Paton Dillon on the north-east quarter, Gussie Dillon on the west half of the south-east quarter, Norman Casler the south-west quarter and Moses Eaton the north-west quarter of section 22. Those 1870 homesteaders whose section numbers we have failed to obtain are William W. Cross, Ray Cross, Lewis Castle, Henry Jett and Oren D. Culver. D. P. Sherwood on section 32, and Dr. Rufus D. Harvey on section 8 in 1871. Ira McCollister homesteaded in 1872. Charles Lezott settled on rail road land on section 27 in 1873. William Bouton settled on the south-west quarter of section 35 in 1873. This farm was purchased in 1876 by Richard Jones

who still resides upon it. Eph. Ausmer purchased the John Rumsey homestead on the south-east quarter of section 34 in 1874. Other 1870 settlers in -L- precinct were: Robert Walker, John Kennet, Benjamin Jenkins, Ransom Walker, Patrick Galiger, Laurence Deidle, T. J. Clark, Daniel Brown, Hon. Adam Seed, W. P. Ostrander and Frank E. Pierce. Hugh Seed and Andrew J. Seed settled on section 29, rail road land, in 1872.

There was a large percentage of Union soldiers in the list of pioneer settlers of -L- precinct, as follows: Thomas J. Foster, John Burket, Charles Emerson, John A. Knerr, Henry Cross, William H. Walker, Ben. Brown, Ransom Walker, George F. Hurlburt, Moses Eaton, Paton Dillon, Norman Casler, John Phelps, John H. Waterman, Elam Rumsey, John Rumsey, Ephram Osmer, Richard Jones, Walter P. Ostrander, Minnyard Foster, Henry Jett, Dr. Rufus D. Harvey, Oren D. Culver, Elijah W. Gleason, Lewis Castle, Frank P. Perry, Benjamin Jenkins, Orlando I. Casler and Evans Reed.

M PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

Daniel Millspaw was the first settler in this precinct, having opened a ranch on the east half of the north-west quarter of section 2 in 1864. Columbus D. Clark and father, G. Clark, and Phillip Michael settled on section 12 in 1868, Isaiah Michael and John Leonard on section 14 in 1868; Hanley Jackson homesteaded the north half of the north-east quarter of section 12, Ross Nichols the south-east quarter of section 2, and John W. McCaulley the north-east quarter of section 10 in 1869. The 1870 homesteaders were: William Rumsey on the east half and John Osborn on the west half of the north-east quarter of section 2, Lafayette Millspaw on the south half of the north-east quarter of section 12, Jack. C. McClellan on the west half of the north-west quarter of

section 2, Joshua VanDervort settled on the east half of the north-west quarter, Horace P. King on the west half of the south-west quarter of section 14; John Maurer on the east half, Mrs. Richardson and two sons on the west half of the north-west quarter, Andrew J. Seavey on the north half of the south-east quarter, J. L. S. Jackson on the south half of the south-east quarter and the south half of the south-west quarter, Norman Hill on the north half of the south-west quarter of section 10; Mitchel M. Campion, George Foltz, Benjamin Hunkins, Fredrick Brauer, and David Haney on section 8; W. W. Konkright, William Reed, and D. O. Whitmore on section 20; Rachel T. Littler on section 22; Philip Weinand on section 18; S. O. Curtis, W. T. Wiley, T. C. Deming, R. D. Lull and E. S. Duncan on section 30; Fred. Zastrow, and Fred Kramer on section 32; Edward Warner and Chas. Warner on section 34. Other 1870 settler of -M- precinct: Thomas Kleckner, Jacob Sable sr., Joseph Lanning and two sons, Noah and Edward, John P. Martin and W. S. Beebe who removed and settled in -J- precinct in 1871. Hiram Hunkins was an 1869 homesteader; Martin Campion bought a farm and settled in 1871. John Kraser and John Weible were 1878 settlers on rail road land.

Union soldiers in the war of the rebellion who became pioneer settlers in -M- precinct: W. W. Konkright, Mitchel Campion, Martin Campion, Charles Warner, Hiram Hunkins, William Rumsey, J. L. S. Jackson, A. J. Seavey, E. S. Dunkin, Philip Weinand, William Reed, D. O. Whitman, Thomas Kleckner. John W. McCaulley was a soldier in the Mexican war.

N PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

This precinct had an early settlement. Jessie R. Johnson settled on section 35, and David Barton on section 26 in 1863. Samuel Englehaupt settled on section 22 in 1865.

Martin Wambold, David Croy and Edward Walklin on section 32 in 1868; Thomas A. Healey homesteaded on section 10, George Foster on section 6, W. W. Pierce on section 18, Joseph Blackburn and Peter Ogilvie on section 4 in 1869; Hon. Silas S. Atwood was an 1867 settler; Chris. Lezenby and H. A. Brisbin were 1869 settlers. Later homesteaders, coming in 1870 and 1871: Hon. Robert C. Rhea, Hon. J. J. Endicott, William Lemmon, Stephen C. Tremper, on section 8, Jacob B. Courtright settled in the eastern part of the precinct in 1874; Irvin Stall settled on Walnut creek, near the old freight route in 1873; Andrew Jackson homesteaded the west half of the south-west quarter of section 6 and John Geis in the same section in 1870.

Those of the early settlers of -N- precinct who served in the Union army during the war of the rebellion: Thomas A. Healey, Silas S. Atwood, George Foster, W. W. Pierce, Joseph Blackburn, and Stephen C. Tremper. Hon. Robert C. Rhea served four years in the United States regular army after the war, from 1867 to 1870.

O PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

This precinct was favorably located for early settlement, being traversed by both the steam wagon road and the freight route. Thomas West and wife with five sons and one daughter were the first settlers in the precinct and perhaps the first in the county, coming in the spring of 1860 with an emigrant train on its way across the plains to the mountains they were so well pleased with the West Blue valley that they abandoned the enterprise of crossing the plains any farther and settled down to make a new home on the then wild prairies of Nebraska. As this family undoubtedly experienced more of the real hardships and fearful difficulties of life remote from civilization among savage Indians than any others of Seward county's settlers, we quote the

following from I. M. K. Johnson's letter published in Cox's history in regard to them: "They had many hardships to endure in 1861; their log cabin, together with about all their worldly goods except a few cattle were burned by the Indians, supposed to be Omahas disguised as Sioux. This was in the fall and the family suffered great hardships during the coming winter. The Indians were very troublesome and stole much of uncle Tommy's crops of that year. With the exception of the families of Oren Johnson and James West (later settlers) who lived near, there was no settlement nearer than Victor Vifquaiain, near the forks of the Blue and Morgans on the North Blue. Their place of trade was Nebraska City, eighty-two miles distant." Settlement along the west Blue began in 1864 and homesteaders in -O- precinct were locating from that date till along in the early seventies. James West, a brother of Thomas West, and Oren Johnson were 1860 settlers on section 32; J. L. Davison settled on a homestead where the city of Milford is now located in 1864 and S. R. Douglas on section 12 the same year; Daved Barton and Jessie R. Johnson were 1864 settlers; W. J. Clark, Samuel J. Englehaupt, Rev. L. Oliver and Izrael M. K. Johnson settled in the vicinity of West Mills in 1865. The 1866 settlers were: Andrew Rouse, just south of Milford, William Reed, S. G. Merriam and son George, Merriam at Milford, Abram Courtright, Alexander Frisby, Chas. Smith, settled east of the Blue, Lewis D. Laun, Joseph Stockham, Henry Wortendyke, Henry Brown, and David Tift, came in the summer of 1866; William H. Smiley, Lee Smiley, Ira Gallup, S. S. Atwood and John Atwood settled just west of Milford in 1866 and were the founders of "Doby Town," previously mentioned in this work; S. S. Atwood relocated later in -N- precinct; Jacob A. Wilsey and Morris R. Wilsey were 1868 homesteaders; later homestead settlers during the sixties were, Alonzo Clark, George Campbell, Jacob Camp-

bell and Louis Welch; Jacob H. Culver, Dr. J. H. Woodward, D. C. McKillip and Dr. Band were settlers in Milford in the late sixties; J. J. Ainsworth and two sons, William and John and J. D. Stump were 1870 homesteaders.

The early settled precincts show the smaller percentage of soldier homesteaders, due to the fact that settlement in a large degree was made during the war and settlement was started in -O- precinct before the war. Soldier settlers so far as we have been able to learn, in this precinct were: D. C. McKillip, J. H. Culver, Thomas Healey, Dr. J. H. Woodward.

F PRECINCT PIONEER SETTLERS.

The 1860 freight route passes through this precinct and the immense agricultural advantages of the sections along its path invited early settlement. Victor Vifquain settled in 1862; at the old freight route bridge, the first bridge in the county, was an excellent opening for a ranch and A. J. Wallingford took advantage of the opportunity and started one there in 1862; a little later in the same year Mr. Bingman and James Johnson made settlement; Hon. Thomas Graham and Philip I. Hooker settled in 1866; John J. Briggs settled on section 28 in 1868; Thomas H. Bishop homesteaded on section 10 in 1873; Elisha Kinney bought A. J. Wallingford's homestead and settled upon it in 1872; Captain J. S. Dillenbeck was an 1878 settler; Philip J. Stolz settled in 1874.

Of those named as early settlers, Thomas H. Bishop and Captain J. S. Dillenbeck and Victor Vifquain were union soldiers in the war of the rebellion, the latter being a Nebraska volunteer and the only representative of Seward county in that grand throng of patriots that rallied to the defense of the nation and left the emblem of freedom untarnished by the foul air of deception floating above four million boundmen set free and over a united country. Col.

Vifquain had the distinct honor of having been the first man to mount the fortifications at Fort Blakely, one of the defence of Mobile, for which he received due recognition and promotion.

Rail Road Land and Late Pioneer Settlers.

Following the homestead pioneers was a later class of pioneers, a majority of whom came to take advantage of the liberal offers the B. & M. rail road company was making of its raw, or wild prairie land to homeseekers. This land, comprising every odd numbered section or half of the soil in Seward county, was placed upon the market early in the seventies at a low rate. And sales were made under guarantee to the purchasers by the railroad company that in consideration of a certain amount of improvement in preparing the land for the production of crops a fair discount would be made upon its price. In addition to this, liberal terms of payments were given the purchasers, affording an opportunity to make the required improvements in advance of payments, this together with the reduction in price bringing the improvements into double account by the advantage to the purchaser of making his payments from a share of the crops.

It may seem strange that the B. & M. rail road company would practically pay purchasers of its land for making improvements upon it, but there was an object of interest to the company in having the thousands of acres of wild land in its possession transformed into productive farms. It had extended its road into a wild area and obligated itself to operate it, and while the company needed a portion of the value of the land it needed the business that only a more improved agricultural country could give. In fact, the opening of farms throughout Seward county in those early times was more to the interest of the pioneer B. & M. rail road company than to any other class of individuals aside from

the settlers themselves.

Considering all of the several advantages together as a whole the purchas of rail road land was about as advantagi-ous as the homestead priviliges. Added to the liberal con-ditions upon which settlers could purchase homes, the home-steaders had acted as advance guards and opened up and prepared the way for them. Markets had been established and general foundations lain for future prosperity by the open-ing of farms and other industries. But fully two-thirds of the low priced, easy to purchas, rail road land was taken by the homestead settlers, many of whom purchased rail road land on sections adjoining their homesteads, in tracts of from eighty acres to a whole section and the rail road sec-tions in Seward county were soon off of the market having been sold and transformed into cultivated farms. However there were many homes made exclusively upon rail road land, but had the rail road company withheld sales of its land from settlers who owned land and sold it only to those wishing to make homes upon it, Seward county would have at least a third more population than it has at this time.

We have not been able to obtain the names of but a lim-ited number of the later settlers, a majority of whom were purchasers of rail road land. Among them we find the fol-lowing named -B- precinct settlers: C. M. Gordon, settled in 1875, Rev. Christian Beck, in 1877, Calvin S. Wright, in 1879, Fredrick Rurup, in 1887, and Harvey Moler in 1888. Christian Schaal was an 1880 settler in -C- precinct, John M. Merrill in -I- precinct the same year, Osceola A. Shaw 1885; P. P. Hershberger settled in -J- prebinct in 1876, B. W. Houdersheldt in 1878, Albert Procknow in '81 and Jacob Webber in '84; E. N. Wingfield settled in -K- precinct in 1874, later came Beech Downs, Jerome Aldrich, Jacob Geis, John Evans, and Irvin Stall; late settlers in -L- precinct: Charles Lezotte, Burt Arthur, Thomas Wilson, David Rol-

and, Forest Roland, Tillis Roland, J. S. Stonecypher, John Boicourt, James Miller, Peter Johnson, Fred. Tepner, Carl Imig, R. B. Richmond, Richard Jones, Jas. M. Smiley, John W. Smith, E. L. Blanchard, John Cooper and Patrick Smith. In -M- precinct John Kraser settled on section 19 and John Weible on section 17 in 1878, Fred. Rodeman, Mike Rogowsky, and Jacob Sable sr., were 1880 settlers, Daniel Blanchard bought and settled on the Ed. Warner homestead in 1885, W. A. Wilsey settled on section 11, rail road land in 1884 and Wm. H. Mygatt bought a farm of homesteaded land on section 2 the same year. In -O- precinct Willam W. Miller settled on section 9 in 1874, John Stanfer settled on section 5 in 1878, Valentine Springer in 1877, Fred. Petschek in the same year and Chas. H. Adams in 1883.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE MIRAGE.

We feel that a history of any portion of the western plains would be incomplete without some mention of this strange phenomenon, and again we feel our inability to do justice in a pen picture of its grandure as it appeared to many Seward county pioneers. We remember away back in the remote past that our good old mother frequently mentioned the great "seven wonders of the world" and we supposed, and believe she did also, that the equal of any one of them would never be known. If we remember right they consisted of the rainbow, the ocean tide, Niagara Falls, the mammoth cave, the pyramids of Egypt, the natural bridge in Virginia and the aurora borealis or "northern lights." But the western plains with their greatest natural "wonder" had not then been known and considered. In looking upon the scenes of one of those mirages a person is viewing the grandest panorama of the world, as its appearance is only periodical and while it may be visible one day it may not be seen again in the same locality for weeks or months, depending upon the condition of the atmosphere. The impression made upon the mind of one who beholds this mystery is that the earth has sank, leaving a great valley between two hills. Standing upon the brink of one of these imaginary hills a person may look across and see well known cities upon the opposite hill which are from twenty to forty or more miles distant while the valley is seemingly not more than two miles wide. This is a direct forward and slightly upward view of the spectacular appearance and is generally the first curiosity which attracts attention, but a glance down through the valley the second and not by any means the least amazing prodigy is plainly apparant. Farm dwelling houses, barns, teams

working in the fields and traveling upon the roads may be plainly seen throughout the entire valley.

We resided on the Evans Reed homestead in -L- precinct during the year of 1876, one half mile west and one and one-half miles north of Beaver Crossing, which might be supposed to be in proximity to the West Blue valley, but while the place was on high ground, there was no view from it of any part of the valley therefore it was in no way accountable for the misterious appearing pictures which appeared occasionally throughout the landscape covering that area. Between that place and the city of Friend, eleven miles distant, Exeter twenty miles and Fairmont twenty-seven miles distant, is an ordinary tract of Nebraska land surface. There are no valleys except the West Blue not over one-half to three-quarters of a mile wide at any point, and every one of the three cities is located upon low and level ground, but notwithstanding these facts, we have stood in the dooryard of that homestead several times in the early part of the day at various times and viewed all of those cities and recognized their well known elevators, railway depots, and business houses as plainly as though not more than two miles distant, and at the same time saw well known farm houses, barns, fields, and traveled roads throughout the imaginary valley which was rounded out from the two given points like some of the great canons or basins of the rocky mountain regions. These things that we witnessed in those early times are fast vanishing from the memory of those who beheld their grandure. While it is possible that they may still appear from the same points of view at about the old time intervalles, it is probable that they are among the wild west scenes that have disappeared as a result of the changed condition of the country which is now covered with obstructions to such views with growths of timber where it was in pioneer days one great, boundless prairie.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DEATH OF SEWARD COUNTY PIONEERS.

THE VOICELESS.

We count the broken lyres that rest
Where the sweet wailing singers slumber,
But o'er their silent sister's breast
The wild flowers who will stoop to number?

A few can touch the magic string,
And noisy Fame is proud to win them—
Alass for those that never sing,
But die with all their music in them!

Nay, grieve not for the dead alone
Whose song has told their heart's sad story—
Weep for the voiceless, who have known
The cross without the crown of glory!

Not where Leucadian breezes sweep
O'er Sappho's memory-haunted billow,
But where the glistening night dews weep
On nameless sorrow's churchyard pillow.

O hearts that break and give no sign
Save whitening lip and faded tresses,
Till Death pours out his longed-for wine
Slow dropped from Misery's crushing presses.

If singing breath or echoing chord
To every hidden phang were given,
What endless melodies were poured,
As sad as earth, as sweet as heaven!

—Oliver Wendel Holmes.

We are sorry that we have not been able to give a complete list of Seward county pioneers and only a partial list of those who have passed to their final rest. We have searched

every available record and avenue of information, but have met considerable disappointment. The pioneer settlers were attached to each other in a much stronger tie than that of mere neighbors and it would have been in line with the general thought of the day and age to have formed pioneer societies for the purpose of preserving the memories of events, as well as the life and death of its members. But what we have been able to collect of the saddest events in the closing scenes of pioneer residents we present to the friends and the general public, trusting that it will be accepted by all as the best we can do at the present late date in that direction.

While there are not a very great number of the early settlers whose passing may come in line with the sentiments embodied in the foregoing poetry there were a small percentage of them who closed their eyes to the scenes surrounding them before they had realized the grand results of the sacrifices they had made to open the new country and place it upon a plain of civilized progress.

First Death and First Coronor's Inquest in Seward County.

FATHER DUNWAY

As he was familiarly known and for whom there is no other name recorded, settled on a homestead on section 3, in -G- precinct in 1864. He had made some improvements upon his claim, hoping to make his family contented and comfortable, expecting them to arrive from the east in the near future. His neighbors were few and far apart, but visited him at odd times and especially Grandfather Imly, an aged gentleman who spent a little time with him frequently. One day in the month of September, 1864 Mr. Imly made one of his customary calls at the Dunaway home but found it alone. He waited some time for his friend's return, but becoming alarmed at his continued absence, commenced a search, resulting in the discovery of his lifeless body laying in a patch of grass which showed evident signs of a struggle, having been wallowed down to quite an extent. The old gentleman immediately hastened home and gave the alarm, his son, David Imly mounting a horse rode to a field, some distance away, where several neighbors were putting up hay. A short consultation was held and as W. W.

Cox, one of the number present, was a justice of the peace it was decided that he should act as coroner, but the difficulty of finding enough persons for jurors confronted them. Finley R. T. Gale, being special constable with power to summon jurors, suggested that they proceed to the Morgan settlement where he would complete a jury. With exciting hurry they proceeded to the Morgan settlement where the jury was quickly made up consisting of David Imly, sr., D. P. Imly, William Imly, Joseph Imly, R. T. Gale, Job Reynolds, Thomas Morgan, William Morgan and W. W. Cox. They reached the scene of death just as the sun was sinking behind the western horizon and with solemn faces and uplifted hands were immediately sworn as jurors. The jury soon reached a verdict that the deceased came to his death from the effects of cramp colic.

It being evident that the deceased had been dead some time a rough board coffin was constructed of lumber taken from the cabin and the remains of Father Dunaway were laid to rest beneath an oak tree by the light of the misty moon beams. His goods and chattles were properly cared for and turned over to the sorrowing wife upon her arrival.

CHRISTOPHER G. W. CLARK

Who with his wife, Rachel Clark and several children, moved from Coles county, Illinois, to Seward county, Nebraska in 1867, settled upon a homestead two and one-half miles south-east of Beaver Crossing. Mr. Clark enjoyed his new home for the short period of ten years, being called to a brighter home in Heaven, March 20, 1877. He left a wife and several grown sons and daughters—the oldest son, Columbus D. Clark, also an early homesteader in the same section with his father, moved to California, after a few years residence on his homestead, where he with his wife died about 1879, leaving two small children, a son and daughter. Thomas J. Clark, next younger son, also a Seward county homesteader, made a trip to California after the orphan babies, bringing the smaller one the entire distance in a hand basket. The wife, Rachel Clark, survived her husband a little more than thirty years, passing to her final rest November 24, 1907.

One of the two children who was brought from California, the brother being the oldest, was married several years ago, and Rosa, the "hand-basket" passenger is now Mrs. Clarence Harling.

HENRY BRIDENBALL

An 1873 settler in -L- precinct died in 1892, aged 82 years and 4 months, leaving a wife, three sons and three daughters, Henry Jr., Fred., George, Lizzie, Amelia and Minnie.

JOHN D. SALNAVE.

Father Salnave was a native of Chemung county, New York where he was born July 1st 1814, and where he was married to Jane S. Reed in the year 1842. Moved to Seward county, Nebraska, in 1869 and settled on a homestead in section 34, -L- precinct. He passed to his eternal home in Heaven, March 24th, 1880, aged 66 years, 8 months and 23 days. His wife, Jane S. Salnave, followed him to rest at her home in Beaver Crossing Friday, August 1st, 1890, aged 73 years, 1 month and 5 days. She was born at Bainbridge, New York, June 27, 1817. They left to mourn their departure, two sons and six daughters, B. F. Salnave of North Chemung, New York, John G., Annett G., wife of William Rumsey, Lydia M., wife of J. H. Waterman, (the author) Pamela Grace, all of Beaver Crossing, the latter being now the wife of Edward Lanning, of Lexington, Nebraska, Lucy A., wife of O. C. Fish, of Iowa, Margaret J., wife of Patou Dillon, of Alma, Nebraska, and Lenora, wife of Christain Maurer, of Farnam, Nebraska. One son, Francie, preceded his parents to rest in New York state when ten years old. John G. Salnave, victim of a fatal accident which will receive notice further along in this work, died at Beaver Crossing, Tuesday, September 1st, 1891, aged 39 years, 8 months and 4 days; B. F. Salnave dieing at Elmira, New York, September 21. 1914.

WILLIAM RUMSEY

Who settled on a homestead near Beaver Crossing in 1870, died at his home in that village, February 18, 1902, leaving a wife, three sons and one daughter. His wife, Annett G. Rumsey, followed him to rest February 16, 1913, aged 68 years, 7 months and 23 days.

J. B. COURTRIGHT,

An early pioneer settler near Milford, died at the home of his son in-N-precinct, April 1, 1901.

HON. SILAS SCOTT ATWOOD

Was born in Preble county, Ohio, March 12, 1842, his parents moving to Washington county Iowa, when he was eighteen months old, where he grew to manhood. He settled on a homestead two miles west of Milford in 1867, later moving to his final home south-east of Beaver Crossing where he resided till the end of life. He was twice elected to represent his county in the state legislature, first in 1902 and again in 1904. He died at his home at 12:30 a. m., April 8, 1906 of heart failure. His last moments, when he fully realized that his life was drawing to a close, were passed with the same uncomplaining fearlessness that seemed to characterize his whole

life and after gently telling his wife that he could not live he quietly closed his eyes in that sleep that "knows no waking." We were personally acquainted with Comrade Atwood and can truly say that Comrade Thomas A. Healey voiced our estimation of him when he said of him: "He was a quiet, inoffensive soldier and citizen—one of God's noblemen."

GEORGE A. KILLPATRICK

A pioneer settler at Beaver Crossing in the early seventies where he was engaged in T. H. Tisdale's store for a long time as a clerk, afterwards taught the village school and other schools of the vicinity—married Miss Wing and shortly after moved to Seward. Was several times elected county surveyor. Passed to his final rest at a hospital in Crete, Nebraska, in 1902, leaving a wife and small children.

JUDGE J. K. COREY

A pioneer settler, died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. F. T. Wing, in Lincoln, Nebraska, Wednesday, May 21, 1913, aged 87 years. Mr. Corey served three terms as county judge of Saline county, and was for several years a practicing attorney at Beaver Crossing, Seward county.

STEADMAN G. MERRIAM

Settled in Milford in 1866 and was for several years a pioneer merchant of that village, passed to his rest at the home of his son George, in Seward, May 21, 1904, aged 90 years, one month and 24 days. Mr. Merriam retired from business a few years prior to his death and moved to Seward where he spent the remainder of his advanced life.

HON. DANIEL C. MCKILLIP

Seward county's first attorney at law, who began his professional career at Milford in 1868 died at his home in Seward, March 17, 1904. Mr. McKillip was one of Seward county's most able attorneys, highly respected by all citizens of the county. Served two terms in the state legislature, from '72 to '76.

DANFORTH BROWN

Settled in Beaver Crossing in 1872, died at his home in that village in 1899, aged 92 years. His wife, Mrs. Jane Brown, died in October 1902 while on a visit in the New England states. The remains were brought home to Beaver Crossing and laid to rest by the side of her aged husband. One grown daughter, Abbie Brown preceded them to rest, dieing shortly after their settlement in their new home.

GRANDFATHER AND GRANDMOTHER NICHOLS,

Father and mother of Ross and Uriah L. Nichols, came from New York state in 1872 and settled on a portion of Ross Nichols' farm where they built a home which is now one of the very few remaining pioneer residences of Seward county. It stands in the south half of the village of Beaver Crossing and is known as the Maule property. These two aged people came to a new country to live their last days near their children. They both passed to rest in 1876.

ROSS NICHOLS

An 1869 homesteader settled upon a quarter section upon which is now located a portion of Beaver Crossing where he erected a home which is perhaps the oldest frame house in Seward county, in use now as the Beaver Crossing hospital. Mr. Nichols died at his home, March 16, 1892, aged 68 years leaving a wife, one brother and one sister. One daughter, Ella Nichols preceded him to rest in 1875, aged 15 years, 4 months and 1 day.

URIAH L. NICHOLS

An 1869 homesteader just over the Seward and York county line in the latter county, moved to Beaver Crossing where he resided about twenty-five years where his wife died in 1911 when he moved to Omaha to live with his son, William where he died March 28, 1915, aged 85 years. One daughter, the wife of Thomas Kerby preceded her parents to rest by several years and one son, William, remains to mourn their loss.

HORACE P. SEYMOUR

For many years a resident of Beaver Crossing, died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Ross Nichols, in that village, September 16, 1908, aged 88 years. Mr. Seymour was a pioneer railway engineer, having served as such several years before the war of the rebellion.

ELDER W. G. KEENE

who bought and settled upon the W. J. Thompson ranch farm in -K- precinct in 1872 died at his home there June 16, 1876, leaving a wife, one son and two daughters. His wife, Harriet Seymour Keene, remarried to Mr. Edwards, an early homesteader of the locality, shortly moving to Oklahoma where she resided till the spring 1914 when she returned to Beaver Crossing, dieing at the home of her niece, Mrs. Ross Nichols, June 16, 1914, aged 84 years.

CHAS. C. LEZOTTE

Settled on rail road land in -L- precinct in 1873, died at his home in

Beaver Crossing, April 27th, 1905, aged 76 years, 9 months and 10 days. Mr. Lezotte was born in Clinton county, N. Y., July 17, 1828. Was married to Mary S. Little, January 1st, 1849. They came to Seward county, Nebraska in 1874 and settled upon rail road land in -L- precinct where they resided two years when they exchanged their farm for James Hayward's homestead in the same precinct upon which they resided until a short time previous to his death they retired from the farm and moved to Beaver Crossing. He left a wife and several sons and daughters.

S. R. DOUGLAS

A homestead settler near Milford in the sixties and for twenty-five years a well known money loaner at Seward, died at his home in that city, Monday morning, December 18, 1905, aged 77 years. He left a faithful and loving wife to mourn his departure. Although Mr. Douglas wanted as high a rate of interest as the law allowed him, the writer, as well perhaps as many other citizens of Seward county, remembers many accommodating acts in his dealings and settlements for borrowed money, and he must be regarded as a benefactor by those who applied to him in times of necessity.

LYMAN F. MORGAN

Settled on a homestead in -E- precinct in 1870, near where the village of Utica was afterwards located, and died at his home June 14, 1904. Nancy A. Morgan, his widowed wife, followed him to rest May 10, 1915. They left two sons, Eugene D. and Fred. B. Morgan, both residing near the old homestead.

ELIJAH GLEASON

Who settled on a homestead in -L- precinct in 1866, died at Milford January 20, 1915. Mis. Gleason, his life partner, preceded him to rest at Beaver Crossing, March 29, 1802.

ROLAND REED,

An 1866 settler at Beaver Crossing, died at his home, February 8, 1884, aged 65 years and 7 days. Jane Reed, widowed wife of Roland Reed, followed him to rest at the homestead home, October 1, 1888. They were both born in Pennsylvania, he February 6, 1819, and she September 3, 1820. They came to Seward county and engaged in keeping a ranch for three years, settling upon a homestead in 1869. During his ranch life Mr. Reed was appointed and served as Beaver Crossing's first postmaster. They left six children, three sons and three daughters, one son John preceded them to rest at Beaver Crossing, November 29, 1875, aged twenty-eight years.

HON. E. C. CARNES

Died at his home in Seward, Friday, March 22, 1895. Mr. Carnes was known by all early settlers of Seward county as one of the first grain buyers of Seward, locating there soon after the advent of the rail road. He was a man prominent in business and also in politics. Although only a little past middle life at the time of his death he had gained an advanced position as an able statesman. He served as a member of the state constitutional convention in 1875; was the first state senator from Seward county and was twice elected lieutenant governor of Nebraska.

JUDGE J. W. DUPIN

Settled on a homestead northwest of Seward in 1869, moved to Seward in the early seventies and began his business career as a clerk in the Grange Store, a popular institution for a short period. He later served as deputy county clerk for Thomas Graham; was twice elected county clerk, served one term as Seward's postmaster and was county judge at the time of his death, March 9, 1902. In our meetings with Judge Dupin, mostly on business occasions, we found him an admirably pleasant and agreeable man, and his untimely passing away so suddenly and unexpected brought great sorrow to us as it did to all Seward county people who knew him. He left a wife and children.

A. R. WINSOR,

Who settled on a homestead in -K- precinct in 1869, died at the home of his son, J. L. Winsor, three miles east of Beaver Crossing, March 20, 1902, aged 88 years and 23 days. His wife died in 1898. They were the parents of ten children, five of whom preceded them to rest.

JUDGE GEORGE W. LOWLEY

Who settled on a Seward county homestead in the sixties, and later becoming one of Seward's ablest attorneys at law, practicing his profession in that city for more than a quarter of a century, died suddenly, Thursday morning, March 27, 1902, leaving a wife to mourn his departure.

ELIJAH K. DUNBAUGH,

Seward's first druggist, who opened a drug store in that city early in the seventies, which he conducted several years, died at his home, Wednesday, April 24, 1895, aged 71 years. Mr. Dunbaugh had been in poor health for several years.

DR. J. H. WOODWARD,

One of Seward county's pioneer physicians, died at his home in Seward,

October 8, 1902. He was born in Indiana in 1835, came to Seward county in 1871, and settled at Milford where he practiced his profession for two years when he moved to Seward. He was an able physician and enterprising citizen. He left a wife and grown children.

JOHN CATTLE,

Vice president of the State Bank of Seward, died in England, August 12, 1902. Mr. Cattle had been in ill health for some time and together with his wife made a trip to England to visit friends, in hopes that a change and rest from business cares would aid in restoring his health. He was a popular and successful business man and in his death the city and county sustained an inestimable loss.

E. N. WINGFIELD,

Who bought and settled upon the Widow Wilson homestead in -K-precinct in 1874, died at his home September 9, 1879, aged 74 years. Mr. Wingfield left a wife and four daughters to mourn the loss of a kind husband and father. The deceased was a southern man who lived in the war zone during the rebellion, and his sympathies with the cause of that movement were so strong and fearlessly expressed that his loyal neighbors' suspicions were aroused to such an extent that they preferred charges against him for "bushwhacking" Union soldiers and he was arrested and confined in a United States military prison nine months. While living near him for a period of two years, we leaned to know him and feel safe in saying that his great, tender and sympathetic heart never permitted him to harm a boy in blue. He was in truth "one of God's noblemen."

JOSEPH F. M. DIMERY,

A pioneer settler on a farm near Beaver Crossing, died at his home in that village, Saturday, April 18, 1903. Mr. Dimery entered the mercantile business with Thomas Tidyman in Beaver Crossing in 1873 in which he continued several years. He later bought the flouring mill at that place of W. J. Thompson, conducting it for some time, finally selling it to George Winand he returned to the business of farming. Upon the completion of the F. E. & M. V. rail road to Beaver Crossing he became interested in the State Bank of that place. He built a store building and conducted a general mercantile store for several years, being closely identified with the business of the village for twenty-five years.

SAMUEL MANNING,

A pioneer settler of Seward county, died at the home of a son in Seward Thursday, April 27, 1905. aged 82 years, 5 months and 13 days.

CLAUDIUS JONES

Seward county's first banker, died suddenly at his home in Seward, Wednesday morning, November 3, 1886. Mr. Jones had apparently been in his usual health up to almost the moment of his death. He had risen at his usual hour, and after taking breakfast started to go to town, but meeting his son, Harry T. Jones, returned with him to the house where he was stricken down, dieing instantly. He had spent twenty-three years in the banking business at Seward and was president of the first national bank of that city at the time of his death. His wife, Harriet I. Jones followed him to rest at her home in Seward, July 18, 1903.

ALEX. H. VANCE,

A pioneer resident of Milford, an able farmer and well known able correspondent for democratic newspapers under the name of "Old Stallwart," died at his home April 21, 1905. Mr. Vance was above the average democratic writer and did more good for his party and the public than any other writer of that party in Seward county.

J. M. FLETCHER,

A pioneer settler at Seward, died at his home in that city, January 15, 1896. We quote the following in regard to Mr. Fletcher from the Weekly Review of Beaver Crossing of January 16th, '96: "Comrade J. M. Fletcher of Seward died about two o'clock yesterday afternoon. Mr. Fletcher has visited our village several times, and his kind face and genial ways will be remembered by everybody in this vicinity. He was an able speaker and never permitted an audience to get tired waiting to hear something. He was an old soldier and could illustrate the trying scenes of the civil war, as well as the general conditions of the country previous to the war with an accuracy to revive the memories of all who witnessed the tragic events. Comrade Fletceher was a great sufferer from injuries received in the battle of Pittsburgh Landing."

SAMUEL BROWN,

One of the earliest settlers of Seward county, who came and located on a homestead in -J- precinct in the sixties, residing on the same for many years and finally retiring and moving to Milford, died at his home in that village Sunday, October 25, 1896, aged 80 years.

A. V. SKILLMAN,

An 1865 homesteader in Seward county, died at his home in Seward, Tuesday morning, July 22, 1902. He resided upon a farm for many years,

finally moving to the city and engaging in business from which he retired on account of failing health a few months previous to his death.

JAMES V. PRICE

Settled in -N- precinct in 1869, and died at the home of George Foster in that precinct, September 26, 1895, aged 74 years. Mr. Price had an interesting military record. He was a soldier in the United States regular army from 1842 to 1847, serving through the Mexican war. In 1861, at the outbreak of the war of the rebellion he enlisted in Company I, Second New York volunteers and served until the close of the strife. He was not married, but left several mourning relatives and friends.

MRS. MARY A. ROBSON CHAMBERS,

Aged 91 years, 6 months and 12 days, died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. C. L. Slonecker, in Seward, Monday, August 27, 1906. She was born and married in England and ten children were born to the union. They came to Seward county and settled upon a homestead four and a half miles south-east of Seward in 1869. Her husband died in 1882.

CHRISTOPHER TURNER,

A pioneer settler in the city of Seward, died at his home, November 20, 1905, aged 72 years, 2 months and 19 days. Mr. Turner was married at Seward to Matilda Robinson in October 1879, where he with his wife spent their married life, having born to them eight children. The wife and children were left to mourn his departure.

SARAH FOSTER,

An 1870 homesteader in -L- precinct, died at her home in Beaver Crossing, Tuesday morning, November 28, 1893, aged 80 years and seven days. Mrs. Foster built the first frame house in -L- precinct which was occupied as her home for many years. She was the mother of several sons and one daughter.

SAMUEL LONG

And wife settled upon a homestead in -H- precinct in 1863; he died in 1887, aged 75 years while she remained to the advanced age of 93 years, dieing April 27, 1916. Her maiden name was Permilia A. Rodgers. She was married to Samuel Long, March 1, 1843 in their native state, Kentucky. While Mrs. Long was one among the earliest homestead settlers in Seward county she will retain the enviable record of having lived a longer time on her pioneer homestead than any other of the early settlers, having spent forty-three years upon it, from settlement until called to her eternal home.

HOADLY G. HOSFORD

Settled on a homestead in -D- precinct in 1869 where he resided until the late nineties when he retired from the farm and moved to Seward. He died August 2, 1903 leaving a wife, one daughter and four sons.

WARREN BROWN

Settled on a homestead north-east of Seward in 1866 where he resided for thirty-eight years, moving from the farm and settling in Germantown in 1892 where he passed to his final rest May 24, 1904.

WILLIAM SCHULTZ

Forty years a resident of Seward, died at his home in that city, August 9, 1915, aged 76 years, 9 months and 4 days. Mr. Schultz was a dealer in boots and shoes in the city of Seward for many years and was well known by a majority of citizens throughout the county. He left to mourn his loss a wife and several sons and daughters.

NEWTON G. EVANS

An 1868 homesteader in Seward county died January 13, 1911. His wife, Emily J. Evans, who came to Nebraska in 1850 with her parents and settled in Marshall county, survived her husband until June 7, 1915 when she followed him to rest, aged 65 years, 8 months and 4 days. They were the parents of one son and three daughters who survived them.

GEORGE F. HURLBURT

Settled on a homestead in -L- precinct in 1870 and was for several years a prominent figure in the affairs of his town and locality. His wife died at their homestead home, August 7, 1877, aged 44 years, 8 months and 19 days. He moved to Utica in 1881 and engaged in the banking business in which he continued until the close of life, June 2, 1915, aged 85 years, 7 months and 7 days.

THOMAS TIDYMAN,

A pioneer settler in Seward county, died at his home in Beaver Crossing September 26, 1915, aged 75 years, 5 months and 2 days. Mr. Tidyman engaged in the mercantile business in Beaver Crossing with J. F. M. Dimery, under the firm name of Tidyman & Dimery successors to Edward Nye who conducted the store opened in connection with the mill by Mr. Smith in 1872. They took charge of the store in 1874 and continued the business about eleven years when they sold their interest and good will to Ernest VanSlike. Deceased left a wife to mourn the death of a kind and loving husband.

JOHN EVANS Sr.

Who settled on rail road land in -K- precinct in 1877, died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Anna E. VanSlike, at Long Beach, California where he was spending the winter, January 9, 1916, aged 83 years. His wife, Louise Evans, preceded him to rest July 23, 1901, also two daughters, Mamie Caulder, who died in 1909 and Emma Johnson who died in 1914, four sons and one daughter surviving him. Mr. Evans was engaged in the furniture and implement business with F. H. Roland, under the firm name of Evans & Roland in Beaver Crossing at the time of his death.

JOHN WHEELER

And family settled on a homestead in section two, -L- precinct in 1870 where they resided for many years, finally moving to Florida where he died March 31, 1900, aged eighty-seven years, one month and nineteen days. His wife, Electa Wheeler, died in 1891. Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler were both born in the state of New York—he February 2, 1813 and she May 31, 1819. Several daughters survived them.

GEORGE F. DICKMAN

For more than thirty years a resident of Seward county, died suddenly Monday night, March 5, 1916. Death was the result of a stroke of apoplexy which came upon him while at the dinner table Sunday noon, followed Sunday night by a second stroke from which he did not regain consciousness. He was sixty-one years of age. Mr. Dickman was in the implement business in Seward for many years and was active in business up till the date of his death. For thirty-five years he was a prominent figure at state fairs. For twenty-three years prior to '04 he was speed clerk of the state fair races, and following the death of Ed McIntyre that year, he was appointed to a place on the board of managers of the state fair association, and was for several of the later years treasurer for the society.

JOHN W. MCCAULLEY

And wife, Eliza Mable McCaulley, were among the first pioneer settlers of -M- precinct, homesteading the north-east quarter of section ten in 1869 where they spent many years of pioneer life. They retired from the farm and moved to Beaver Crossing in the early nineties where she passed to her final rest November 27, 1893. Mr. McCaulley remained for twelve years when he answered the call to follow and meet her and other loved ones gone before. He was eighty-five years of age at the time of his death and was one of the few remaining U.S. soldiers in the Mexican war. Three sons and two daughters survived them.

PETER OGILVIE,

An 1868 homesteader in -N- precinct, died at his home in -L- precinct, February 17, 1897, aged 69 years. After several years residence upon his homestead Mr. Ogilvie relocated upon a farm in -K- precinct, later buying the T. H. Tisdale farm in -L- precinct where he resided at the time of his death. His widowed wife remained at the late home until suddenly summoned to her heavenly home, April 4, 1901. They left two sons and one daughter, one daughter, Mrs. John Woods of Seward having died several years previous.

JOHN T. GODDING

Settled upon a homestead just west of the Seward and York county line in 1869, moving from there to Haddam, Kansas in 1880, and relocating at Beaver Crossing in 1890 where he engaged in the restaurant and market gardening business several years. He died at the home of his son in Fairbury, Nebraska, February 11, 1913, his wife, Rachel Streeter Godding having preceded him to her heavenly home about two years. They left three sons to mourn their departure.

MRS. F. B. TIPTON.

The citizens of Seward were shocked Sunday morning, June 24 1906 by the announcement that Mrs. Frank B. Tipton had been found dead in bed that morning, the result of heart failure. She had been in her usual health the evening before and had planned with her husband to do some work in the flower garden the next morning. When he went to her room about five o'clock in the morning he found her dead. She was reposing with her head resting upon one arm, her eyes closed, and had apparently passed away while asleep without a struggle. Harriet, their little daughter, just past five years old, nestled at her mother's back fast asleep, unconscious of the sad event which had taken place. She was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Cladius Jones and came to Seward in 1873 with her parents. Her death was similar to that of her father, previously mentioned. She left to mourn her untimely death, a husband, two sons, one daughter, one brother and two sisters.

JOSEPH JONES,

A pioneer homesteader in -D- precinct in the early seventies and afterwards engaged in the mercantile business in the village of Utica and later became vice president of the Utica Bank, died at his home, April 23, 1905. Mr. Jones was a progressive business man, well liked by all who knew him and his death was a great loss to Utica.

WILLIAM J. THOMPSON,

One of the pioneer ranchmen of Seward county, opened a ranch at the Walnut creek crossing of the freight and steam wagon routes, in 1864, and was a member of the first county board of Seward county commissioners, died at his home in Beaver Crossing, July 25, 1895. He left a wife, two sons and one daughter. Mr. Thompson was well known by many people in the south portion of Seward and York counties and the north portion of Saline and Filmore counties as having catered to their needs in the management for several years of the flouring mill at Beaver Crossing. This mill was a pioneer enterprise which was not entirely a financial success, the dam being constructed upon a bed of quick sand would wash out every time there was a freshet and high water. There is but little doubt that this condition was well known by Mr. Smith after he had built the mill and when he sold it to the latter as he did not conduct the business but a very short time after opening it and the sale of it was a surprise to its patrons. However with all the unfavorable conditions Mr. Thompson, with the expense of many times rebuilding his dam and placing plank foundation under the mill and a portion of the mill race, continued to grind out peoples grists. He finally sold the mill to J. F. M. Dimery as previously mentioned. But Mr. Thompson will hold a place in the memory of early settlers as the pioneer miller who patiently sacrificed more good money to maintain a business of public benefit than any other man of the time in Seward county. He had the distinction of having served in the United States navy during what is termed "the Mexican War," which occurred in 1846.

Margaret J. Thompson, wife of Wm. J. Thompson, remained after his death for a period of eighteen years, reaching the age of 88 years. She died Thursday, September 18, 1913 leaving two sons and one daughter, one of the former, B. F., or Frank, followed his mother to rest September 30, 1913, being sick with pneumonia at the time of her death he failed to recover. One daughter, Leticia, wife of Horatio Reed, preceded her parents to her eternal home by several years.

JOHN KNOBBS AND WIFE

Pioneer settlers in Seward county, coming in 1873 they spent their remaining years as residents of the county. Mrs. Knobbs passed to her rest January 23, 1911, aged 74 years, 2 months and 21 days. Mr. Knobbs closed his eyes to the scenes of this world and passed on to meet his wife, November 3, 1915, aged 84 years, 3 months and 3 days.

BENJAMIN WALKER

An 1870 settler in -O- precinct died October 20, 1879. Mr. Walker left a wife to mourn his early departure.

HECTOR MCCLEAN

Was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, October 24, 1833; came to Canada when three years old and from there to Seward county, Nebraska, in 1870 where he resided until called to his eternal home. He died at Dunning, Nebraska, December 29, 1915, aged 82 years, 2 months and 5 days. He was married in Canada to Jane Whitton with whom he passed along the troubled journey of life for fifty-nine years. The wife, two daughters and one son, Mrs. Donisthorp, of Geneva; Mrs. Garland, of Seward, and Allen McLean of Dunning, survived him.

HON. ADAM SEED,

A pioneer settler in -L- precinct, died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. L. F. Cottrel, in York, Nebraska, April 19, 1916, aged seventy-three years. Mr. Seed was elected to the Nebraska state legislature in 1890. Three brothers, Hugh, Andrew J. and Adam Seed were pioneer settlers in -L- precinct. The two former were not married; the elder one, Hugh, died at their pioneer home early in the nineties, while Andrew removed to their old home town, Peoria, Illinois, about the year 1900 where he shortly passed to his rest. In memory of the three brothers who helped, in their kindly way to make the trials of early life in Nebraska more pleasant for other people we record our heartfelt sorrow for their passing from among us.

JOSEPH MCCORMICK

An early settler on school land in -L- precinct, died in 1884; his wife, to whom he was married in 1869, died at Lincoln, Nebraska, January 4, 1916, aged sixty-three years, eleven months and two days. To Mr. and Mrs. McCormick there were born four children, two daughters, Martha and Clara, both of whom preceded their mother to rest, and two sons, H. E. and Ira, both living. Mrs. McCormick was remarried in 1888 to J. M. Thornton and to this union there were born three children, William, Harriet and Marie—Harriet dying in infancy. J. M. Thornton, the second husband, preceded his wife to rest in 1900.

JOSEPH HICKMAN AND WIFE

Settled on a homestead in -G- precinct in 1868 where he died October 29, 1876. She remained upon the homestead thirty-six years when she moved to Aurora, Nebraska, where she died, October 25, 1914, aged 81 years, 1 month and 20 days. They were the parents of one son who died in infancy and five daughters still living.

WM. E. LEMMON, an 1872 settler in -N- precinct, died at his home, October 21, 1911. He left several sons and daughters.

JACOB A. WILSEY

Came to Seward county in 1869, settling at Camden where he built a residence and resided one year, when he moved upon a homestead in West -O- precinct. He remained on the farm many years, making a success of his efforts in the line of agricultural production. But with the approach of age infirmities he abandoned his farm labors and retired to the village of Milford where he died July 25, 1912, aged 84 years. His wife survived him but a short time, passing to her final rest November 11, 1912. Seven children survived them—four sons and three daughters.

AUGUST DAEHLING

Settled in the neighborhood of Stplehurst in 1867. He was born in Germany, February 19, 1839 and was married there to Elizabeth Roehrs in 1862, came to America in 1865 and to Seward county two years later. He died Saturday morning, May 6, 1916, aged seventy-seven years, two months and seventeen days, leaving a wife, two sons and four daughters to mourn the departure of a loving husband and father.

JOSEPH H. HUFFMAN,

An early settler in the vicinity of Beaver Crossing, died at his home in that village, November 1, 1915, aged sixty-seven years and twenty-one days. Mr. Huffman was a well known pioneer school teacher by residents of the south part of Seward county, having been engaged in that profession for about twenty-five years. The last few years of his life were spent in other occupations. He left to mourn his departure, a wife and five sons, one son having lost his life in 1913 by the accidental discharge of a gun.

RUSSEL SLONICKER

Came to Seward county with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Slonecker, who settled in -F- precinct in 1875. He was married at Seward to Clara L. Wykoff in March 1878 and settled upon a farm west of Seward in -F- precinct where they resided many years. In 1892 he purchased the furniture business of D. Blessing at Beaver Crossing which business he conducted several years finally disposing of it he returned to the farm where he resided until 1904 when he entered into the mercantile business with I. L. Dermond at Beaver Crossing, retiring from that business at the end of one year moved to Lincoln where he became interested in the basket store business of that city. He died at his home in Lincoln, March 26, 1916, aged 55 years 2 months and 22 days. He left to mourn his departure from this life, a wife, one son and one daughter.

DR. O. C. RENOLDS

Who spent several years in the practice of medicine in the city of Seward, and was for many years pension examining physician for the boys who wore the blue in the days of the rebellion, moved to Lincoln in 1896, where he died of heart failure in 1911. He left a wife and three sons, two of whom, Drs. N. O. and C. A. Renolds are practicing physicians in the city of Lincoln. It seems the wife, Mrs. O. C. Renolds, was destined to answer the summons through the dark valley of death in the same unexpected manner as that which called her husband to his eternal home and she dropped dead at the home of one of her son's in Lincoln, March 30, 1916, aged fifty-nine years.

WILLIAM W. KONKRIGHT

Was born in Milton, Chittenden county, Vermont, December 3, 1829; moved with his parents to Massena St. Laurence county, New York when ten years old, removing to Lake county Indiana in 1842. His first life as a western pioneer began by a settlement at Sigourney, Iowa, in 1852, where he was married to Maria Siverly September 26, 1854. She was born in Venango county, Pennsylvania, February 18, 1830, and became a pioneer settler in Louisa county Iowa while that state was yet a territory, removing to Sigourney in 1846. Mr. and Mrs. Konkright made their second pioneer settlement in the west upon a homestead near Cordova, Seward county, in the fall of 1870 where they spent twenty-nine years, retiring from the homestead and moving to Seward in 1899 where she died June 13, 1902, he following her to the great beyond December 23, 1907, aged 78 years and 20 days. They left six children to mourn their departure, John, Lewis Devo of Seward, Eugene, of Dunbar, Nebraska, Mrs. Almena Lull of Cordova, and Mrs. F. A. Parsons of Wiggins, Colorado. Two sons died in childhood, Milton aged four years was laid to rest at Sigorney, Iowa, and William in Leland cemetery, south-west of Beaver Crossing, Nebraska.

MR. AND MRS. CLAUSE BOCK

Settled on a homestead near Germantown in 1874. He answered the summons to the world beyond in 1904, she following him to rest August 22, 1915, aged 72 years, 3 months and 19 days. Mr. and Mrs. Bock were the parents of sixteen children, four of whom preceded them to their eternal home while twelve remained to mourn their parent's departure.

BIRNEY WISE

Was born in Michigan, December 3, 1846; settled on a homestead in -l- precinct, nine miles south-east of Seward in 1875; died at his home in Seward, October 21, 1915, leaving a wife and two sons to mourn his loss.

Samuel G. Mathews settled in -F- precinct in August 1869 where he resided forty-one years and where his wife departed this life in 1907 after a companionship together of sixty-one years. He died March 28, 1913 aged 90 years, 9 months and 3 days. No children were born to them.

George B. Winterstein, a partner with T. H. Tisdale in the mercantile business at Beaver Crossing in the late seventies, died in Colorado, April 7, 1905. A wife and daughter survived him.

Henry J. Anderson, an 1873 homestead settler in -F- precinct, near the present village of Tamora, died at Oklahoma City, October 15, 1905, aged sixty-eight years, five months and two days, leaving a wife and six children.

John Hand, one of the earliest settlers in Seward county, died at his home two miles west of Goehner, Friday, January 6, 1906, aged sixty-eight years, five months and nineteen days.

James Iler, an early settler on Middle creek in -I- precinct, the founder of Pleasant Dale and its first postmaster, died at the home of his daughter, near that village, December 10, 1905, aged eighty-four years. Mr. Iler's wife died several years previous to his death.

Hon. W. E. Ritchie, an 1870 homesteader in -D- precinct, died Monday, January 22, 1906, aged fifty-nine years and three months. He left a wife and six sons and daughters. Mr. Ritchie was elected to represent the county in the state legislature in 1890 and was elected in 1896 to represent Seward and Butler counties in the state senate.

R. E. Marshall, a pioneer settler and for thirty-three years a resident of Tamora, died at his home in that village, March 19, 1915, aged sixty years seven months and twenty-four days, leaving a wife, one son and two daughters.

Judge J. H. Wortendyke, one of the earliest settlers in the vicinity of Milford, and Seward county's judge from '69 to '71, died July 26, 1901.

Norman Casler, an 1869 settler on a homestead in -L- precinct was frozen to death in a Kansas blizzard, December 26, 1886. His wife died at the home of her son, Pierce Dygert, south-west of Utica, February 2, 1903, aged seventy-nine years and seven days.

E. L. Ellis, one of Seward county's earliest settlers, who entered a farm of government land just north-west of Seward in 1860, died at Seward March 10, 1914.

Ransom walker, one of the early homesteaders in -L- precinct, coming in 1870, after many years residence on the farm, moved to Lincoln where he answered "the last roll call" October 13, 1913.

Oren Culver a homestead settler in -L- precinct in 1870 died at his home in Beaver Crossing, July 22, 1893, aged fifty-five years. Mr. Culver was married in Harrison county, Indiana, to Mary J. Stephens in 1857, who followed him to rest August 25, 1913 at Lexington, Nebraska. They left two sons and two daughters.

G. H. Underhill, a pioneer settler, and for many years in business in the city of Seward, died at his home in that city, September 12, 1903, aged seventy-two years. He left three daughters and three sons.

G. Babson, for thirty years senior member of the Babson-Dickman Implement Company at Seward, died at his home, October 6, 1903. Mr. Babson was an enterprising citizen in public affairs and an able business man.

David Roland who settled on rail road land in -L- precinct in 1878, died at his home in 1899. Mr. Roland was married in Kentucky in 1858 to Nancy Jane Houchen, who died at the home of her son, Forest Roland, in Beaver Crossing, September 15, 1804. In an acquaintance with Uncle David and Aunt Jane Roland, as they were familiarly known, for a few of the closing years of their life, we learned to number them among our kindest friends and to remember them as the truest and noblest christians. Their hearts were ever filled with the kindly sympathy and brotherly love of the one in whose footsteps they were constantly and faithfully following.

Wm. Cromwell who bought and settled on the John Todd homestead in -L- precinct in 1876, died at his home, Wednesday, April 17, 1901. He left one son and several daughters; his wife preceded him to rest.

Carl Snyder, an -F- precinct pioneer homesteader, died at Hot Springs, S. D. where he had went in hopes of improving his health, Monday July 5, 1915, aged seventy-four years one month and twenty-five days. A wife, one son and four daughters survived him.

George W. Anderson, a pioneer homestead settler two miles south-west of Seward died at his home, Sunday, Jnruary 24, 1904, aged sixty-six years, eight months and nineteen days.

John Kennett, who settled on a homestead in -L- precinct in 1870, died at his homestead home, March 29, 1915, aged sixty-four years. He left a wife and several children.

John Maurer and wife settled on a homestead in section ten, -M- precinct in 1870. She passed to rest November 26, 1884 and he followed her April 25, 1909, aged eighty-one years, one month and twenty-five days.

Samuel Manning, a pioneer settler in Seward county, died at the home of his son in Seward, Thursday, April 27, 1905, aged eighty-two years.

Andrew Mickelson settled in -E- precinct in 1872 and died at his home in 1896. He left a wife who remarried C. H. Christenson, another pioneer settler who died in June 1913 leaving her to mourn the second time for the departure of a loving husband. She passed to her rest May 10, 1915.

M. E. Shorey located at Milford in 1870 and later moved to Seward where he was engaged for many years in business. He died suddenly of apoplexy, April 19, 1914, aged sixty-two years, nine months and two days. He left a wife and one son.

Charles Henry Schrader, an 1873 settler in Seward, died May 22, 1915, aged seventy-three years, six months and eighteen days. His wife preceded him to the better world, November 25, 1911. They left to mourn their departure, six daughters and three sons.

Richard R. Schick who entered a homestead near Seward in 1869, died at his home in that city, Monday, May 24, 1915, aged seventy-four years, two months and eleven days. Mr. Schick was married to Elizabeth Whitcomb in Illinois in 1866, who with one son and two daughters survived him.

Fred. J. Struhs a pioneer settler near Germantown, died at his home in that village, July 1, 1915, aged seventy-one years, ten months and twelve days. He left a wife and daughter.

Herman Neitzel, an 1872 settler near Germantown, died at his home Wednesday, September 8, 1915, leaving a wife, 3 sons and 3 daughters.

Frank M. Horton who located on a homestead in -L- precinct in 1870, was found dead in bed at his home in Beaver Crossing, July 31, 1915. Mr. Horton was married in 1871 to Angelina Foster who with one son remained to mourn his untimely departure.

Ernest W. F. Wall, an 1877 settler near Seward, died at his home, April 15, 1914, aged eighty years one month and twenty days. A wife, three sons and four daughters survived him.

James K. Devore was one of the earliest pioneer settlers of Seward county, having located on a homestead in -J- precinct in 1868. Some years after his settlement his wife died at the homestead home when he moved to Seward where he followed her to rest September 15, 1915, aged 72 years.

Daniel P. Sherwood an 1871 homestead settler in the west part of -L- precinct, died at his home in Utica, Saturday, March 22, 1902. He left a wife who passed to her rest a few years later leaving their one son, George, to mourn the departure of a father and mother.

Sprague K. Woods settled on a homestead near Seward in 1868 and died at his home August 12, 1914, aged seventy-seven years, one month and six days. A wife, two sons and one daughter mourned his departure.

J. N. Roberts, an 1865 homesteader near Seward died at his home in Seward, March 11, 1914.

Robert Walker, an early pioneer in -L- precinct, died at the home of his son James in that precinct, August 12, 1880 aged seventy-seven years. Mr. Walker was the father of Wm. H. and James Walker, the former was an early homesteader in -L- pfectinct and later a lumber dealer.

Fredrick Schumacher settled on a homdstead in -G- precinct, northwest of Seward in 1872 and died at his home, at the advanced age of ninety-three years, April 10, 1913.

Ernest Caleb and wife, both born in Germany, came to Seward county and settled in -L- precinct in the early seventies and later moved to Beaver Crossing where she died in 1913 and he in 1914.

John P. Maule, one of the first school teachers in the village of Beaver Crossing, in the sod house period, died Friday, November 29, 1912 in a hospital in Kingston, New York, of heart failure. He left a wife, one son and two daughters.

George Pickerel, a pioneer settler near Seward, having settled near that city in 1872, died at his home in Seward, Wednesday, August 1, 1894, aged seventy-two years. He left an aged wife and eleven sons and daughters.

John Rumsey and wife, 1870 homesteaders in -L- precinct, moved to Lexington, Nebraska in 1878, and removed to Covina, California in 1907 where she died May 4, 1909, he following her to rest May 31, 1910.

James A. Fallen an 1871 settler in Seward, died at his home in that city December 20, 1914, aged seventy-one years and nine months.

Elam Rumsey and wife settled on a homestead in -L- precinct in 1870 where they resided fourteen years when they moved to Lexington, Nebraska, where he departed this life in August, 1903, she remaining till March 12, 1914 when she passed to her rest,

William Porter and wife homesteaded an eighty acre farm in the south part of -M- precinct in 1870 where they resided several of the pioneer years finally moving to Friend where they spent their remaining days. Mr. Porter died while on a business trip to the western part of the state in 1906 and the wife followed him a few years later.

John Englehaupt, an early settler and lumber dealer at Beaver Crossing in its booming days, and later ingaged in that business for many years at Milford, died at his home in that village, June 20, 1903.

Wm. C. Follett an 1870 homesteader in -N- precinct died at his home in Seward where he had recently moved, June 12, 1903.

Edward Maul and family were pioneer settlers at Milford, moving from there to Beaver Crossing in 1872, he opened the first blacksmith shop in that village, and for many years performed the work in that line for the entire locality. Without doubt Mr. Maul pounded more breaking plows than any other man in Seward county and nine of every ten acres of improved farming land, in at least, the south-west quarter of the county were broken with plows sharpened by him. He departed this life after a long period of suffering with dropsy, at his home in Beaver Crossing, June 4th, 1887. His wife, Hannah Maul, followed him to rest August 15, 1912. They left five sons and two daughters, one son having preceded his mother.

Martin Campion, an 1871 settler two miles south-east of Beaver Crossing, moved to Lincoln in 1906 where he departed this life June 1, 1909, aged sixty-five years. He left a wife, one daughter and two sons.

John Bartels came to Seward county and took a homestead in 1870 two miles from Staplehurst upon which he resided forty-four years, and until the end of life, December 8, 1914. He was married June 15, 1866 to Dora Milkie and moved with his family from Iowa to Seward county in 1870. Mr. Bartels was seventy-five years, four months and nine days of age at time of his death. His wife died several years previous. Three sons survived them.

William A. Collier, an 1868 pioneer, died at his homestead home in N-precinct, July 6, 1909. Mr. Collier was married to Charlotte Ann Laune, May 15, 1864. His wife who survived him, died October 13, 1914. Five sons and daughters survived them.

Orson Olmstead and wife, who settled near Seward in 1870, were among the few older people to seek a new home in the west. He was born in Hartford, Connecticut, May 26, 1806, her birth occurring February 21, 1814. Her maiden name was Pauline D. Grant. They were married at Stillville, New York, April 14, 1838. She died December 26, 1893, and he went on to join her in that brighter world five days later, December 31, 1893. They were the parents of seven children, six surviving them.

William O. Pierce, a Nebraska pioneer, settling in Sarpy county, in that state in 1856 when it was known the world over as "The Great American Desert." He was married December 31, 1849 to Miss E. S. Poor who shared his pioneer life commencing the second year after their marriage when they emigrated in 1851 from Indiana to the wilds of Iowa. He died at Seward in 1900, leaving a wife, five sons and six daughters to mourn the departure of a loving husband and father.

Aaron Anderson came to Seward county in 1867 and homesteaded the west half of the south-west quarter of section twelve in -F- precinct. He lived single until March 7, 1873, when he was united in marriage with Susie McFeely. He died at the homestead home, March 1, 1904, leaving his wife and two sons to mourn the loss of a kind husband and father.

Hiram L. Boyes came to Seward county in 1867 and settled at Seward where he built a saw mill, later adding a flouring department which took the name of "Banner Mills." Mr. Boyes experienced many difficulties in the pioneer times in conducting his mill, but managed to keep it in running order, adding improvements until it became a permanent, modern enterprise, previously mentioned in this work. He died June 19, 1900, aged eighty-eight years. His wife having preceded him to rest several years, seven sons and daughters remained to mourn the loss of a father and mother.

Rev. E. L. Clark, the first resident preacher in Seward county, came in 1865 and settled on a homestead two miles south of Seward. We quote the following in regard to Rev. Clark from Cox's history: "Mr. Clark preached the second sermon ever delivered in this locality in the fall of 1865 at the home of the writer, two and one half miles north-west of the present city. Mr. and Mrs. Clark were most welcome in this community. He proved of great benefit to the community in moulding moral and religious sentiment among the people. He organized the first Baptist Church in 1870." Mr. Clark was not only available as a minister of the Gospel, but took high rank in those early days as a statesman, being elected in 1866 to represent his district in the Territorial legislature and elected to the first Nebraska state legislature, being an active and valuable member in the Capitol removal and many other important legislative acts. He passed to his great reward in March 1873, his good wife following him December 19, 1874. They were the parents of eleven children.

Hon. George A. Derby settled on a homestead in -E- precinct, near the present location of Utica, in 1870. Mr. Derby represented the county in the state legislature two terms. He died July 12, 1901, his wife having preceded him April 29, 1893. They were the parents of fourteen sons and daughters, twelve of whom reached the age of men and women.

Hon. William R. Davis was married to Margaret A. Bohannon in the town where he was born in North Carolina, and moved from there to Iowa in a prairie schooner drawn by an ox team in 1852, removing in 1857 to Rock Bluff, Cass county, Nebraska. Mr. Davis was elected to the third, fourth and fifth sessions of the territorial legislature, and was appointed assistant assessor for the territory. His wife died in 1864, and in August

1866 he married Hannah C. Coleman. In 1858 he moved to Seward and in company with his son-in-law, J. N. Beaty opened the first general merchandise store in the locality of the present city, which business was continued for ten years when he abandoned the general merchandise trade and soon after established the grocery business which is now conducted under the firm name of "W. R. Davis & Sons." Mr. Davis died July 23, 1899. A wife and eight sons and daughters survived him.

David H. Figard was married to Amy Anderson March 17, 1860 and they came to Seward county and took a homestead in -F- precinct in 1867. Mr. Figard was elected county treasurer in 1885 and moved from the farm to Seward where he resided till the end of life, February 14, 1900. The wife and two sons, Henry and Silas remained to mourn the departure of a kind husband and father.

Robert T. Gale, Seward county's first homesteader, who entered a homestead just east of the city of Seward January 2, 1863, it being the next day after the homestead law became in effect, died in the spring of 1867. A wife and daughter survived him.

David Imlay was born in 1792 and married Doras Johnson in 1814, moved from Pennsylvania, their native state, to Ohio to make their first home in the wilderness of Muskingam county the year they were married where they remained nine years when they returned to their native state to spend nine years, returning to Ohio they made another stay of seven years when they again moved on westward to the woods in Wabash county, Indiana. Their next move was to Harrison county, Iowa, in eighteen fifty-six and to Seward county, in 1864, settling on a homestead in section ten, -G- precinct. She died in 1871 and he followed her in June the next year.

Grandfather and Grandmother Imlay were the parents of twelve children, one son, Hon. William Imlay was born at the old home in Pennsylvania in eighteen thirty. He accompanied his parents in their journeys from one state to another and during their residence in Indiana he was married to Mary Donaldson. After their settlement in Harrison county, Iowa, they seemed to have branched off from the parents and came to Cass county, Nebraska where they resided till eighteen sixty-four when they came to Seward county and settled on a homestead one mile west of Seward his parents coming the same year. Mr. Imlay was elected to the Nebraska territorial legislature the same year of his settlement and upon the organization of Seward county in 1865 he was elected to the board of county supervisors and served with Wm. J. Thompson and H. W. Paaker three

consecutive terms. In death as in life Hon. William Imlay and wife followed his parents to that eternal city of the blessed. They were the parents of seven children.

Thomas H. Tisdale who opened a store of general merchandise in the John E. Fouse ranch building at Old Beaver Crossing in 1869 and later moved his store, the U. S. postoffice and the town name four miles southeast to the present location of the village of Beaver Crossing, died at his home there July 7, 1888. Mr. Tisdale did very much to assist the early settlers in their struggles to keep "the wolf from the door" while they were improving their homes and getting in shape to help themselves. And it is a matter of regret that so few remembered his kindness past the time they needed it. He took a great interest in the welfare of his town and adjacent territory. Though he had no child to send to school he took a leading interest in the advancement of his home schools, being a prominent factor in the building and furnishing of Beaver Crossings' first good school house. And after the house was completed and the money which had been raised for its erection expended he procured funds to buy it a bell from the proceeds of a dance in the new school house, July 4th, 1874. And whatever spirit may have been engendered by the dance, that bell rang for many years for every religious service held in the town, and has called the school children together every school day for forty-two years, and is still in service. And the benefit derived by the public from Mr. Tisdale's management is beyond computation, and there is no greater reward to bestow upon the one whose forethought extended the peoples' interests so far in the future than to cast upon his last resting place a flower. Mrs. Lane E. Tisdale preceded him to rest, dieing July 29, 1881. They never had any children.

William Morford, a pioneer settler in -N- precinct, died at his home, January 10, 1899. A wife and several children survived him. Mr. Morford was a prominent and successful farmer, and an earnest and active politician, always taking a firm stand for what he believed to be right.

Benjamin Hunkins, an 1869 homesteader in -M- precinct, died April 27, 1900. Mr. Hunkins served two terms in the Wisconsin legislature previous to his settlement in Nebraska, was an able attorney at law though he did not practice his profession in his new home state. He was an enterprising, progressive and highly respected citizen. He was ninety years of age at the time of his death and left several grown children and grand children.

Luke Agur who built a mill at Marysville in the early seventies died at Exeter, Nebraska, July 1, 1902. Mr. Agur was one of the few early millers of Seward county who were justly considered public benefactors.

S. C. Langworthy, Seward's second banker, died at his home in that city, March 2, 1904. Mr. Langworthy came to Seward in the early seventies and established a state bank, and was president of the First National Bank of Seward at the time of his death.

W. B. Barratt, one of Seward's earliest business men, having settled there in 1872, died at his home in that city, January 20, 1901.

S. Adler, a pioneer merchant at Seward, and an able business man, died at Hot Springs, South Dakota, June 30, 1902. Mr. Adler made substantial and valuable improvements in the city of Seward during the time of his business career there.

General Victor Vifquain, one of the earliest settlers in Seward county, having settled near Camden in 1860, died Thursday, January 8, 1904. He was a philanthropist in ever sense of the term, and never failed to do a kind act when ever and wherever it was needed.

Alexander D. Ritchie, one of the earliest homesteaders in -D- precinct, died at his home in Seward, April 25, 1892. Mr. Ritchie was married to Harriet Hoyt January 11, 1847, at Chicago, Illinois. He was a progressive farmer and bought a section of rail road land which he put under cultivation in addition to his homestead. He helped to establish the State Bank of Beaver Crossing and was its first president. His wife followed him to rest at Seward, February 2, 1904. They were the parents of five children, Hon. W. E. Ritchie, (deceased mentiond in this work) Alonzo D., Franklin C., (deceased) Alice G. married D. S. Jackson, and Jennie H. (deceased) wife of Dr. H. B. Cummins, of Seward.

Stites Wooley, a pioneer who settled at Nebraska City in 1855. Was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1807, married Mary A. Stevenson in 1839, who was born in London, England in 1811. They removed from Nebraska City to Seward in 1864 and homesteaded near where Seward is located. Mr. Wooley was a brick mason by trade and laid the brick in many of the early brick structures in Seward. He died December 10, 1887 and his wife followed him January 10, 1899. They were the parents of four sons and four daughters.

Milton Langdon came to Seward county in 1872, settling at Oak Grove where he followed the business of producing lime for many years. He died in December 1880, his wife surviving him nearly four years, dieing July 16, 1884. They left two sons and two daughters to mourn their departure.

(For additional list of deaths of pioneers see page 267--272.)

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Seward County Agricultural Society and Other Societies and Lodges.

It is not the mission of this work to give singular and complete histories of societies and lodges. The County Agricultural Society is closely indentified with the progress of agriculture in Seward county from the days of its earliest settlement. Its benefits to all the leading industries of farming, fruit production and stock raising are beyond estimate. In fact it is difficult to understand what a farming and stock raising county or state could substitute to take the place of an agricultral society. It is true the society is composed of private individuals who have only a personal interest in the success of the enterprise. But so are the rail road companies and other companies, almost indispensable to public interest, and it is a fact that a rich county agricultural society is a positive indication of a prosperous community throughout the county.

The Seward County Agricultural Society was organized in 1871 and therefore may be classed among the pioneer enterprises of the county. Just who all have been prominent members of it I am unable to state, but its first officials were Milton Langdon, president, F. M. Ellsworth, vice president, T. F. Hardenburg, secretary, and George W. Standard, treasurer. And the names of W. W. Cox, James A. Brown, T. L. Norval and Joseph Lossee are connected with the early organization of the society.

The society has held fairs nearly every year since its organization which have been generally satisfactory and are increasing in interest to the public. Their fair ground at Seward is second to none in Nebraska and is a beautiful park. The buildings are modern and elaborate in design.

OTHER SOCIETIES OR LODGES.

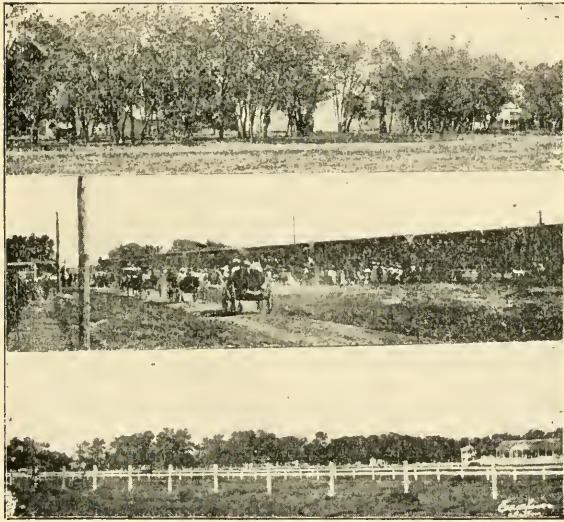
I do not care to follow the precedent laid down by Brother W. W. Cox in trying to produce the history of lodges as a part of county history. In fact I fail to connect their history with the history of the county in any way. Their rise and increasing growth has had nothing to do with conditions of public welfare nor have they advanced the prosperity of the communities in which they exist. The personal welfare of their individual members is all the conceivable benefit there is in any of them. However, that secret societies, or lodges, of nearly every kind do exist in Seward county, many of them being represented in every village is a matter worthy of note. Some of them are secret fraternal societies and some are secret beneficiary or insurance orders. The latter's accomplishments in the way of benefits to their members have reflected creditably upon them with the general public in every locality of the county.

There are but a small number of lodges in Seward county with organizations dating back to pioneer times. In fact no beneficiary order was known in the county till several years past the pioneer period. The earliest lodge to organize in the county was the Independent Order of Good Templers. The first organization was at Milford followed shortly by one at Beaver Crossing in the fall of 1871. For a limited time this was quite a popular movement, but it soon lost its attractive feature by an overgrowth of internal enthusiasm for the cause on one side while there was a corresponding disregard upon the other, causing destructive contentions to destroy the fraternal interest of the members, resulting in the final death of the order inside of one year. A few years later lodges of the same order were organized in different localities of the county, but they were about as short lived as the previous ones.

Among the early pioneer settlers there were many mem-

bers of the orders of Odd Fellows and Masons, and lodges of those orders were organized in Milford and Seward in the early seventies, but the greatest movement throughout the county in lodge formation took place along about 1880, when in addition to the Odd Fellow and Mason movement in the organization of lodges, The G. A. R. came to the front as an order and with their old time enthusiasm the comrades, bearing in mind the old order: "FALL IN, BOYS," fell in and organized posts in every town in the county. But sorrowing time with its destroying angel has laid its cold hand upon so many of the boys and passed them to the eternal camp ground that the posts are diminished and fast passing away, there being but two with depleted ranks left in the county at the present time. The great movement in the formation of lodges of the insurance orders occurred about 1888 and was the beginning of a popular theme which has been increasing every year not only in membership in the older orders, but in new societies. The Ben Hur order was introduced in the county about 1902 and the Highlanders about a year later. They have many members throughout the county.

It is possible that the increase in membership in the different lodges during the past twenty-five years in Seward county has been much greater than in a majority of older counties farther east, resulting largely from the restless desire in the public mind from the earliest settlement of the county for changing scenes and enterprises. It is a notable characteristic of individuals in the early communities to be vigilant and on the alert for that which might better their condition. And in this may be seen that spirit of progress that has made not alone the lodges but the general prosperity of Seward county, a spirit that has been a growing feature among those of the rising generation.



Bird's Eye View of the County Fair Grounds at Seward.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Notable Advancements in Seward County's Prosperity Leading Up From Pioneer Times to The Great Changes to Modern Times.

During the early years of the pioneer period, from 1860 to 1870, there were many deprivations and trials difficult to endure. Obtaining the necessaries of life was many times a problem solved with a puzzled brain and an empty stomach. The country afforded many natural additions to what the settlers produced on their homesteads, to eat, but the important items that make up the main staff of life were the ones that tried the nerves and filled life with worry. Mills to grind bread material were so remote as to be almost out of reach. To reach them and get a few bushels of corn ground requiring days of journeying, crossing bridgless streams, camping on the great boundless prairie nights and keeping one eye open in a vigilant watch with fear for the possible onslaught of the red skins. Salt and other staple necessities from the cities and towns were fully as difficult to obtain. Crops and live stock were subject to confiscation by the Indians or wild animals. But the earliest settlers came to stay and struggled along, looking forward for brighter and better times in the future. The spirit of progress was an early harbinger of good and mills soon began to answer its call and appear in different localities, the first one being the mill of Thomas West, known as West Mill, built in 1864. And the mills were followed in a few years by stores and postoffices. Although the capacity of the mills was small and the store supplies limited they were blessings that made home seem homelike to the discouraged settlers and gave them a new impulse for improving their opportunities which marked the beginning of an unparaleled advancement that

regardless of the many ups and downs yet to be experienced went steadily and surely on.

The years from 1870 to 1880 were fraught with many trials and disappointments for the homesteaders. Crop failures, sand and dirt storms, hot winds, drouths, grasshoppers, chintz bugs, living in sod houses and dugouts, poverty, privation and want made up the problem of frontier life. Yet the footsteps of approaching prosperity by which the dark days were growing brighter were still advancing. During those most trying years of the pioneer period there was but one year that a decrease in population was shown by census returns. In 1875, the year following the great grasshopper raid there was a decrease of eight hundred and twenty-eight in population, a result of some people being worse scared than hurt and without waiting for further warning left, some of them being glad of an opportunity to get scared away from their debts, left unpaid for farm implements and machinery half worn out and eaten up with rust, standing in the fields as mementos for the implement dealers who trusted them to remember them by. And so far as this class of inhabitants went the decrease in population was not lamentable. However many excellent people become alarmed and left, many returning later on. But in 1876, the year after the scare, there was an increase of two hundred and seventy-four in population, and in 1878, two years later there was an average increase of five hundred and fifty-six for each year, or one thousand, one hundred and sixteen for the two years. The following two years, 1879 and 1880, after the grasshopper excitement had subsided and conditions had become settled to a normal state, the average increase for each year was one thousand, five hundred and fifty-two, the total increase for the two years being three thousand, one hundred and four.

The great agricultural wealth of the soil was gradually

becoming more fully understood every year, while the facilities for transportation of farm produce were improving and thereby increasing the profits from productions. And those productions were being more fully developed every year by introductions of advanced labor saving farm implements, by a better knowledge of the most profitable crops, suitable to the climate and soil and by the use of cheaper and grain saving methods of harvesting. The dismal and dull days of the pioneer period were gradually passing away from about the date of the last homestead entries in 1870, and terminated during the period from 1880 to 1890. Land that seemed so cheap or valueless, many acres of which were laying idle and growing up to weeds, or let out to tenants in consideration of their keeping down the weeds, took an incline upwards and some idea of its approaching value appears to have been entertained by the homesteaders. They cut off all waste of valuable land by fencing and crowding the highways from their fields to the section lines. Sod houses and dugouts crumbled, decayed and shortly passed out of use and existence, being replaced by fine modern homes. The remembrance of the sod houses and dugouts of Seward county, with all of their pioneer time blessings passed to history when the changes from pioneer to modern conditions were ushered in. And while this marks one of the advancing steps of prosperity, it will be remembered by many with deep and heartfelt regrets. Surrounding those homely places of abode, now characterised as disagreeable places of refuge, are entwined the sweetest memories of childhood, youth and the family's home. "Be it ever so humble there's no place like home." And a great majority of the early settlers will remember those homes in all of their ugliness as "friends in need and friends in deed." It is well understood that in the closing days of the pioneer period Seward county had a wave of increasing prosperity which was shown no where more evi-

dently than in the towns.

ADVANCEMENT AS SHOWN BY ASSESSMENTS.

A glance at the assessed valuation of property in Seward county from the first assessment in the county in 1866 to 1885 will disclose the gradual advancement in prosperity. There was a small amount of deeded land in the county in 1866 that was taxable and that property increased at a great rate as soon as the homesteaded land began to change to the personal real estate of those who homesteaded it, but that could not be considered an advancement in prosperity. The most reliable way of computing the amount of increase in prosperity would be from the increase in the assessed value of town and personal property. The amount of deeded land assessed in 1866 was 4,728 acres, the tax valuation being \$18,667. Personal property assessments amounted to \$10,880, the total personal and real estate assessments amounting to \$29,547. There was no town property assessments that year. The levy on personal property and real estate brought the county \$423.00.

Four years later, the 1870 combined real estate and personal property assessments amounted to \$120,160, an increase of \$90,513 in four years. But this increase was almost entirely due to the fact that many of the early homesteads had been "proven up on," as it was termed at that time, and turned over by the government to the homesteaders and thereby become taxable real estate. The number of acres of real estate assessed at this time was 33,670, an increase of 28,842 acres. And still there was practically no town property assessed.

During the next five years the 1866, 1867, 1868, 1869 and 1870 homesteads, which amounts to nearly the entire homestead entries, become taxable real estate and there were 275,204 acres assessed in 1875, the tax valuation being placed at \$1,025,439. Up to this assessment town prop-

had not been mentioned, but the increase during the five years from 1870 to 1875 gave town property an assessment showing of \$92,091 which, with the assessment of personal property at \$412,335 and the rail road \$67,480, was the first indication of real advancement in the county. And it was a great showing. In nine years—1866 to 1875 town property had increased in value from nothing to a little over three times the assessed value of the real estate and personal property at the county's first assessment.

During the next five years, from 1875 to 1880, there was a great advancement along the whole line. The real estate of the county increased 63,595 acres, the assessed number of acres being 338,799, amounting to \$1,216,669, the valuation being fixed at 16 cents less per acre than in 1875. Assessments on town property reaches \$130,906, personal property \$506,316, and rail road which has an increased number of miles from eleven to fifty-four, is assessed at the value of \$183,447, amounting to a total of \$2,037,337, an increase of \$540,002 in five year. In estimating the gain in property at this time it must be remembered that the tax levy was reduced considerably during the last five years. The increase in acres of real estate was due more than it had previously been to the fact that more rail road land had become taxable real estate.

In 1885 land assessments amounted to 1,391,385 dollars; town property, personal property and rail road assessments made almost an equal showing, amounting to 1,273,222 dollars, which indicate the county's prosperity advancement in the five years from 1880.

It might be a difficult problem to figure out the gradual increase in all kinds of property from the first of the pioneer period in 1865 to its close in 1885 by the assessments, yet those assessments point directly to a certain progress which will clearly be recognized by all careful, observing pioneers.

CHAPTER XXX.

A Reflection and Backward Glance at Pioneer Days Gone by.

Looking backwards forty and fifty years to the hardships, troubles, trials and privations of pioneer life in Seward county, it is in accordance with nature to feel that the sacrifice of the comforts and enjoyments of former homes and the pleasures surrounding them was too great for the reward to be gained. But placing those things in the balance with the pioneer freedom, social relation of neighbors and the general absence of dull care, and the seeming sacrifice loses its significance and a longing for an opportunity to live it all over is ever present with us. The human race can live but one childhood and but one youth, those periods in life are never fully enjoyed till they are replaced by more mature years and old age. It is then that one can glance backward with regrets for lost opportunities and sigh for the dear old dead past. And while each and every individual can enjoy those brightest of all periods in life, pioneer life in a new country can be lived only by those who shared its sorrows and joys in pioneer times, and can be lived by them but once. After passing that period known as pioneer days, which might be called the country's birth period, it passes to eternity and beyond recall. And the memorable events of pioneer life in Seward county is fast passing from the minds of men and women as "one by one" the remnants of that grand community of home seekers and home builders, follow in the footsteps of pioneer days to eternity. Those who remain of that throng that passed through the ordeal of pioneer life look back upon those days with regrets akin to

those of the aged looking back upon their childhood, through gathering tears. The memories of those times which we know are fast fading from even the thoughts of men in the distant past, are realities in life which are eternally lost as they can never be imprinted upon other minds than those who lived them. While they may be printed upon paper as near as words can picture them they have passed in reality to silent rest forever.

In reviewing the past and comparing it with the present I am tempted to quote a little poetry which illustrates to a certain degree the social side of life "then and now" in Seward county. It is not of western origin, but illustrates the spirit of early days in the west. At that time as at the present there were some persons who condemned dancing as a sin. Let it be a sin or no sin as it may, by holding the interests and contentment of the communities till other conditions were reached, those old time social events were the corner stones of society, the foundation upon which Seward county and the entire western frontier built their civilization. They were the approaches to the bridge over which advanced the society and prosperity of today.

THE OLD VIRGINIA REEL.

QUEER, some times, how little happ'nin's, little chances, little things,

Comes to free a feller's fancy from its tight-drawn leadin' strings;

And just now a little girlie, dressed up mighty fine and gay,

Came to tell her proud old grandpa of her dancing school today;

And her talk has set him dreamin', set his mem'ry driftin' back

Down along the tangled pathway where old Time has left his track,

Till to him, across the twilight, scraps of music seem to steal,

And he hears the fiddles playin' for the old Virginia Reel.

Till he sees again the faces crowded in the little hall,

Smells once more the lamps that sputter in their brackets on the wall,

Hears the ribbons rasp and rustle 'gainst a starched muslin gown,

And the Sunday shoes a-squeakin' as the feet go up and down;

Sees the old folks on the benches lookin' on with happy smile—

Dancin' days are past and over—yes, indeed! but wait a while;
 Wait until the prompter hollers, as the tunin' fiddles squeal,
 "Gentlemen'll choose their partners for the fust Virginia Reel."

Just you watch those benches empty! How can mother keep her seat
 When afore her, arm extended, Uncle Jim is on his feet?
 See her laugh and drop a court'sy; see his polished cowhides shine,
 And the wrinkles in his coat-tails as he leads her into line.
 Father's there with A'nt Sophrony; see her eyes alight with fun,
 Though there's silver at her temples where 'twas gold at twenty-one.
 Notice how she smiles at Mother? Ah, it does 'em good to feel
 There's no room for years and worry in the old Virginia Reel.

And I wonder—yes, I wonder, if some other feller sees,
 Same as I, a road that wanders in and out among the trees,
 Where the moonlight flings your shadows—hers and yours—acrost the
 snow,

And, behind, the talk and laughter sounds so faint and far and low;
 It's a world bewitched to stillness, like 'twas by a fairy's charm,
 And your own good fairy—bless her! has her hand upon your arm.
 Can't you smell the snow-hung spruces? hear the crust beneath your heel?
 Walkin' homeward through the moonlight, from the old Virginia Reel?

Well, the time keeps movin' onward and the dancin's different now,
 And there's no more prompters callin' "Money Musk" or "Speed the
 Plough"

And the little bright-eyed girlie, climbin' on her grandpa's knee,
 Smiles to hear his funny stories of the days that used to be.
 But I guess we were as happy, though we hadn't quite the style,
 And I ain't so sure the "two-step" beats the jig step such a pile;
 And I'd swap the grace and beauty for the stamp and laugh and wheel
 That brought youth and age together in the old Virginia Reel.

—Selected.

In glancing forward from the closing scenes of pioneer life our vision is met with glimpses of the approaching great changes with their overshadowing wings covering and transforming the old to the new era, which will be dealt with in the preceding chapters of this work.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Changes From Pioneer Conditions to Those of the New Era. A Startling Prophetic Vision of the Golden Future Upon the Great Expanse of the Western Plains, Saw in 1866.

As to the great and rapid changes which have transformed the once wild plains, or "desert," in which is located Seward county, to its present high state of civilization and prosperity, I am at a loss for language to depict. Perhaps a look from the distant past into the future might reveal the mystery in a measure, of the grand advancements of the past as accurately as it pictured the future at that early date. From a work entitled "Turner's Guide to The Rocky Mountains," published in 1866, I quote the following interesting prophecy:

"The traveler from the lakes to the mountains is apt to undervalue that great expanse of territory which he traverses. Political, social, industrial and commercial problems, which have no parallel and as yet have had no solution, crowd upon him and he strives to outwork them. He recognizes the prophecy of events, but he fails to realize its fulfillment, and it is only when he observes the ever increasing tide of humanity rushing into the wilds and establishing out-posts of civilization that he catches glimpses of the golden future. He sees the population of the continent, which in 1854 was but forty millions augmented by the well ascertained rate of increase, to be eighty-eight millions in 1900, and to one hundred and seventy-six millions in 1925. A large proportion of this mighty throng he finds domiciled upon the three million square miles over which our flag now floats. The plains and the mountains are teeming with intelligence, industry and busy life. He beholds new cities, new marts of

trade and industries. A dozen iron roads instead of one span the continent and carry from ocean to ocean the commerce of half the world with incredible speed. The political center of our country has passed the Missouri river and the capital of the nation rears its dome almost in sight of the snow capped peaks of the west."

Was this picture of the future very greatly over drawn? It was certainly not a fanciful dream beyond the realm of possibility. The public has only to go back to that date, half a century ago, and view the conditions in Seward county and compare them with those of the present time to realize its true value. Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden could not have laid greater claims to having associated with and been wholly governed in their living by nature, with the possible exception of the garments they wore, than could the sod house and dugout inhabitants of Seward county in the sixties and early seventies. They subsisted upon just what nature produced from the Eden like soil, were sheltered from rain, wind, cold and heat by what nature provided and were ever dependent upon the scant supply nature gave them of fuel to keep them warm and cook their game, fish and other food.

At the time of the publication of the quoted prophecy, in 1866, there was not a railroad in operation in Nebraska and there was not one completed "iron road spanning the continent" and but one had ever been thought of. There was no sign of the hundreds of modern cities which are now in evidence in all parts of the state, with their paved streets and railroads leading in every direction, nor the many beautiful villages supplied with electric lights, telephones and modern mail facilities with rural mail routes leading to every farm house. If the casual travelers who passed along the steam wagon and freight routes in early pioneer times through Seward county were conducted over those routes

today they would realize their previous inability to "catch glimpses of the golden future" and would recognize the fulfillment of the "prophecy of events." They now see the immense industrial and commercial advancement and turn the pages of memory in vain to find their parallel. Upon those pages they see the unbroken prairie, inviting home-seekers to settlement without price or cost. With the exception of a few cottonwood and other native trees growing along the streams, the scenery is an endless plain and not a switch large enough to chastize a cat with its visible. An occasional sod house or a stove pipe sticking up from a dug-out are the only objects or signs of civilized life to be seen. The wind is constantly sweeping the prairie from first one and then another direction with furious velocity and feeling the old time loneliness and dispare they close the memorial pages and turn to the present grand and interesting scenes around them. And they behold those once baren plains dotted with groves of timber, the sod houses and dugouts replaced by palatial farm residences and comodious, modern barns everywhere visible, with lines of telephone poles and wires running in every direction. In the distance they see the church steeples and grain elevators and hear the whistle of the locomotive as it puffs along with its train of cars heavy laden with produce from the farms. They turn in every direction to catch the old, familiar blast of air, but it is silent, gone forever and in its stead comes a gentle and refreshing breeze, stimulating the senses and bracing the nerves.

But it is not only the travelers who may be reminded of the vast changes which mark the prophetic vision. Failing to catch "glimpses of the golden future" many homesteaders undervalued their opportunities and imagined that because they got their homes for nothing they were worth nothing, many of them disposing of their land for a trifle while others held on to theirs only because the small amount it would

bring was not enough to take them safely out of the "desert." And now after a lapse of forty or fifty years all are brought face to face with the fact that the land which cost them nothing and would not bring over one dollar and a quarter an acre in those early days is worth one dollar now for every cent it was worth then and has ready buyers at all times.

In consideration of the ordinary decline of soil from constant crop production the land in itself could not be as valuable after forty or fifty years tilling as when it was new land, therefore the cause for the great advancement in its price must be attributed to something else. And I can find no better solution of the problem than in the fact that the fulfilment of the prophecy of events has been realized and the prophetic "under-value of that great expanse" has been reversed by an industrial period to a foundation of true and real value.

In the foregoing views of "the old and new" I have only partially considered the improvements and advanced conditions of the county in fifty years. As stated, at the beginning of that period, there was not a rail road in operation in Nebraska where now the state is well equipped with those necessary methods of transportation. And as was also stated there was not "one iron road spanning the continent" while there are now nearly the prophesied number and busy life and prosperity are everywhere in evidence of prophetic fulfilment. And, again, to these achievements may be attributed the advancement in land values.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Seward County—Its Towns, Postoffices, Schools, Etc., After the Changes From Pioneer Conditions.

The changed state of public affairs in Seward county, by which the general prosperity of its citizens has reached the highest attainment of progressive success in industry, agricultural and intellectual pursuits was not made in a day, month, year nor even ten years, but just grew up with the country. It had its beginning with the earliest settlers and is due to their habitual diligence in sowing the seeds of progress. We have seen them portrayed in this work, building sod house and dugout homes and ever mindful of the interests and welfare of the rising generation, building sod, log and dugout school houses without sufficient means to buy a door or window for their house of instruction, nor pay for hinges to hang the door nor even for a draw-string to the door latch, but the school houses were in early evidence, pointing onward to coming success. The early settlers were industrious, and ever on the alert for that which might improve the general welfare of their communities. However the closing of the pioneer period and the ushering in of that period known as the new or modern era, which might be termed "the changes," occurred during the period from about 1885 to 1910.

In the pioneer portray of Seward county, its towns, schools and postoffices, Camden was found to be the earliest and foremost town in the county, but by the location of the county seat at Seward and the advent of the railroad to that part of the county, together with the nearby towns on the rail road in Saline county, Camden was crowded out of existence and its identity as a town is unremembered by its own citizens.

But the location of the old town of Camden as well as its immediate surrounding sections of real estate is the most attractive locality in Seward county if not in the state of Nebraska.

SEWARD.

In those interesting days in the birth of the county and the country in general in which it is located, Seward was not a town. It got its name about the time that Camden and Milford were springing into prominence, but as the party who owned the real estate desired for the new townsite hesitated about having a town built upon his property, the city of Seward was somewhat like the "chicken counted before the egg was hatched." And the town not only had a name, but it got a post office before it had a location which was almost forced into the log residence of Lewis Moffit and that gentleman conscripted into Uncle Sam's service as postmaster by the enterprising citizens. These matters together with the little log school house, serving the purpose as church, school and county court house have been previously dealt with in the reminiscences of pioneer days in this history, and we have now before us Seward, a modern city.

Seward today with a population of between three and four thousand inhabitants is supplied with numerous daily mails by railway. The Chicago Burlington & Quincy rail road, known as the B. & M., enters the city from the east, west and north, and the Chicago & North Western passes through it from north-east to south west. While the weekly mail—carried a distance of twenty miles in an army haversack by a man on foot—has been supplanted by the daily mails as stated, the log house postoffice has been replaced by an improved structure at an expense of several thousand dollars supplied with a complete set of modern post office fixtures, including eight hundred and forty private mail boxes at an expense of three thousand five hundred dollars. In

addition to these facilities for handling the city mail there are six rural mail routes, upon which mail is delivered daily from the Seward post office to several hundred of the farmers' homes now occupying the old homesteads of pioneer days.

To meet the requirements of advancing changes in the city, new and expensive high school houses have come and gone somewhat in line with the appearing and disappearing of the sod and log school houses of pioneer days, until the third commodious school building has recently been built at a cost of fifty thousand dollars.

The modern public improvements in the city of Seward consist of a fine county court house, one of the best in the state, a jail in line with it, a public park, high school building, seventeen thousand dollar city hall and fire department, twelve thousand dollar Young Mens' Christian Association building, Carnegie Library building, cost, eight thousand dollars, forty-five thousand dollar city water works, twenty-five thousand dollar light plant. The city has fifty-two blocks of street pavement and more being added, and twenty miles of brick and cement sidewalks. The streets, which in the days of street grain buying, were outlined with invisible corner stakes and a few wagon ruts, are now lined with large forest and ornamental shade trees, telephone and electric light poles while fine, commodious residences fronts them on all sides.

There are eight church buildings in the city. The German Lutheran is perhaps the finest church building in the state of Nebraska outside of the large cities. It was erected at a cost of twenty-five thousand dollars. The M. E. church is also a very fine and imposing edifice, built at a cost of fifteen thousand dollars. The Catholic church was built at a cost of six thousand dollars, and the Congregational near the same amount. The Pysbeterian church was originally

built in 1872 and although it has been removed from its first foundation and rebuilt in later design, it can still be called a pioneer church building. And notwithstanding this it is one among the fine church buildings of Seward county. The Adventists, United Brethern and Evangelicals all have good, substantial houses of worship.

One of the most interesting and laudable enterprises in the city of Seward is the German Normal College, which was instituted in 1894 by members of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church throughout Nebraska, led by such prominent business men of Seward as Herman Diers, John F. Goehner and O. E. Bernecker. The school was opened in the fall of 1894 in one brick building built that season, with an enrollment of but sixteen students. There has been a gradual growth in this institution and it is now occupying six large school buildings, including a training department and music hall four stories high where several pianos and pipe organs are in daily use. In addition to the six school structures there are eight beautiful private residences occupied by the instructors. The estimated cost of this enterprise is one hundred thousand dollars. The increase in number of students brought the 1916 enrollment up to one hundred and forty.

An artificial ice plant, installed in 1912 by Graff, Stevenson & Company at an expense of thirty-two thousand dollars, marks the progress of times from the pioneer days. This enterprise is said to be of the greatest benefit to the largest number of people of any establishment in Seward.

Among the many expensive public buildings within the limits of the city is the B. & M. railway depot which was built at an expense of eighteen thousand doilars. It occupies historic ground—within the boundaries of the pioneer grain market—from the ground upon which it stands, out across the still remaining, well remembered bridge, upon the bot-

tom, mounted grain buyers watched for the approach of wagons loaded with grain, each eager to get in the first offer for the load; at the first appearance of a team they were off under whip and spur to meet it. About twenty rods northwest of where the depot now stands, a little up the incline, was the grain office and weighing scales of E. C. Carnes, and just south of it at the track were the two elevators. Upon the site of the depot stood what was known to farmers as a "shoveling elevator" where they elevated their loads of grain with a scoop shovel, generally upon an empty stomach after a ride of eighteen or twenty miles. Farmers didn't ride in automobiles in those good old times, and felt mighty proud to have a spring seat to ride on. But the "good old times" are gone and with them the pioneer grain market of Seward.

The business of Seward at the present time is conducted in ninety-two establishments. Three hardware stores, one operated by J. F. Goehner, who has been in the business since 1879. S. C. Oaks, an 1870 settler in the county has been in the hardware trade since 1891, and Rupp & Dietz have the hardware business established by John Zimmerer.

Five grocery stores are in operation. The business of W. R. Davis & Sons was established in 1879, and although the elder member of the firm passed to his eternal reward many years ago the business is still conducted in the original firm name; T. C. Sampson has the next oldest grocery store, having been in the business since 1901; the other three more recently established stores are conducted by C. T. Joren; J. E. Croy; and T. H. Feary.

Three drug stores dispense medicine for the city and surrounding districts. They are conducted by M. J. Douglas; A. Schuler; and H. J. Cooper.

Two furniture stores are in operation, one by W. H. Moore was established in 1898; and Fred. Goehner has been

in the business since 1906.

(I wish to digress here to make correction of an error in regard to the location of E. C. Carns' grain buying office, mentioned on preceding page. It stood a few rods north-east instead of north-west of where the B. & M. depot stands.)

Parks & Willis conduct a wholesale and retail feed store which was opened by the first named gentleman in 1889.

Henry Campbell is the proprietor of a prosperous business in the buying and selling of seeds. He is established on fifth street; has an extensive trade every year.

The city is supplied with two first class hotels, two up-to-date cafes, and a number of lunch rooms which make the eating facilities equal to the ordinary demand.

There are three first class blacksmith shops in operation in the city; Chris Vogel is conducting one of the highest grade shops in the state of Nebraska. His welding of iron is done by electricity, and all other work by the latest modern system. This shop has a floor space of four thousand five hundred feet. It was established in 1887. George Knipple has a fine shop on the corner of Eighth and Main streets, and A. R. McCord is doing a good business on Seward street.

Five automobile garages are in operation in the city and each doing good business.

One of the oldest established shoe stores perhaps in the state of Nebraska, is conducted by C. F. Kroeger who has been continually in the business in Seward forty-one years, it being a pioneer trade of 1875.

Three grain elevators and two alfalfa mills are located in the west part of the city. Harrison & Son are operating an elevator on the Columbus branch of the B. & M., and the Updyke Grain Company have one on the Northwestern. Imig, Graff & Hentzen run a large elevator in connection with their alfalfa mill. This mill has a capacity of thirty

tons a day. Nelson & Figard are operating the second alfalfa mill which has an equal grinding capacity with the former.

The two flouring mills of pioneer days are, with improved appliances and modern machinery, grinding away. The old Banner Mill, established in 1869 by Hiram L. Boyes, is now owned and conducted by Boyes & Hulshizer. It has a grinding capacity of one hundred and twenty-five barrels of flour per day. The mill built in the seventies by Cooper & Henderson, two miles south of the city, is owned and run by Heuman Borthers and is doing excellent work. It has a capacity of fifty barrels of flour per day.

Two lumber yards are in operation in the city. One is run by the Pauley Lumber Company and the other by the Seward Lumber Company.

In the way of clothing stores Seward is certainly on the map, there being four different exclusive clothing establishments in the city. William P. Berdolt has been in the business since 1882; the Graff Clothing Company since 1888; Curry Brothers since 1906 and Hershberger & McCoy established their business in 1914.

Ed. Woods, proprietor of the cigar store and news stand was born in Seward in 1877, and has been in business nine years.

Four first class drygoods stores are doing business in the city. Pete Goehner is a pioneer in the trade, having been continually in it since 1873. M. C. Miller has been doing business eighteen years. The Seward Dry Goods Company have been in the city about six years, and D. S. Chappel, successor to Diers Brothers, two years.

J. F. Geesen is proprietor of the one tailor shop which he has conducted nineteen years.

Three meat markets furnish the city with meat. Brown & Salsbury may be found on Seward street, George Rapp

on the east side of the square, August Blenderman near the corner on Seward street.

Percy Ost manages the electrical supply store. Two city photograph galleries are conducted by W. D. Givens and J. H. Walford. The former has had a gallery in the same location for thirty-five years and it was established in the pioneer period. Mr. Walford has been in his present location about four years. The Seward brick yards are owned and managed by J. W. Turner. This business is among the best up-to-date brick works in Nebraska. A pop factory and bottling works are managed by H. M. Wiese. Two cigar factories are in operation in the city, by H. F. Busche and F. Kaufman. H. G. Dunphy has been in the business of repairing and painting buggies and carriages for twenty-five years. The city has five coal yards. John Fleener and W. H. Whiteneck are each in the poultry trade. R. G. Buchanan is proprietor of the city steam laundry.

Three bakeries supply the city with "the staff of life," excellent bread, pies and cakes. They are operated by Wm. Leibhart, W. T. Mickleson and J. H. Feary.

J. F. Gereke, Seward's artistic musician, repairs and sells all kinds of musical instruments. Also deals in sewing machines, wall paper etc. Mr. Gereke has been a Seward business man for thirty-six years, being a pioneer druggist and jeweler for several years, and was successor to Cyrus Chapin in the music trade in 1887.

E. A. Polley is one of two early pioneer merchants in Seward, Pete Goehner being the second, and both gentlemen established their business in 1873. Mr. Polley deals in jewelry.

There are three banks in Seward. Two of them are outgrowths of pioneer enterprises. The State Bank of Nebraska was the first bank in Seward county and was founded by Claudius Jones in 1873. The First National Bank was or-

ganized as the Seward County Bank by S. C. Langworthy in 1876. It merged into and was chartered as a national bank in 1882. The Jones National Bank was established in 1884 by Claudius Jones who was its first president, being succeeded by his son, H. T. Jones in 1895.

Six rural mail routes lead out from Seward ranging in length from twenty-seven to twenty-nine miles each. Devoe Konkright is the regular carrier on route number one. Has carried the mail on said route since 1910. D. C. Work, the original carrier on route two, started in 1901 and is still performing that service. John C. Konkright is carrier on route three, has been in the service since May 1st, 1906. S. H. Beaver is the carrier on route four. Has been running regular since April 1st, 1904. Alfred Hiller who drives on route five started it November 2nd, 1903. Maurice Leger started route six December 15th, 1903 and is still in the service.

Two racket or variety stores are run by Kolterman and Wilson, late additions to the corps of Seward business men.

The Noxall Grain and Seed Cleaner and Grader was invented by T. J. Hatfield and F. N. Wullenwaber in the fall of 1907 and patent issued December 22, 1908. A manufacturing company was organized and incorporated under that name by Seward business men in February 1909 with a capital stock of fifty thousand dollars. This factory employs several men. The company manufacture the Noxal machines which are sold throughout the north-west, also window screens, screen doors and medicated chicken perches.

The following are professional men of Seward at the present time, and some of them may be numbered with the pioneers of the county while one of them is a Seward born citizen. L. H. McKillip, son of Daniel C. McKillip, Seward county's first attorney at law, was born at Seward, January 21, 1879 and commenced the practice of law in 1903. T. L. and R. S. Norval are pioneers, and have been practicing

law since 1873. J. J. Thomas, Roy Schick, Edwin Vail, H. D. Landis and S. C. Stoner are additions to the city's legal practitioners from 1891 to 1911

Dr. H. B. Cummins has practiced his profession in Seward for thirty-one years, was for some time associated with Dr. J. H. Woodward. Has served on the pension examining board for many years, has held a prominent place on the state medical board, and laid aside his M. D. in 1900 and became a politician and was elected to the state senate where he served one term and then returned to where he was the most needed, the practice of medicine. Dr. J. Morrow, successor to Dr. J. H. Woodward, built an up-to-date hospital in 1901 and has associated with him in practice his two brothers, Drs. M. and B. Morrow, the former in 1907 and the latter in 1913. Dr. S. E. Ragan entered the practice as a physician in Seward in the spring of 1902. He also has a hospital. Dr. C. F. Stockert and Dr. R. S. Hirsch commenced practice in the city in 1913. Dr. O. H. Kent, Osteopath, commenced practice in Seward in 1907. Drs. R. P. Belden and C. K. Porter, dentists have practiced since 1904. Drs. S. D. Atkins and C. D. Kenner since 1905.

The only second hand store in Seward is still conducted by its original owner, Jake Goehering, who started it more than twenty years ago.

The business buildings of Seward are nearly all modern structures, some of them having been erected at a cost of thirty thousand dollars, while there are many less expensive houses which are of value to the city.

There are one hundred and twenty-five artistic dwelling houses in Seward, built at a cost of several thousand dollars each, one recently built by John Zimmerer, cost thirty-five thousand dollars. It is modern in every respect, entirely fire proof and is one of the most beautiful dwellings in the state. The city has an estimated number of six hundred less

expensive, modern and valuable dwelling houses.

MILFORD.

Although Milford can not be called a city, it has retained its place upon the map as the second largest town in Seward county and one of the most beautiful places in Nebraska. In view of this fact two of the state institutions are located there, the Soldiers Home and the Industrial Home, both of which will receive more attention farther along in this work.

The town is doing a large business in the general lines of trade. The mill, which from the earliest pioneer days to recent years was a popular flour producer, has been transformed into a factory of corn products, and as such is undoubtedly one of the largest in the United States if not in the world. The business houses number forty. Modern residences thirty, while there are about two hundred comfortable and pleasant but less expensive homes. There are three churches; Methodist, Congregational and Evangelical. Three grain elevators. Two banks, Farmers & Merchants, and Nebraska State Bank both occupying special bank buildings of modern design and construction. Two hotels and two restaurants. It is estimated that the town has several miles of cement sidewalk. A centrally located park, town hall and opera house, fine high school, good system of water works and fire department.

Milford has a very fine third-class post office, the fixtures costing one thousand dollars has two hundred and forty-nine private mail boxes. In addition to this there are four rural mail routes go from the office every day. Number one and two of those routes were among the first established rural routes in the state. They were established July 15, 1899, with Chas. W. Funk as carrier on No. 1, and H. J. Matzke on No. 2. The third route was started November 1, 1900, and the fourth November 1, 1904 with William Smiley as carrier. The present carriers are Ed. Bishop on route No. 1,

Paul Swearingen on No. 2, Ed. Kline on No. 3, and Wm. Smiley is still running No. 4. J.A. Coklin is the postmaster.

The town has two lumber yards, both handling coal; four general merchandise stores run by Kenagy & Kensinger who have been there twenty-five years; Warnke & Haverstock; Findley Mercantile Company and D. G. Erb. One exclusive grocery store is conducted by Roth & Co. One variety store. Bakery conducted by S. A. Langford. Two drug stores furnish medicine for the village and vicinity, one run by W. D. Alexander who has been in the business over twenty-five years; J. F. Bruning having been there since 1906. There are two furniture stores, one run by the Troyer Furniture Company and the other by Joseph Mael. David Boshart deals in poultry and feed and S. T. Sweasy is a dealer in poultry and cream. Babson, Dickman Implement Company and George Fosler sell harness. The pump and wind mill business is conducted by A. J. Weaver. The two hardware stores are managed by Joe Kribill & Co., and W. C. Klein. Real estate and insurance offices are conducted by J. H. Perkinson, and E. E. Ely. Charley Funk, Web. Wright and C. Smith are each running a barber shop.

Like all other towns in the present day of death dealing automobile craze, Milford presents a prevalent popular front with three automobile garages, run respectively by the Milford Garage Company, Schweitzer Brothers, and Fosler & Sanders. It is to be noted that Seward county has a greater number, at the present time, of this kind of business houses, or as might be called shops, than any other one line of trade or business in the county, whether it is a mark of progression or digression from the pioneer lumber wagon-spring-seat days. It is to be remembered however, that no one of those old, homely conveyances ever "turned turtle" and killed the driver or anybody else therefore those who enjoyed their comforts were a longer lived race of people

than the present automobile—we will not say cranks but—crankers.

Of professional men Milford has three doctors, and one dentist. It has two hospitals; also the Shogo Litha Springs the water of which is bottled and sold in some localities as being beneficial in the treatment of some chronic afflictions humanity is subject to.

DEDICATION OF THE SOLDIERS' HOME AT MILFORD.

The dedicatory exercises which marked the beginning and opening of a new home for the honorable defenders of the cause of freedom, and a grand manifestation of the Nebraska peoples' appreciation of their services, took place at the Home in Milford, at 3 o'clock p. m., Tuesday, October 8, 1895, in presence of a large gathering of patriotic citizens from various parts of the state.

The exercises were opened by Rev. O. R. Beebe, G. A. R. Department Chaplain. H. C. Russell made the opening address, after which Department Comander Adams made the address of dedication.

Governor Holcomb received the Home on behalf of the state, and Captain J. H. Culver was installed as commandant.

Informal addresses were made by Congressman Andrews, Senator Sloan, Representatives Cramb and Roddy, Judge Wheeler, Mrs. W. A. Dillworth and Captain Henry.

Patriotic music for the occasion was furnished by the Lincoln, Dorchester and Seward drum corps, and appropriate vocal music by a Milford quartet under the direction of Prof. Warner, editor of the Milford Nebraskan, and the veterans quartet of Lincoln.

An enthusiastic camp fire was held in the evening, the hall being filled with veteran comrades and their friends. Timely speeches were made by Chaplain Beebe, H. C. Russell, Rev. F. J. Culver of San Francisco, G. E. McDonald, of Lincoln and others. The Home has answered the purposes for which

it was intended in a satisfactory manner. Many of the old comrades have found a pleasant home there, enjoying its comforts to the end of life. There is at the present time one hundred and thirty-two soldiers and fourteen lady occupants of the Home.

THE INDUSTRIAL HOME

is a charitable institution of the state of Nebraska intended to aid wayward and indigent women and girls who have met with misfortune in life to a higher and firmer position, and to look after their offspring and see to it that their future life is properly provided for with homes. And no more beautiful place could be found in the state of Nebraska nor any other state than it occupies at, or near the village of Milford.

It is in reality as well as name an Industrial Home where the different home industries are taught, together with the science of nursing and the branches of common school education. It was founded by act of the state legislature in 1887 and dedicated in 1888.

Of this Home as well as the Soldiers Home I can say I am reliably informed that they have, from their foundation to the present date, been generally conducted in a creditable manner by those placed in charge of them by the state, and it is not the mission of this work to record minute details of their management from year to year. They are state institutions of which the citizens of the state should justly feel proud.

The population of Milford during the pioneer period ranged from one to three hundred while it now reaches about twelve hundred, counting the east side settlement.

Milford is the only town in Seward county to support two post offices, and it has been something of a mystery why such a condition should have been inaugurated there. The second office was established in 1884 under the name of Grover, supposedly in honor of President Grover Cleveland,

and notwithstanding the fact that it was only about half a mile from the main post office of the town, it retained its place upon the map, becoming a money order office in 1900. There is the natural dividing line—the North Blue river—between Milford proper and Grover or East Milford, the latter having the advantage of the railway station on its side.

THE VILLAGE OF UTICA.

The third largest town in Seward county was among the later laid out towns of the pioneer period. It was located in a favorable area of country and was blessed with an excellent business patronage, and had, for several years, but two competing shipping points and grain markets, Seward and Germantown, and while it had no advantages of a natural kind or institutions of popular favor, it has progressed to a greater extent than any other town in Seward county outside of the county seat city. It is in point of time ten years behind Milford and seven years younger than Seward, all of which has been shown up in the pioneer town topics in this history.

Utica has a population at the present time bordering closely upon one thousand. Its business houses number thirty-four, several of which are up-to-date brick buildings. It has two banks and modern bank buildings; one hotel, two restaurants; one opera house. The amount of its business may be estimated from the fact that it has three grain elevators which are all doing a good business. Its residence buildings, modern and otherwise number two hundred. It has five miles of brick and cement sidewalks. The place has a modern high school building and supports one of the best twelve graded high schools in the county. It has four churches and church buildings of an excellent grade. The post office has two hundred and fifty private mail boxes and two rural free delivery mail routes, the carriers being John Mikkelson on route number one and Robert Hunter on route

number two.

There are four general stores, run by R. E. Davis, Herman Zumwinkle, Kath & Harms, and Mr. Rau; Hornady & Sons recently established an exclusive grocery store.

There are two drug stores reported, P. R. Wolf being proprietor of one and Dr. Homer Houchen runs the other; two implement houses, one conducted by Craig & White, and the other by Herman Mundt; three cream, flour and feed stations, one by J. K. Greenwood, one by T. J. Shirley and the other by J. H. Casler; two blacksmith shops, John Hansen is the proprietor of one and Charles Bereuter runs the other; E. J. Bereuter deals in pumps and windmills; F. E. Patton is a dealer in poultry and eggs; T. L. Davis & Son manage a lumber yard; C. S. Shores keeps a livery and feed stable. There are three automobile garages run respectively by Craig & White, Bereuter & Son and Bert Birket.

The professional men of Utica are Drs. Houchen, McConaghey and Kenner; Dentist Dr. C. E. Klopp; Attorney at law, A. O. Coleman.

THE VILLAGE OF BEAVER CROSSING.

By referring back to the write-up of "pioneer towns, schools and post offices" in this work it will be noticed that Beaver Crossing was among the first places in Seward county to get a post office and store. And its future prospects to become one of the best towns in the county were bright and promising, but time soon dimmed those prospects on account of its being several miles off from any rail road. And although it did a good "cross-roads" business through the pioneer period it did not keep up, as a town, with other towns which had the advantages of railway facilities. And it seems that in the later period after the closing of pioneer times, the town was doomed to blights and drawbacks to impede its progress and make it a dead one with all of its natural and valuable advantages. The C. & N. W., or as it was then

called the F. E. & M. V. rail road was opened through the town in 1887 and just why the place should have been misrepresented and boomed as a coming metropolis at that time and what benefit such misrepresentation was expected to be to the future of Beaver Crossing, is and will remain a mystery. In fact the town was almost rode to its death by an over growth, extremely wild and unreasonable. Although the general trade of the vicinity was abundantly supplied previous to the coming of the rail road by two general mercantile stores, shops and other business houses, there was a general rush from all directions for the best business locations in the town. The racket of the saw and hammer was heard early and late in different quarters of the place, and business houses and dwellings were rushed up in short order. And Beaver Crossing like a stream of water in a flood season overflowed its banks and spread out over the low lands. Had those business men who were so anxious to get "in on the ground floor" in the new town with their business, stopped long enough to solve the problem of where the trade for so large an increase of business houses was coming from they would not made buildings to leave standing empty inside of a year. But the great newspaper, the "Beaver Crossing Bugle," with its six pages patent printed and two pages, constituting the Beaver Crossing portion of it, printed at Milford, was the spokesman for the coming greatness of the place, and strange as it may seem, it displayed such inducements that a number of people overlooked the fact that the enthusiastic publisher of the great seven column paper was booming a town that he had not got sufficient confidence in to put in a press to print his paper on.

The blasts from the "Bugle" were loud and long. It had several rail roads headed for Beaver Crossing and was very much alarmed for fear some undesiable road would slip in unawares. It also had the establishment of some kind of

glass factory planed for the place, where the alkali and sand that was going to waste in the vicinity might be worked up into glass. But it boomed enterprises in one column while it devoted three columns to "Bugle" loud tunes for base ball. Two brick yards were established to produce brick for the coming "sky scrapers" of Beaver Crossing. And the building of business houses went on with alackerty, and the revelry of the modern time sport grew to such proportions that the little, weakly supported burg had a subject to discuss as well as recreation for leisure hours when not engaged in wrapping up goods for customers.

In viewing the outlines of the booming city (to be) and its business, I see the following new enterprises added to the place while others were expected to develope in almost the immediate future: M. Byington, general merchandise store; M. M. Johnson, general merchandise store; A. H. Parks, boots, shoes and grocery store; W. R. Davis & Sons, hardware, tinware and grocery store; McDougall & Callahan, hardware and tinware store; P. H. W. Corkins, drug store; W. J. Organ & Co., dealers in agricultural implements; J. H. Erford & Co., dealers in grain, coal and lumber; Nye, Englehaupt & Co., dealers in grain, lumber and coal; I. G. Chapin & Co., dealers in lumber and coal; F. M. Foster, new livery stable; J. W. Leisure, new livery stable; J. E. Cloud, meat market; Joe Kuncce, harness shop; Mrs. A. H. Parks, millinery; Mrs. Frank Horton, Millinery; The State Bank, T. E. Sanders, cashier; Dimery's Hotel, J. F. M. Dimery, proprietor; Willis Bentley, blacksmith shop; J. I. McWilliams, blacksmith shop. Dr. F. A. Greedy, physician and surgeon, Dr. J. E. Phinney, physician and surgeon, with Dimery's opera house, Horton's brick block, Erford's elevator and other business houses in course of construction. Is it any wonder such a bubble would burst and leave the place in a state of colapse? And that the town of Beaver

Crossing has not improved since that collapse is evident and the reason obvious. It is difficult to resurrect a dead town, especially after such discouraging circumstances have driven the best and most enterprising business men from it.

Beaver Crossing passed through its pioneer period in a creditable manner after many years, but it entered and passed through its devastating booming period during the one year of 1887 leaving it in a more helpless condition than that of the former period. And it was doomed to still farther depressions as results of its being unable to overcome misfortune, but it was on a fair road to recovery when along in 1904 and 1905 it got an undesirable apportionment of business individuals that would be as sure death to a town as a grain of strychnine would to a rat. There were five in this consignment and they did not hesitate to engage in any kind of dirty spite work that seemed the least popular and had a banker and state senator at the head of it. In fact their addition to that kind of element constituted about half of the spite engendering dirty gang of the place. But the "last grain of sand" more than the town could bear was the addition to the newcomers of the renowned editor Fred. C. Diers, a man that could not look a hog in the face, much less a man. And this sickening dose to the already distressed and weakly little place would not have been so blighting a curse to its interests and welfare had he and his foolishness not been indorsed by those who claimed to be the whole town. It was well known that there was a committee of the gang running to different towns in the country hunting just such a character until he was found. And they did not only indorse his folly in advance of his coming, but they poisoned his mind with their own sour and depraved dispositions, giving the fool the impression that the whole town was at his feet and ready to surrender its interests and good name to serve him if he would only do their low down work and help

them destroy a hated man's business who had presumed to question the honor and ability of the august personage who was so honorably and ably leading the crusade of spite and was short just the amount it required to make up Diers to complete the list of assistants. And Diers was no worse than the others, but his part of the program was more open to the public. He acted in accordance with their wishes and in doing so gave the honest citizens of the place a shamed face by calling himself and his silly paper their "Pride," or what amounted to the same thing "The Pride of Beaver Crossing."

Now this matter may seem small and unworthy of notice, but it is history and I see no way to avoid the issue. And it is large enough to amount to a dark page of damaging effect upon the prosperity of the beautiful little village of Beaver Crossing. As the scheme did not result as it was intended and expected to, in the injury of a private citizen, that individual being found amply able to stand by his rights and take care of himself, what else could the treachery, intrigue, and low trickery, continued in for months by one-half or more of the so called business men of a town, amount to but serious injury to the prosperity of the place? To briefly state the case I will say that because one man had chosen to exercise his right as an American citizen and failed to support a young ignoramus for an office he did not consider him fit for, the young aspirant for ever office in sight, commenced a fight against the aforesaid citizen and the element known as the gang took sides with him. The despised citizen was editor of the home paper and the work of spite progressed in the aforesaid search for a printer to—as they termed it—run said editor out of the business. Some of the more rash ones would not even consider a proposition to buy him out. They were after his scalp and nothing but the raising of his hair would appease their wrath. In their search the only speci-

men of humanity they found that would engage in such an undertaking was this man Diers. But he had no money. In order to supply this deficiency they started a stock conspiracy, the object of which was publicly stated, to be the boycotting and destruction of the said offensive citizens business. And each member of this conspiracy was required to put up fifty dollars or more to raise the funds to aid Diers in starting his part of the good work. He got the money and bought the printing plant from the former editor as he thought it was easier to buy him out than to run him out. And now the fun opens up in earnest. Diers had been led by the gang to think that they were the ruling element and that there was no possible chance for the other fellow to rise from the wreckage of his business, and Mr. Diers felt safe in the bosom of his admiring benefactors. But "it is a long road that has no turn," and the former editor purchased a new printing plant and started another paper called "The Independent Examiner," which examined too close to the skin for the gang and they slowly but surely withdrew their encouragement from Diers and one by one sold and disposed of their business and sneaked out of the town, four of the later arrivals having made their exit in about a year, Diers turning the paper over to his brother to close out, followed shortly after. And it is a matter worthy of note that the entire outfit that composed that gang, with the exception of one, and possibly two have found it to their interest to hunt another location. Why? Because their own ignorant conduct had brought upon them and the town an unaccountable depression in business as compared with any other town in the county. "What you sow you shall reap." This became apparent, the "running out" scheme took on a back action and amid the prevailing quietness a lot of sneaking out was in order.

Beaver Crossing has three rural free delivery mail routes,

all of which were established in 1903 with Lucian Wash carrier on route number one, Pierce Dygert on route number two and W. A. Wilsey on route number three. Routes number two and three were established with carriers who had circulated the petitions, but after P. G. Tyler had succeeded in getting sufficient petitioners for the establishing of route number one he was turned down, perhaps through advice of some of "the gang" and a very unqualified young man given his route. The carriers now are Roy Huffman on route one, Pierce Dygert on route two and Al. Caswell on route three. These routes raised the post office from a fourth to a third class office and has done more good for the town than any other three things in it, although their establishment was contrary to the wishes of nearly every business man in the place, opposition to them being based on the grounds that with routes carrying mail to their doors farmers would not come to town. This was an opinion shared in to a large degree by other towns in the county which might be named, where the postmaster, following the requests of their tradesmen, threw the petitions when presented for the postmaster's endorsement and forwarding to the proper department, into the waste basket. The result of this was that rural routes from other postoffices ran up so close to the limits of their village there was no room for them to get a route. And when they saw farmers, residing right close to them, driving away on Saturday evenings and other times when they were expecting mail that they wanted sooner than the carrier would bring it, to the town their mail was delivered from, the desire for routes was an increasing torment to them. Some of them got a short route or two, close round their town and some of them are still on the anxious seat for "just one route." The postoffice has two hundred and fifty private mail boxes, the same number it had twenty years ago, the increase in this branch of the service having been

confined entirely to the limits of the village by the rural routes. G. W. Norriss is the present postmaster.

The town has several substantial, and up-to-date business houses, and quite a number of the less portentous, chaper wooden buildings, relics of the previous mentioned boom.

The amount of business Beaver Crossing is doing I am unable to state, but feel safe in saying that it is still doing a good "cross roads" business. There are many excellent men in the different branches of business and some of the other kind too, just like any other town. I. L. Dermond is still in the mercantile trade and conducting it in the manner he has for twenty years; W. O. Johnson & Co., recent comers, are running a general merchandise store in the Eager building; one hardware and harness store is run by W. L. Cook; one hardware and grocery store by Earl Eager; one drug and grocery store by Chas. Simonton & Co.; one drug store by T. H. Lyon; one furniture and implement store by James Evans; one furniture and implement store by Danskin & Lowe; one grain elevator run by the Nye, Schnieder, Fowler Company, and one by the Farmers' Grain Company; there are two banks, the Citizens State Bank and the State Bank of Beaver Crossing, both located in modern bank buildings; one lumber yard conducted in the name of the Barstow Grain Company which recently sold their elevator to the Farmers Grain Co., and the Nye, Schnider Company runs a lumber yard; both grain companies sell coal; Chas. E. Gentry is the undertaker and sells pictures, frames, glass and notions; Chas. Luce keeps all kinds of jewelry; a new electric shoe shop is run by Oliver Hess; Ed. Warnke runs a first class bakery; there are two barber shops, two ten cent stores, one opera house, one skating rink, one hotel, one livery and feed stable, two hospitals; one by Dr. C. O. Petty and the other is conducted by Drs. Doty & Hickman; two blacksmith shops; Jacob McCord runs the east shop and John Witter

runs one on Mill street. Dr. Hewit is the dentist, and Judge A. Leavens, attorney at law. James Barnes deals in fresh and salt meats and ice. The town supports four automobile garages, and half supports one news and job printing office. E. A. McNeil is the editor and has been giving the town the usual heaping and running over measure of local newspaper support for the past ten years, and he at least has the author's sympathy. (The statement, which has already gone in print on page 238 of this work, that the Beaver Crossing rural mail routes were established in 1903 is an error. They started December 1st, 1902.)

Beaver Crossing has a population of about eight hundred, contains many modern residences, two pioneer residences, one occupied by George Winand and family was built in 1872 by Grand father Nichols, later becoming the property of Edward Maul, father of Mrs. George Winand; and the second pioneer building was built by Ross Nichols in 1869 upon his homestead, and is now the Beaver Crossing Hospital, and many other good and comfortable dwellings. It has several very beautiful streets and shady lawns. Cement sidewalks extend throughout the town. It has a twelve grade high school and five churches, the Evangelical, Methodist, Catholic, Christian and Church of God.

VILLAGE OF GERMANTOWN.

Germantown in -H- precinct in the north part of the county is a pioneer town. It has had a fair share of the general prosperity of Seward county towns since the closing of the pioneer period. It has a population of about five hundred; has one rural free delivery mail route, Charles Wyant being the carrier, and there are one hundred and twenty private mail boxes in the post office; it has a ten grade high school and two churches, the Lutheran Congregational and Evangelical.

Its up-to-date business houses number twenty and it con-

tains one hundred residences. The Folley Theater, owned by Louis Meyers, is a modern structure fine enough for a city. The hotel is owned and managed by Paul Kafke; one restaurant is under the management of Henry Zimmerman; one lumber yard, the Home Lumber Company, proprietors; two general mercantile stores, one run by Robert Beckman who has been in the business fifteen years; and the other is conducted by Meyers & Haus; two coal dealers, one the Home Lumber Company, and the other Louis Meyers, who runs one of the two elevators, the second elevator being managed by the Farmers Grain Company; James Blackwood deals in pumps and windmills; Wm. Gannon runs the one barber shop; one furniture and hardware store conducted by Wm. Groats; one state bank, August Beckman cashier; one meat market, Adolph Haas proprietor; one blacksmith shop run by Carl Koch; one harness shop by Fred Roehorkasse; the town has two automobile garages; it has one of the best creameries in the state.

Germantown was one of the early towns in the county, having been laid out in 1873, just after the B. & M. rail road was run through to Seward.

THE VILLAGE OF PLEASANT DALE.

This is one of the most correctly named villages in Seward county. Its location in the narrow vale between the undulating hills of Middle creek, forms a shady nook, while the scenery up and down the valley is pleasing and attractive. A postoffice was established there in the early seventies by James Iler, under the present name of the place, but the town was among the latest established towns in the county. The B. & M. rail road, first called the A. & N., came through the dale in 1879 and the townsite was laid out in 1883, the post office was moved to town and a store opened. The school was later moved to town also, and a market for grain opened up and the town of Pleasant Dale was on the map.

Pleasant Dale at the present time is a busy little village of about two hundred inhabitants. Its post office has one hundred and fifty private mail boxes, and two rural free delivery mail routes are in operation from it. W. L. Wallace is the carrier on route number one and Percy Peterson on route two.

The town has a graded high school, and two churches, the M. E. and Lutheran; it contains ten business houses and thirty-five residences. It has one elevator, managed by E. J. Newton; one bank, A. F. Akerman, cashier; one lumber yard, W. C. Newman proprietor; one hotel, managed by C. H. Oxbery; one restaurant run by C. McGowan; one harness shop by F. C. Thomas; one livery stable, A. C. Castle proprietor; one implement and hardware store, E. J. Newton proprietor; one grocery store run by J. W. Dillenbeck; one general mercantile store by C. Uthe; one drug store by C. McGowan; one meat market; one physician, Dr. Wm. Sandusky; J. A. Gammell conducts a pump and windmill business. The town has about two miles of cement sidewalks. It is located in -I- precinct.

VILLAGE OF STAPLEHURST.

Staplehurst is in -C- precinct, in the northern portion of the county. It has developed a notable advancement in progress since the pioneer period. In fact it can hardly be called a pioneer town. It was founded in 1879, but was backward in growth for some time. Along about 1883 an addition to the village was laid out by Goehner & Company and business houses and numerous dwelling houses were erected. Two grain elevators were built, and the place beginning to show signs of coming importance as a shipping point, started upon a healthy and prosperous career.

Staplehurst has a population of about four hundred. It has two good banks; a ten grade high school; three churches; one rural mail route; three general merchandise stores, one

lumber yard, two meat markets, one hardware store, two blacksmith shops, one livery stable, and several other business establishments of more or less importance, indicating that the town has shared in the general new era prosperity of the county.

VILLAGE OF TAMORA.

Six miles west of Seward, in -F- precinct, is located one of the latter day pioneer towns of Seward county. It was founded and laid out in 1879. P. G. Tyler was its first post master and built the first residence in the town. The grain market of Tamora was started in 1879 by J. W. Scott who built a small grain warehouse and commenced the purchase of grain. A store was opened the same year by William Butler. An elevator was built in 1881 by Morrisey brothers and T. W. Lowery built another the next year. It has at the present time about three hundred inhabitants, numerous dwelling and business houses, a good, 12 grade high school, three churches, several stores, one lumber yard, three elevators and one bank, the Farmers Exchange. Tamora has no rural mail route.

A small boom was started at Tamora in 1893. A large business building, covering nearly one business block in the village was commenced. It was to be almost a "sky scraper," to go four stories high above the basement. And the basement was built in fine shape, made of stone or cement, which was divided into several separate store rooms by stone walls. The foundation for an immense structure could not have been excelled in any city, and it was currently reported that the project was being pushed by city capital, with a view to the removal of the county seat to Tamora, as it was near the center of the county. But it developed finally that the whole affair was originated and planned by a young man whose brain was upset with success in a deal on the board of trade, and the castle never got higher than the foundation.

I have now concluded the details of conditions of Seward county towns at the present time, 1916, which were written up in the beginning of this work as pioneer towns, and a comparison of their present situation with that of the former period may show the general advancement of prosperity throughout the county.

The following villages were not pioneer towns, but display the advanced state of progress since the close of the pioneer period.

VILLAGE OF BEE.

This village is located in a prosperous farming district, in -B- precinct in the north-eastern portion of the county. It was founded in 1887; is on the Chicago & North Western rail road, has a population of about two hundred and fifty, and is as busy as its name indicates. The post office is fourth class and has one rural free delivery mail route. It has a good high school and two churches. Minnie Dunigan was Bee's first postmistress, and her father, Michael Dunigan was one of the founders of the place. There are a number of substantial business houses, and about seventy-five dwelling houses.

The general criterion of the business of a town in the west is its grain elevators and stock market. Bee has two large elevators and its stock market is second to no village in the county. It has one bank, one hotel, a blacksmith shop, one hardware store, a drug store, one lumber yard, one implement store, two general mercantile stores, two grocery stores, and other minor business enterprises.

VILLAGE OF GOEHNER.

This is the second modern time town laid out on the F. & M. V. rail road in Seward county. It was founded in 1887 and bears the name of one of Seward's most prosperous business men, Hon. John F. Goehner, who represented this senatorial district in the state senate in 1884, and did very much

towards securing the C. & N. W. railway line through the county, the town of Goehner being named in his honor. It is located in -K- precinct, almost in the center of both the precinct and the county, is seven miles north-east of Beaver Crossing and nine miles south-west of Seward. Its population is about one hundred and fifty. The business of the town is similar to that of Bee. It has a graded school and three churches. Two elevators, one bank, two general mercantile stores, one hardware store. It has no rural mail route.

VILLAGE OF CORDOVA.

Cordova is located in the south-west quarter of Seward county, seven miles south-west of Beaver Crossing. It was founded in 1887, the third new village on the line of the C. & N. W. rail road in the county. It was first called Hunkinsville in honor of Benjamin Hunkins, an enterprising and respected early homesteader of the vicinity, but there being a town and postoffice of similar name in the state the town was renamed Cordova. Situated in an excellent area of farming land, and a prosperous community, the early enterprises of the place soon placed it upon the map as one of Seward county's lively and growing towns.

The early business establishments of Cordova were two Elevators; three general stores, managed respectively by Rodeman & Son, C. W. Hunkins, and Vaughn & Peterson; one drug store, Dr. C. W. Doty proprietor; one hardware store run by Graff & Goodbrod; one furniture store, one agricultural implement house, one harness shop, one lumber yard, one hotel, a bank, a barber shop, one blacksmith shop. Among the early public improvements was a good, graded school, and three church buildings were added in due time. In 1888 Joshua Warren, of Friend, erected a large wooden building from the wreckage of the old M. E. church building at that place; the lower part of the building was divided into three store rooms, and the upper part was used as an op-

era house, the structure being called Warren's Opera House, or Cordova Opera House to distinguish it from Warren's Opera House in Friend.

On a visit to Cordova in 1913 the writer was much surprised and pleased by the apparant change and improvement in the town; especially the residence portion with its many neat cottages, attractive lawns and clean streets. The old Warren's Opera House, which was sold to Dr. E. G. Watson, and known in later years as Watson's Opera House and finally destroyed by fire, had been replaced by an imposing, two story brick building. This building has several store rooms on the lower floor, a finely arranged opera room, lodge room, and other rooms on the second floor, all of which are reached by broad, modern stairways from both the front and rear part of the building. There are several other improved buildings in the place among which is the State Bank which is certainly a beauty for a town the size of Cordova. Aside from the improvements two familiar objects are to be seen—the little 8x10 shanty post office and the hotel.

Cordova has a population of about three hundred. It has numerous business houses centered among a hundred residences, with cement sidewalks extending throughout the town. It has no rural mail route.

VILLAGE OF RUBY.

This little vill is scarcely on the map, but holds a place among the business centers of Seward county. It is located on the B. & M. rail road, about half way between Seward and Milford, in -J- precinct, and has a rich and productive area of farming land surrounding it, but the two larger towns draw much of its business away from it. However it is not a dead town as it shows many signs of life and activity. It has a grain market supported by two grain elevators; two stores, a post office and such other places of business as are required to provide for the wants of the patrons of the place.

By looking over the foregoing historical record of modern achievements in lines of trade in merchandise and farm products in the towns of Seward county together with the advantages of public schools, churches and places of social and public entertainment, and comparing them with the condition in the early pioneer days, the extent of the great progress which had its origin in the gloom of pioneer sod houses and its growth through the many long years of hopeful enterprise, will become plainly apparent. In those early times markets for any kind of farm products were forty and fifty miles distant, while one little store and postoffice in a sod or log house within an area of fifteen miles was considered a priceless blessing. Sod and log school houses in about the same area answered the purpose for churches, public halls, election booths and court houses. In the towns of Seward county at the present time there are twelve grain markets, supplied with twenty-six large grain elevators, any one of which could handle and store the amount of grain raised in Seward county in 1870. In those towns there are fifteen opera houses and public halls, thirty-eight churches, thirty general stores, thirty-five exclusive stores, handling groceries, hardware, furniture, clothing etc. And there are twenty-one rural free delivery mail routes delivering mail daily to ever farm in the county, while farmers are in touch with neighbors and the local markets of the county by telephone.

The general reader of this work is invited to examine the conditions of the two periods as they are presented, bearing in mind at the same time, the fact that the advancements in the towns are the results of improved conditions throughout the rural districts. The improvements of farms and their products have made Seward county's prosperity.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Chicago & North Western Rail Road in Seward County.

The C. & N. W. rail road was perhaps the earliest great railway system in the north-west. Its first operations were from Chicago up Lake Michigan to Green Bay, finally branching out, in early rail road days, through the territory of Wisconsin. In the early sixties the North Western Company bought the Chicago & Galena line west and extended that line through Illinois and Iowa in 1866, reaching Council Bluffs in the fall of that year, being the first railway to reach the Missouri river from Chicago. It was the policy of the company to locate their own stations and to lay out and own the towns along its new lines, and twenty-five miles north-east of Council Bluffs, where the Bouyer and Missouri valleys unite, forming an extensive area of bottom land, they founded a station and town, calling it Missouri Valley. From this point they extended a line up the Missouri bottom to Sioux City calling it the Sioux City & Pacific Rail Road. It also extended a branch line from the same point west, crossing the Mo. river at Blair, to Fremont as a short cut connection with the Union Pacific rail road, saving the round-about trip by way of Omaha and thereby shortening the distance from the far west to Chicago. They called this branch the Fremont & Missouri Valley Rail Road. This branch was finally extended up the valley of the Elkhorn river and on to the Black Hills country when the road was renamed Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Rail Road.

The company was always on the alert for paying enterprises, which generally seemed to be successful, and seeing an opportunity to make another extension of their branch

line, the F. E. & M. V. from Fremont south-west through many miles of rich and productive Nebraska territory and make a valuable connection with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fee Rail Road at Superior, they commenced negotiations with counties through which the desired line might pass, for a bonus in the way of bonds for its construction. Propositions were made to the precincts of each county through which the road would pass to build it provided the precincts voted to give them a specified amount of twenty year interest bearing bonds. It taxed the precincts of Seward county sixty thousand dollars, fifteen thousand dollars of this was required of the city of Seward while ten thousand dollars were demanded from -G- precinct in which the city is located, the total for the city and precinct amounting to twenty-five thousand dollars. The road was only to touch one corner of -L- precinct therefore it was only charged five thousand, but the precincts of -B-, -K- and -M- were each held up for ten thousand dollars. The company made it clear to the minds of the citizens that they did not care to traverse their county with the road, but would do so provided the bonds were assured. And of course the voters wanted the road more than the company wanted a paying line through their lands and therefore when the propositions were voted upon they carried by large majorities. The line was established and constructed through the county in 1887.

The North Western has added a large amount of taxable property to the county. It is undoubtedly worth all it has cost the precincts through which it passes, but they practically made the road or paid the railway company for doing so. And it is a matter worthy of note that the North Western company has added to its own wealth many thousands of dollars more than it has to the counties along its Superior line. The C. & N. W. assumed its proper name about 1895 when the name of F. E. & M. V. was dropped.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Seward County Farms and Farmers. The County's Agricultural Wealth.
The Extended Drouth Period. Schools and School System. Gold
Agitation.

What has been said of Seward county: "There are but few, if any, more progressive, active, wide-awake and prosperous farming communities than that represented by Seward county, Nebraska. This district of country is possessed of natural soil resources that have been spared from the hand of the soil robber. Its gentle undulating surface, which characterizes the greater portion of its area, with its finely planned and well laid out farms, nicely cultivated fields, bearing orchards, beautiful groves, home grounds with their large and elegant residences, lawns tastefully decorated with evergreens, shrubs, vines and flowering plants, all combine to tell the story of 'the home beautiful,' the farm home of Seward county."—Twentieth Century Farmer.

The forgoing estimate of the present conditions in Seward county is a true pen picture of the high standard of agricultural wealth gained by proper application to natural resources in their time. In early years nature had here been lavish of those advantages which only required the developing hand of human enterprise to yield rich and sure returns. There was no area of territory of equal size to that of Seward county in the domain of Nebraska capable of yielding more sure or more ample rewards to industry, or offered greater facilities for future support of a large population of enterprising people. The present large fields of cereal grasses and grains produced each year bear ample testimony to the quality of the soil. Add to this the fact of easy culture,

speedy and cheap transportation and good and never failing markets and the dream of the agricultural utopians appear to be realized. The great anticipations of the first settlers and the feverish excitement occasioned by the construction of rail roads through the county, many visionary and delusive, have subsided into a more practical view of things and there is, not only a rational appreciation of the facilities which nature has afforded, but a substantial and grand exhibition of that practical application and energetic action which formed a sure presage of success, hence the "home beautiful, the farm home of Seward county."

EXTENDED DROUTH PERIOD.

The drouths of pioneer times in Seward county were discouraging to the early settlers who felt keenly their damaging effects. But they were not so blighting to vegetation as the dry seasons of later years. New ground that was just previously put under cultivation seemed to stand drouth much better than land that had been under cultivation until the soil was rotted down through the subsoil. And while the county was subject to an occasional drouth by which corn would be a partial or entire failure it seldom damaged small grain, and through that early period dry spells were not known to continue for a longer time than one season. And it was left for the modern era period to see all records of drouth extension broken and three years, 1893, 1894 and 1895, of continuous dryness when crops in Seward county were almost entire failures. During those three years there was but a small amount of snow fall in the winters and not enough rain in the growing seasons to lay the dust on the highways. This drouth period extended from the season of early vegetation in 1893 until January 31st, 1896 when an all night downpour of rain gladdened the hearts, at that unseasonable time, of weary watchers for gladdening, refreshing, long delayed moisture to at least refresh the earth. During

this unparalleled dry period there was a redeeming feature in the fact that many other localities of Nebraska were not effected by the lack of moisture and raised an abundance of the necessaries of life to spare their unfortunate neighbors at reasonable prices.

SEWARD COUNTY SCHOOLS.

We have seen the schools of the county in their primitiveness, taught in the manner and rude structures of the pioneer period, amid the surroundings of destitution and want, blazing the way for the coming unexcelled school method of which Nebraska boasts today. The school system which is being enjoyed by the young people at the present time is a native of the state. It originated as a pioneer by the ever increasing efforts and desire of the early settlers who labored to provide places of learning almost before they had a sod home. And that system has grown up with the country until it has reached an eminence unsurpassed in any state.

And at the head of this school system stands the rural or district schools which annually reinforce the high schools, where the higher branches of English education are taught. Poverty is no impediment to learning in Seward county; every thing necessary for the pupils' use, even to the text-books, are included in the free system of education for those of all school ages.

Seward county now has twelve high or graded schools and each precinct contains from four to seven district schools and all are housed in fine buildings. The high and graded schools accommodate many hundred students, affording superior advantages to those who wish an education, and numerous young people have taken advantage of the opportunities, and year by year well educated and sterling young men and women are given to the world by Seward county.

GOLD EXCITEMENT IN SEWARD COUNTY.

Real estate in some localities took quite a boom in price

in the years of 1895 and 1896 on account of the supposed existance of gold in paying quantities in the soil. Several encouraging items were published in local newspapers of Seward county and at Crete, in Saline county. One of those items in the Milford Nebraskan, gave the following flattering information in regard to the amount of the precious metal found in the dirt in the vicinity of that village:

“The dirt has stood the assayer’s test in at least five trials on J. S. Dillenbeck’s farm, ranging \$57, \$71, \$96, \$160 and \$196 per ton. These tests were made by experts of national reputation and are considered reliable.”

Unfortunately it was discovered that it is not all gold that glitters and the gold agitation went up the dark river to join the spiritulist coal anticipations at Milford in 1870. But there is no denying the existance of gold in the soil of Seward county, and it is being taken out already coined into dollars every year through the gold producing products of the farms of the county. And it is a fact that this system of obtaining gold from the dirt has advanced the price of Seward county real estate very much above the most sanguine thoughts of those gold boomers of 1895.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Miscellaneous Items. Produce Statistics of Mid Pioneer Period. First Marriages in Seward County. Rattle Snakes More Dangerous Than Indians. Seward County Court House and Court House Propositions. Death of Etta Shattuck. Remembrance of Henry Cashler.

The following statement of acreage of land under cultivation and crop yield in 1879, about the middle of the pioneer period, is from a report made to the B. & M. Railway Company by Edwin McIntire, of Seward, agent for the sale of that company's Seward county real estate.

Total number of acres under cultivation in Seward county, 109,590. Number of acres in rye 1283, yield 19,240 bushels. Number of acres in spring wheat 43,825, yield 482,362 bushels. Number of acres of barley 8,900, yield 170,900 bushels. Number of acres of oats 5,718, yield 227,720 bushels. Number of acres in buckwheat 112, yield 2,240 bushels. Number of acres in flax 2,109, yield 18,981 bushels. Number of acres in corn 46,594, yield 2,096,280 bushels. Number of acres in broom corn 160, yield 53 tons. Number of acres in potatoes 966, yield 36,840 bushels. Tame grass, timber and fruit trees. Blue grass, 17 acres. Timothy 1,272 acres. Clover 1,179 acres. Number of acres of cultivated timber 4,500. Number of apple trees 30,500; pears 300; peaches 26,450; plums 8,000; cherries 16,000; grapes 33,000 vines.

These estimates were made on the returns of 1877 and the proportionate increase.

The following market prices taken in June, 1892 is a fair sample of prevailing prices through the entire pioneer period, varying at times by a drop in the price of corn to fifteen and twenty cents, and eggs to three cents.

Market prices on that date for farm produce were as follows: Wheat 55 cts per bushel. Corn 30 cts. Oats 23 cts. Flax seed 70 cts. Millet seed 45 cts. Hogs \$4.00 per hundred lbs. Steers \$3.00 to 3.50; cows and heifers \$1.50 to 2.00. Eggs 10 cts per doz. Butter 10 cts per lb.

FIRST MARRIAGES IN SEWARD COUNTY.

W. W. Cox states in his history that the first marriage in Seward county occurred on the 12th of November 1866 at the residence of Samuel Long when his daughter, Eva was united in wedlock with John W. Pitt, C. J. Neighardt J. P. officiating. The first marriage in -G- precinct and the locality of the city of Seward was on the 20 of March 1867, at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Moffit, the contracting parties being David P. Imlay and Miss Mary Moffit, W. W. Cox, J. P. officiating. The second wedding in -G- precinct occurred April 20, 1867, at the home of the brides father, one and one-half miles north-east of the present city of Seward, the contracting parties being James A. Brown and Miss Sarah A. Imlay, W. W. Cox officiating. In addition to the foregoing we wish to present -L- precinct's and southern Seward county's first marriage, being that of James G. Anderson and Miss S. Alice Reed, at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Roland Reed, near old Beaver Crossing, in -L- precinct, December 18, 1866, Judge J. L. Davison officiating. We are suspicious that Brother Cox didn't know there was anybody living down on the West Blue so early in the pioneer period.

RATTLERS DANGEROUS NATIVES.

Rattle snakes were more dangerous in Seward county during the pioneer period than the Indians. The greater danger was with small children, with whom the bites of the reptiles frequently proved fatal. Chris Hoops, a farmer living about ten miles north of Seward, went out one day, about the mid-

dle of June 1887, to his barn to gather some eggs, and in a nest that was partially hid from sight he felt sure there were some eggs and putting his hand in got an egg, and at the same time felt something like the prick of a thorn on his hand, and putting his hand in the nest for another egg the same thing occurred again. He thought nothing of it, but after going to the house his hand began to pain him and one of his sons, learning of the occurrence, went out to see what was in the nest and found a rattle snake. After killing the snake the boy reported what he had found and wanted to go for a doctor, but his father objected, saying there was no need of it. He was given some whiskey which had no effect upon him and he soon became delirious, requiring three men to hold him. Dr. Breed, of Seward was summoned and administered remedies which relieved his distress and he recovered after several days.

While this was a case of recovery the following case was not so fortunate. A German lady whose name was given to us as Mrs. Swantzenburg, pioneer settler near the Seward and Butler county line, who was quite a help in the art of binding grain in the harvest field, went to the field, one day in 1873, to assist in binding some sheaves of wheat which had lain some time after being cut, and going to the first one kicked it to get it closed together for binding and received seven rattle snake bites upon her limbs before she could get away from the reptiles. A doctor was immediately summoned but the unfortunate woman died before he reached her.

In the following case which, perhaps is the only one ever known of a child sleeping all night in bed with a rattle snake, there is room for doubt of the reptile's temper at all times. Mark A. Armagost, section foreman on the North Western railway, at Beaver Crossing, son of James Armagost who settled on a homestead in Butler county, Nebraska in 1870, has the distinction of being the only living person who shared

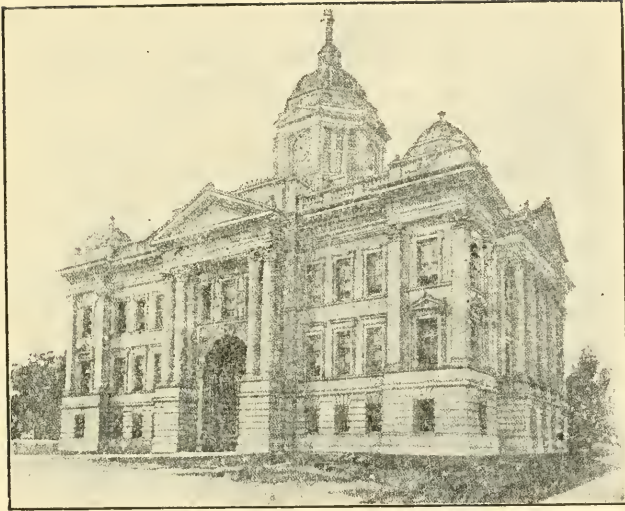
his bed when three years old with a rattle snake. The pioneer homes were not air tight and many of them become open enough to admit gophers and rats. One night in the spring of 1871 young Mark was put to bed and in a short time he called his mother and told her there was a snake in his bed. She didn't think so and told him to go to sleep. He did so and in the morning after he got up and his mother went to make the bed she turned the covers down and there in the middle of the bed lay, nicely coiled up, the boy's bed-fellow with thirteen rattles on him. Rattle snakes do not bite; their upper jaw seems to be on hinges and when they become excited the upper jaw is thrown so it stands perpendicular, and in the upper part of the mouth is a small sac of poison, and extending from this are two fangs laying close together and closed with the point back, or inwards. And when the snake is angry that fang is thrown straight out from the roof of the mouth and he coils and strikes the fangs into his victim by jumping from his coil the two fangs sprading sufficient to emit the poison into the wound. It is possible and probable that Mark's bed companion could not open his mouth and strike when covered with bed clothing, and the warmth of the child's body soothed his anger.

COURT HOUSE AND COURT HOUSE PROPOSITIONS.

The pioneer part of this work mentions the first court house in Seward county, which was a result of the action of wide-a-wake citizens of Seward soon after the question of the location of the county seat had been settled in favor of that place. A court house was considered not only a necessity, but a help to seal the location of the county capital, therefore funds were procured by private donations to erect a court house in accordance with the needs of the county, and it was built at a cost of twelve hundred dollars, but was not supposed to have been any expense to the county. And at that time the house was an expensive structure. Had it been

built to correspond with the general wealth of the county as it would if the expense had been boren by the county, it would have been constructed of sod, the same material as the school houses, churches and dwellings were made of. But it was a frame building, well arranged with rooms for the different county officials. It was found after a few years that there was such an accumulation of records and other valuable county books in the different offices that there was not only insufficient room for them in the old house, but great danger of their loss by fire, therefore rooms were rented in some of the more fire proof buildings and used for all the purposes of a court house. And the old, and first Seward county court house was abandoned and finally sold and used for a blacksmith shop. The county continued to rent rooms for a court house from about 1879 to 1906, and during that period there were two propositions submitted for the issuing of bonds to build a court house at the expense of the county, but the people seemed too well pleased with paying rent to put the same money into a building of their own and defeated the propositions at the poles.

Along in 1904 a new proposition to issue county bonds to the amount of \$100,000 to build a court house and jail, the former to cost \$88,000 and the latter \$12,000, was submitted to a vote at the general election. In the mean time following the defeat of the last proposition in 1901, voters of the county had brushed the scales from their eyes sufficient to see the unnecessary extravagant waste in renting, and added to this Lewis Moffitt had bequeathed a large and valuable farm to the county to be sold after his and his wife's death, the procedes to be applied on the building of a new court house and when the vote was taken the proposition for the issuing of ten year optional bonds carried by a vote of 2,406 for to 1,228 against. The court house was built in 1905 and 1906, an illustration of the structure is presented on the opposite page. An error in handling the funds for building the



SEWARD COUNTY COURT HOUSE.

The grand structure of which the above is a fair illustration was erected in 1905-1906 at a cost of eighty-seven thousand, two hundred and twenty-five dollars. It is composed of Indiana white stone and is as near fireproof as it is possible to make any building. The expense of the building was borne in a large degree by LEWIS MOFFIT AND WIFE, pioneer settlers and enterprising founders of the city of Seward, who bequeathed the proceeds from the sale of a large and valuable farm for that purpose. And the court house stands today as a monument to the memory of those noble and worthy early settlers.

jail delayed its erection until 1915, about ten years. The following taken from a Seward newspaper dated May 11th, 1915, is undoubtedly a correct version of the transaction:

"After being lost to sight for nine years the missing court house and jail bonds were found Tuesday in the vault of the First National bank pigeonholed among some old papers where they had been handled many times perhaps, but mistaken for old insurance policies. At the time the court house was built an agreement was made between the trustees of the Lewis Moffitt estate and Mrs. Lewis Moffitt by which the trustees were allowed to sell 400 acres of land that Lewis Moffitt had set apart, the proceeds to be used in the erection of the court house after Mrs. Moffitt's death. By an agreement of the trustees and Mrs. Moffitt, \$15,000 of the county bonds was to be reserved and the interest on same was to go to her support during her lifetime. However, Mrs. Moffitt died not long after and from that time \$10,000 of the bonds could not be found and no coupons were ever presented at the county treasurer's office for payment. Several times when a movement has been started to erect a new county jail the matter has been held up because of the missing bonds. This year, however, the county board of supervisors took up the matter of building and appointed a committee to try to locate the bonds with the result that at last they were found."

With the finding of the lost bonds the building of the new jail was almost immediatly commenced and rushed to completion during the season of 1915.

DEATH OF ETTA SHATTUCK.

The subject of this sketch, whose suffering and tragic death should touch the sympathetic heart of christiandom, was a young lady resident of Seward. She made a living for her father, an aged and helpless veteran of the war of the rebellion, by teaching school. In the winter of 1888 she was teaching a country school. On the evening of January 12th

that year, during the fierceness of that terrible calamitous fury of wind and blinding snow, she dismissed her school. In her misgivings for the safety of the children her kind heart was touched and she thought only of their welfare, and after making every possible effort to guide them safely to their homes she became bewildered and lost, wandering for hours in that fearful night, she came upon a haystack in which, with trembling limbs and frozen fingers she burrowed sufficient space to admit her exhausted body, where without nourishment, suffering with her frozen feet and limbs she laid for forty-eight hours, and until found by a searching party. She was taken to her home at Seward where it was found necessary to amputate her limbs, but she died from the effects of the severe and dreadful ordeal, February 7, 1888. Death relieved her, after nearly a month of intense suffering in mind and body, and she was laid to rest at Seward where her aged and heartbroken father, Benjamin Shattuck, shortly followed and was laid by her side.

REMEMBRANCE OF HENRY CASHLER.

Many of those who were young people living in the south west quarter of Seward county in the early seventies will remember Henry Cashler who lived at the York and Seward county line, and who was found dead in his house, Monday, November 11, 1901; at whose pioneer home they frequently met to enjoy an old time social dance while he sat with his good wife by the stove and listened to the music of his son John's fiddle, smoked his cob pipe and watched the graceful dancers and the great clouds of dust from the sod house floor, set afloat by their merry feet. We distinctly remember many occasions of the kind when with others we faced the cold north-west winds five miles to his home, well knowing that when we reached there we would meet with a warm welcome and a good fire. The kind old people are both dead now as are the times when we enjoyed those pleasures

at their home. Two sons, Alex. and John, still living, and six daughters, Mrs. Paul Peterson, Mrs. George Bray, Mrs. Laurance Deidle (now dead), Mrs. White, Mrs. Mann and one we knew as Miss Belle, survived to mourn the departure of the most kindly parents.

POULTRY AND EGGS IN SEWARD COUNTY.

This has become recognized during the past few years as one of the standard and most profitable adjuncts to the products of the farm. Car loads of eggs and poultry are going out of the county every week and good prices are being returned for them to the farmers and poultry raisers. There was a time, which includes the period from the earliest settlements in the county to as late as 1890, when the profits from the feathered flocks on the farm were considered only from the place they filled on the farmer's table. As late as the spring of 1880 we hauled twenty dozen eggs twelve miles to the Seward market and sold the entire consignment for sixty cents and took pay for it in goods at one hundred per cent profit to the dealer—net thirty cents for the twenty dozen eggs. We didn't think it was a big deal only so far as the eggs were concerned in it, but we had more eggs than we could eat and our neighbors were supplied in about the same way. We packed those eggs in bran to prevent them from being broken, and when we looked at the proceeds from their sale on our return trip home we regretted that we didn't pack them in rocks. But times change and so does the price of eggs. The time when we sold eggs for three cents, or more properly, one cent and a half a dozen because we had more than we could use, has changed and we now think we are lucky if we can buy what we can use for one cent and a half each. And egg producers feel very much depressed if eggs drop occasionally to twelve cents per dozen. But they seldom get that low in price these days and hold so much value as to be worth packing in silk tissue.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The Beaver Crossing Telephone Company and Its Change to Seward County Telephone Company and Final Sale to The Lincoln Telegraph and Telephone Company. Additional Early Settlers.

The Beaver Crossing Telephone Company was incorporated March 2nd, 1903 with a capital stock of five thousand dollars. It was to continue twenty years unless sooner dissolved by vote of the share holders. And while the company seemed not to have been dissolved its name, for some reason, was changed to Seward County Telephone Company, while its original officers continued in its service. This change was made on August 3, 1903, five months after the company's organization.

The first annual meeting of the Seward County Telephone Company was held in Beaver Crossing, January 5th, 1904. The interest at this meeting was greatly manifested by the presence of many of the stock holders from various parts of the county. The meeting was called to order by the president, Dr. C. W. Doty, at 10 o'clock, a. m. The books of the Company were carefully examined and the Company found to be in a flourishing condition. A dividend of ten per cent was declared and paid to the respective stockholders. The election of officers was held in the afternoon of the same day, Jacob Geis being elected president, Henry Wellman vice-president, J. P. Mayhew treasurer, and J. H. Ritchie secretary. Henry Gake, John Steckley, E. H. Strayer, Chris Klem and Paul Bulgrin were elected directors.

The meeting adjourned with a rising vote of thanks to the officers who had so faithfully served the company during its short existence.

During this meeting the retiring president, Dr. C. W.

Doty delivered a speech, outlining the then prosperous condition of the Company and its bright prospects for the future, a part of which we quote as a historical resume of the early telephone work in Seward County:

“Ladies and gentlemen, members of the Seward County Telephone Company:—Ten months ago your company came into existence. Its increase in so short a period has been marvelous. With a paid up capital of nearly nine thousand dollars, a gain of close to four thousand dollars since its first organization regardless of its constructive expense, its prospects for future developments are very flattering. And we feel and judge the promise of greater strides for our system during the present year of 1904 from the success gained in the few months of its existence. The building of lines has kept pace with the increase in stock, reaching east, west, north and south until we now have about sixty miles of poles and five hundred miles of wire. In addition to an excellent exchange in this city we have reason to expect a fine one in Milford in a short time, and as rapidly as finances will admit we will reach other towns of the county and especially the county seat city. In the past rural lines have done exceedingly well which is very encouraging for the future.

“Our outside connections are excellent, reaching Saline, York and Filmore counties with their valuable towns and rural districts. And the day is not very far distant when we can reach far beyond our neighboring places, thus increasing the earning capacity of our own system. The treasurer’s report has shown what we have gained this season and in view of the fact that our earning capacity has been brief, its increase reaching one hundred and twenty-five phones placed and in working order, is very assuring of many more to follow soon.

“The toll business is showing a steady gain each month, the secretary’s books showing an existing dividend equal to ten percent, Can you as stockholders have invested your

money better? I think not. With the dividend thus declared it ought to increase the coming season, as our plant has been but partially in operation during a part of the past year.

"We have taken in at some expense the Star Telephone line of Milford and feel that the act was fully justified and has been the means of harmonizing the Seward County Company and its rival on the east. With this consolidation we have been enabled to invade one of the richest fields for telephone construction we have as yet encountered.

"Except in certain localities, telephone construction is a difficult proposition, many failing to comprehend the utility of it. But our contention is its many advantages for the up-building of society, as well as its many business facilities. It is an educator for the young, keeps the older members of the family more contented to stay at home, and prevents crime by placing the rural districts in close touch with peace officials. To the farmer it is a source of profit, placing him in close communication with his fellow workers and the markets of the world, in addition to which it advances the value of his farm lands."

The Seward County Telephone Company was among the most prosperous associations of the county, and its enterprises the most successful. It had a career of about eight years of financial prosperity. However the line was sold to the Lincoln Telegraph and Telephone Company in 1912.

It has been a difficult matter with the patrons of the Seward County Telephone, as it has with a part of the stockholders in that enterprise to understand why it was closed out to the Lincoln Company. The business had been worked up to a point of permanent profit to the Seward county people, and was giving the highest grade satisfaction to its patrons. And while its service was as good as the best, no patron need be afraid of having his telephone disconnected in the

middle of the night, or secretly at any other hour, because he has failed to comply with new rules established in the middle of the night and kept a secret from him, of making monthly payment of phone rent six or seven days before it was due by previous established rule of payment. Arbitrary treatment of patrons was not resorted to in the management by the home company of telephone business and we are glad to mention the company's clean record.

ADDITIONAL PIONEER AND EARLY SETTLERS.

The following early settlers in Seward county were overlooked in our previous mention of settlements:

In -G- precinct, J. J. Hamlin settled in 1883; -K- precinct, Ethan Atwater, an early pioneer; Josiah Griffin settled in 1879, George Heid in 1883. -L- precinct, Wm. J. Hannah, Roland Terrill and John Terrill in 1883, F. M. Foster in 1869, Pierce Dygert and Wm. Ward 1872, Oliver Dickey in 1879. -M- precinct, Henry Bridenball and two sons, Henry and Fred. and Danforth Brown were 1873 settlers, Chris Klem settled in 1880, Joseph Crone, Leonard Wehr, J. T. Davis, Wm. Flack and Chas. Flack all settled in 1883. -O- precinct, Edward Healy settled in 1869, Chas. Smith in 1870 and Riley Hornady in 1883.

Those of the above early settlers who were Union soldiers in the war of the rebellion: J. J. Hamlin, Ethan Atwater, and Edward Healey.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Additional List of Deaths of Early Settlers of Seward County. Fatal Accidents and Untimely Deaths. Suicides.

Daniel Millspaw, one of the 1864 ranchers, whose ranch was located on the east half of the north-west quarter of section two, in -M- precinct, now in the west part of the village of Beaver Crossing, where he resided as a pioneer homesteader many years after the ranch period, died at Pagosa Springs, Colorado, April 14, 1893. His death was the result of a fall from a wagon on which he was riding two weeks previous to his death. He was on his way to Pagosa Springs intending to bathe for rheumatism, and in a rough place in the road one wheel of the wagon struck the root of a stump while the wheel on the opposite side of the wagon went into a chuck hole, throwing him off and breaking his collar bone in two places. He received all the care and attention possible, but on account of his advanced age he was unable to recover from the accident. His good wife preceded him to rest several years, an only daughter, Rosa McClellan surviving them.

Philip Weinand an 1870 homesteader in -M- Precinct, died at his home in Beaver Crossing, March 1, 1910. A wife, one son and three daughters remained to mourn his departure.

John Atwood, an 1867 homestead settler four miles north of Milford, died in Dayton, Washington, March 11, 1902, aged fifty-eight years. He was one of four brothers, the others being H. C., Lee R. and Silas S. Atwood who all came to Seward county about the same date. He moved to the state of Washington in 1885.

Elmer E. True, an early settler in the south part of -M- precinct, and for many years a resident of Beaver Crossing where he was engaged for some time as a clerk in Eager's store, and later conducting the hotel at that place, died at his home, March 1, 1896, aged thirty-five years. He left to mourn his loss a wife and two small children.

Mrs. Mary Atwater died at the home of her son, Ethan Atwater, four miles north-east of Beaver Crossing, December 17, 1893, aged 81 years, 4 months and 3 days. She was born in New York state August 14, 1812.

Henry H. Buck, an 1873 settler in -N- precinct, died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. J. A. Reams, near Beaver Crossing, November 8, 1894 aged 67 years. He left an aged wife and several sons and daughters.

On Saturday evening, about five o'clock, September 2nd, 1916, the citizens of Beaver Crossing were shocked by the report that Paul W. McNeil had been stricken down by heart failure. He was a promising young man, just past seventeen years old, son of Editor E. A. McNeil and wife, and his death was so sudden and untimely that it cast a shadow of sorrow over the entire community. Paul was a Nebraska boy, born at Orleans, May 10th, 1899, and came to Beaver Crossing with his parents in 1908. He left to mourn his early departure a father, mother and little sister, Genevieve, who have the heartfelt sympathy of the public in their great sorrow.

Following closely upon the shock over the sudden death of Paul W. McNeil came the report on Monday evening, September 4th, 1916, that Al. Caswell, mail carrier on rural route number three at Beaver Crossing, had died in his automobile while on his way home from the state fair. His death was thought to have been caused by ptomaine poisoning from food he had partaken of shortly before leaving the fair grounds. The day of his death was Labor Day, a national holiday and he was not required to make the trip over his mail route, therefore he attended the fair. Mr. Caswell had been carrying the mail about ten years. He was born in Providence, Rhode Island, September 27, 1869, and was 46 years, 11 months and 8 days of age. A wife, one son, an aged father, mother, two brothers and one sister were left to mourn his untimely death.

Lewis Moffitt, a pioneer who settled upon a homestead, a part of which comprises the location of the city of Seward, in 1865, and gave a large and valuable farm to aid the county in building its fine court house, died at his home in Seward, June 14, 1900, leaving a wife who followed him to rest in 1905. Mr. Moffitt had the first part of Seward laid out in 1867, and was the first postmaster for the new town, the postoffice occupying a part of his pioneer residence.

James P. Dunham, many years a resident of Seward, was twice elected councilman and twice mayor of the city, died at his home there, October 30, 1902. Mr. Dunham was born at Crawford, New Jersey, February 8, 1853. A wife and two children survived him.

Mrs. Jacob Shaffer who had been a resident of Milford since 1879, died at her home in that place, July 23, 1906, a husband and adopted daughter surviving to mourn her loss

Joseph D. Woods, an early settler at Seward where he conducted a hotel in pioneer times, later moving to Stromsburg, Nebraska, died at his home in that city, March 9, 1902, aged ninety-three years. He was the father of William Woods of Seward.

Mary Jane Linch was born in Riley, Indiana, October 16, 1838, and was married to George Foster September 26, 1859. In October 1869 she, with her husband, settled on a homestead in -N- precinct, Seward county, where she resided until the time of her death, November 12, 1901. She left to mourn her departure a husband and two daughters.

Lewis G. Castle, an 1870 homesteader near Tamora, in -F- precinct, died at his home in Seward, June 9, 1910, leaving a wife and one son. His wife, Emugene M. Castle followed him across the dark river, August 16, 1916, one son, Lewis Castle of Lincoln, surviving her.

William P. Clapp settled on a homestead in -F- precinct in 1867 where he died April 10, 1875. He left a wife who passed to her rest at her home near Tamory, June 13, 1916, aged seventy-four years, six months and thirteen days. One son and three daughters survived her.

Mrs. Ashford Holloway, ne Amanda Anderson, daughter of James and Jane Anderson who settled on a homestead two miles west of Seward in 1867, died at her home in Seward, April 5, 1915, aged fifty-two years, eleven months and thirteen days. Mrs. Holloway spent all of her life except five years in Seward county. She left a husband, one son and one daughter.

Mrs. George Gannon, who with her husband settled on a homestead near Staplehurst in 1872 and with him retired from the farm and moved to Seward in 1913, died at her home in that city, March 16, 1915, aged fifty-one years, nine months and twenty-three days. A husband, one son and two daughters survived her.

Hon. Thomas A. Healey, an 1868 pioneer settler at Milford, died in a hospital in Lincoln, Nebraska, January 14, 1910, aged sixty-seven years, six months and seven days. He was elected to the state legislature in 1876, and served many years as Milford's postmaster, being in that service up till nearly the date of his death. A wife remained to mourn the departure of a kind and loving husband.

Edward Healy, brother of Thomas A. Healey, also an early pioneer settler at Milford, died in Lincoln, Nebraska, June 8, 1906. He was born at Montreal, Canada, in 1840, and was about sixty-six years of age at the time of his death. Was elected county superintendent of public instruction in 1896 and served two terms.

Mrs. Silance, wife of Ira Silance, an 1870 settler in -K- precinct, died at her home in -L- precinct, April 4, 1896. A husband and three small children remained to mourn the departure of a loving wife and mother.

Mrs. Jerry Coffey, a pioneer settler north-east of Staplehurst, died at her home, Saturday, May 6, 1905, of pneumonia, aged 52 years. A husband, three sons and three daughters remained to mourn her departure.

Dr. Alma M. Rowe, a well known resident of Beaver Crossing in the nineties, where with her husband, Dr. E. J. Rowe, she was a successful practicing physician, died at her home in Mississippi, in June, 1906, aged 38 years. The Drs. Rowe moved to Mississippi in 1900. A husband and twin daughters, born at Beaver Crossing, survived her.

Joshua VanDervort, an 1870 stteler on a homestead one mile south of Beaver Crossing, died at his home in Friend, Nebraska, Sunday, April 28, 1905. Mr. VanDervort purchased a farm on section 15, -M- precinct, and moved on to it shortly after proving up on his homestead, where he resided until about 1894 when he retired from the farm and moved to Friend. A wife and daughter, Mrs. Avona Wehr, preceded him only a short time, to rest, the latter leaving a husband and two small daughters, one daughter, Mrs. Ora Crone of Friend, surviving to mourn the departure of a kind and loving father, mother and sister.

Edmond L. Blanchard was born in Florida, Mass., June 15, 1856, and died at York, Nebraska, Friday, May 5, 1893. Mr. Blanchard was a pioneer settler in York county, but moved in an ealy day to Seward county and settled on a farm in -L- precinct where he resided many years, returning to York in 1892 he spent the short remainder of his life in that city. His remains were brought to Beaver Crossing where funeral services were held after which they were laid to rest in the Beaver Crossing cemetery.

B. F. Perry was born in Kentucky, March 4, 1841, and came to Nebraska and settled on section 7, rail road land in -E- precinct in 1873. He retired from the farm and moved to Tamora where he resided till the end of life, November 11, 1898. He left a wife, one son and four daughters.

Samuel Manning, one of the early pioneers of Seward county, died at the home of his son in Seward, Thursday, April 27, 1905, aged 82 years. He left a wife, one son and two daughters.

Weldon Ragan, a pioneer settler in Seward county and for many years a business man in the village of Utica, died at his home April 4th, 1905.

Mrs. David Stutzman, a pioneer resident of Milford, died Sunday, April

1, 1905. Her husband, David Stutzman preceded her to rest about seven years. Seven sons and seven daughters survived them.

Patrick Smith died at his home in -L- precinct, four miles north-west of Beaver Crossing, Wednesday, August 29, 1906. Mr. Smith came to Seward county in 1884 and settled on the farm where he spent the remainder of his life. He left a wife, three sons and four daughters, his wife following him to rest, January 3, 1915, aged sixty-nine years, eleven months and ten days.

Julia Saxon Hamlin, wife of J. J. Hamlin, a pioneer settler who retired from the farm and moved to Seward in 1904, died at her home there Thursday, March 11, 1915, aged 75 years, 4 months and 1 day. She left a husband and two daughters, Mrs. Wm. Mooney of Montana, and Mrs. L. S. Konkright of Seward.

Louisa Jacobine Goeting, an early settler with her husband in -L- precinct died at her home in Germantown, May 17, 1915, aged sixty-six years, nine months and sixteen days. They retired from the farm just a short time before her death and made their home in Germantown. She left a husband and seven sons and daughters.

Warren Brown, an 1866 homesteader in -H- precinct, retired from the farm and moved to Germantown in 1892 where he passed to rest May 24, 1904.

Robert Walker, a pioneer settler in -L- precinct, died at the home of his son James in that precinct, August 12, 1880, aged 77 years.

Roland Terrill, another nobleman passed through the valley and shadow to that eternal home where God is the ruler, February 14, 1916, aged seventy-nine years. He came to Seward county in 1884 and settled in -K- precinct, near Goehner and in 1890 located on a farm in -L- precinct where he resided until the date of his death. His wife, Hanna A. Dunn Terrill, preceded him to rest nearly six years, having passed away April 7, 1909. One son, Henry Terrill, died about a year previous to his father, three sons survived him.

John T. Davis settled in the south part of Seward county in 1879, and engaged in farming for several years. In 1892 he moved to Beaver Crossing where he followed the trade of mason and plasterer. He died February 14, 1916 after about four years of continued sickness. He left a wife and several sons and daughters. John T. Davis was one of Seward county's grand pioneers, respected by all and disrespected by none who knew him, a kind, inoffensive citizen and neighbor.

Joseph Lanning, an 1870 settler at Beaver Crossing, died at the home of his son Edward, in Lexington, Nebraska, December 12, 1900. Mr. Lanning was about ninety years of age. Two sons and one daughter survived him.

J. B. Seavey, an 1870 homestead settler on the south half of the south east quarter of section ten, -M- precinct, died at his home, Monday, February 27, 1888. Mr. Seavey left a wife, daughter and one son.

A. J. Palmer, a pioneer homestead settler in -L- precinct, died at his home, Tuesday, May 10, 1887, aged sixty-nine years. Mr. Palmer planted corn until noon the day of his death, and shortly after going to the house, sank down and expired immediately.

Charles H. Smith, an 1870 homesteader in -M- precinct, died in California, June 18, 1916, aged seventy-nine years. He was a shoemaker by trade and worked at that business in Beaver Crossing in an early day.

Jacob Geis, who settled on rail road land in -K- precinct in the pioneer days, where he improved one of the fine farms of Seward county, died at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, in Lincoln, Nebraska, August 17, 1916, aged seventy-two years, three months and nine days. He was married January 31, 1871 to Mary Karl. She preceded him to the great beyond, at their home January 5th, 1901. Five sons and two daughters survived them.

FATAL ACCIDENTS AND UNTIMELY DEATHS.

The first untimely deaths in Seward county, were those of the two young sons of Conrad Grots, sr., Henry and Conrad, who resided in -H- precinct, both being killed by one bolt of lightning, July 14, 1869.

SHOOTING OF AMOS RUMSEY AT UTICA.

At a celebration in Utica, July 4, 1879, Amos Rumsey, a young son of Mr. and Mrs. William Rumsey, was standing behind a young man who was shooting at a target with a revolver. The marksman getting a little artistic in the handling of his weapon, extended his hand with the gun over his head with a fancy flourish as he was about to shoot, and accidentally pulled the trigger, discharging the gun, the ball striking young Rumsey in the side of the neck and passing downwards lodged in the spine from which the lower part of his body and his lower limbs were paralyzed. In addition to the entire medical profession of Utica, Dr. Woodward of Seward was called, but there was no relief for the unfortunate young man. He was taken to his home at Beaver Crossing, where he lingered a helpless cripple for four years when death relieved him of his suffering.

ORSON C. FISH ACCIDENT.

Orson C. Fish, who settled on a homestead in -L- precinct in 1869, and was a resident for many years, moved to Collins, Iowa in 1894, died Saturday, November 9, 1895 from injuries received by being run over by a thrashing engine. He had went under the engine to couple the machine to it and was laying down in front of one of the drive wheels, and another person started the engine, the wheel passing over his body. It seems like a miracle that he was not killed instantly, but he was favored by being in an old deadfallow or low place in the ground. He lingered a few days, during which time he underwent a surgical operation. He left a wife, three sons and four daughters.

JOHN HUFFMAN.

John Huffman, a sixteen year old son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Huffman, pioneer settlers in the vicinity of Beaver Crossing, with other boys had been out hunting and on their way home were overtaken by two neighbors in a wagon who invited them to ride. Young Huffman going behind the wagon laid his gun in with the muzzle toward him and the hammer coming in contact with the wagon box discharged the gun, the contents striking him in the face and side of the head. He was hurriedly taken to town and the entire medical profession of Beaver Crossing called to his assistance but he gradually sank until between one and two o'clock the next morning, Tuesday, February 20, 1906, his spirit took its flight to the one who gave it. He was born and always lived at Beaver Crossing. He left to mourn his untimely death, a father, mother and five brothers.

H. W. BENTLEY.

H. W. Bentley, one of Beaver Crossing's respected and valuable citizens met death while at work in his blacksmith shop, about 5 o'clock, p. m., Friday, April 5, 1895, by the bursting of an emery wheel upon which he was polishing a plow shear. The stone was run by a steam engine and just previous to the accident Mr. Bentley said to the boy who was assisting him that the wheel was not running fast enough and to "put on more steam" which were the last words he ever said, a portion of the emery wheel striking him in the head and killing him almost instantly. The wheel was comparatively a new one, having been used but a few times. It was broken in three pieces, two of which were found in the shop, the other having made a hole through the roof, was found several rods east of it. Mr. Bentley left a wife and two small daughters to mourn his untimely and tragic death.

DEATH OF MATHEW MILLSPA W.

Mathew Millspaw, an early resident of Seward county, met with what proved to be a fatal accident at Goehner, November 23, 1892. He was operating a sheller and shelling corn when one of his coat sleeves was caught in the machine, drawing his arm in and crushing it. The arm was amputated, but he died from the effects of the injury. He was a brother of Daniel Millspaw, early pioneer rancher.

UNTIMELY DEATH OF MARY STRAYER.

A very sad fatal accident occurred just north of the city limits of Seward Saturday evening, August 18, 1894. John M. Strayer and family, consisting of wife and three daughters, resided one mile north of the city. On the evening named, Mrs. Strayer and the three daughters were out riding in a buggy, when one of the girls in turning round to return home, made too short a turn, tipping the vehicle and throwing the occupants all to the ground. The mother and two older girls were slightly injured while little Mary, the youngest, sustained a dislocated neck. A doctor was quickly summoned, but arrived only in time to see her breathing her last. She was between four and five years old, the pet of the family and neighborhood.

DEATH OF PETER HUBERTUS.

Peter Hubertus, a farmer residing about two miles north of Beaver Crossing, in -L- precinct, went to the field about 6 o'clock Friday evening, April 3, 1896, to relieve one of his boys who was running a stalk cutter. He took charge of the machine, which was being drawn by a team of young, spirited horses, and soon after starting them a dog after a rabbit frightened them and they started to run. Mr. Hubertus was thrown off and one of his feet becoming caught in the machine he was dragged until the leg was mangled in a terrible manner. His family managed to get him to the house and summoned Dr. Doty who amputated the shattered leg, but on account of the loss of blood and internal injuries the unfortunate man did not regain consciousness, lingering until the next morning when death relieved him of his suffering. He left a wife and several sons and daughters to mourn the sad departure of a husband and father.

LEWIS J. GRAUL.

Lewis J. Graul, a homestead settler in -K- precinct was killed in his barn yard by lightning, May 20, 1897. A wife and several sons and daughters survived him. Mr. Graul was for several years a neighbor of the writer, and known to be a kind and honorable citizen.

DEATH OF JEFF STEVENS IN 1871 AND 1915.

The accidental death of two persons on the public highway, under similar circumstances, both of the same name, seems more than ordinarily strange, and is an incident that perhaps will never occur in Seward county again. The unfortunate men were undoubtedly relatives. The date of the first accident together with the age of the latter victim shows that the first accident occurred nine years previous to the birth of the second person.

On the morning of July 6th, 1871, Jeff. Stevens, a resident six miles north-west of Milford, was found dead under a load of overturned lumber, about four miles east of Milford, near the Middle creek bridge. He left a wife and ten children to mourn the untimely death of a husband and father.

On the morning of January 12, 1915, Jeff. Stevens, who resided about seven miles south-west of Seward, was found about one mile west of his home, in a ditch at the end of a high culvert, dead under his horse and buggy. He had left Goehner about nine o'clock the evening before for his home. The horse was blind and evidently went so near the end of the culvert that the wheels on one side of the buggy ran off and tipped it with Mr. Stevens over into the ditch, and the tightening of the lines caused the horse to back off and fall upon them. The fall had disabled the horse so he was unable to move and laid on the unfortunate man all night. Mr. Stevens was born in Seward county, and was thirty-five years of age. He left a wife and five children to mourn his untimely death.

DEATH OF JOHN G. SALNAVE.

John Gilbert Salnave was killed by the kick of a horse, Monday, August 31, 1891. He was engaged at work with a team of horses for Dewit Eager and after feeding the animals at noon he passed behind one of them and to make it stand over, slapped it on the rump when the horse kicked, striking him in the abdomen. He lingered between life and death until Tuesday, about twenty-four hours, when he passed away from his suffering. John was a single man, thirty-nine years, eight months and four days of age, a son of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Salnave who settled on a homestead in L-precinct in 1869. His father and mother having preceded him to rest, he left to mourn his untimely death, one brother, B. F. Salnave of North Cheyenne, N. Y., and six sisters; Annett, wife of William Rumsey, Lucey A., wife of O. C. Fish, both of Beaver Crossing, Lydia M., wife of J. H. Waterman of Friend, Nebraska, Margaret J., wife of Paton Dillon, Lenora, wife of Chris. Maurer, and Pamela Grace, wife of Edward C. Lanning, all of Lexington, Nebraska. His sisters and husbands were all in attendance at the funeral, September 3, 1891, conducted by Rev. J. P. Ash.

POISONING OF THE W. D. CAMP FAMILY.

One day in the latter part of May 1895, the family of W. D. Camp, residing one mile and a half north of Beaver Crossing, in -L- precinct, was poisoned by eating greens. Medical aid brought the older members of the family, Mr. and Mrs. Camp and his mother, Lucia Camp, through the affliction, but the three children were seriously effected and confined to bed several days, the younger one, Dwight, dying from its effects, Monday, May 27, 1895.

LITTLE MERWIN TUCKER.

A very sad accident in the drowning of Merwin Tucker, small son of Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Tucker, of Beaver Crossing, occurred on July 19, 1914. He with his parents, playmates and friends assembled at the river just west of Beaver Crossing on a picnic and fishing outing, and amidst the exciting pleasure of the occasion, while with other children at some distance from his parents the unfortunate boy slipped and fell down a steep bank into the water and met his death before assistance could reach him. In the struggle of the father to rescue his boy, being unable to swim he was only saved from drowning by the assistance of others of the party. Merwin was born at Pleasanton, Nebraska, April 3, 1908, and was 6 years, 3 months and 26 days old at the time of his death.

"I cannot say, and I will not say
That he is dead. He is just away!
With a cheery smile and a wave of the hand,
He has wandered into an unknown land,
And left us dreaming how very fair
It needs must be, since he lingers there.
And you—oh, you who the wildest yearn
For the old time step and the glad return—
Think of him faring on, as dear
In the love of There as the love of Here;
Think of him still as the same, I say:
He is not dead; he is just—away!"

FLOREN GEIGER.

Floren Geiger, a German farmer and an early settler in -L- precinct, went to Utica, Friday, June 16, 1894, after a load of lumber. He started home with his loaded wagon, setting on top of it using a keg of nails for a seat. When almost to his home, in going down a hill the lumber slipped

forward, striking and frightening the horses and they started to run. The keg of nails tipped with Mr. Geiger and he fell under the wagon, the wheels passing over his chest killed him instantly. He left a family of wife and children.

ALFERD PALMER.

Alfred Palmer, or more properly Alfred Street, was a very weak minded young man who had lived all of his life with Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Palmer, pioneer homesteaders in -L- precinct. After Mr. Palmer's death in 1887, Alfred formed a habit of roaming over the neighborhood and would frequently forget the way home. He would enter anybody's house without the formality of knocking at the door. On March 30, 1896 he wandered to the residence of Patrick Smith, about three miles south-west of his home where he remained until early the next morning when he left to go home. Mr. Smith went nearly to his home with him and until he thought Alfred would find the ballance of the way, but he did not find his home and wandered around until he got onto the Northwestern rail road track just ahead of the south bound freight train. This was a new sight to him and he was seen, by the engineer, advancing towards it. Thinking the man would step to one side the engineer paid no attention until nearly to him when he became alarmed and reversed his engine, throwing on all the breaks in an effort to stop the train and at the same time giving the warning whistle. The man continued to advance until within a few yards of the engine, throwing his arms in an unintelligible manner and then turned to run the other way, but did not leave the track. He made but a few steps when the front guard struck him and he fell back upon the cow catcher, striking his head against the front end of the engine, crushing his skull. The train crew picked him up and took him on to Beaver Crossing and Dr. Doty was summoned, but found him past all human help. He was placed in the depot where he remained nearly all day before anybody was able to recognize him. Undoubtedly Alfred was acting in the strange way he did, and throwing his arms so misteriously to banter the train for a race, and had no idea it could catch him.

LEONARD WEIBLY.

Leonard Weibly, of Cordova was drowned in the West Blue river while bathing with companions, July 8, 1893. It was thought that he was taken with a cramp while in deep water and it being dark, in the evening his companions were not aware of his condition until too late to render him assistance. He was 34 years, 1 month and 2 days of age.

FRED FEIGIN KILLED.

Fred. Feigin, a farmer residing two miles south of Seward, an early settler, was killed by a train of cars upon which he had been a passenger to Tamora. He had arrived at Tamora when the accident happened and it was thought that in trying to get off of the car before the train stopped he had been thrown under the wheels, but it is probable that he lost his balance and fell off of the platform between the cars, the rear car running over him. He had been a resident of Seward county for thirty years. A wife and two children were left to mourn his untimely death.

DROWNED.

While bathing in the river just south of Beaver Crossing, Emil Martsen, a young man, was drowned, June 19, 1898.

In August 1899, Clifford Heizart, a boy about fifteen years old, resident of Beaver Crossing, was drowned in the river, west of the village. He was subject to fits and was at the river alone and it was thought that he fell in the water while in a fit.

William Tjarks, a young man seventeen years old, of Dunbury, Nebraska, in company with Emil Honbrock, a young man of the same place and Wm Sherwood of -L- precinct, were in the river bathing, just south of the depot at Beaver Crossing, July 7, 1893, when young Tjarks started to wade across the stream and when near the middle he stepped into deep water and was drowned. His companions both being unable to swim could render no assistance.

Near Mayrsville, in -C- precinct, in June, 1882, a young man named Mentz, while plowing corn, was dragged into the millpond by his team, and was drowed with his horses.

Leonard Goettler, a young man, was drowned while bathing in a creek four miles south-west of Seward, June 12, 1887.

Peter Gerken was drowned in the river just south of Seward, July 15, 1874, while bathing.

Tim Lacker fell into the river at Milford while fishing and was drowned, June 15, 1901.

James Arnell, an old soldier inmate of the Soldiers Home at Milford was drowned in the river near the Home, Sunday, April 13, 1913.

John Cavanaugh, another comrade inmate of the Soldiers Home at Milford, was drowned in the river near the Home, December 13, 1913.

REV. WILLIAM MURPHY.

Rev. Father Murphy, pastor of the Catholic church at Beaver Crossing was killed about two miles north-west of that village, by the overturning of his automobile, November 7, 1913. He was driving fast and overtaking a buggy he made an effort to pass it and turned into a deep ditch which caused the accident. Rev. Murphy was well known throughout Nebraska, and held in high esteem by the general public, regardless of religious creeds. His aim seemed to consist in living a true christian life and to do good to any and all whom he came in contact with.

SHOOTING ACCIDENT.

Alfonzo Mellick, a thirteen year old boy who resided with his parents on a farm south of Pleasant Dale, accidentally shot himself while trying to mount a horse with a loaded gun. He was away from home and failing to return his father searched for him, finding his dead body, Saturday afternoon, February 15, 1902.

WILLIAM ALLISON KILLED.

William Allison, son of Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Allison, 1869 homestead settlers in -K- precinct, who spent the greater part of his life in Seward county, was accidentally killed by an engine in the railway yards in West Lincoln, Saturday, July 15, 1905. He was employed by the B. & M. rail road company and was on duty at the time of the accident. A father and two brothers survived him, his mother having died some time previous.

KILLED IN HARVEST FIELD.

Herman Webermeir was the victim of a fatal accident in his harvest field July 25, 1903. He was running a harvester and something got out of order with the harness on one of the horses and he stepped out on the tongue of the machine between the horses to fix the harness, which frightened them and they started to run, he falling to the ground in front of the machine which passed over his body. He died that evening at eleven o'clock. Mr. Webermeir was a resident of -N- precinct where he owned a large farm and was a progressive and prosperous farmer. He left a family.

NICK SPRINGER.

On October 3, 1915, Nick Springer, twenty-one years old, son of Valentine Springer, residing eight miles south-east of Seward, was found dead in the Blue river near his home. He had gone hunting and had been riding in a boat and when he picked up the gun to leave the boat it was thought it was accidentally discharged, the ball entering his head.

FROZEN TO DEATH-

January 15, 1893, a German gentleman, named Schull, about seventy years of age, residing near Milford, started to walk up the railroad track from East Milford to attend the dedication of a new German Lutheran Church near Ruby, about six miles distant. He did not reach the church and after the close of the services his dead body was found, frozen stiff, within about half a mile of it. He was in feble health and it was thought that he had become exhausted by the walk facing a cold north wind and set down, freezing to death.

THE SCHULTZ TRAGEDY.

The most heart rending accident known in Seward county occurred near Goehner, Wednesday evening, October 30, 1903. F. Schulz went to the field, a short distance from his house, to mow some grass, and unobserved by him, his almost infant daughter followed him and thinking to play a joke upon him, hid in a bunch of tall grass in the way of the cicle of the machine and her father was not aware that she was even in the field until the knives had run upon her and severed both of her feet. Physicians were soon in attendance and did all that was possible to save her life, but the little sufferer passed to the one who said "suffer little children to come unto me," in the early morning of the next day.

FIVE YOUNG MEN KILLED BY LIGHTNING.

On Sunday, July 6, 1899, five young men were riding in a buggy north of Staplehurst, when a storm overtook them and lightening striking their rig, killed all of them. Their names were: Victor Dobson, Ira Dobson, John Ames, Thomas Bidwell and Herman Egars. They lived in the vicinity of Staplehurst and were trying to reach home before the storm.

OTTO HALLSTEIN KILLED BY TRAIN.

Otto Hallstein, nineteen year old son of Mr. and Mrs. George Hallstein residing near Goehner, was instantly killed by a B. & M. railway train at the crossing one mile north of Seward, Wednesday morning, March 18, 1903. The young man had attended a dance at Bee and had taken Ada Wickersham to her home, about one mile and a half east of where the accident occurred, in his buggy, and then started for his home, and the return of the horses there without the buggy or driver aroused suspicion of his friends and a brother who went to look for him found the vehicle torn to peices and the lifeless body of his brothet laying near the track. The horses were not injured.

Claud Smith, a thirteen year old boy, started to cross the rail road in front of a train near Utica, May 28, 1887, and was run over and killed.

Frank D. Grant, son of an -N- precinct pioneer, was dragged to death by a runaway horse, his foot becoming caught in the stirrup of the saddle, July 24, 1879.

October 16, 1879, Miss Lizzie Welty, residing near Seward, lost her life by the accidental discharge of a gun.

A ten year old son of M. Minsell, of -A- precinct, was killed by the accidental discharge of a gun, November 18, 1897.

An accidental shooting occurred at Utica, November 8, 1898 by which a twelve year old son of Joseph Manweiler, of that place, lost his life.

Claudius Roberts, a Seward boy, was accidently shot and killed at Ogden, Utah, July 20, 1903.

April 20, 1901 a little son of Charles Dingman, of Seward, was burned to death; fire having accidently caught in his clothing.

July 9, 1901 a little son of Mrs. B. Robottom, living near Germantown was killed by the kick of a horse.

Charles Prest, of -H- present was killed October 12, 1899 by a fall from a load of lumber.

In August 1899 Samuel Manley, of Seward, was killed in Montana by a bronco pony he was trying to ride. He was brought home to Seward for burrial.

Fredrick Beckman, a farmer residing near Germantown, was killed July 7, 1895, by the kick of one of the horses he was working with in his field.

William A. Thomas, a resident of Bee, lost his life on a street of Davenport, Iowa, where he was visiting friends, April 18, 1904, by being accidently thrown from a bicycle he was riding, in front of a street car. He was brought home to Bee and burried in one of the cemeteries at Seward.

On Sunday, June 4, 1916, D. L. Adams, residing about a mile south-west of Beaver Crossing, sustained injuries in an automobile accident which resulted in his death fifteen days later. He was sixty-five years and two months of age. A wife and several sons and daughters survived him.

April 22, 1880, Ira Windall lost his life by being caught in the machinery in the mill at West Mills. He left a wife and two children to mourn the tragic death of a kind husband and father.

April 22, 1897, a young son of Loren Jensen, residing near Germantown was instantly killed by being thrown from and under a stalk cutter.

(Correct date of drowning of Wm. T. Jarks, page 278, July 7, 1911.)

The seven year old son of William Teuscher, of -J- precinct was run over and killed by the water tank of a traction engine, Tuesday, November 6, 1906. The boy was at school and having been dismissed for recess was playing with other children around the machine. While trying to ride on the tongue of the wagon he fell off and before the engine could be stopped the wheels passed over his body.

Wm. J. Hannah an early settler in -L- precinct was kicked by one of his work horses in the abdomen, and after intense suffering for eleven days was relieved by death, August 23, 1912. A wife and several grown sons and daughters survived him.

Frank Hedge, a young man twenty-six years old, a resident of Seward, was drowned in the Blue river at that place, Friday, June 23, 1916, while bathing with a companion.

Wm. A. Pierce, a former Staplehurst boy, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. L. Pierce, early residents of that place, was crushed by the cars at Ashland, Nebraska, Tuesday, May 23, 1906, and died shortly after the accident, aged twenty-three years. His remains were entered in a Seward cemetery.

Wm. D. Bowers, a pioneer settler in the city of Seward, and well known by a majority of Seward county settlers, was found dead in his bed April 27 1891. He had been in failing health several months.

Frank Oldenberg, for many years a resident of Seward, and familiarly known as "Dutch Frank," being for some time in failing health was cared for at the county poor farm where he was found on the morning of May 6, 1901, dead in his bed.

William Ladwig of Seward died November 25, 1914, from the effects of burns received twenty-four hours previous. His clothing caught fire from a blazing paper which blew against him while in an alley. He was one of Seward county's earliest pioneers, who had been a resident of it forty-five years. He was eighty-seven years of age. Two sons and two daughters survived him.

Fred Meyer, a farmer residing one mile north of Seward, received fatal injuries in a runaway accident near the Northwestern depot, Saturday, October 31, 1903, from which he died the next day. The team was a pair of mules which became frightened at a railway train.

April 1, 1897, Ray Vance met an accidental death while attempting to board a moving train at Utica.

October 1, 1900, E. E. Mitchell, residing six miles north of German-town was killed by lightening.

April 15, 1901, Mrs. Christiana Obermeyer, wife of W. B. Obermeyer of Beaver Crossing, lost her life in an Omaha hotel by asphyxiation from an open gas jet.

July 11, 1876, Lizzie Gray of -B- precinct was killed by a runaway horse.

February 5, 1900, a two year old child of Herman Langor, of Seward, was scalded to death, and March 5, 1900 a three year old child of L. G. Soverign, of Ruby, was burned to death.

SUICIDES OF SEWARD COUNTY CITIZENS.

There is no class of unfortunates for whom there seems to be so much room for double sympathy as that class known as suicides. The frightful mental strain and anguish leading up to and prompting the act of self destruction can only be understood by those who have yielded to its influence. And following this is the ending of the most precious gift God has given to humanity in some tragic and violent manner. The voluntary last separation from loved kindered and friends, together with the self willed "leap in the dark," down through the valley and shadow of death, cannot be attributed to sanity nor charged against insanity as an offense. In the loss of reason may always be found a diseased brain which is no more offense than a diseased body, and in this misfortune lies the cause of the suicide's death.

Conrad Reush, while in a state of mental excitement, took his own life, at Pleasant Dale, April 15, 1899.

Phil Bridenbaugh, of -N- precinct, was the victim of self destruction, in a fit of despondency, July 9, 1900.

W. S. Wallick, an 1875 settler in -F- precinct, took his own life by shooting himself in the temple with a 32-calibre revolver, at Tamora, Tuesday morning, March 10, 1914.

Fred Wimken, a farmer who resided six miles south-west of Utica, hung himself Friday morning, May 5, 1893. The cause for his act of self destruction has never been understood. He was financially well fixed, out of debt and had no family or neighborhood trouble.

Harry A. French, a long time station agent at Utica, committed suicide by shooting himself at Ashland, Nebraska, Monday, April 5, 1915. His rash act was attributed to despondency over ill health.

John Doody, an early settler on the north-east quarter of section 22,-L-precinct, was found dead in his bed, January 13, 1878. He was a bachelor living alone, and his death was undoubtedly due to self administered poison.

MRS. A. L. JOHNSTON.

Mrs. A. L. Johnston, an aged widow lady, living alone in Beaver Crossing, committed suicide by hanging herself in an outhouse of her home, Wednesday night, June 26, 1901. Her lifeless body was discovered hanging in front of the door, Thursday morning by Mrs. W. A. Wilsey who lived near Mrs. Johnstons home. Despondency over her loneliness was evidently the cause of her act of self destruction. She was the mother of three sons all surviving her.

SUICIDED IN JAIL.

Hugh R. Fullerton, a young man confined in the jail at Seward, committed suicide by hanging himself with a rope constructed of a pair of drawers, Saturday, April 14, 1894. He left a short note to his father as follows: "Well father I have waited for you till I can't wait any longer. I want you to take me back home and lay me by the side of my brother, so I will bid you all goodbye. I would sooner be dead than shut up in a cage. H. R. Fullerton."

BURNED HIMSELF TO DEATH.

William R. Connor, twenty years old, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Connor of -A- precinct, destroyed his own life, Saturday night, August 24, 1906 by burning himself to death in his father's barn. There was a disagreement existing between the young man and his father and he had left home in the spring. He returned home about two weeks prior to the tragedy, but there was still a feeling of disagreement between them which seemed difficult to become reconciled. He tried to borrow a revolver and failing to do so, resorted to the terrible manner named, of ending his trouble. He left a note which was afterwards found, stating his intention to burn himself and the barn together.

JOHN MUIR SUICIDE.

Despondent over financial difficulties and the death of a baby daughter, John Muir, one of the early settlers of Milford, took his own life by firing four shots into the right side of his body from a 32-calibre revolver, September 30, 1902. He left a note directing the disposition of his life insurance, amounting to four thousand dollars, which he wished divided equally between his wife and little son.

JOHN TUCKER drowned himself in Conelley's fish pond, five miles west of Seward, May 30, 1901. He was suffering with a despairing fit of insanity, resulting in self destruction.

MARY A. WHITE.

Mary A. White, aged sixty-five years, committed suicide by taking strychnine, Monday afternoon, September 25, 1899, at the home of her sister, Mrs. Neff, who lived twelve miles north of Seward. Mr. and Mrs. Neff had been at Seward during the day and were greatly shocked at the sad occurrence, both being very old people. A nephew to whom she told that she had taken the poison, ran to a neighbor's and gave the alarm, a physician being immediately summoned, but he arrived too late.

RILEY HORNADY.

Riley Hornady, an 1882 pioneer settler in Seward county, committed suicide by taking carbolic acid, Tuesday morning, August 29, 1916 at Council Bluffs, Iowa, where he had moved in April to enter the mercantile trade. He was fifty-seven years and six months of age, and left a wife, four sons and one daughter to mourn his sad death. Mr. Hornady was a near neighbor to the writer for a period of nine years, in the village of Beaver Crossing, and we knew him as a man of exemplar habits, cheerful disposition, inoffensive and kind. He was an able farmer and as such, combined with a financial ability, had accumulated sufficient means for the comfortable support of his family and to enable him to spend the remainder of his days in ease and comfort. He had made a good home in Beaver Crossing to which he was personally attached, the attractiveness of which with what seemed to him an abandonment of it in a fruitless business effort which had no encouraging prospects for him, with other disappointing and discouraging matters, helped to sink his previous cheerful mind into that dispondent state which prompted self destruction. A short time before his fatal deed he visited his Beaver Crossing home and spent several hours with the writer, during which time he freely expressed his desire to return to his home to stay, declaring his mistake in listening to the advice of others to enter into a losing deal in trade. In his death we feel that another of God's noble men, whose face was always lit up with a kindly smile, has passed to the great city beyond the silent river.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Soldier Element in the Early Settlement of Seward County. A Closing Glance at the Early Advance Guards of Civilization. An Eloquent Narration of Pioneer Achievements From the Omaha Bee—Promptings of the Semi-centennial Celebration of Nebraska's Statehood.

In the late sixties and early seventies Seward county was comparatively a bee-hive swarming with Union soldiers, remnants from the fields of Antietam, Atlanta, Stone River, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Gettysburg, the Andersonville stockades and many other places renowned in history for scenes of conflict and prison horrors. The county could well claim to be the camp ground of a large brigade of that grand army that kept "Old Glory" undivided and floating in the breeze, and made it represent, at last, a real free and undivided country. The number of this indomitable band of home-seekers which settled in Seward county is not and perhaps never will be fully known, but beneath its sod, on the last camp ground are sleeping those who have answered the last roll call, while the fast depleting ranks of remaining comrades press forward to pitch their tents upon the field with those gone before.

While we realize our inability to give a complete list of the dead and living veteran soldiers of the war of the rebellion who were early settlers in Seward county, we present the following statement of the number of well known dead, there being perhaps an equal number throughout the county that are not accounted for:

In the cemeteries at Seward there are resting in their last sleep, ninety-two comrades. In the Ruby, Staplehurst and Germantown cemeteries there has been fifteen accounted for while in the Beaver Crossing, Utica and Milford cemeteries there are forty-six more, making a total of one hundred and fifty-three dead. Many of the soldier pioneers of Seward

county have moved away, some to other counties and some to other states where many of them are tenting upon the new camp ground. It is perhaps a fair estimate to say there are one fifth of the squad of old soldier settlers in Seward county that can be counted as living at the present time, October 1916. Those living comrades who settled upon homesteads in pioneer days have nearly all retired from their farms to the towns and it is to be noted that there is not a sufficient number in any one of the villages for a quorum in a G. A. R. Post. Cordova has but one old soldier of the war of the rebellion, and the Beaver Crossing post which had at one time about thirty members, was forced to surrender its charter several years ago on account of insufficient numbers for a quorum—nine members. Surely these signs signify something. The old boys are silently passing away.

There are perhaps not one of the dead or living comrades who settled in Seward county whose services are not worthy of special mention, but we are not personally acquainted with the facts only in a limited number of cases through the county. Of those buried at Seward we will mention Wm. W. Konkright, who enlisted in the 8th Iowa Infantry, August 17, 1861, being one of the first volunteers for the war of the rebellion and was mustered out of the service, April 20, 1866, at Selma, Alabama, having served four years and eight months. During this time Mr. Konkright participated in eighteen regular battles and thirteen skirmishes, and was one who passed safely through the great conflict. Isaac D. Neihardt, enlisted early in the war as a private and was promoted several times, reaching the rank of captain. Took part in many battles, being wounded in 1864, and was mustered out of the service in May, 1866.

Chas Emerson who settled on a homestead in L-precinct in 1870, enlisted in an Indiana regiment upon the breaking out of the war and served to its close, participated in seven-

teen general battles, marched with Sherman through Georgia to the sea, was not wounded and did not spend a day in a hospital. Comrade Emerson died at Tamora in 1896.

George H. Winand, for many years a resident of Beaver Crossing, now resting in its cemetery, saw much service in the field during the war, and had the unenviable experience of being a guest of Captain Werz, in his Andersonville prison several months. Comrade Winand had formed a great disrespect for his landlord and expressed no emotional sentiments of regrets because he, "the meanest man on earth" had been hung, only that he was not hung soon enough.

Victor Vifquain, previously mentioned in this work, was the only representative of Seward county in the Union army during the war of the rebellion. And he left no cause for his county or state to feel dishonored by his services. In fact he mounted the upward steps of fame for valuable and heroic service as rapidly as most any other man in the army, and returned to his home bearing the well earned, honorable title of General Vifquain.

SPANISH WAR VETERANS IN SEWARD COUNTY.

Seward county furnished a number of soldiers for the war with Spain who went where duty called them. Some lost their lives and many their health. One of the former, Orson E. Humphery, previously mentioned in this history, was a son of an 1861 veteran. And it has been a matter of pride to the old soldiers to know that the sons of Seward county, if not their own sons, stood ready to take from their feeble and trembling hands that starry emblem known to them as "Old Glory," and place new honors upon its folds throughout the civilized world. And in this grand achievement of the younger "boys in blue" the older ones view a new victory gained from their school of patriotism and all are glad to honor and cherish the deeds of the boys of the "Spanish war."

FOOT PRINTS OF PIONEER TIMES.

As the final closing of this history approaches in this, the sixteenth year of the twentieth century, we are reminded of the flight of time by it and also by the demonstrative preparation of Nebraska's citizens to celebrate the semi-centennial of the state's statehood. And we review the chain of eventful time from the period of the red man's dominion as lord and king, in vain search for a missing link in the onward march of progress.

While we are unable to even make an outline of the great display of modern thought and inventive attractions that will round out a full and appropriate program of that historic event, the first part of which was recently rendered in the city of Omaha, we can point back with pride to the footprints of the pioneers in their endeavors to lay the foundation upon which this great commonwealth rests today, and for which proud rejoicings are echoing and to re-echo throughout the nation. And along this line we are pleased to quote upon the pages of this history the following able and eloquent tribute of appreciation of the courage, fortitude and endurance of the people who with primitive methods and means, were the advance guards of civilization, from the Omaha Bee of October 8, 1916, prompted by the grand display of that part of the program, carried out by that city, of the semi-centennial historical exhibition.

A MESSAGE OF PRIDE.

"The magnificent moving picture of western progress staged on the streets of Omaha in honor of the semi-centennial of Nebraska's statehood carried a message of pride to hearts that revere the deeds of pioneers. Not in the prehistoric floats, the legions of Coronado, nor in the figures of trappers and fur traders, was the message glimpsed, nor yet in the gorgeous colors of statehood's fruition. It threaded through and linked up the primitive tools and vehicles with

which pioneer settlers trekked over prairies, deserts and mountains, uncovered the treasure houses of gold and silver and transformed the wilderness into fruitful fields.

"The prairie schooner and the patient plodding ox teams are as a mirage of long ago, almost unreal to people of an automobile age. Yet they carried both power and sustenance, combined the pull and the meat, and enabled the pioneer to reach his destination. While lacking the speed of the horse and the mule, the ox team was well within the average resources of the home and fortune seekers, and thus became linked with the forces which implanted civilization in the west.

"These typical instrumentalities of western settlement merely glimpse the courage and fortitude of the men and women who employed them in their quest for material betterment. The hardships of primitive shelters, the struggle to wring from virgin soil uncertain crops, the lonely vigils in a hostile country, and the great distances which too often prevented neighborly co-operation—all these and more united in testing the strength, confidence and determination of the empire makers. Their dauntless courage and sublime faith in the future shone forth with equal luster in the trek of Mormon converts behind pushcarts from the Missouri river to Salt Lake.

"There were heroes and heroines in the pioneer days. They were cast in large molds—large of heart, of generosity and of cheerfulness amid privations. Too many, unfortunately, filled nameless graves, succumbing to the rigors of climate and primitive habitation, but those who overcame the hardships of the early days and lived to enjoy the fruition of their struggles deserved the crown and tribute of work nobly done."

CLOSING OF OUR SEWARD COUNTY HISTORY.

The closing of this work does not close Seward county history which will continue to the end of time, but we trust

that our efforts will aid others in producing records of past events, especially those which will never be repeated, their time and condition having passed to eternity and will never be known the second time, such as the sod house and dugout period together with the pioneer time in general. Ill health and other matters have combined to detain us in our work on this history. However it has proven to be a task that could not be accomplished in a day nor any other short period of time. While we are glad to say that it is done we cannot say we are entirely satisfied with it, and perhaps that is no exception to other authors in closing a work.

Fully realizing the fact that in these days of speed and hurry people do not care to read extended articles we have condensed the matter as much as details of facts will permit.

No printer can reliably read and correct the proof of his own work, but we trust that our little errors, though many, may for that reason, not be taken seriously nor draw attention of readers from the interesting features of the work.

We wish to extend our sincere thanks to Editor E. A. McNeil for his kindly assistance in the art features of this history. And we hold in grateful remembrance the valuable and kind assistance in compiling it, rendered by Lewis S. Konkright of Seward.

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