CHAPTER V

REMINISCENCES AND NARRATIVES OF PIONEERS

Details of the Anderson-Smith Massacre, by Mr. and Mrs. John Thomssen, Sr. — Her Quota Furnished, by A. Schernekau — Reminiscences of a Hall County Pioneer, by Norman Reese — Early Life — Arriving at Grand Island — Other Early Settlers in Wood River Valley — Our First Farming — Stage Routes — Squire Lamb's Route — During the Civil War — Indians had Visited — Pressed into Service as Scout — Uncle Sam's Surveyors — Many Middle Men — The Right of Way — During the Last Days of Indian Occupation, by W. E. Martin, Doniphan, Nebraska — Settlement Here — An Early Serviceable Well — Our Early Neighbors — Indian Visitors — Indians' Outfit and Customs — Let the Women do the Work — The Indians' Camp — Their Evening Meal and Menu — Preparing Clothing and Meats — A Broken Axle — Samuel Clay Bassett — A Few Glimpses of Early Life in Hall County — William (Jack) Anderson Settlement — Goes into Business — The Storm of 1873 — The Cowboy Regime — Three Years at Sidney — A Freighting Experience — Grand Island in Early 'Eighties — Early Horse Race — Other Early Recollections — A Rattlesnake on Locust Street

DETAILS OF THE ANDERSON-SMITH MASSACRE

Scenes Presented Shortly After

BY MR. AND MRS. JOHN THOMSSEN

Mrs. John Thomssen, who was the one single young lady who came to the present Hall County with the first settlers, relating briefly her experiences states that on account of the threatened starvation of the colony, she left the settlement in September, two months after the location, for Omaha, and on March 5, 1858, went to Council Bluffs for two years. In 1860 she was there married to John Thomssen. In the spring of 1860 they returned to the settlement and left for Fort Kearny shortly afterward, remained at Fort Kearny three months and then returned to Hall County, residing here ever since. Most of this traveling was done by ox-team, excepting the trip on the return from Fort Kearny which was done by stage, "Pap" Lamb being the stage driver.

John Thomssen, Sr., had the following to say for an historical edition of *The Independent* in 1907:

"Fort Kearney was at that time our market for corn and produce. We had to cross the Platte River near Fort Kearny, which was no small job with a loaded wagon. One day Charles Boehl, Henry Thomssen, and I started out for Fort Kearny with corn. We had ox teams and traveling was slow. We got as far as the site of the present Wood River where lived two families by the name of Smith and Andrews. There was some snow on the ground and Smith and Andrews had been hauling wood on sleds from the creek. Just as we drew near Mr. Smith came up from the creek with his empty sled, at full gallop, gesticulating to the women folks as he drew near. We were soon at the scene. When we arrived everybody was crying. We at once learned what had happened. The Indians had killed Andrews and his two sons and also the Smith boy. Mr. Smith had escaped. We

made a hurried trip down to the creek, which was only a little distance from the house. The first thing that we saw was the sled loaded with wood. But the horses were gone. The harness was cut to pieces and scattered about. A little distance from the sled lay Mr. Andrews, dead. An arrow had struck him from the side under the arm and had nearly gone through him. He was lying under a bank where he had probably gone for shelter. We next found the axe. It was covered with blood. We found the Andrews boys nearby. They were both dead. One of the boys was lying with his face downward, with a club across his neck, but no arrow was to be seen. Evidently he had been knocked down with the club and then murdered with the axe. The other boy was shot with an arrow through the wrist and then brained with the axe. Both of the boys' faces and clothes were covered with blood. We hunted for some time to find the Smith boy but hardly dared to go farther into the woods for fear of being attacked by the Indians ourselves. The boy was found by other parties next day. He had also been shot and clubbed to death. We hurriedly alarmed what neighbors we could, got together eighteen men, and started in pursuit of the Indians. They had gone west up Wood River. During the next night there came another snow storm which obliterated all tracks and we returned home."

HER QUOTA FURNISHED

How Original Settlement Provided Volunteer That Bondsmen Might Be Freed.

BY A. SCHERNEKAU

Landing in New York on March 24, 1857, I came direct to that Mecca of all Schleswig-Holsteiners — Davenport, Iowa. I found that my cousin, Fred Hedde, had procured work for me on the farm of Mr. Rusch, near Davenport. He himself had left a few days previously with a party of Germans for the Platte River Valley in Nebraska. It was his desire for me to remain at work on the farm to acclimate myself before undertaking the trip into the western wilderness.

Mr. Hedde returned in the fall to Davenport and in the spring of 1858 the trip overland, to Council Bluffs, was undertaken. We were a small train of perhaps seven wagons in all, drawn by oxen. Owing to an unusually late and wet season we had to undergo many hardships in crossing the numerous swollen streams, bridges being either swept away or standing in the wide bottoms, all approaches to them being covered with water and only to be reached by wading and swimming, holding to an ox-bow while driving, and guiding your team through the raging waters to the bridge.



A. SCHERNEKAU

But, after long delays and much waiting for the waters to subside, we reached Omaha. From there we took the "military road" only lately surveyed up the valley of the Platte. Here we found a few substantially built bridges, erected by the government, over the Papilion Creek and the Elkhorn River. Our traveling was better up the valley. Only the insignificant "Prairie Creek" caused us some trouble in crossing the same, as the bottoms were very soft. I will here suggest to the indulgent reader of these notes to imagine a lot of green immigrants from Europe, unacquainted with the country, with its customs,

and even, to a large extent, with its language. It was really not an easy task that these men and women had before them. But, young and strong, and with great hopes of a brilliant future, we struggled on. In July — I have not the exact date on hand — we finally reached the settlement.

COTTONWOOD AS BASIS

We found four double log houses built and occupied by the colonists who had preceded us. The houses had been built with a view of defense, in case of an Indian attack, being provided with loop-holes for musketry, the cattle to be corralled in the space left between them, the houses themselves forming part of the inclosure.

The town of "Grand Island" had been surveyed and also the "claims" of the settlers. Each one of the latter wishing to have some land close to the "city limits" it was decided that forty-acre tracts should be laid out all around the town, touching with one side of the city limits. These tracts were then, by lot, distributed to the original colonists who had come in '57. The strip of timber on the islands in the north channel of the Platte were surveyed, similarly in twenty arce lots, and "drawn for" or chosen by lot, among the immigrants, as for the forty-acre pieces. As no government survey had been made this survey started from a big dead cottonwood tree on an island in the river, near the northeast corner of the town.

Ditches and sod walls in place of fences had been constructed by the industrious and hard-working people, but were afterwards abandoned, partly as being only imaginary lines and partly because they did not give satisfaction as permanent enclosures. The sod did not grow but, with the sandy soil and the burning by the hot rays of the summer sun, the disintegration was soon almost complete.

The only houses in the town proper, as laid out, were two log structures with double roofs — one put up by Mr. Hagge and the other, I believe, for Mr.Hedde, who soon afterward moved to his claim, on the west side of town as then laid out. Land had been broken up on the different claims of the settlers and corn planted; but little was raised this season owing to the fact that the cattle got in and destroyed the crops. The season being so unusually wet there was a rank growth of grass all over the bottom, such as I do not remember ever having seen since. In doing our work we were always more or less wet, going through the sloughs filled with water, or through the long grass. The result was that most of us had attacks of fever or ague during the summer. I was one of the last to be taken ill — we were mowing slough grass and binding the same into sheaves to thatch the house of Mr. Hedde, at the time.

The roofs of some of the first cabins, made of cottonwood bark, did not answer the purpose at all. Thatch was therefore substituted as roofing material.

LEARNED WHAT FIRES WERE

A rather pleasant winter from 1859 to 1860 brought a disastrous prairie fire — I think in January of the latter year. By this fire most of our provisions were burned, which again almost rendered the little community to the famine conditions that had prevailed in the first winter when provisions from Omaha failed to arrive in time. This year, however, the general government stepped in and prevented extreme suffering by sending us a month's rations for thirty men.

How little we knew the nature of and therefore how little we at first feared the prairie fire will be illustrated by the following: I was at the time living with Mr. Hedde, west of the "town" limits. The day was bright and pleasant. We saw, about noon, the long lines of the flames of a prairie fire below the settlement — that is the four double log houses built by the first settlers. It was suggested after dinner that I hitch up — that was putting the ox team to the farm wagon which had to do duty as a runabout — and drive Mrs. Hedde down to get a good view of the fire. We did not realize the danger and in what short time it would be upon us. Before we had gone far the fire had reached the houses and we had to hasten down there, to help, if possible.

The next year I had my own land and was

building a small cabin, 12 x 16 feet. I broke land and planted corn and regarded myself as having reached my ideal — a real cabin and 160 acres of land which I could call my own. This land was located west of Mr. Hedde's and Mr. Stolley's, west of the original town of Grand Island, and a part of it is now occupied as a site for a beet sugar factory. While I was living on this land the war broke out.

WERE ABOLITIONISTS

In common with a very great majority of the Germans who had come to the country in the previous years, I was an ardent abolitionist and the desire to assist in the carrying out of these views as well as the sense of duty to my adopted country, led me to enlist. When the first regiment of infantry was raised in Nebraska my affairs at the farm were in such shape that it was impossible for me to join the same. In the fall of the year, however, when a second call was made to fill up the depleted ranks of the regiment and Hall County came in with two men for her share, I concluded that I would be one of them. In a meeting one Sunday, at Schuler's, I came forward as a recruit to represent Hall County as one of her quota and Jack — (I have forgotten his name) volunteered also but for some reason or other he did not go to the front. In October, 1862, I enlisted at Nebraska City where the recruiting officers were stationed, and in a few weeks found myself at the front, joining the regiment when it was on the Black River, in Missouri.

There followed three years of a soldier's life with such experiences and incidents as such a life brought to thousands during these years. I was wounded while on the White River in Arkansas, came back to Grand Island on sick leave, and finally joined my regiment again, which had again been recruited up and reorganized and sent to fight the Indians on the plains. While at home on a furlough we had our miniature "Indian war" at Grand Island. The "O. K." store, the big log building, was fortified by building a big sod wall with bastions on the four corners around the same large enough to hold wagons and cattle of the settlers flocking in from all sides for protection.

General Curtis coming up from Omaha with an expedition to protect the Overland road left with us a six-pounder field piece, with ammunition. We had no occasion ever to use the cannon, neither was our "fort" attacked. The settlement proper never was molested, the Indians probably being aware of our preparations. We were, however, in my opinion, very lucky not to be attacked by the red-skins at that time, as our guns were very indifferent, consisting of all kinds of rifles, some shotguns, a few government muskets (condemned), and a great number of all makes of revolvers. The greatest trouble was the lack of proper ammunition for all of these arms. Though half an invalid I was at that time able to ride a horse and with several others of the young unmarried men of the settlement, had to patrol the country northwest and east of us. We never got a glimpse of the hostiles but frequently found signs where they had been.

PLEASURE MIDST HARDSHIPS

After being discharged from the service, in 1865, I went back to my farm, selling my first claim west of town. This time I took up another piece of land, east of the old site where, with the help of my neighbors, I erected a double log house under one roof made of slough grass. Lumber and shingles were yet almost unknown in the little community. A few boards were required for doors, and door and window casings were whipsawed out of cottonwood logs and it was hard and particular work.

Old Frederick Vatje is made to say, in our friend Sass's immortal "long song" (dat Lange Lied):

> "So stuen he in de Sagkuhl
> And sae; de Audern sind man ful."

Yes, with all of our hardships and the hard work we performed, often under the greatest of disadvantages — because being green, new emigrants, we could not be expected to understand and did not understand the life and

work on the frontier — we yet had a great deal of amusement among ourselves especially among those of us who kept "bachelor's hall." The names of Sass, Schaf, Nagel, Menck, and others only need to be mentioned to awaken in the old settlers the recollection of many jolly incidents.

Much hard and useless work was performed in the first years. I will only mention, for instance, the wall and ditch fences (a remnant of one of these preserved by trees planted on the same may today be seen on the section line road due south of Grand Island, just before one reaches the first channel of the Platte — EDITOR) and the clearing up of allotted wooded portions of the Island. At least Fred Vatje did work diligently to grub out underbrush, etc., so as to give the young growing trees a better chance to thrive. Others, like myself, planted trees and wild shrubs on their land, but with very little success. Not until Mr. Stolley came and went systematically at it were there many trees growing.

TROUBLE WITH RAILROAD CONTRACTORS

With the advent of the Overland railroad (Union Pacific) the settlers had another war on their hands. This time it was with the gangs of workmen sent out ahead, before the actual construction of the roadbed began. Contracts had been let to deliver ties and firewood along the line of road. The timber growing along the river, mostly on the islands in the same, was claimed by such of us as had land adjacent to the channel, we presuming that the survey would not meander along the narrow north channel of the river. But as no government survey had been made this was in doubt. The railroad, interested in securing all the timber in the region with which to construct as much of the track as possible, instructed its men to cut down all the timber. That which was unfit for ties was to be cut into cordwood. As our protests were not heeded we were advised by our counsel in Omaha to arrest the men engaged in cutting and hauling away the timber. The sheriff swore in a number of deputies, we arrested simultaneously a number of choppers and teamsters only to have them at once released on bonds given by the bosses, and the trees were cut as before. The robbing us of the timber that should have been protected and would for years have been good for a supply of firewood was one of the causes which eventually led me to emigrate to a country where there was a natural supply of fuel, without shipment.

END OF LOCAL EXPERIENCES

Before I carried this out, however, I made a trip back to Germany, returning in June, 1868, to Grand Island. While in the Fatherland I was married and brought Mrs. Schernekau with me. At that time the Union and Central Pacific were making great exertions to complete the overland route to California. Everything was high and in great demand at the front, while the actual work of building was going on. Camps and little towns sprang up at the temporary termini of the roads, and they needed, we were informed, among other things, a supply of milk. Our intention to emigrate west was again stimulated by these reports and in the spring of '70 just after the golden spike had been driven near Ogden, we set out on our long trip. We had, together, a herd of some twenty milch cows. Cheyenne was our objective point. And here end my experiences and recollections of the pioneer days of Grand Island.

REMINISCENCES OF A HALL COUNTY PIONEER

BY NORMAN REESE

I was born in 1840 in Dane County, Wisconsin. In 1858 my father leased me to the Great Venabury Consolidated Shows for two years, in my 18th year. I was with another boy of my own age. We played together as horizontal bar performers as the Postering Brothers. Our parents received $75.00 per month during our traveling season of five months and $25.00 per month while in winter quarters. My father had been studying medicine in the University College at Madison, and

received his diploma in 1858. In 1860 my father who did not own a home, decided to go into the far west. He purchased two wagons with heavy canvas coverings and a tent, a stove, break plow, and a few tools that we would need in a new country, with two yokes of oxen, one yoke of cows, household effects, provisions to last over the journey, and a supply of drugs and medicines to last for a period of two years, and we started out. The first week we made about six miles of progress a day. We never saw a mile of railroad after leaving the capital of Wisconsin until the Union Pacific went through Nebraska in August 1866. When we came to the Loup River near Columbus we found but a few dwellings at Columbus. Incidentally when we arrived, the man who conducted the ferry was on a spree, and wanted $5.00 to take us across, and this was more than my father had. He was, therefore, obliged to go 15 miles up the Loup River to the Genoa crossing. There at the Pawnee Reservation we saw the Pawnee tribe, the first Indians with which we came in contact. The man here ferried us across for $2.00. There was a company of United States soldiers protecting the reservation against hostile Sioux, Cheyennes, and Comanches, which tribes were on the war path against the Pawnees. When we reached Eagle Island, the stage station, a band of Pawneees were on the other side of the Platte River after a herd of antelope, and a band of Sioux attacked them and stole them from them. The Pawnees came upon us just as we were camping, and impudently surrounded our little caravan and relieved us of all our provisions. A little later two Pike's Peak gold seekers joined our company, camped with us, and gave us the first Buffalo meat we ever ate.

ARRIVING AT GRAND ISLAND

We proceeded to make our way to the city of Grand Island, for my father had an old acquaintance who had come out from Dane County, Wisconsin, in 1858, in old Squire Land, who kept a stage station 35 miles east of Fort Kearny. We really came out on the urging of Mr. Lamb, who had written my father that there would be a letter with money at the Grand Island post office. When, therefore, we arrived at Grand Island, we were unable to find the city, but saw a lone shack on the north channel of the Platte, south of where Grand Island is now located. When we asked how far it was to Grand Island the man said we were there, and informed my father that he was post master. His post office was a cracker box partitioned off. His name was John Schuler. He declared that there was one letter in the post office and that was for my father. It contained $2.00 "Shin Plasters."

There were very few settlers in Wood River Valley at that time, and they were five to eight miles apart. We selected a site and with the aid of my father's neighbors, he was not long in putting up a log cabin 22 feet long and 18 feet wide with a thick roof of Nebraska shingles (sod). Fort Kearny, 35 miles or so west, was the nearest trading point, there being the settlers' store, controlled by the government, and the only trading place until Mr. Koenig and Mr. Wiebe erected a large, log store at Grand Island (O. K. Store). To the west, the early settlers who came in 1860 and took up claims on Wood River, were Richard, Anthony, and Patrick Moore, and James Jackson, Judge Beal and his family, settled on Wood River, a man by the name of Townsley, foster father of Mrs. William Eldridge, with his family, settled on what is known as the Gallup farm. Mrs. Eldridge's parents had died when she was seven years of age, and an aunt took her to raise when she was twelve. This aunt joined a colony of Mormons and left England bound for St. Louis, but died on the way over. The Mormons brought the waif with them on a steam boat bound for Florence, Nebraska, just north of Omaha, where a church train of Brigham Young was waiting for them. A church train consisted of thirty wagons and a Mormon preacher to each train, holding services each evening on the journey. At Florence this orphan child was noticed by Mr. Townsley, a government interpreter, who received the consent of the Mormons to adopt her and took her to his home on the reserva-

tion. She lived there with the Townsley family among the Indians, learning their language, customs, and tricks. The adopted child moved to Wood River with the Townsley family. There she met William Eldridge, who had settled in that locality in 1858. A romance formed and their marriage was one of the first in the county.

OTHER EARLY SETTLERS IN THE WOOD RIVER VALLEY

After the Moores came Edmond O'Brien and John Maher. A few years later Mrs. Keefe, with her family of three children, located on a claim just south of Richard Moore. Ted Oliver, his wife, brothers, and sisters, and mother, and a family by the name of Owens, who were enroute to the Great Utah Valley stopped here. They believed in the Mormon religion but had not joined the church and were making the trip independently. They located on Wood River, two miles east of Wood River Center, now known as Shelton, and located in Wood River in the spring of 1861. Jim Jackson at this time kept a grocery store on his farm and he was appointed post master of the community, which was then known as White Cloud. The post office remained in this store until the railroad came through, when he built a new store on the new town site and a post office established there was called Wood River. A man by the name of Berry located on the claim now owned by Paddy Francis, who in 1861 sold or traded his claim to Mike and James Crane.

OUR FIRST FARMING

The first year we were here my father broke sod and planted corn with an old axle. That year we didn't raise anything because we had a drought, but there were thousands of buffaloes, deer, antelope, and elks roaming the plains and we made our living from their meat. Every cabin from the mouth of Wood River to Jim Boyd's ranch, which was the last house on the north side of the Platte, was decorated with buffalo and antelope meat drying for future needs. We also had a barrel of corned buffalo meat.

In 1861, the next year, father went at the farming operations again. He marked his ground off with a yoke of oxen. Father had done some blacksmith work so he made a cultivator out of two old spades which he got hold of up at Fort Kearny. I held the plow, my youngest sister drove the ox, one sister whipped him up. We put a mule collar on the ox, father had made a crude shovel plow out of old broken spades, and by giving the shovels just the right twist it could be used, and thus we got along in such a way as to get a crop in and get it cultivated.

STAGE ROUTES

We were located on the great western stage route, which ran from Omaha to Old Fort Kearny. It followed the old Oregon and Mormon and California Trail. The stage line running from Plattsmouth to Fort Kearny was called the Overland Stage Line. There was a stage line from Leavenworth, Kansas, which struck the Overland Trail at Sober Swiskey (Dobe Town) and Gamblers Roost twelve miles east of Old Fort Kearny, now known as Prosser. That was called the Snaky Hill Stage Line.

The stage line running from Kansas City, called the Santa Fe Stage Line, intercepted the Overland west of old Phalon's Bluffs. From Fort Kearny on west to the Pacific coast this was called the Overland Stage and Pony Express route. These stage lines west, northwest and southwest, were controlled and operated by Ben Holladay.

The stages were arranged for the comfort of the traveler, with cushion backs and seats, and could carry eight passengers very comfortably. A ninth would have to sit in front with the driver in his booth. The driver occupied the largest part of that seat accompanied by mail sacks under the seat, his tool sack, water pail, buffalo robe and whip. There was also a rear booth on the stage for a trunk with a heavy leather curtain to buckle down, protecting them from storm. These stage coaches were built not on steel springs, but heavy leather springs, so in going over an obstruction the coach would not jolt, but simply rock back and forth.

SQUIRE LAMB'S ROUTE

West of Old Phalon's Bluffs, Squire Lamb drove from the station at his place to Fort Kearny. He changed his teams at Wood River Center where he usually put on four big grey mules, which he drove through the Platte River. When the river was at full bank it made a dangerous crossing, but he never touched the reins or used a whip on the animals while they were passing through deep water. He guided the mules by the throwing of little stones that he carried in the front booth, and when he did whip the mules it was done with a trace chain. When he desired the animals to go up stream he would throw stones and rattle the trace chain and they would get into the collar in a hurry. The channel next to the last channel on the south, which is called ox channel, was very dangerous, and in high water it was very deep and the current very swift. More or less stock was drowned in this channel at different times, and passengers on the stage would get wet. The stage company at Omaha finally built a sand wagon with five inch tires on the tread, and between seven and eight feet high, its steps going up from the behind. This wagon was sent out by the company for this Platte River crossing. The drivers would leave the stage on the north side and the passengers' trunks would be put aboard the sand wagon.

I was sent up with Squire Lamb on the sand wagon on the first trip through the river, and the passengers crossed in safety without getting wet. I sat in the front booth with the driver. Going into Ox channel the mules were obliged to swim for about 50 feet at one stretch, and all we could see of them was their ears, their entire bodies being submerged. I remarked to the driver that the mules would drown, and he replied that so long as their ears were two feet, six inches out of water they would not drown, and that they got their breath through their ears. I never knew before that mules breathed through their ears.

All stage lines came into the stage barns at Kearney about the same time, hardly ever any one being more than an hour late. If they were late, it was usually on account of snow drifts or swollen streams. The stage barns were located across the road from the Fort where they kept extra horses, mules, stage coaches, and other accessories, and when there was an overplus of passengers for the west, they would put on an extra stage on the Overland route. West of Kearney, the Pony Express was put in. They paid $50.00 and board for working on these stages. A dollar in those days looked as big as a wagon wheel. The limit to weight of persons driving a stage was 135 pounds, and when measured and weighed at Kearney I filled the bill. My parents thought $50.00 was too little and the route too dangerous, but I kept at it and was considered a good and easy rider, and I never heard of a Pony Express rider being held up, although they carried the most valuable parcels.

DURING THE CIVIL WAR

While the Civil War could not take many away from such frontier settlements as we had out here, the Indians became very troublesome as early as 1862. They would make a break down the valley and run us in our cabins, and take all our buffalo meat. We would hardly get our cabins lined up again before they would make another raid, which was very discouraging to the settlers. Some of them would stop and converse with Mrs. Eldridge, as she could talk the Sioux and Cheyenne tongues, and once or twice she saved the settlers from serious trouble. The redskins knew that a serious conflict was going on between the North and South and diverting the attention of the federal government from them, so depradations of all descriptions were permitted on the plains. Some of these were planned by white outlaws, but not all. Important trains were attacked, horses and mules stampeded, and white villages attacked. As a rule the redskins could be mean enough without white men putting them up to anything worse. As Mrs. Eldridge often remarked, "they would sign a treaty with one hand and scalp you with the other." I understand the Smith massacre, Campbell raid, and other specific incidents and episodes of this period, as well as the stampede of 1864, are detailed in your

work by others. In 1864, 300 warriors, squaws, and papoose came up and surrounded the Eldridge home, and Bill thought his time had come, but they had come only to offer him his pick of ten ponies out of 500 for his wife. They wished to take her to Pine Ridge or Rose Bud, but Bill flatly refused. She had no fault to find with the Indians, as the happiest girlhood days had been spent in an Indian reservation, but she had married her paleface and wished to spend the remainder of her life among her own people. The Indians told her that if she did not go with them before twelve moons came around they would massacre the whole settlement. The Indians were then committing crimes west of Kearney on the Overland trail near Cottonwood Springs, where there was a small squad of soldiers stationed.

The Indians in the stampede that followed these attacks of 1864 practically ran our whole community out of the Wood River Valley. Upon about fifteen minutes warning many of the families cleared out and never stopped until they got to Fremont or Columbus. As I remember, the eighteen families that were then living in that valley were, Sol Reese, Jim Boyd, Storey, Nutter, Sol Richmond, Highler, Jim Jackson, Richard Anthony, and Patrick Moore, Edmond O'Brien, Dugdale, Jack, Bob, and Ted Oliver, Bill Eldridge, Squire Lamb, and Fred Adams. The Martins located in south of the river, more towards Doniphan region, in 1862; John Thomssen Sr. who came in 1857, was down in what is now Alda Township. The German Settlement, as it was called (down south, the present Grand Island), had fine homes started with good supplies of poultry, lands where they had plenty of corn, cabbage, and vegetables of all kinds and good grain. Just getting well fixed they were reluctant to leave their homes and thought out some means of protection. Koenig and Wiebe had a good stock of groceries and dry goods on the north channel of the Platte, which the people in Grand Island called Wood River, so they felt the same way. A large fortification was built around the premises of Koenig and Wiebe. This was a long structure with walls made of sod about eight feet high and three feet wide with port holes. Some wanted to call it Fort Grand Island, others wished to call it Fort Wiebe, but Henry Timpke, who lived half a mile from the O. K. Store, said it should be named Fort Sauer Kraut, and it was known by this until the store was removed. When our folks had to leave in July, 1865, Mr. Eldridge, Mr. Lamb, and my father had been putting up hay on the bottoms near our home. They had put up three stacks, one for each of the men, and were going to cut and draw the rest home, and they were going to put up more, when the critical moment arrived on August 1st. We learned the red-skins had cut the telegraph lines east and west of Fort Kearny, the stages stopped, and freighters were stopped. Jim Jackson rode down the trail and told us to load all our effects into our wagons. We left many things behind. My sister had to leave a Chester White pig that was given to her in the spring and we left about half of our chickens to care for themselves. Never had our corn and vegetables looked more promising, and all felt very reluctant to leave our homes, but all felt that we had to do it to save our lives. We bade goodbye to our cabin and traveled on until we reached Fort Sauer Kraut. There the Germans were expecting an attack at any moment, but we kept on, however, until our cattle became too weary to travel, and at 12 o'clock that night, put to camp for the first time. We kept on then until we reached Columbus. The other settlers would not slow up, but as fast as their stock would play out, they would sell it at any sacrifice. Two ladies died on the way back to Iowa, one the daughter of Jesse Shoemaker, who married Charlie Combs. She died just before reaching Omaha. Another lady by the name of Mrs. Haisington, died east of Council Bluffs, from nervous overstrain. On reaching Fremont we met a man who had a hundred tons of hay cut ready to be put in stack, and we hired out for wages, letting our cattle graze on the plains. While there a member of the town board appeared with a telegram from

President Johnson telling us to remain there. In less than ten days, he sent soldiers to escort us back and to remain and protect our old settlement. At that time the Rock Island railroad had got as far west as Des Moines, so the soldiers and supply wagons were shipped to Des Moines, and in six or seven days they arrived. It turned out that they had been Confederate soldiers who had been taken prisoners by the Union army and rather than be thrown in prison, not knowing how long the war might last, they took an oath that they would not take up arms against the United States, but would enlist in the United States service to protect the frontier settlers. This caused some bitter feeling among the settlers, who took their time in following these soldiers back to the settlement, for we couldn't begin to keep up with them.

INIDANS HAD VISITED

When we got back to our cabin home our chickens had been killed and cooked in the old fire place and the bones were lying about. Our pig we never saw. It was also evident that the Indians had been at the Eldridge cabin, but we knew not why they had not burned the buildings. Most of the settlers on hearing of our protection returned to their claims that fall, and even more came in later in the year to take up claims. The more who came, the more sickness prevailed in the community and my father was kept quite busy. His charges were very moderate. His good nature, pleasant words, and good judgment, made him many friends, and his motto was, "Live and let live." If the doctors of today used the same good judgment that he used, there would be fewer operations and a great many less dope fiends. His practice grew steadily to the year 1869, when he passed to the Great Beyond. He left behind a good name and a good reputation that added to his memory for a long time.

PRESSED INTO SERVICE AS A SCOUT

After stampede — in 1865 — though I was only a lad of 19 years of age, I was pressed into the United States service as a scout. Jesse Eldridge, Bill's brother, and I were put on to do this duty, and we scouted from the Jim Boyd ranch (Wood River Center, now Shelton) up to the South Loup River. We had a load to carry with us on our horses, for we had to be provided with a carbine, Colts, field glass, compass, nose bag, harness, rations, canteen, tin cup, kettle, and a whole outfit that weighed about sixty pounds. Often we had to carry this on our back for fifty-five miles a day, rain or shine. My father took the stage to Kearney and interviewed the quartermaster about having me relieved from this duty, and was informed that in view of Indian dangers, some other man would have to be provided. My father went to Fremont and found a man who offered to go for $2900.00 but my father didn't have ninety cents, and offered him a yoke of oxen, but he would not take it. Another fellow answered that he wasn't afraid of anything that wore hair, Indians or otherwise, and he would go for $600.00 but father couldn't do that either, so it was up to me to go. They were going to put Elridge on the west boundary of our territory and put me on the east boundary, but he finally convinced them that it was only right for the two boys to be together. They told us if we saw any "hostiles" that we should report. Anyway we were to report to Fort Kearny every Saturday night, and there to receive rations. At one time we ran across about 400 or 500 Indian tracks and immediately rode in and reported to the quartermaster. He would not believe us, but surmised it might be buffalo or elk tracks. But the Indians had evidently moved on. Three or four days after that we came up the stream towards the Bluffs on the South Loup and saw a place where the front gears of a wagon were buried in the mud and weeds, and on searching around we found the decomposed bodies of two men who had been shot. When we came down to the fort and reported this we were informed that we were not put on as an expedition to hunt up old carcasses.

It wasn't three days after that until we ran into 400 warriors and they pretty nearly got us. The north branch of Prairie Creek ran

through there and there was just one place that I knew we could possibly make the crossing. The Indians came up on us near Prairie Creek, and that frightful yell of a war whoop they gave, it was worse than the yell of a beast in the jungle; our hair stood up on its end. We knew we had only one crossing we could make on Prairie Creek, and if we failed to make that, they would get us. The water was only two or three feet wide, but there was alkali mud and if the horses got down, good night! It was the worst place to cross imaginable, but with that pack back of us, we had to make it and God must have ruled over us or we never would have made it.

When we came to that point we couldn't say anything, and I gave my horse a whack on the hip and he gave a lunge and got over to the other bank. We just barely got across and didn't have a couple minutes to spare. We thought our time had come, and had made up our minds not to be taken in captivity, for we thought that meant to be burned at the stake. Luck was with us and we got across all right. We had such a scare. I never had such a feeling come over me before or since. Eldridge said I didn't look like myself and I assured him later I certainly didn't feel like myself. We rode into Jim Jackson's and our horses were pretty well jaded after that long exciting ride. There was a corporal stationed two miles west of Jim Jackson's and he happened to be at Jackson's postoffice and store for his mail, so we told him our story; he gave us orders to ride straight through to Fort Kearny and report it at once. We notified the settlers to be on the lookout for we didn't know whether those Indians might come on down or not. We told this corporal we didn't consider ourselves bound by his orders, even if we went to guard house. Jackson had some mules there and he said, "Boys, I will take care of your horses and you take the mules and ride on and report this matter." Eldridge wasn't very fond of riding a mule. I had noticed mules hitched before, so when I got the saddle on him, I tried to mount and went up in the air. I saw five-pointed stars in every direction. Well, we went on to Kearney and reported the matter to the quartermaster's lieutenant commander, and he questioned and cross-questioned us. He wanted to know where we first saw those Indians and we told him a mile and half west of the big sand bluff (about where St. Michael is now) and he asked how many there were, and we told him about four hundred; he said, "Weren't you men just scared and imagined that many?" and I told him I didn't think so; he said, "that is a pretty big number," and asked if we counted them and I told him we didn't have time; and he insisted, how did we know there were that many. Then he asked if we would swear to it under oath that there were more than twenty-five of those Indians. We answered that if there had only been twenty-five, after we reached Prairie Creek bottom we would have held our ground and held them at bay as long as our ammunition held out, then we could have crossed Prairie Creek. He said this would be looked into and if found to be false we must take the consequences. So he detailed a sergeant and twenty of the U. S. cavalry, and they proceeded to the South Loup River; we were to meet the sargeant and his men at the big sand bluff and receive a report on what they discovered. We arrived at the big sand bluff about 11:30. At first we saw no signs and I began to fear, and then the sergeant's horse hoved in sight pretty soon. He had five soldiers with him, and the other sixteen had gone back. The sergeant said the one thing we hadn't been correct on was the number, there were 560 on paper, as they found it. So we returned, going around by Fred Evans's, that night, north of Wood River. Their horses were not used to this kind of a jaunt, for we covered about eighty miles that day, and the sergeant had never been in that country and he didn't think much of it as a country to be in. When we rode into Fort Kearny and a report was made, the quartermaster agreed there was an apology due us. We were relieved by Major Frank North, who then took charge of the territory with his Pawnee scouts. We were relieved from this work and discharged. We had no regular clothing, we couldn't get money on our vouchers. They had to be en-

dorsed and taken down by the express messenger to the First National Bank of Omaha, where they would cash it and take a 10% discount, and the express messenger charged 5% for his collection work and delivering it. If it had had to go through another pair or two of hands we would have soon owed somebody something on it. To add to the ignomy of our whole treatment, our discharge papers never came. The records disappeared when Fort Kearny was abandoned. John Tolbert, an interpreter, tried to look the matter up for us, but he never could trace it down in the records of the department.

I might add that Tolbert was an interesting character, who lived at Dobetown, two miles southwest of Fort Kearny, and kept a feed store there. He gave me an introduction in 1864 to Buffalo Bill, and the first thing Buffalo Bill asked me was my age, and when I told him, he said we might be twins. I was twenty-six days older than he. He was born on the 28th and I was born on the 2nd of February.

On one occasion we got attacked by Indians, and they got the rest of the family into the house and the door closed before I could reach home. I had to take refuge the first place I could find, and backed myself into a badger hole, and squeezed in so tight, I could not go either way, and didn't dare to make a move, or a tomahawk might come over my head. For fifteen minutes I could hear Indians to one side and that animal gnawing on the other. I laid there until the shades of night came on and then I heard my father's voice and he came down and pulled me out.

UNCLE SAM'S SURVEYORS

In 1866 the government sent out land surveyors through Nebraska and two or three of them stayed at our place for several days going over their figures. They gave us quite a little information concerning section corners and half mile stakes and told us what amount of labor would be necessary to provide for steam boats to go up the north channel to the Platte River. This channel was called the meandering stream of the Platte River. Their figures showed that the north channel put out ten miles east of Fort Kearny, which formed Grand Island. This channel went to the Old Long Tree Stage section. Their figures showed that Grand Island was sixty miles in its length, and ranged from half a mile to two miles and half in width. This had been known as Grand Island since the early 'fifties. In 1867 a company of surveyors came through and made three surveys, saying they were surveying for the railroad. Their second line of survey was selected for the route of the railroad.

MANY MIDDLE MEN

Woodchoppers were set to work, tie choppers, saw mills put in action, and timber certainly flew along the track. The contracts for grading were let to some of the most noted political men, who sub-contracted them to private parties, and they in turn sub-contracted them. These contractors all made the money, but the men who did the work came out at the little end of the horn, but how the dirt did fly. When the day for the month's pay rolled around, the gang bosses informed the men that they would be obliged to throw off $5.00 of their wages. Most of the men had families, and inquired what this was for and were informed it was for a reserve fund, which they were told was customary where they paid cash. If they did not consent to this, they were obliged to wait ninety days, but most of them were compellel to get it on account of their dependent famiiles. Even at this early date the monied men, speculators, and corporations controlled all the business matters, no matter of what nature. The little farmer, and small property holders, and hard working class of people paid their bills. Dear reader, I do not take those facts from any one. I have been through the mill. I have worked for corporations and private individuals, and in every case, I have been obliged to pay them interest on what they owed me. In the fall of 1867 and the spring of '68, the working gang began to work at laying ties with a force that averaged about seven miles a day.

THE RIGHT OF WAY

Early pioneers about this time received small pamphlets, which they thought were records of bills which had passed Congress, but in fact, it was a contract between the railroad and the government. It stated that the government would give the railroad company $15,000 for each mile of road they built through Nebraska, also every alternate section of land for 30 miles each side of this track, as also 100 feet from the center of the track on each side of the right of way. The pamphlets also stated that all parties having claims in these sections, taken before these grants were made, would be allowed to hold them, and the railroad company forced to take the same amount of land in other localities. Cook Lamb's and my father's claims were the only ones that were in section 13. Years later under the McKinley administration a controversy had arisen between the government and the railroad company in regard to the right of way, but through an act of Congress, the company was granted 400 feet of right of way instead of 200, which caused a great deal of dissatisfaction to those who had land along the line of the road as well as those who had purchased railroad land, a controversy which has raged for a long time, and is hard to tell but what money and corporations will again control more than their rights, and those who are looking forward to redeeming a part of the right of way, will be compelled to take their medicine in large doses.

Now a man of 73 years of age, I have been spared to live through all of these tortures and tribulations of the early pioneer days, but I have nevertheless been blessed to see this country grow from the bleak prairies and realms of Indians, buffaloes, and emigrant trails to as fine a farming country and beautiful region of homes as there is anywhere under the sun.

Note: A few words should be added to the foregoing sketch concerning Mr. Reese's family. Mr. Reese lived for many years on section 13, where his parents had located. In recent years he bought a small place down on the bank of Wood River, where he and his wife are living. His sight has been impaired in recent years, and for thirteen months he was almost blinded, but treatment under Dr. Gifford's direction has given him some use of his eyes. He was married at Wood River to Catherine Matthews, and they have raised two sons and two daughters. One son, Edward Reese, resides at Elgin, Illinois, where he is engaged in the shoe manufacturing business; the other son, Joseph, resides seven miles east in Alda township; the daughters, Mrs. Delia Woodward, of Denver, Colorado, and Irene Reese, in New York City, caring for an invalid aunt. This couple take great pride in one grandson, seventeen years of age, Sylvester Reese, son of Joseph Reese, now working for William Dristy, two miles west of their home.

DURING THE LAST YEARS OF INDIAN OCCUPATION IN PLATTE VALLEY

BY W. E. MARTIN, Doniphan, Nebraska

Our father came to this county in 1862. He had arrived in the United States from England in 1850, and lived first in Henry County, Illinois, and then from there he settled in Fremont County, Iowa, Sidney being the county seat. From there he came to Hall County and located. In the meantime he had crossed the plains a number of times and would go up this valley when travelling from the Missouri River on the cut-off road from Nebraska City. That road came in south of the Platte, entering Hall County where Clarence Lowery lives now. That is how he got the idea of locating in this vicinity. In passing several times, when going back and forth with a load or empty wagon on trips from Nebraska City to Denver, he would go past the place at which he afterwards located. He came out here and he told my brother Nathaniel and a smaller boy, "Here is a good place to locate in the future" indicating right where he did locate. He would go right up this valley where there was a good stretch of country. In August, 1862, he went up that

valley and stopped right there. His location was in Township 13, in Martin township, where Fred Weaver lives now. When he reached that place, he jumped out of the wagon, with a spade in hand, and remarked, "I am going to dig a well here."

AN EARLY SERVICEABLE WELL

To Robert and Nathaniel the larger boys, he spoke. "You boys unhitch the team here. I am going to dig a well right here by the side of the road." That was the public road to Denver. He threw the dirt out with a short handled spade and worked until he got a well fifteen feet deep. Then he took a salt barrel out of the wagon, and knocked the heads out and sank the barrel down in the sand until he had it full of seeping water. The Platte River was lower than the end of his hole and he had only to make it fifteen feet deep until he struck water. He then took the sand out of the inside of the barrel and in only a few minutes had that barrel full of water so you could dip the water out, with a bucket tied to a rope. In years after that well became established as a place to draw water. Nathaniel cut cord wood to make a wall for the well, and we curbed it up, fifteen feet deep. Got the inside curbed up so it wouldn't cave in.

That old well was used nearly twenty years. We had the buckets fixed on a rope, so one bucket would come up and the other would go down. There was considerable travel went by on that road during those years in the decades of the 'sixties and the 'seventies. The emigrants, stage passengers, hunters or trappers would stop at that old well for years. Like an oasis in a desert, that well with its buckets of clear water was welcomed for nearly two decades. The water was secured by using the buckets until we got our first pump. Mr. McAllister, a hardware man at Grand Island, had a patent pump which he put in. He came down and going over closer to the house put in a drive pump.



AN INDIAN VILLAGE

OUR EARLY NEIGHBORS

As I said, it was in 1862 that father located there. He first built a sod-house by the side of the public road. After we lived about three years in the sod house we got a better place. We broke prairie in 1863. In 1864 we planted some cottonwood trees on the place. I well remember that I planted one little tree which was then about seven or eight inches in height. It still stands there, a remarkably large tree, after its thirty years vigil on the prairie. The other boys planted a couple others, which are still there, probably thirty feet west of the larger one. They may be about a third of the thickness of this first tree I mentioned, but they were planted at the same time. This one had a better chance to spread out and make a good growth.

When we built the second house we built

a log structure, using cottonwoods off the island above us.

During the early days my father was there neighbors were rather scarce articles. A man by name of Nabin, who figured in the buffalo-hunt story narrated by Mr. Binfield in his story of our family and beginnings of Martin township, lived about four miles from father's location. Bissell was a ranchkeeper on west there, near Dobetown in Buffalo County, about 22 miles on. There was nobody on west there in our locality and on that side of the river. There was no one living east, when father first came there, until you got down in the York vicinity. A Mr. Foucks lived down in there. The O. K. Store and the German settlements of 1857-1858 and so forth were to the north and northeast of us.

There was an old man by name of George Brown had a claim down in there near us. Charles Jerome came about 1867 and bought out his rights. W. J. Burger came to the Doniphan vicinity in 1864, and homesteaded. Of course the country gradually settled up after that.

INDIAN VISITORS

Of course our experiences and observations of Indians were generally with those of the Pawnee tribes. The Indians generally came from the south. The Pawnees moved eastward and westward through this part of the state. Their reservation, when they got one, and their general camping grounds, were on north of the river and eastward from here. Their reservation was up in Nance County. When they went after buffalo they would go southwestward toward the Republican River, where the good buffalo territory lay. They would go through about twice a year on such an errand. About the 15th or 20th of May, these Pawnee Indians would go on their spring buffalo hunt to secure enough buffalo meat for their summer's supply. In the fall, about October, they would go back over the same ground, going through here southwestward, to get buffalo for the winter. When they went back they would cross the Platte River and go back to their reservation quarters in what is now Nance County. They would travel through in bunches numbering as high as a thousand.

THE INDIANS' OUTFIT AND CUSTOMS

The main feature of their outfit was their mode of transporting the freight they needed, and riding facilities. For those purposes they used innumerable ponies. The ponies had fastened to them long poles which hung by a belt around the girth. The poles were fastened to that belt. They would let the other end of the poles drag in the dirt, and these poles would generally be about 18 or 20 feet long. They pulled principally on the band around the waist, with sometimes a breast strap around the front to reinforce, which would hold the pole up in better shape. Then they would load their meat or other articles on these poles. Sometimes they would have a supply of extra ponies for riding purposes. But the freighting ponies were the mainstay of the outfit.

LET THE WOMEN DO THE WORK

The Indian let the women do all of the work. Any work that a woman could do would be beneath the Indian to do. He simply carried his bow and arrow, and quiver, and did nothing else. He was the provider of meat and foods and the warrior to afford protection or glories of conquest to the tribe. The squaw was designed to do all of the manual work, and she did it all. The Indian would put forty or fifty arrows in a leather bag. This bag reminded one of the golf stick bag used nowadays. They were a great deal like the carrier used now in playing golf, for holding the golf sticks. They would place them so the leather kept the points of the arrows from going through. While the squaw carried and prepared all of the meats and hides, and took care of all of the luggage, in addition to carrying the papoose around if there was one, the Indian would go out to shoot birds. As to carrying the papoose, while there on that subject. The papoose was carried on the back, strapped to a board. If the squaw stopped to do any work, the papoose might be left strapped to the board, which was set up against the tent. The squaw would then go on about

her work. There the baby was, strapped to that board, and there he might be left for hours, or most of the day. A most remarkable Indian trait, even in infancy, was that you would never hear the baby cry. If you lived close enough to them to observe and became familiar with their habits, you would find the Indian very harsh toward his women, his children, and even his dogs and ponies.

The dogs they used were generally of a terrier class, small, alert, and faithful. When the dog was spoken to, he generally obeyed. But if the dog transgressed, he received harsh treatment at once. The Indian might tell the dog to go back and lay down. If there was not that instant compliance that the master required, he would take his tomahawk and aim at Mr. Dog. The Indian carried this tomahawk which had a blade like a hatchet, and a head for his pipe on the other end. If the dog did not render instant obedience, he would soon feel the tomahawk. When the Indian hit the dog, he did not care if it did kill him. The Indian wouldn't eat a dead dog if he had any other meat and the spur of necessity was not urging such a course. If they were dreadfully short of food it might be different, but if not short enough of food, the dog would be promptly thrown away.

The same way with the children. The little papoose was trained to stand a great deal, and might be left strapped to the board all day. But there would be no whimpering. In the evening time it would be taken off the board and the mother would lay the board to one side and take care of it, and then put it back on the board the next morning. You hardly ever heard one of the children cry. There might be three or four children playing or working around the tent, but you would hardly ever hear one of them cry. The Indian was boss over all. Whatever he said would go, and go whenever he said so. There was none of the teasing or chafing so common among our children of this twentieth century generation.

THE INDIAN'S CAMP

In establishing their camp, the Indians we had through here generally took a lot of those poles the ponies had been pulling all day. They stuck these in the ground and brought the ends together, with the bottoms scattered enough, so they circled around at the bottom and came together at a common point at top. This made a cone-shaped frame-work for the tent. Then they would use for covering sufficient buffalo robes to form sides to the cone-shaped tent.

This buffalo robe they had made from the hides they tanned before then. These were sewed together inasmuch as necessary with sinews they had pulled out of the flesh of the buffaloes. They used these sinews for thread. They also used them for making bow strings and for whatever threads they needed for their usual purposes. Those sinews were a dried fiber out of the buffalo's back, right down the middle of the back, and were three or four feet long. They would open that part of the flesh and pull them out. They would put that in water and clean the blood off, and dry it in the sun and pull out into threads; and they would twist that into plenty of good strong strings. It made a good strong thread. It was stouter than our linen threads and as strong and durable as any silk thread you could get. They made the buffalo hides with this thread, also used it for making blankets and mocassins. The squaws did all of this work.

THEIR EVENING MEAL AND MENU

When the tent was properly placed the evening meal was prepared. The Indian's common items for his menu were buffalo meat, soups, and cracked corn. They liked to take cracked corn and make a corn soup with it. Sometimes when they could get the corn meal they would have a corn-bread very like our own, and even pancakes. They would take a hot flat rock, place it up at the fire and plaster their batter on it, or place their dough on it to bake. If they could get a skillet, the white man's invention, so much the better and more acceptable. Sometimes they would take a rock and scoop out the center, in which they would prepare the soup. They used this rock or stone kettle very frequently.

When they came to eat they had a spoon

made out of a buffalo's horn; they cut the horn at such a place as to make the spoon properly crooked. By cutting the horn in two pieces at the right place they would have a spoon very much like our largest table spoons, and would eat out of that. A person would be surprised at the number of little things they devised, so much like our kitchen utensils.

PREPARING CLOTHING AND MEATS

Their moccasins were made up as nicely as they posibly could be. The squaws would do all such work; the Indian would know nothing about it. The squaws would make all of the moccasins, and some of them were splendid articles. The squaws would also tan all of the beaver hides and skins. The Indian only had to hunt and be the warrior. It was for him to go out and shoot the buffalo, elk, deer, antelope, and to bring home the material from which the squaws made the clothes and prepared the meat. In this last operation they were rather skillful.

They dried buffalo meat by cutting it into slices, cross-wise of the grain. These very thin slices were then salted and placed in a barrel of brine and left in that brine, maybe two nights. They used a wire, or sinew line, possibly thirty or forty feet in length, and hung the slices in the sun to dry, for about twenty-four hours, then had meat so it was ready for use.

"A BROKEN AXLE"

BY SAMUEL C. BASSETT

(Mr. Bassett is now President of the State Historical Society, and a few years ago was author of a splendid history of Buffalo County, our next-door neighbor to the west. The following story is a sort of border-line story, which belongs to either Buffalo or Hall county, as the Olivers became identified with the history of both counties.)

In 1860, Edward Oliver, Sr., his wife and seven children, converts to the Mormon faith, left their home in England for Salt Lake City, Utah. At Florence, Nebraska, on the Missouri River a few miles above the city of Omaha, they purchased a traveling outfit for emigrants, which consisted of two yoke of oxen, a prairie-schooner wagon, and two cows; and with numerous other families having the same destination they took the overland Mormon trail up the valley of the Platte on the north side of the river.

When near a point known as Wood River Centre (the first name of Shelton), 174 miles west of the Missouri River, the front axle of their wagon gave way, compelling a halt for repairs, their immediate companions in the emigrant train continuing the journey, for nothing avoidable, not even the burial of a member of the train, was allowed to interfere with the prescribed schedule of travel. The Oliver family camped beside the trail and the broken wagon was taken to the ranch of Joseph E. Johnson, who combined in his person and business that of postmaster, merchant, blacksmith, wagonmaker, editor, and publisher of a newspaper (*The Huntsman's Echo*). Johnson was a Mormon with two wives, a man passionately fond of flowers which he cultivated to a considerable extent in a fenced enclosure. While buffalo broke down his fence and destroyed his garden and flowers, he could not bring himself to kill them. He was a philosopher, and, it must be conceded, a most useful person at a point so far distant from other sources of supplies.

The wagon shop of Mr. Johnson contained no seasoned wood suitable for an axle and so from the trees along Wood River was cut an ash from which was hewn and fitted an axle to the wagon and the family again took the trail, but ere ten miles had been traveled the green axle began to bend under the load, the wheels ceased to track, and the party could not proceed. In the family council that succeeded the father urged that they try to arrange with other emigrants to thru their movables (double teams) and thus continue on their journey.

The mother suggested that they return to the vicinity of Wood River Centre and arrange to spend the winter. To the suggestion of the mother all the children added their entreaties. The mother urged that it was a beautiful country, with an abundance of wood and water, grass for pasture, and hay in plenty could be made for their cattle, and she was

sure crops could be raised. The wishes of the mother prevailed, the family returned to a point about a mile west of Wood River Centre, and on the banks of the river constructed a log hut with a sod roof in which they spent the winter. When springtime came the father journeyed to Utah, where he made his home and married a younger woman who had accompanied them from England, which doubtless was the determining factor in the mother refusing to go.

The mother, Sarah Oliver, proved to be a woman of force and character. With her children she engaged in the raising of corn and vegetables, the surplus being sold to emigrants passing over the trail and at Fort Kearny, some twenty miles distant.

In those days there were many without means who traveled the trail and Sarah Oliver never turned a hungry emigrant from her door, and often divided with such the scanty store needed for her own family. When rumors came of Indians on the warpath the children took turns on the house top as lookout for the dreaded savages. In 1863 two settlers were killed by Indians a few miles east of her home. In the year 1864 occurred the memorable raid of the Cheyenne Indians in which horrible atrocities were committed and scores of settlers were massacred by these Indians only a few miles to the south. In 1865 William Storey, a near neighbor, was killed by the Indians.

Sarah Oliver had no framed diploma from a medical college which would entitle her to the prefix "Dr." to her name, possibly she was not entitled to be called a trained nurse, but she is entitled to be long remembered as one who ministered to the sick, to early travelers hungry and footsore along the trail, and to many families whose habitations were miles distant.

Sarah Oliver and her family endured all the toil and privation common to early settlers without means in a new country, far removed from access to what are deemed the barest necessities of life in more settled communities. She endured all the terrors incident to settlement in a sparsely settled locality, and in which the coming of such savages was hourly expected and dreaded. She saw the building and completion of the Union Pacific railroad near her home in 1866; she saw Nebraska become a state in the year 1867. In 1870 when Buffalo County was organized her youngest son, John, was appointed sheriff, and was elected to that office at the first election thereafter. Her eldest son, James, was the first assessor in the county, and her son Edward was a member of the first board of county commissioners and later was elected and served with credit and fidelity as county treasurer.

When, in the year 1871, Sarah Oliver died her son Robert inherited the claim whereon she first made a home for her family, and which, in the year 1915, is one of the most beautiful, fertile farm homes in the county and state.

A DREAM LAND COMPLETE

Dreaming, I pictured a wonderful valley,
A home making valley few known could compare;
When lo! from the bluffs to the north of Wood River
I saw my dream picture—my valley lies there.

Miles long, east and west, stretched this wonderful valley
Broad fields of alfalfa, of corn, and of wheat.
'Mid orchards and groves the homes of its people;
The vale of Wood River, a dream-land complete.

Nebraska, our mother, we love and adore thee;
Within thy fair borders our lot has been cast.
When done with life's labors and trials and pleasures,
Contented we'll rest in thy bosom at last.

(The foregoing taken from pp. 27-29, *Nebraska Pioneer Reminiscences.*)

A FEW GLIMPSES OF EARLY LIFE IN HALL COUNTY

One of the interesting characters of Grand Island's early days is a man whom we all know as Jack Anderson, but whose real name is William Anderson, who has been living at the soldiers home for some years past. Anderson was a member of Company E, Second United States cavalry, during the Civil War.

Mr. Anderson, in reply to a query, casually remarked that the Soldier's Home was the only home he had, and was about as good a

home as a man could ask for. Having expressed a feeling of gratitude for such a home, a word or two of comment over his services aroused the curiosity of the reporter, and it required only a few questions to reveal that he was a man with a rather remarkable record of service not only during the war, but with reference to the building up of the great west. And the following story was finally worked out of Anderson:

In brief he was born at Bedford, Pennsylvania, and enlisted in the company mentioned and served the full five years and was honorably discharged two days after Lee surrendered. His discharge notes he participated in thirty battles. At the expiration of the war, things became too dull for Jack, and he served three more years in the wilds of Nebraska and Wyoming. His discharge from this service in amplified by a note from A. E. Bates, first lieutenant, and adjutant of the Second Cavalry to the effect that Anderson was an excellent soldier, an honest, upright and reliable man.

Mr. Anderson states that after he was honorably discharged for the second time, there was a vacancy in the transportation department, and says Mr Anderson, "I was told to go to Omaha, where the headquarters of the department of the Platte now were, when Adjutant Bates gave me a slip informing whom it may concern, that I was competent, and I got the job. Bill Cody was at the time a scout, and he and I worked together for a year and a half, I in the transportation department and he as a scout. Later the posts were abandoned and I lost my job, and that is the end of my services."

Mr Anderson came from there to Grand Island in February 1870, having now been a resident of this city for 49 years. He says the first place he stopped was at the old Michelson hotel, of which James Michelson, the father of Fred Michelson, and builder of the Michelson block, was owner. Mr. Anderson desired to engage in the retail liquor business and wanted someone to draw up his papers. He was introduced by Mr. Michelson to Governor Abbott, as "my lawyer" and from that day to this the governor and Anderson, both comrades in the days of the country's trial, have been constant friends.

Mr. Anderson was in the saloon business during the 'seventies in Grand Island, and his place of business was the center of many exciting chapters of the early history, in the free, easy, and noisy days. He built a large house between where Fifth and Sixth streets and Cleburn and Elm streets now run. This place became very notorious and as it was so far "out on the prairie" in the early 'seventies, it was called the "Prairie House." This site has recently been selected for the new High school, and the old building standing there, with all the others since erected on that block, will soon be removed.

GOES INTO BUSINESS

Mr Anderson went into the saloon business that year, in 1870, on the corner of Front and Pine streets, near what was known in the early days as the Pat Dunphy building. He was there about two years and then removed to the story and half frame building which the Mobleys had erected at Locust and Third, the present site of the Tucker and Farnsworth drug store, for the *Independent*. The printing office occupied the upper portion of the building and Anderson's parlor for liquid and sometimes turbulent, refreshment, the lower portion of the building. At that time there was only a couple of buildings on the north side of the town. When he first arrived, the only house was the property originally built by Mrs. Mobley for the printing establishment.

The old Union Pacific eating house was then on the north side of the present Front street, near Pine street. The Nebraska House, commonly known as the Michelson Hotel, was located on the present southwest corner of Front and Pine streets, and was operated by James Michelson. After the old U. P. eating house was moved away, another eating house was built further east, down by the depot, which stood east of the present freight depot. In the early 'seventies upon Anderson's venture into the saloon business, he had four

competitors, a bar maintained in the Michelson Hotel, Kraft's place on the site of the present Commercial State Bank, Bassett's Sample rooms under the Clarendon Hotel, and Cornelius Iver's billiard hall on Third street.

A Dane by the name of Thomsen ran a hotel called the Herman House on Pine street. He was a jolly, good-natured fellow, with a fairly good education. One time he got up a card and threw it around the saloon rather freely. His place was next to John Fonner's livery barn, which went under the title of "American Feed, Livery and Sale Stable." Those were times when so many homesteaders were going through and it was difficult at times to get a team to take one out of town to look at a piece of land, and resource was generally had to bronchos that Michelson or Fonner might have available. The card which Thomsen distributed read something like this: "When you come to Grand Island you got to go someplace to stop — you just come to the Herman house. And here you get good board and cheap lodgings. When you see what you don't want, just ask for them. Then you want to ride in the country out — John Fonner, next door, he's got some troubles what'll take you out before you start away."

Where the Koehler hotel now stands the old O. K. Store was located. When Anderson first came to town, he says, there was a slough that ran through between Pine and Front, and on Locust street it made a very low place. It is hard for one now seeing the brick buildings that center around Locust and Pine streets, between the railroad and Third streets, to realize that at one time there was a low place on this location. Mr. Anderson opines that a thousand wagon loads of manure, rubber boots, tin cans, and various materials were doubtless filled in there, and when they came to dig cellars, these places were cleaned out and dirt put in around the holes excavated. Where the Glade Mills now stands there was an especially low place. On the alley, on the west side of Locust, between Front and Third streets, a bridge was fixed so when water stood there both sides of the street would not be blocked. The little frame building used by Platt & Thummel has been taken away, and the brick building occupied by the State Bank of Grand Island placed there, but a frame building hauled in during early days and called the Bon Ton Free Mason building still remains on Locust street back of the State Bank building.

THE STORM OF 1873

When the great storm of 1873 came, Mr. Anderson was conducting the saloon at the corner of Pine and Locust. The entire building was drifted in, with snow to the top of it. When it lessened so the boys could get outdoors, they would climb up over the snow to the roof of the building, get onto their sleds and run over onto a story and half structure at the corner where the present Hedde Block now stands. Mr. Anderson remarks incidentally that at one time he was offered that 66 x 132 feet of ground, with the building thereon, for $1500, then owned by a Mr. Lord, an old engineer.

Mr. Anderson then lived in a story and half house on Pine street, right south of Second street. For three days he was unable to traverse the distance of less than three blocks from his place of business to his home. They then had a couple of rooms and a little small kitchen in which there was a pump and a supply of coal and kindling. He says: "I knew my wife had enough to eat, but when I went down to the house, before I could get in, I had to call some police and get a lot of fellows together and we shoveled in to the door. She couldn't open the door. We shoveled that door open. Then she commenced to cry and I wanted to know what was the matter. She wouldn't stay in that house any longer — it was haunted. I said nonsense? She went over to the wall, said she could hear it there. I went over and listened and could hear an o o o! o o o! I thought perhaps it might be a man pinned in there and perhaps he might be dying. So we got busy and shoveled it out, and would you ever guess what we dug out there — we shoveled out a great big Texas steer, about fifteen hands high, immense horns, and his eyes were green. You had ought to have seen the fellows run. There was a butcher



GRAND ISLAND IN 1879

here by the name of Cornelius, and he rounded up that steer and kept him all summer. His hair came off his back clear to his horns. He was some sight. He had come this way in the storm, kept coming northeast; snow had just drifted in on his hair and froze it so his hair all came out in time. In the fall he was a big fine looking fellow and then they butchered him."

THE COWBOY REGIME

During the early 'seventies Grand Island and Kearney were the principal trading stations on the railroad, from which trade radiated to an immense territory. Cowboys would come from the Custer County and Upper Loup country and clear from the Niobrara region. Some pretty rough scenes took place, but compared to what he afterwards witnessed out around Ogallala and Sidney, Mr. Anderson considers that Hall County did not experience the bloody initiation into settled life that towns further west did.

THREE YEARS AT SIDNEY

About 1875, Mr. Anderson and his partner, Johnnie Williams, left the saloon and pool room business in Grand Island and went to Sidney, where they remained for awhile. At that time the Black Hills excitement was on in full blast. They went into a saloon business there. Mr. Anderson was elected coroner, but that proved, as he expressed it, "too tough for me." He adds: "Every few mornings there would be a rap on the door and a call would come, 'Mr. Coroner, get up, we've got another stiff for you.' that being the way they put it. That got to be too much for me and I quit before my time was up. I wouldn't be annoyed with so much killing." Those were the days in Sidney when the Texan herds would be brought up to the north country. The Civil War was not so far removed but that the northern fellows would run into the southern herders and something would start right away. In those times such characters as Ben and Bill Thompson, Texas gamblers, killers, and shooters as they called them, came along. Others who would show up were Wyeth, Bat Mathiesen, Jim Fien, Grasshopper Sam, Eat-em-up Jake, Rebel George, Levy, and others who could stand around and brag, "I killed my man," "I got my man," "I got another one," as they called, "I've got six to my credit now," "I've got three," and other remarks showing the credit due to their skill in markmanship and dexterity.

During this time Henry Clarke of Omaha built a toll bridge across the Platte River, at the point known later as Camp Clark, about three to five miles west of the present town of Bridgeport. This bridge opened a short route from Sidney to Deadwood and Dakota points. The danger from Indians was so great the government did not undertake to carry the mail, but permitted Mr. Clarke to do so, for a charge of 10 cents. An envelope used for this purpose showing the centennial stamp of 1876 is illustrated on another page.

A FREIGHTING EXPERIENCE

One day a man came along with a freighting outfit, one of those with a large front wagon and its trailer, with six sets of teams, eight pair of mules to the team, each team handling two wagons, the main wagon and its trailer. Anderson narrates: "He came into my place of business, took a few drinks and wanted to know if I would trade my saloon for his freighting outfit. I said, I never had anything yet I wouldn't trade, so we went down in the cellar and took a kind of an inventory. The building I had built myself. I believe it wasn't two hours until I had traded the saloon for his outfit, and then I went freighting to the hills. We used to get big prices then.

"Then one time the town of Deadwood burned down. Pretty nearly the whole town burned out that time. The news came and then every freighter was wondering what he would load with to make a trip there. Some got a load of whiskey, some flour, some a load of ham and bacon, and I finally said to myself, what are you going to load with? I tried to think what might be most desired when I'd get there Anyhow I happened to think of window glass. I didn't have enough money to buy, wasn't able to buy enough window glass for loading my outfit. I went to a man there by the name



SIDNEY, SHORT ROUTE.

Clarke's Centennial Express to the Black Hills.

In consideration of the 10 cents paid for this envelope, and of which payment its possession bears evidence, the undersigned agrees to carry it from the Union Pacific Railroad at Sidney, Neb., to Custer City, and Deadwood, Dakota, (and such other places as his route may supply), or from above places to the Union Pacific Railroad at Sidney, without additional charge.

H. T. CLARKE.

(OVER.)



Care of H. T. CLARKE,

Sidney, Neb.

FAC-SIMILE OF ENVELOPE USED IN THE PONY EXPRESS BUSINESS.

SIDNEY SHORT ROUTE

TO

THE BLACK HILLS.

The New 61 Span Truss Bridge over the Platte River, 40 Miles North of Sidney,

IS NOW OPEN FOR TRAVEL, AND, WITH THE ROAD, IS

Guarded by the United States Troops.

ONLY 167 MILES TO CUSTER CITY

FROM THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD.

Wood and Water in abundance, and the Finest Roads in the World by this Route. All Mail sent in care of **H. T. CLARKE, Sidney, and Camp Clarke, Platte River Bridge**, will be forwarded as directed. Sidney is now a good out fitting point. Large supply of Grain, Groceries, Hardware, and Produce always on hand. Hotel accommodations good.

TOTAL DISTANCE FROM SIDNEY TO CUSTER CITY **167 MILES.** This distance is by the road now traveled between the two Agencies. Deer's Sidney and Black Hills Stage Line leaves this route and Snake River, running through to Red Cloud Indian Agency in **17** hours, and to Custer City in **36** hours. The distance by this route is **183** miles.

Our forwarding houses can furnish transportation for **250 000** Pounds at a Shipment. FREIGHT CHARGES, Sidney to Custer City, range from **3** to **5** cents per pound. Freight shipped care H. T. Clarke, Sidney, Neb., will be shipped at lowest rates.

PASSENGER RATES — Omaha to Custer City, 1st class $65. 2d class $35, 3d class, $25.

Tickets for sale at Union Pacific Railroad and principal Railroad Ticket Offices East.

H. T. CLARKE, FORWARDING AND COMMISSION MERCHANT, wholesale dealer in Grain, Groceries, Provisions, Wagons, Hardware, Agricultural Implements, Stoves, Tinware, Coal, &c. Will buy, sell and forward at the lowest rates of freight. Owning to the difficulty of procuring Lumber for Building purposes, Mr. Clarke has had cottages put up for sale at Sidney and Points in the Black Hills, all of which are complete in every detail, and can be erected by mechanics employed by the Company. Letters forwarded to Custer City, Deadwood and other points. Price 10 cts.

REVERSE OF ENVELOPE USED BY MR. CLARKE IN THE PONY EXPRESS COMPANY.

of Reddington and told him what I'd thought of and asked what he thought about it, what sizes of window glass would be wanted. He said, 'Just you telegraph to Solomon,' who then ran a wholesale glass business in Omaha; he says, 'If he will furnish the stuff I will back you,' so I said yes. Solomon said yes. I left it to Solomon and told him about what we were going to do. I left it to him as to the sizes for I didn't know anything about that, what sizes we would be likely to want. Didn't have to wait but a few days until Solomon sent a couple of carloads of glass. I loaded up that stuff and went to the Black Hills, though the snow was flying. Before I got there they had a hundred houses or so, temporary houses, put up, with places left for windows, but had just nailed up the space with boards. Nobody had thought of window glass. I drove into town one morning, and I had to go and get the mayor and police to protect my wagons while I sold out the glass. I have forgotten how much money we made out of that, but it was a goodly sum. Solomon had said to me, we would cut the profits in two. Of course I didn't rob them and might have gotten more for it."

As Mr. Anderson put it, the life in Sidney, as it was then in Julesburg and Ogallala, was too rough to suit him. He continued the freighting for awhile, and then sold his outfit to the man, Reddington, who had stood behind him in the window glass venture. Williams went somewhere for awhile, but Anderson returned to Grand Island. Williams came along later and they again started a saloon.

GRAND ISLAND IN THE EARLY 'EIGHTIES

Mr McAllister then built them a brick building near where the McAllister brick block at Pine and Third stands. Mr. Anderson narrates the story of an

EARLY HORSE RACE

"A fellow used to bring horses here from Missouri and sell to the homesteaders. I bought a young three-year old mare from him. She proved to be a pretty good 'quarter-horse.' He brought up horses two or three times a year, and he heard that I thought this mare could beat most anything; so he brought up a little old scrub race horse from Missouri, intending to beat me out of some money. I went over and looked at his horse. He says, 'they tell me you think that mare you got from me is quite a race horse.' I said, 'yes I think she is.' I had won a couple of races with her. So he says, 'I've got an old plug here, I'll just bet you a hundred dollars she can beat yours a quarter mile.' Then I just bet him that $100. We went over on Second street to run the race. We started about where Wolbach's home is now, just go down to where the court house was, where Pioneer Park is now. We thought that was the nicest place, there was just a wagon road there then, so we measured off a quarter of a mile. We started at Wolbach's and run up by the court house. It happened that court was in session. The lawyers, the jurors, and everbody jumped up and ran to the windows to see what all the yelling was about. Judge Gaslin was here presiding. The judge said to the sheriff, 'Sheriff, what's it all about?' The sheriff said, 'A hoss race.' The judge said, 'You go out and bring them in.' He brought them in. The sheriff did, he came out and hauled me and the other fellow in as the two principals and brought us up. The old judge fined us $10 apiece for running on a public highway. But I won the $100 and it cost the other fellow $110.

OTHER EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

"Once in a while there used to be something pretty rough pulled off. A policeman shot a fellow one day where the American restaurant now stands.

"Gus Koehler ran a saloon on the site where the Schuff or American restaurant is now, until after the old O. K. store was moved away and until he got the brick Koehler hotel built on the present corner. Such characters as the principals in the Olive tragedy up west used to wander through occasionally. Doc. Middleton, the famous horse thief from up Custer way, who never stole just a horse or two, but generally a carload or two, used to come in. I remember that last time I saw him

was when he had his wife in the Sisters Hospital." Mr. Anderson remarks that he was present when the Soldiers' Home building was dedicated, and the young community and county thought it was getting to be some place to have a wonderful building as that put up here. He adds that every old buggy and plug in the county and about every person within range was here that day. In those early days the Union Pacific round house stood where the city water works is now located on Pine and Fourth streets. In the early 'seventies, Mr. Anderson says, one morning he counted fourteen antelope feeding between present Fifth street and the railroad tracks. "You could get up on a nice still morning, like this time especially, and hear the prairie chickens in a continual roar, and see roosters strutting around and it was no trouble at all to kill great numbers of prairie chickens. He says that while he was stationed out around Fort Kearny in the 'sixties, around Kearny and the present Lexington and over toward the B. and B. Divide you could ride on horseback and see buffalo just as far as the eye could see, looked just like an ocean, continual movements as far as the eye could see.

A RATTLE SNAKE ON LOCUST STREET

Mr. Anderson narrates that one day, before the time the block that now contains the City Hall, Bartenbach Opera House, Wolbach store, and other buildings was built up, the boys had a path zig-zagging across that block, to make a short cut to get to the U. P. eating house and depot, which were then east of the present freight house. One day Claus Eggers and a man he was working for went across here. There was then a blacksmith shop on the corner where the postoffice building is now. They started across this path, and while Claus and the old man were walking across there they came across a big rattle snake, and holy terrors! they had nothing to kill him with. The old man told Claus to keep the snake out of a hole and he would go over and get something to kill it with, which he did. On his return they killed the snake. It was a big fellow with sixteen rattles.

There are many more just as interesting reminicenses that Mr. Anderson could narrate to us and hand down to posterity, if time and space in this work permitted of their incorporation, but nevertheless Mr. Anderson's career has been one of the moulding factors in the early history of the community.