

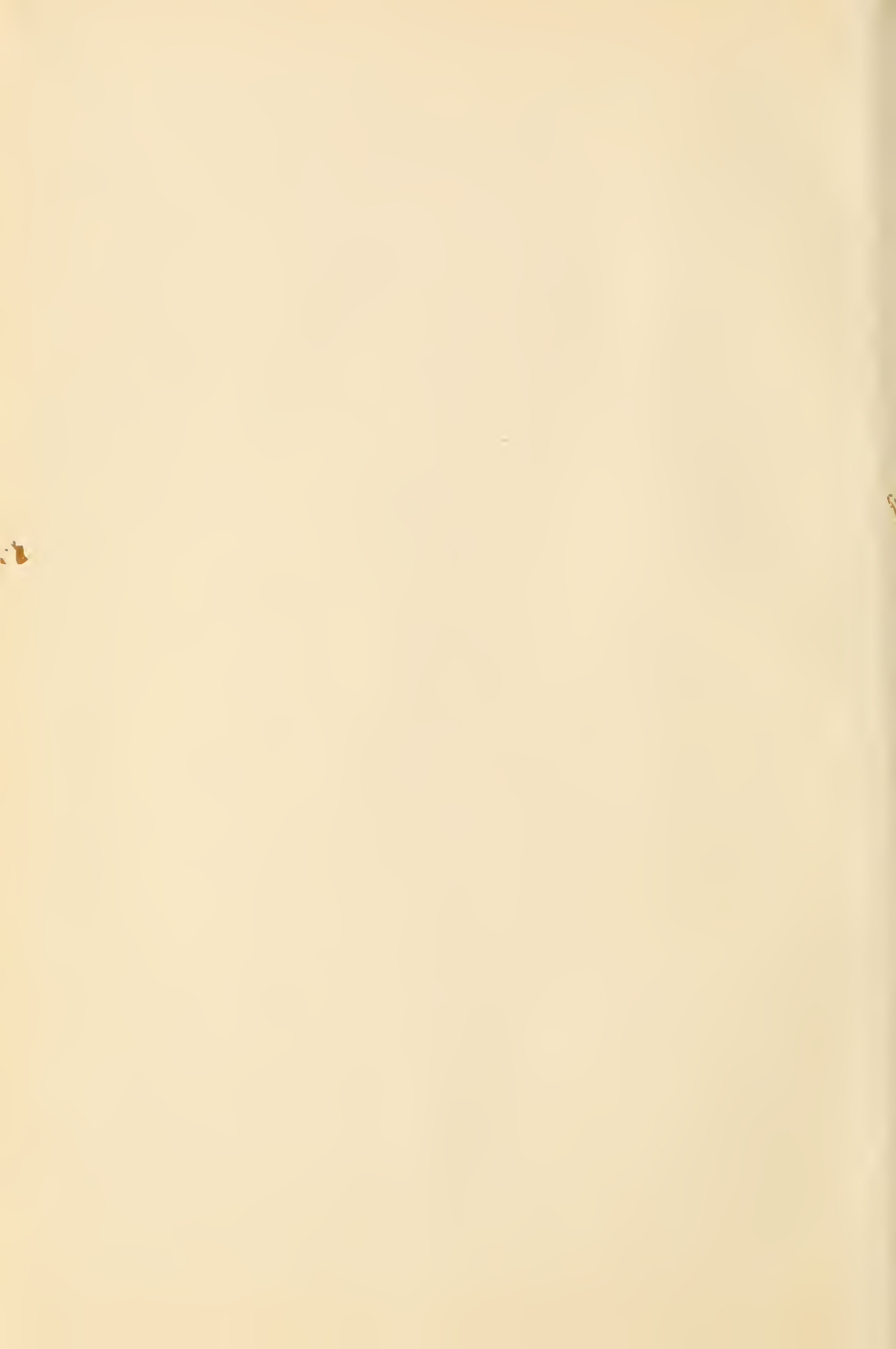
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EARLY HISTORY OF FRONTIER COUNTY NEBRASKA

BY W. H. MILES AND JOHN BRATT

WITH POEMS BY BOYD PERKIN



EARLY HISTORY AND REMINISCENCE
OF
FRONTIER COUNTY
NEBRASKA

By

W. H. MILES

and

JOHN BRATT, NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
OF FRONTIER COUNTY

BY A SUBSCRIBER

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BOYD PERKIN

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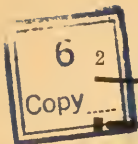
N. H. BOGUE, Editor of THE EAGLE

Maywood, Nebraska, A. D. 1894

and

W. H. BARTON in THE EAGLE-REPORTER, in 1911

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HOME IN THE WEST

Give me a home out in the West,
Where the softest breezes blow;
Among the fields of golden grain—
It is there that I would go.

On the wide prairie let me live,
In the saddle there to roam;
Four walls leave little space indeed
For a man to call his home.

Let me live beneath the heavens' blue;
Yes, give me the rain-filled clouds,
Crimson glory of sunset skies—
Away from the city's crowds.

—Boyd Perkin.

PREFACE

"Early History and Reminiscence of Frontier County, Neb." was published in the Eagle by N. H. Bogue in 1894 and again in the Eagle-Reporter in 1911 by W. H. Barton.

As only a few of the original copies were printed in booklet form and it is now, almost impossible to obtain one, I thought it would be a service, and might, as it has to me, a source of inspiration to old settlers and others interested in the tales of the pioneers, so with the permission of the Editor of the Eagle-Reporter I decided to have copies published.

BOYD PERKIN.

FOREWORD

With appreciation of courtesy from the editor of Studio News Magazine, in which "Mammoth" and other poems included in this book were first published.

The author of "Mammoth and Other Poems," Boyd Perkin, presents his first work in book form. We find his poems and writings of excellent type, that will be beneficial to readers. He has written Stories, Poetry and Songs. His latest songs: "On Irish Linen" whose words were written with the help of the Editor of Studio News and melody by Jimmy Crane has been published and with "When Autumn Turns The Leaves to Gold and Crimson" which was written in collaboration with Annie Peltokangas, who also composed the music has been broadcast over K.O.D.Y.

"Mammoth And Other Poems" are written thoughtfully and sincerely.

We highly recommend this book in the literary field. May it help you along life's pathway.

LETA S. BENDER,
Editor Studio News,
Friend, Nebr.

"BUD"

The frost lies on the ground, Bud—
A whiteness everywhere;
The sky is dark and gloomy,
A chilliness in the air.

The birds have all gone South, Bud,
Where skies are blue and fair;
And there comes now no music
From trees so lone and bare.

The years lie on my head, Bud,
And snow-white is my hair;
My friends have all departed—
I've none with whom to share.

They say there is a land, Bud,
Where there is no more care
And there will be no parting;
I'll meet the loved ones there.

—Boyd Ferkin.

A HISTORICAL AND GEOLOGICAL SKETCH OF NEBRASKA

On the first day of March, 1867, Nebraska was admitted into the Union. Through the mist of years the chronology of Nebraska has been handed down, tinged with romance as well as the sterner realities. The name itself possesses a mysterious charm. Young men who comprise the bone and sinew of the young State's 1,900,000 inhabitants have taken the land as they found it with scarcely an inquiry as to its origin. Misfortunes are long remembered. Perhaps they have a faint recollection of an Eastern home where kind friends busied themselves in providing things needed in a land sorely stricken with the plague of Egypt. Even youth born within Nebraska borders and educated in its boasted institutions of learning may have glanced at its history only hurriedly.

It is believed that over all this vast region once rested an immense lake, compared to which Lake Superior is a mere pond. Over the bottom of this lake were spread, through the changing scenes of time, lacustrine deposits of soil five to two hundred feet deep. A small area on the north side of the State seems to have emerged first, for the soil is entirely gone from it. But it must have been at one time a tropic isle of marvelous luxuriance of vegetable and animal life. In the hardened clay of its low hills are to be found vast numbers of fossil animals that have no existence outside the tropics. Here were immense numbers of rhinoceroses, horned and hornless, some with two horns, and others with none. Here ranged the hippopotami and vast herds of carnivorous animals; here are found petrified turtles, one specimen perfectly preserved, being seven feet across. "It requires but little imagination," says Bishop Warren, "to cover the region of the mouth of the Niobrara with abundant forests through which meandered great rivers full of huge animals, while chattered the monkey, and flew the gorgeous bird of paradise above them."

MAMMOTH

What picture shall we paint from these huge bones,
A Mammoth of the Pleocene age?
Vainly we'll ask the artist or the sage
Unless the poet's gift he freely owns:
For only poets truly can portray
That ancient beast in colors for Today.
Who else can place a heart in that huge frame
And 'round these naked bones a robe array?
Can others set that ancient heart aflame,
That it again may trumpet forth its love
For the vast herd now gathered far above?

—Boyd Perkin.

Afterward the surrounding country, covered with the richest soil, arose above the water; the climate grew more severe, and the tropical animals and birds gave place to those of a colder climate. One race of men lived here and disappeared; another took their place, but they have passed away, leaving but little trace of their existence; a third, now known as the Indian, luxuriated in the abundant meat of the buffalo, but they are being pushed rapidly off the stage of time, and their labors will be as extinct as the two races that have sunk beneath these waves of land, "unwept, unhonored and unsung."

Nebraska was a part of the large unexplored country that was claimed by La Salle for the King of France and named Louisiana. It was said to be full of mines and richer in ingots than Peru. John C. Fremont crossed its borders and opened up a new world, California gold hunters made a lasting path through its waving prairies, and the old trail made by the Mormons on their weary march to the city of saints is not yet obliterated. The origin of Nebraska had great influence upon the fate of our nation. The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, in 1854, threw open the territory to slavery, gave birth to a party that was made up of Whigs, antislavery Democrats and free-soilers, known at first as anti-Nebraska men and later as Republicans. The antislavery branch of the know-nothing party opposed the extension of slavery. Thus did Nebraska, in its infancy, figure in political history.

Nebraska being a portion of the Louisiana territory, divisions were made from time to time, resulting in the formation of Mis-

souri and Arkansas, between 1804 and 1854. In the latter year the Kansas-Nebraska bill became a law and defined Nebraska as that territory between 40 degrees and 49 degrees north latitude, the Missouri River on the east and the Rocky Mountains on the west. In 1863, the year before the question of statehood arose, the final boundaries were established. The enabling act was passed by Congress and approved April 22, 1861.

The bill gave Nebraska one representative in Congress, and granted large tracts of public lands for the purpose of endowing colleges and erecting public buildings necessary in forming a seat of government. It gave the people the right to formulate a constitution and that was to prohibit slavery. In 1866 the Territorial Legislature met and submitted a constitution to the popular vote; in June '66 the vote was cast, and declared accepted by a small majority. This constitution was submitted to Congress with the hope of gaining admission.

An attempt was made to ingraft a clause prohibiting discrimination on account of color. The bill was passed without that clause, but the measure was not signed by President Johnson, and did not become a law at that session; but when the next Congress assembled the measure was again called up before that body and passed. President Johnson vetoed the bill on January 29, 1867, and on February 8th it was taken up in the Senate and passed over the President's veto by a vote of 120 to 43 amid great applause from the floor and galleries.

The legislature was called in special session on February 20, 1867, by the territorial governor, Alvin Sanders, for the purpose of taking action upon the conditions imposed by Congress. The governor went before the legislature and presented a brief message informing that body that the constitution adopted by the people of the territory in June, 1866, restricted the elective franchise to "white male citizens." The condition imposed by Congress was that "this act shall not take effect except upon the fundamental condition that within the State of Nebraska there shall be no denial of the elective franchise, or of any other right, to any person by reason of race or color, excepting Indians not taxed." The joint convention adjourned and the Senate at once passed a bill assenting to the act of Congress admitting Nebraska into the Union. The House concurred immediately, and President Johnson issued his

proclamation announcing the admission of Nebraska into the union of States on March 1, 1867.

Geographically considered, the territory comprising the scene of our following History and Reminiscence, of local interest, is two hundred and twenty-five miles west of the Missouri river, seventy-two miles from Colorado and in the second tier of counties north from Kansas. It is in latitude 40 degrees 30 minutes, and in longitude 23 degrees west from Washington, the area of which is about the size of the state of Rhode Island.

EARLY HISTORY AND REMINISCENCE OF FRONTIER COUNTY

BY W. H. MILES

Ho! Brothers, come hither and listen to my story,
Merry and brief will the narrative be;
Here, like a monarch, I reign in my glory;
Master am I, boys, of all that I see.
Where once frowned a forest a garden is smiling,
The meadow and moorland are marshes no more;
And there curls the smoke of my cottage beguiling
The children who cluster like grapes at the door.
Then enter, boys; cheerily, boys, enter and rest;
The land of the heart is the land of the West.

Well, boys, I am going to follow my trail back to 1870, when I came into the Medicine Valley—and the true facts are in store for you. It is rather a lonely trip, as I am left alone: a part of my companions then have long since gone to that far away hunting ground, while the others, like the Arab, have folded their tents and silently stolen away.

The first settlers in the Medicine Valley found no exception to the numerous hardships endured by pioneers of other portions of the Great West. To settle down in this wild country, the nearest habitation being Fort McPherson, fifty miles away, not a road, bridge or church to guide the weary traveler, who was exposed to heat and cold, rain and drouth, lawless bands of white men, Indians and grasshoppers; to tramp down the prickly pears and kill the

rattlesnakes, hunt the elk and buffalo, haul the meat to the fort and trade it for supplies—was not as romantic as some may think. Yet pleasures were strewn along the weird scenes that would appear upon our horizon and pass away like the morning dew. We were free from the banker, lawyer, doctor and mortgages; we had no church quarrels, no grades in society or wealth; no parties or politics; all worked together and shared alike.

The first settlers here had passed over this territory on a trip through the west but found no place as good or inviting as the Medicine Valley. Here the Indian ponies were fat and could run all day with no feed but the buffalo grass. I did not know then that this would become an agricultural land, but thought it the best stock country in the world. Daily hundreds of fat buffalos, deer, elks, antelopes and wild horses came down to the Medicine creek to drink. Wild turkeys were numerous; the trees would be black with them when they went to roost, but they were soon killed or driven away.

BUFFALO CREED

For me these canyons and these tow'ring hills
And rushing streams have romance and a charm
I deem them riches that the brave man wills should be;
More precious far than any golden vein
Of storied lore where men have fought in vain,
Their fleeting earthly treasure and brief fame,
Has perished long ago, but here the name
Of valiant scout and rugged pioneer,
Are fresh in memory and it will remain,
Verdant as growing fields. The golden grain
Is but a symbol of the trust and faith
That tried beyond the years can still behold
The Western vision glimpsed by prophets old.

—Boyd Perkin.

FIRST CHRISTMAS

The Indians that camped on the Medicine in 1870 were Whistler's Band, that had been cut off from the tribe of Spotted Tail, the big Sioux chief. Hank and Montie Clifford and John Nelson were with them and had Indian families; W. H. Miles found them, built a smoke-house, dried buffalo meat and trapped during the winter. Also, the writer took a homestead, the first in the territory now comprising Frontier County.

We killed the buffalos, and the squaws tanned the robes, until we had ten thousand pounds of meat and a thousand tongues dried, that we expected to ship East.

But, alas! a shadow came over the spirit of our dreams of wealth, in the shape of sixty Indians that came down to spend the winter with us, which they did. The meat and tongues went to entertain our guests.

We prepared for a "big time" on Christmas; so Clifford went into town and brought out some "fixin's" such as currants, sugar, etc.; last but not least, a keg of whiskey, of which Indians and all indulged freely. The Indians had a war dance which came very near to a "killing off," but we had a good time all the same.

The Indians said they would celebrate Christmas too, by killing and eating all the dogs in the village. I had a fine dog and told them to spare him; but the first thing I saw Christmas morning was poor Dodge roasting on the fire. There were ten dogs eaten at the first Christmas celebration in Frontier County.

Mr. John Bratt, the cattle king of Nebraska, came over from the Platte and proposed to organize a county. We favored the proposition, but our population was so numerically small we hadn't enough to fill the offices. There being four of us, I was the only one but what belonged to the Sioux Indians in the territory of the proposed county. Mr. Bratt, being a man of indomitable will, did not intend that the want of a few men should hinder the organization at that time.

It scarcely seems twenty-two years ago when a few of us got together and determined to organize the county of Frontier, at that time the home and paradise of the buffalo and the Indian. I had already consulted with Montie and Hank Clifford, who were at that time living in teepees with their squaws, paposes and Indian relations, near Coon Creek; also with that nature's nobleman, the whole-souled, generous hearted Sam Watts, W. H. Miles and a

few others, as to the boundary of the county, location and name of the county seat, Stockville, and who the county officials should be. These matters decided, we went to work with a will, and considerable expense; succeeded in getting an act passed by the legislature, which was approved January 17, 1872, by Wm. H. James, then acting governor and Secretary of State, bounding the county of Frontier, whose organization was entrusted and commissions issued to Levi Carter, my partner, as county treasurer; John Kirby, clerk; Hank Clifford, sheriff; E. G. Nesbitt, superintendent of public instruction; Samuel F. Watts, judge; A. S. Shelly, coroner; James Kerr, assessor; John Y. Nelson, surveyor; W. H. Miles, Monte Clifford and your humble scribe, commissioners.

Well do I remember starting out from Ft. McPherson at between eleven and twelve o'clock on a bitter cold night in January, 1872, the day prior to our organization set by law, in company with John Kirby, whom I had to take before a justice of the peace, E. E. Erickson, to have sworn into the office of clerk, before starting.

We were both mounted on two slippery shod horses; the ground being partially covered with ice and snow made the trip from Ft. McPherson to our ranch, at the head of Fox Creek, anything but pleasant, especially to a man of Mr. Kirby's size, an inexperienced rider as he was. His horse, though I had given him the best one, persisted in falling down on the ice, and it was only by coaxing that I got him to finish the journey to Fox Creek Ranch, where we arrived shortly before daybreak and where I had sent, the day previous, a team with the county books, blanks, commissions, etc., in care of Jones and Kerr, two of our men, who were appointed to fill two of the offices.

After partaking of a hasty breakfast consisting of biscuits, buffalo meat and coffee, Kirby and I started in a light rig with the box of books, etc., followed by Kerr and Jones on horseback, en route for Hank Clifford's tepee on Coon Creek. At this time there was not much of a road between Fox Creek and the Medicine, east of Curtis Creek, and it usually required the skill of a careful driver, even with a gentle team, to go through the breaks of Fox and Curtis creeks without upsetting.

Before leaving Fox Creek Ranch, I had put in the team a green Texas horse that had scarcely ever seen a rig, say nothing about pulling one. It took four of us to hitch him up; but once started, after kicking, rearing and plunging for about a mile, he

sobered down to his share of the work, but was far from being bridlewise.

We had got safely out of the second canyon east of Fox Creek, and had stopped preparatory to descending a steep hill leading into another canyon, when I insisted that Kirby should get out, to which he strenuously objected, remarking that he dared to ride where I rode. The hill was long and very steep, some parts of it covered with ice, especially at and near the top; other parts of the buffalo trail we were following were covered with snow. The morning was bright but stinging cold with a sharp wind blowing.

I hesitated some time, surveying my intended route down the hill before starting, having a lack of faith in the Texas side of our team when and where careful driving was needed to get us over bad places without accident, since our Texas horse, in the short distance we had come, had indicated a very strong desire to go one way while I would endeavor to persuade him to go another. This caused me to insist and then beg of Kirby, who was an old Missourian and knew no fear, to get out, telling him at the same time we were liable to upset.

But it was no use; might as well talk to a stone. After taking a big drink out of a suspicious-looking canteen, he gave orders to "let her go," and I obeyed, using all the precaution I possibly could. We had proceeded but a little way down the hill when our horses lost their footing, and the wagon likewise. The dashboard was on my neck, and both horses; especially my Texas friend was making a target of my head with his hind feet. Fortunately I held onto the reins and, after being dragged under the buggy about two hundred yards, I was finally extricated by Kerr and Jones.

Alas! poor Kirby lay groaning where he had fallen, the box of books having rolled down the hill some distance from him. We were sorry to find Mr. Kirby's arm broken in two places, and collar bone fractured. The only words we succeeded in getting from him were:

"Let me die right here."

As soon as we could fix up the breakages on the wagon and tongue, we lifted poor Kirby into it, much against his protests, and I led the team back to Fox Creek Ranch. Here we laid him carefully on the bed, at which I knelt while he swore me into office of county commissioner, and I left him in care of three of our men with orders to take him to Ft. McPherson as quick as they could and as easy as possible.

This done, I again started with that team and that box, with which I arrived at Hank Clifford's Indian lodge, near Coon Creek, at nearly six o'clock that night. Here our would-be county dads had assembled and were impatiently awaiting my arrival. It was but a few moments before our box was opened, the officers sworn in, the commissions distributed. But lo! when we came to sign our names we had neither ink, p n nor pencil. Necessity, the mother of invention, came to our rescue. A stick was sharpened, some soot scraped from the teepee poles, our names signed—the organization of Frontier County was complete.

Returning to Fox Creek Ranch the following day, I was almost paralyzed to find my friend Kirby yet on the bed where I had laid him, his arm and shoulder swollen to an enormous size. He had a six-shooter by his side and threatened to shoot the first man that disturbed him. I took the revolver away from him unnoticed. Meantime I had our men prepare a wagon with hay and quilts, into which it took six of us to handle and lay him. We got him into the hospital at Ft. McPherson about three o'clock the next morning, where Dr. Elbery, one of the most efficient of army surgeons, attended him and I am pleased to say saved his life, which for some years afterward was devoted to the interests of your county. Kirby finally went back to Missouri, where he died. Finis.

CONTINUED BY W. H. MILES

We went on each other's bonds; and as the whole population of the new county was in bond to protect its interests, the new organization was a success under the watchful eyes of Judge Watts and Commissioner Bratt.

FIRST FARMING

The first farming in the county was a failure. We planted some squaw corn and pumpkin seed, which soon gave promise of good returns for time and labor bestowed. But one morning we heard bellowing in the field. We gathered our cartridge belts and guns, then went to see what the intruder was.

About one thousand buffalos had taken possession of our field. We protested with a vengeance and brought down fifteen of those lordly brutes of the plains, but the entire crop of Frontier County was tramped out of sight or that year. The squaws came out, butchered our game, and a feast followed the loss of our crop.

I FIRST HERD OF CATTLE

John Bratt built a ranch near where Curtis is now, one at Medicine Lake and one on Fox Creek, and brought in the first herd of cattle, which numbered many thousand head. Cattle were sold, beef-fat off the nutritious buffalo grass, with no care or expense but rounding up and branding. Every ranch stood open to all that came, so hospitable and free-hearted were those pioneers. The cook would "rustle" up a good meal, and when it was ready he would sing out, "Grub pile!" And when the meal was over, all would sit around the fire, tell stories, sing songs until tired out, then sleep, perchance dream of the loved ones and their homes far away, that they had not seen for many long, weary years.

INDIAN OUTBREAK

In 1871 there came very near being an Indian outbreak on the Medicine. Chief Whistler and two of his braves started for Ft. McPherson. While in camp, preparing some food they were discovered by three white men who were passing through and shot them in the back. Then the bodies were taken and thrown in a canyon. It was several days before they were found. During this time the cowardly murderers had fled from the country. The inhuman act so enraged the Indians that they would have killed all of us for revenge on the white people, had it not been for the great influence Hank Clifford held over them.

BUILD COURT-HOUSE

After the organization of the county, we concluded to give up hunting and go to farming. We were in doubt yet whether it would pay or not, but determined to try; and in taking this initiatory step toward civilization we selected the present site of Stockville (that being near the center of the county) in 1872. Then we set a day on which all turned out and began the erection of a court-house sixteen feet square, built of logs, which was soon completed and was furnished with the county records. It was also the first house erected in the county of Frontier.

We worked early and late, building bridges, houses and putting out a crop. Clifford and I sent back East and had a dozen chickens shipped out, which cost us seventy-five cents each. They were a wonder to the natives, who came from far and near to see them.

FIRST WHITE WOMEN

We had made such a wonderful stride toward civilization that I wrote back to Florida for my father, mother and sister to come

here. They arrived on March 12, 1872, my mother and sister being the first white women in the county. After a long ride across the wild, roadless country, over level divides and through long canyons, from Fort McPherson, we came to the Medicine and went into camp. Mother said:

"The last link is broken in the chain of civilization."

A flock of antelopes stood on a hill near by and watched us while we busied ourselves picketing out our horses and gathering up wood for our camp-fire. Welk Snell got supper in true frontier style in the far West. Snow-drifts, remnants of the past hard winter, yet lay at the head of canyons, white and cold; the buffalo and wolves serenaded us with their various notes of weird cadences; a flock of geese passed over us, winging their way north, added to the unbounded solitude. Thus the introductory scenes of life in the Wild West were thrown upon the minds of those pioneer ladies to institute a comparison and contrast with their old home in the far-away "Land of Flowers."

FIRST SHEEP

During the summer of 1872 a few "prairie schooners" came in, laden with men and their families in search of a place to take up their abode and make a home. A Mr. Lewis was the first to bring in a flock of sheep, which was a picnic for the wolves. James Kibben and Judge S. P. Baker each brought in a herd of fine cattle in the summer of 1872. Also, John Lockwood, Andrew Webb, R. A. McKnight, George Carothers, Ed Bovey, Herman Doing, J. R. Brittingham, A. S. Shelly, Orville Works, Jerome Dauchey, J. A. Lynch, Henry Miller; James, John and Sam'l Gammill; W. H. Allen, Wm. Black and W. L. McClary—all settled on the Medicine and successfully played their parts in the early historical drama of the county.

FIRST WHITE CHILD

John Sanders was among the front rank that came in to earn a fortune in a new country, and built the first flour mill in the county, on the Medicine near Stockville. To Mr. and Mrs. John Sanders was born the first white child, a daughter, that is recorded in Frontier.

Wm. Nolan, J. M. Noyes, E. S. Childs and John Waits took claims in the southeastern part of the county and had borne their part of the burden in tramping out the cactus, turning over the buffalo sod and making our county bloom like the rose.

FIRST PREACHER

Reverend Shirvington, the first preacher to take up his abode here, staked out a claim on Fox Creek; John Miller outlined a ranch on Brush Creek and was a "Robinson Crusoe" for some time; W. G. Warner, who brought in a herd of fine cattle from Iowa, settled permanently on the Brushy; Gid and Abe Barry purchased and located on a ranch that John Bratt built, on Curtis Creek. All aided in opening the way for the great flood of emigration which soon followed and took up the government land.

A DAY IN JUNE

I think, of all the year, a day in June
Is sweetest: honeysuckle fills the air,
With the wild roses blushing everywhere;
Listening to the golden chiming tune
Of wedding bells; a moon is sending down
Its mellow rays upon the prairie; soon
Strumming guitars and men's voices resound
To spread their joyful romance all around
As care-free, happy cowboys softly croon
A welcome to the one in wedding gown.

—Boyd Perkin.

THE FIRST WEDDING

The first wedding in the county was at the ranch of W. H. Miles on June 4, 1873. The happy parties were Andy Barret and Mrs. Nancy Wheatly, both half Indians. It was a grand social affair attended by ranchers, cowboys and Indians.

Andy Barret had been captured, when a child, by Mormon emigrants and taken west, where he became one of the best ropers and horse trainers of the Rocky Mountains. After twenty years he came back to the Sioux here in search of his mother, but she had long since gone to the happy hunting grounds.

We did all possible to make his nuptial feast a social success. After congratulations Judge Watts wished them "that their lives would be one sea of happiness, that the white wings of love and peace would fan away every troubled thought, that their path through life be ever strewn with fairest flowers."

The wish never came to pass. An Indian had a dream that he must kill the first person he met; if not, he would never get to the happy hunting grounds in the hereafter. By chance he met Andy

Barret and shot him dead. Mrs. Barret was lost on the plains and died. Thus ended the earthly pilgrimage of the contracting parties to the first marriage in the county of Frontier.

FIRST LAWYER

The first lawyer that ventured out in the misty dim on a sea of doubt as to what the future would bring forth on the frontier to a disciple of Blackstone was E. T. Jay, who took a claim in the eastern part of the county, on the Muddy. His professional services were seldom needed, as most men in those days here settled disputes before the cases were worn out, by the ravages of time, in the courts.

Mr. Jay was a counselor in the first case at law in this county, which was brought about by the hard winter of 1878 and '79. The weather was unusually severe; hard storms and blizzards raged at intervals. During the season a deep snow fell and covered the grass, so the stock suffered greatly. A big percentage of stock was lost by most of the cattlemen. Large herds drifted in on the Medicine from eastern Colorado, Cheyenne, the northern and western part of this State, so that a big "round-up" in Frontier County was the result in which one hundred men were looking after their interests.

Two men by name Lowe and Joe Ansley got into a dispute. Both drew their revolvers and fired. Ansley, being the quickest, killed Lowe, and the next shot killed his horse. Ansley stood the men off, then skipped out. Lowe was buried at Mitchell's Fork.

I was deputized by Sheriff McKnight to capture Ansley. After several days' hard riding up on the Platte River, I captured and brought him back for trial. Ansley employed E. T. Jay to defend him. They went before the court, a justice of the peace presiding on a charge of murder. The justice put the usual question:

"Are you guilty or not guilty of the charge against you?"

Ansley answered, "Guilty."

Lawyer Jay called the prisoner out behind the house and said:

"You did not understand the reading of the warrant. You must not say 'guilty'; you must say 'not guilty.' If you don't you will be bound over."

Ansley said, "I don't like to lie, but if I must I will."

Then he went before the court and the question of guilty or not guilty was again asked.

"Not guilty, Your Honor," came the response.

The judge said: "I discharge the prisoner."

I returned to him his pistol. He then left for Sidney, on the Platte, minus a horse, saddle and ten dollars that his lawyer kept for his services.

This decision of the justice may seem to the reader who has been educated to believe and obey the high command, "Thou shalt not kill," to usurp, with a heavy hand, the majesty of the law and allow rapine and murder to go untried and unpunished; but in this case the prisoner could prove, by half a hundred witnesses, that he shot in self defense, there not being an instant of time between the reports of the guns, while it saved a big expense to the county.

MITCHELL'S FORK

Stop, stranger; pause and shed a tear
At this lone mound on Mitchell's Fork.
These cottonwoods are sentinels brave,
And in those willows close by them
A turtle dove sings requiem;
While partridges beat their booming dirge
Above the old scout's lonely grave
On Mitchell's Fork.

Stop, stranger, stop; now dry your tears
At this lone mound on Mitchell's Fork.
There's more than dust of a scout so brave,
List to the tale that's buried here.
Though shrouded by the mist of years,
How plainly the scene comes back to me
As we stand by this lonely grave
On Mitchell's Fork.

He came to woo, he loved and lost:
Ansley was quicker on the draw;
So Lowe, the scout, lies buried here
On Mitchell's Fork.

—Boyd Perkin.

After the organization of the county, we held an election which resulted in the adoption of free range, thus making this a strictly stock county; and it proved a success in that line until settlers came in so fast to cultivate land that, when the question of herd law and free-range was again agitated, after a hotly contested election in the summer of 1885 the free-range law was repealed. This was the death knell of the stock business on the free-range plan in this county. The stockmen had to go the same trail the buffalos went, with their vast herds of cattle and horses. The county since then has been rapidly developing in agriculture, and stands today without peer in southwest Nebraska.

WOLF'S REST

The first house I built was upon a high hill, being far from water, and the winds blew so hard that we concluded to camp near the timber. Our choice place for a home was under the protecting branches of a large spreading elm tree.

When we made this selection from nature's grove, for our abode, near by was a large white wolf, dead with a big steel trap on his foot, which he had dragged over many a mile of prairie grass until he had become hungry and outworn with life's pilgrimage, had quietly lain down like one that is weary and sweetly reposed forever. We named our home under the elm "Wolf's Rest." After some inquiry we found that our only neighbor in Red Willow County, Storm King, had set a trap at a dead buffalo, caught the wolf, which broke the chain and took the trap to Wolf's Rest.

Of all happy days, those spent at Wolf's Rest were the best. Here we planted our little fields of corn that grew far beyond our expectations. The large old-fashioned coffee mill was nailed to a tree (the growth of the tree has almost covered the old mill, but it stands as a relic of its former usefulness); with it we ground corn into meal and hominy to cook on the old-time fireplace. Here we trained the grape-vine to climb the rustic arbor, rested far away from the aches of my Southern home and breathed the pure air in the darkling wood, in the shadow of the aged elm; here we watched strange birds build their nests and rear their downy brood unmolested, while we drank of the pure waters of the Medicine, where was not a trace of man's pomp or pride; no brass jewels shone; no envious eyes to encounter; no hypocrites to make one loathe the very name of mankind; but here in the shady nooks, along the

banks of the Medicine, the wild rose, the modest little violet, seemed to look up with perfumed breath, whispering: "Rest with us."

SEEKING

We sink our shining shovel in the soil
Of far-off, beckoning, glamorous foreign lands,
Or go to distant beaches, there to toil
And dig for fancied treasure in the sands.
Forgetting, or in ignorance, we roam
Far from the golden treasure of our home.

But Providence is kind. Our fruitless round
Oft teaches us to till familiar ground.
Thus finding gold thought buried far away,
We prize our home after wandering many a day.

---Boyd Perkin

FIRST DANCE

Our log cabin at Wolf's Rest was a home for all that came. The first dance in the county was here; it took all the ladies in Frontier to make up the set. We helped all the newcomers we could, to get good creek claims, thinking then that the divides were not good for anything but grazing purposes.

DOCTOR CARVER

The renowned Doctor W. T. Carver, of glass-ball-shooting fame, came to Wolf's Rest in 1872 and took a claim near by. Here it was that Dr. Carver learned and practiced the art that made him the wonder of the world. Later on his mother came, bringing the first fine poultry consisting of pea-fowls, ducks, etc., also a collection of choice flowers, and the first piano.

These were a great curiosity to Indians and frontiersmen. In bringing the piano out from the railroad, with some wild broncho ponies, we got stuck in a swamp and could not get enough of them hitched onto the wagon to pull it out. So it stood there several weeks, covered up with buffalo robes, until the ground became dry; then we brought it down and put it in the log cabin in Medicine Valley.

To be a good shot was considered the highest accomplishment and Dr. W. T. Carver's ambition ran that way; so he did nothing but hunt and shoot until he became the greatest shot in the world.

In writing to me from Vienna, Austria, he said: "I have made Medicine Creek famous all over the world—where I am proud to have hailed from."

I helped to plow the first furrow in Red Willow County, in March, 1872. A man by the name of John King had taken a claim below Indianola; he was the only settler in that county then. I went over to get a mule I had bought of him. He had a plow in the wagon, and we hitched on to plow a few furrows to see how it looked.

We called this man Crazy King, as he would take his team and go alone for hundreds of miles, build bridges over streams, pull through deep snows and fetch up at our camp every big snow-storm. Once while King was out on one of his trips, Indians surrounded him in camp. He fought them several hours, but they were too many for him. He was badly wounded, being shot three times; yet he got away, though the redskins took his horses.

WILD MAN

In June, 1870, we found a wild man in Frontier County. On several occasions we had seen very large barefoot tracks of a human being, ranging between the Platte River and the Medicine. We thought it strange, as we knew there was no one in the county but those of our own little neighborhood. As Clifford, Nelson and myself were crossing the divide on the way to Fort McPherson, one very warm day after the water had dried up in the lagoons and the grass was parched with the intense heat, we saw a man coming toward us. We felt like running when he came near enough for us to inspect his visage. He was fully six and one-half feet tall, without shoes and hatless, his head covered with grizzly gray hair, and long beard of the same color all over his face so matted with dirt that we could scarcely see his eyes.

Nelson cocked his needle-gun ready to shoot him if he offered violence. He was not hostile, but seemed to be crazy from thirst; he took our water jug and drained it, then got on the wagon and we took him to Fort McPherson with us. The soldiers came out to see him, though none could tell by his language to what nationality he belonged, nor where he came from or stayed.

The fellow ate all we gave him. After eating some canned fruit, he departed in the direction of Frontier; he carried a heavy club with which to defend himself and kill his meat. Nothing more

was seen of him for several years. A large skeleton was found in a canyon near Moorefield, which we supposed to be the remains of the Wild Man, who must have died unwept and alone.

SWEETHEART WHO LIVES ON THE PLAINS

I've a sweetheart that lives 'way out on the plains,
On the wide-spreading prairie that I love so.
Oh, how my lonely, yearning heart pains;
Westward to her my dreams always go.
Light ever shining in my dark vale,
Love is singing the sweetest strains;
Gladly I'll follow on life's long trail
My sweetheart who lives 'way out on the plains.

—Boyd Perkin.

BUFFALO HUNT

The abundance of buffalo and other game that majestically roamed over this territory, and drank of the waters of the Medicine, attracted men of note from abroad, on a round of pleasure in pursuing the game of the plains.

Buffalo Bill, Wm. Cody, my old partner, would often bring parties in, and we had many interesting hunting exploits, which made Mr. Cody the most noted buffalo hunter in the world.

The Russian Duke Alexis, General Sheridan and other noted men came in for a share of the hilarious sport of buffalo hunting. The duke could not ride over the rough country fast enough to kill a buffalo; he did not want to return to Russia before killing one. So Bill Reed ran down a buffalo calf and held it until the grand duke came up and shot it.

The Indians gave a war-dance for the duke's entertainment, for which he showed his appreciation by giving them many presents. He also gave Buffalo Bill a diamond pin. A tall flagstaff was raised; the American flag was run up to wave in the western breeze. The Indians looked on the flag with great respect and as long as it remained there they felt bound to keep the peace.

The Indians got into a fight among themselves and one we called Little Billy was killed; we buried him near the flagpole.

Duke Alexis was very dignified, and none but those high in office could approach or speak to him. I thought while in Frontier County I could and had a right to speak genteelly to any person, and

that no man stood above me: so I went up to Duke Alexis and said:

"How do you do, Duke?"

He said, "I have not been introduced to you."

I said, "It don't make any difference to me. How do you do, Duke?"

He said to General Sheridan: "General, you are very familiar with your men."

General Sheridan said: "By G—, sir, we are Americans."

In the summer of 1871 a party of us went out on the Mitchell to catch some buffalo calves. When we arrived on their range there were buffalos as far as the eye could span in every direction. We caught three the first dash; and while we were off our horses, tying the calves, an immense herd of buffalos came rushing along pell-mell. The very earth seemed in a tremor beneath their elephantine tread, almost running over me and sending a thrill of fright coursing through our anatomy, which almost paralyzed us and scared our horses so that Dick Seymore, Hank Clifford and Snell's horses broke away and went with the rushing, surging herd toward the Sunny South, bridled and saddled but riderless.

John Nelson and myself followed to try and overtake the fugitives, but they were soon lost to our view in the herd of thousands of buffalo, though we followed on in hopes of coming up with the horses.

Near the mouth of the Mitchell we found where the buffalos had run over a bluff, at one place nearly a hundred feet down to the bottom, where stood a large elm tree in which the gentle zephyrs had moaned the evening requiems of solitude, among its leafy branches, for many long years in the flight of ages, undisturbed. But in the wild rush of the bison of the plains, a huge buffalo was crowded off the perpendicular cliff and lodged in the old elm. This was the only time I ever saw a buffalo up a tree.

We followed the Medicine down to the Republican River, thence down that stream fifteen miles, where we came to a little log house and stakes stuck up all over the prairie. This we found occupied by two men, a woman and child, also a dog. We soon learned the parties were Bill Colvin, Geo. Love and family; that was the first habitation we had seen, in all the county, outside of our own on the Medicine.

As our horses were tired out, we told them we would camp

with them that night. We unsaddled, picketed out our ponies and began looking around for some meat for supper. As luck was to our hand in that line, a herd of buffalos came along near by. I took up my needle-gun and started after them, when one of the men called to me, saying:

"We wish you would not kill any of those animals inside the town site, as it might be hard for us to remove the carcass."

I apologized, saying, "I did not know that I was in town, but grant your request, and would not intentionally violate any city ordinance."

Love said that Captain Murphy had come out from Plattsmouth with a colony, staked out a town and named it Arapahoe. The stakes I thought to be picket pins were the landmarks of the lots and street of the new town. This was in the summer of 1871, and the county was not organized until 1873, and named Furnas.

Captain Murphy was an officer in the army and experienced many hard fights with the Indians over this country. In the sixties he had a ranch on the Platte River, at Alcalie, before the U. P. railroad was built. In 1878 I was married to his daughter, Laura Murphy, the first marriage of white people in the county.

To return to the chase after the horses: There were so many buffalos that they tramped out every track, and trailing them was impossible. After days of hard riding we returned without the horses, which was quite a loss to us.

LORD DUNRAVEN

Lord Dunraven and Dr. Kingsley of England came here on a hunting tour and took back, as a souvenir of the trip a buffalo head, also two wildcats that I caught for them. I had a collection of wild animals that were interesting to many of the "tenderfeet" who came along.

The native cow would raise the buffalo calf, but they did not like it. We could not domesticate the wildcat or turkey; as soon as they got loose, they went away.

One night while out trapping, I camped alone. About midnight I heard the step of some wild animal circling around me. I got my trusty needle-gun ready and waited for him until daylight. A light snow had fallen and I saw the tracks of a large mountain lion. I do not know why he did not tackle me; perhaps he was not hungry. I hastily breakfasted on coffee and warmed-over

beaver meat that I had cooked the evening before, then started on the trail of my lordly visitor.

I knew he was a bad customer; the fresher the trail, the more shaky and cautious I became. On creeping up a high bluff overlooking the stream, I saw him breakfasting on a beaver he had caught as I had done. I got a broadside view and fired. He dropped the beaver and started to climb the bluff after me, when I gave him another shot which settled him. He measured nine feet from tip to tip.

Professor Ward of Chicago came here to get specimens for his museum. I killed ten buffalos, which he took—only the robes and bones for mounting. The Indians called him the "bone man." They thought he had a queer taste to take the bones and leave the meat.

ROPING BUFFALOS

An English officer came out for the purpose of catching full-grown buffalos to put in a large strong corral near Niagara Falls, and had advertised a wild buffalo hunt. He offered us seven dollars a day to catch the buffalos, and good pay to go with him to rope at the falls. He brought out heavy freight wagons in which to cart the animals to the U. P. railroad. It had never been known that full-grown buffalos could be roped and tied down, but we thought we would try it. We made up a party consisting of Andy Barret, the roper; Texas Jack; Dashing Charley; Bloody Dick, a Texas cowboy; Chamberlain and myself.

We went out on the Beaver before we came to the main herd of buffalos; we then got our lariats in readiness and got as near them as possible, to save our horses, for we knew there was a hard run before us. The game was in a draw one hundred yards away when they scented us and started on the run at breakneck speed. We had paired off, Andy and I together. When the herd reached the divide it was three hundred yards in advance of us. We urged our horses and gradually gained on them, while the ground almost trembled beneath the pile-driver tramp. The horns of the bisons rattled together, and all went in one solid black wave that swept on and on across broad divides, through canyons and over hills, stopping for nothing, at a wild and awful rush.

We at last got a chance and cut out a fine large buffalo to one side. An instant afterward Andy's lariat went through the air like a serpent and curled itself around its victim's neck; the other

end was fastened to the saddle horn. I made a lucky throw and got my rope on the animal, too. We could not stop suddenly, but had to keep on the run in order to choke him down gradually, our horses holding back all they could. When we got him stopped, Andy went on one side and I on the other, to prevent him from getting at us until help came, as he did not give up his freedom peaceably. Then a rope was thrown around his feet; he was brought to the ground, then tied down and left until our return after him.

In this way we caught and tied five, Texas Jack and his party caught three; eight in all. We decided to load them in the freight wagons and take them to the U.P. railroad; but when we got around to them, they were about all dead, owing to the hot weather and their disposition not to give up their struggle for liberty. So we succeeded in getting only one alive to Wolf's Rest, and he like his companions did not give up but died while trying to free himself. Thus ended the scheme of capturing wild buffalos for the show at Niagara Falls.

Two of our horses died from heat and overwork, while some of our men got terrible falls. Texas Jack said, "They swapped ends." There has been a great deal said about shooting buffalos, but the world's history does not record the fact that any party ever roped and tied down full-grown wild buffalos, as we did in the summer of 1872.

Medicine Valley was the dividing line, north and south, in the hunting grounds of the two great Indian tribes, the Pawnees on the east and Sioux on the west. The buffalos having all gone west of this line, the Pawnees would occasionally steal across on a hunt. The death knell of disaster swept over the Pawnees in the summer of 1873; they made a raid in Sioux territory and killed a number of buffalos. The squaws, in high glee and happy, were busy cutting the meat in thin slices to dry, ready to take back with them, when their hated enemy, the Sioux, came down on them, in a canyon where they were at work, with a savage war-whoop.

The Pawnees were surrounded and after a hard fight the Sioux won the victory. They showed no quarter to their victims, who left many squaws and braves to moulder away with the buffalos they had slain. This was the last fight between the contending tribes in this part of the country; the Pawnee were so completely whipped that they feared the Sioux. The bones of the "poor Indians" were

picked up with animal bones and shipped East to be ground into fertilizer to enrich the worn soil.

HUNT NEAR MAYWOOD


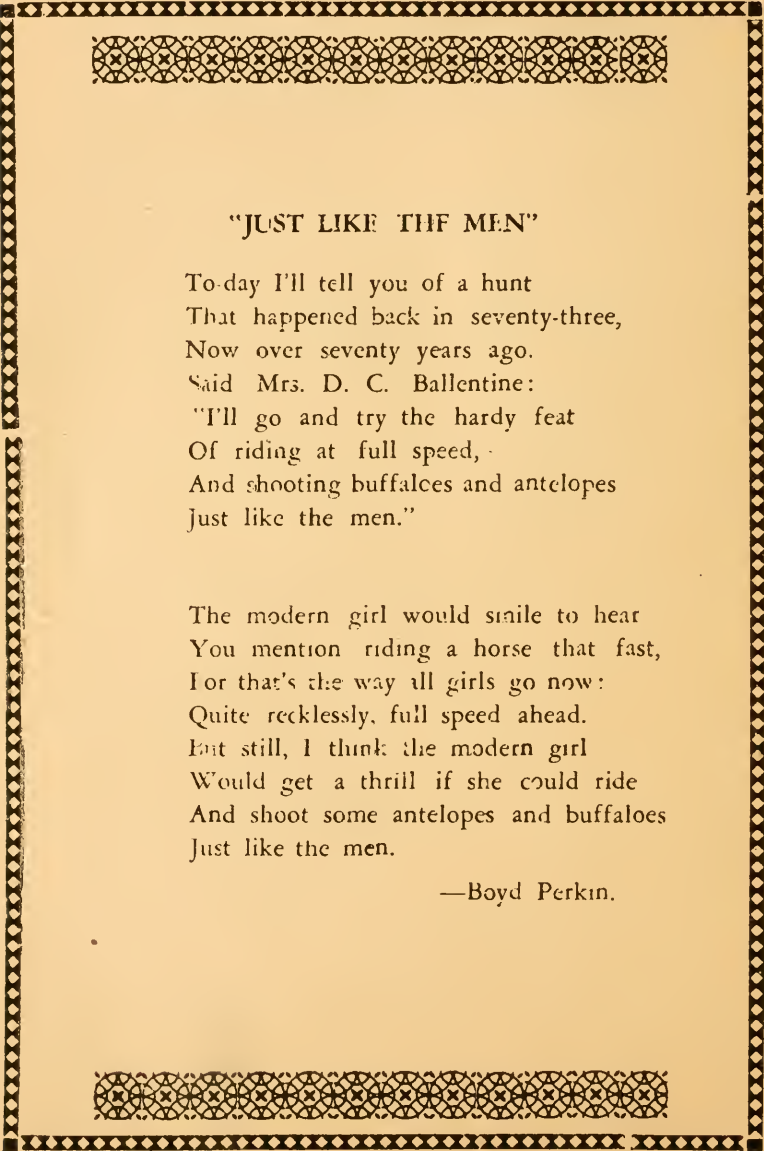
An interesting hunt took place on the Medicine near where the town of Maywood now is. My sister, Mrs. D. C. Ballentine, honored us with her company. She said:

"I will try the difficult feat of shooting elk and buffalo from horseback while at full speed."

There are but few men able to ride a horse on the run over rough country, and shoot with any accuracy. It took a speedy horse to catch a buffalo. I had one that was trained in the chase upon which Mrs. Ballentine was mounted. We sent out a scout to locate the buffalo. After a long ride in the direction he had taken, we saw him about a mile away, riding in a circle, the Indian sign he had found them.

We approached him cautiously and a large herd was seen coming up from the creek, where they had been to water. The saddle girths were tightened, guns got in readiness; but not any too soon for they had scented us. Then away they went, with heads and tails in the air, for the hills. Soon half a dozen of us were strung out, the fleetest horses in the lead. As we neared the lumbering, awkward-looking monsters, they began to gain in speed until it was like a whirlwind, increasing all the while.

Mrs. Ballentine's horse took her along side the herd, on a level run, when she began to shoot, not ten feet away from them. Three of the party were left far behind. The buffalos finally went over a bluff, rolling like balls, with the exception of seven dead and wounded along the trail, Mrs. Ballentine having killed two and wounded several others. This is the first and only case where a woman was ever known to have killed buffalos from horseback while on the run.



"JUST LIKE THE MEN"


To-day I'll tell you of a hunt
That happened back in seventy-three,
Now over seventy years ago.

Said Mrs. D. C. Ballentine:

"I'll go and try the hardy feat
Of riding at full speed,
And shooting buffaloes and antelopes
Just like the men."

The modern girl would smile to hear
You mention riding a horse that fast,
For that's the way all girls go now:
Quite recklessly, full speed ahead.
But still, I think the modern girl
Would get a thrill if she could ride
And shoot some antelopes and buffaloes
Just like the men.

—Boyd Perkin.



FIRST PREACHER

The first preacher in the county came in 1870. Miles and Clifford were trapping and poisoning wolves. One day when we went to our wolf baits we found a man almost dead near where he had roasted some of the poisoned meat. We saw at once that something must be done for him quick. We put him on a horse and took him into camp on the Muddy. We forced grease, whiskey and everything we could get down him. After a great deal of work with him, he was relieved from the effect of the poison; and when conscious, he looked around with astonishment on the Indians and long-haired men with buckskin suits on. He thought he was a subject for a war-dance or a scalping-bee. We told him he was with friends and that he would not be hurt. He said that he had come out with a hunting party from away down East, got lost.

"I was almost starved when I found the poisoned meat. I am a preacher and will pray for you as long as I live, in return for the favors and kindness you have shown me."

One of our men took him back to his camp, and the party returned home, saying:

"We do not like buffalo hunting very well."

THE LAST WILD BUFFALO HUNT IN FRONTIER COUNTY

O the long and dreary Winter!
O the cold and cruel Winter!
Ever thicker, thicker, thicker
Froze the ice on lake and river,
Ever deeper, deeper, deeper
Fell the snow o'er all the landscape,
Fell the covering snow and drifted
Through the forest, round the village.
Hardly from his buried wigwam
Could the hunter force a passage.

—Longfellow.

The winter of 1871 and '72 is long to be remembered.

The "chuck pile" had run low in our little village and the papooses began to have a far-off look in their eyes for something to eat. So it was time for the nimrods to start out and win. Hawk Clifford, John Nelson and myself, whites. Crooked Nose, Bobtail Horse, Big Elk and Long Man, Indians, decided to follow the buffalo

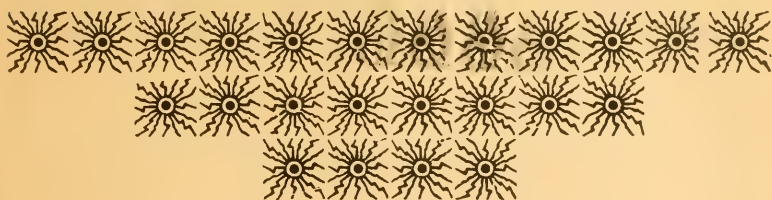
and elk to their secret haunts. Guns, cartridge belts, bows and arrows, knives, etc., were put in readiness; and at sunrise the next morning, we started o'er the desert waste of pathless snow-fields, not a bird or beast to lure us on, or incite our drooping spirits. The sun's last rays were fading on the far-away western hills before he had shown how near the day was done.

We then saw a lone leafless tree, to which we went, broke off the bending boughs and built a fire. Around this the braves of Frontier County sat, cold, tired, discouraged. The earth seemed tarnished while the stars of heaven glared like the eyes of hungry wolves on us, as we slept in the snow by the dying embers of the last camp-fire shared by red men of the plains, in this county, on a buffalo hunt.

As soon as the long cold night had worn away we started on to get breakfast. The Indians "put out on a trot," and I followed as I wanted to be at the first table. After a run of about ten miles, most of the party had dropped out, and Crooked Nose was in the lead. Suddenly he stopped and crouched down. I did the same but saw nothing. He pointed off to the south. There stood a lone buffalo, the last one of the numerous thousands of these noble animals that had roamed over our county, drunk of the rippling waters of the Medicine and lain beneath the leafy branches of the forest trees, to rest at noontide unmolested.

After crawling in the snow for an hour, Mr. Indian got within fifty yards of the buffalo and shot him through the heart. The lonely bison made a leap in the air and fell dead. It was getting late and we had had nothing to eat since the day before. We cut the meat off the bones and broke them over his horns to get the marrow, then cut out the liver and ate it with the marrow for butter.

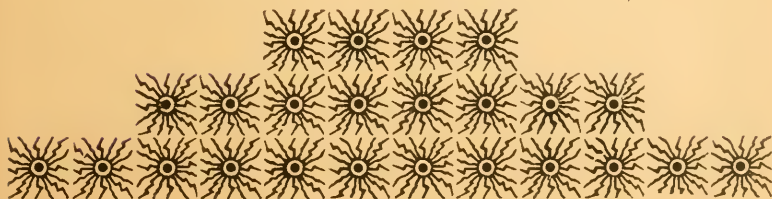
This buffalo was the rear guard of the main herd that was leaving the country and their old haunts in Frontier, for the South. They left a beaten trail where thousands had gone before. The Indians soon left for Spotted Tail reservation, on the White Earth River to the north. Here the Indian and buffalo, which had existed together for ages, separated. They fled toward the setting sun, before the invincible march of the paleface, whose great works will crumble beneath the weight and rust of time and they, too, will leave but the mounds of their existence, as other builders of centuries past, without a ripple in the stream of time.

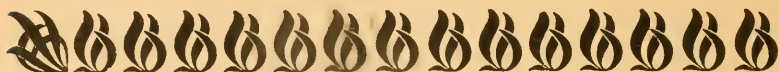


LAST BUFFALO HUNT

We sat from all the world apart,
Above, from heaven, bright stars glared;
Like eyes of hungry wolves they stared.
Our camp-fire's embers cast their glow
Of lurid red upon the snow.
A redskin pointed toward the south.
There stood one lonely buffalo
Beyond the winding canyon's mouth;
And Crooked Nose shot through the heart
The last of lordly brutes to go.

—Boyd Perkin.





WARRIOR

Where is that Indian brave
Who used to stand on that high knoll?
Where are the mighty herds of rushing bison
Galloping over the land
Like restless, bounding billows of the sea,
Swept onward by the raging prairie fire?

No more on purple wings
The signal fire flashes its message across these lands.
The enemy has come,
With bow unstrung, the warrior, a crumbling statue,
Stands beside a mound adorned with bison skulls—
Alone, unwept, unhonored and unsung.

—Boyd Perkin.

THE LAST INDIAN RAID IN THE COUNTY

In 1878 the Sioux Indians ran away from the reservation in Indian Territory and started back to northern Nebraska, their former hunting grounds. They whipped the soldiers, then killed and pillaged everything in their path. The commanding officer at Fort McPherson sent me notice, by a soldier, for everybody to run for their lives, as the soldiers could not protect the settlers. The settlers, generally, went to Cambridge, Furnas County, and built a fort.

I did not like to leave our little home and lose all we had; so I went over and saw D. C. Ballentine, and we decided to go in a cave on my ranch. This cave is ten by fifteen feet, under a bluff fifty feet high. The Medicine Creek runs within a few feet of the mouth. This we fortified, took in a camp outfit and provisions for a siege. Dave Ballentine took in his wife and child. Miss Mamie Timmons and I assisted my mother, and all went in the cave, from which we stood the bloodthirsty savages off, and they failed to get us out of the cave.

Frontier County stands unrivaled in her noted pioneers, her brave, honest, intelligent men and women that came and built themselves pleasant homes within her borders, who ran the financial affairs in an economical and efficient manner so that no man grew opulent while holding office.

In 1879 one Enos Furgeson was the only candidate for sheriff. He was elected and thought there was big money in the office, besides the honor of being "high sheriff." But he soon found out that Frontier County did not support anyone in idleness; so he gave up the position and left.

MURDER

The people of this county can boast of the fact that no county in the State has been the abode of fewer desperadoes, and less crime, than Frontier. Twenty-two years have swung out, on the pendulum of time, since the county was organized, and but one murder has been committed within the boundaries, by a settler, to blacken a page of its history that otherwise rebounds to our honor.

The atrocious crime was perpetrated in the winter of 1885. Eugene Sherwood, a young man about twenty years old, lived with his widowed mother on the Medicine Creek, eight miles east of Stockville. Joining them was an old Swede, a bachelor, Jonas Nel-

son by name, who had been committing some depredations such as burning haystacks, etc.—a man of generally bad repute.

Some trouble arose between Sherwood and Nelson over a boundary line. Nothing serious was thought of the affair by young Sherwood. But Nelson bought a gun and pistol, then concealed himself behind a tree; and as Sherwood was driving his cows home, he came within a few feet of the tree. Nelson shot him dead. Eugene Sherwood was found soon afterward by a woodchopper who happened to be passing along.

I was sheriff at the time; and being notified, I found Sherwood where he had fallen. There being no coroner in the county, I impaneled a jury and upon investigation the verdict was that "Eugene Sherwood came to his death by a shotgun wound in the hands of Jonas Nelson."

I found him at a cattle ranch a few miles away and took him into custody. He was arraigned before Judge W. H. Allen and bound over to court.

I started to take him to jail in North Platte, as we have had so little use for a jail in this county we have not as yet built one. It was very cold and the snow deep; we did not get along fast. When night came on, we stopped at a cattle ranch. There being no one at the ranch, we went in and made ourselves at home, got supper. Dave Love was with me to help guard the prisoner.

At about ten o'clock there was a rush on us of masked men who took Nelson out in the night, back through the drifting snow. As we could do nothing we waited until morning, then followed their trail to the woods; and there, from a limb of the tree from which Sherwood was killed, hung Nelson.

I held an inquest and the verdict was that Nelson came to his death by unknown parties. Thus ended the career of the first murderer in Frontier County. Nelson was buried under the tree he had desecrated.

ANECDOTES

A tenderfoot who came into Frontier said, "I would like to live in this county; but I miss society, churches, hotels, etc." He said that he could not do without milk and butter.

One of the boys said, "We can get all the butter you want."

He said, "Where?"

Cowboy said, "We will all take turns milking: strap the churn

to the saddle and go until we find a herd of buffalo, elk, deer or antelope, pick out a good milker, and milk them while on the run, from horseback. When through, the jumping of the horse will churn all the butter out of the milk."

Tenderfoot said, "That beats the way they milked back in York State."

Judge Gaslin presided at the first term of district court in this county. He sent Sheriff Miles out to call in Henry Dagering and tell him if he did not come into court he would be a defaulter. The sheriff, not knowing the court lingo, went out and said:

"You, Dagering, come right into court, or you will be defrauded."

The Judge said, "No, no, sheriff. Say 'a defaulter.' Now, sheriff, call Euphemia Dagering."

The sheriff again went and called: "You female Dagering, come into court or you will be defrauded."

The judge said, "The country is new and you will learn in time."

THE FIRST EATING HOUSE

Miles Gilland opened up the first eating house and it was the only place "chuck" was to be had during court week. All the dude lawyers rushed in to get first seats. The Western sheriff, not being accustomed to such impoliteness, pulled a six-shooter and told them to step back and give white folks a chance to eat; and they did, too.

In the early days of Frontier County, the people politically were like the fellow who got lost: he knew no north, no south, east or west. We knew no party lines and in our elections the contest was between men, not parties.

In a convention at Stockville, in the year of 1881, the fight was on sheriff, between J. A. Lynch and W. H. Miles. As the political strength of the candidates was balancing in the minds of the people, Mr. Shelley, one of Lynch's men, went down to Calahan's for a drink. While he was gone the balance tilted in favor of Miles, who received the nomination and was elected.

In the spring of 1883 this county met with a loss that is impossible to repair. That was the early records, which, as historical relics, were valuable souvenirs of the county—besides the actual financial loss by the burning of the court-house. A larger and more commodious county capitol was soon built and resupplied with new

record books and furniture in keeping with the development of our adopted county.

Party lines were not drawn in our county government until 1885, thirteen years after our organization. Then the Republican and Farmers' parties set forth their principles in conventions and nominated their candidates. The Republicans, being in the majority, elected W. H. Allen for judge; John Sanders, treasurer; Geo. Kelly, clerk; and E. W. Franklin, sheriff. Since then the Democratic, Independent and Republican parties have been represented in the offices of the county, showing that our people will support principles and men more than party.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF FRONTIER COUNTY

By A Subscriber

The history of the development of any county will show that its growth and prosperity have not been realized at a single bound, but year by year a little has been achieved. New resources have been discovered and developed, obstacle after obstacle has been met and overcome. Experiments have proven what kind of crops to sow, when is the proper time to sow, and what kind of cultivation is best suited to the soil and climate. Until these have been decided, a county must be considered in an experimental state.

The history of agriculture in this county dates much later than the organization. In 1883 the writer, in answer to a letter of inquiry concerning this county, received from Westgate, then county clerk, the following:

"Don't come to this county with a view to farming—a farmer would starve here. This is a good county in which to raise cattle."

Traveling over a large portion of the county in the fall of that year, I found that the settlers here were of the same opinion. No land was broken, no crops were planted, more than garden patches. All the talk was sheep, horses and cattle. All seemed to think that in this county this was the only means by which a living could be made. In proof of which, through the kindness of our county officers I have been able to submit to you these facts taken from the assessors' books of that year:

Number of taxpayers in the year 1883 was 331.

Valuation of personal property..... \$275,714.50

Valuation of real estate 24,773.50

Total \$300,488.00

This assessment was made on a 25 per cent of cash value and shows that on an average each taxpayer would be rated at \$3,450.00 on personal property, and about \$20.00 each on real estate.

At this period the range had all the stock it could support, for it was depended on for both summer and winter. In 1884 there were three hundred forty-five children of school age, fourteen schools, seven teachers and four schoolhouses. In the autumn of 1883 the happy days of the stockmen began to wane. A new era began to dawn in Frontier County, and with the balmy springtime of 1884 came grangers of all races and previous conditions. They came in all conceivable conveyances, by ones and twos and in large flocks. They brought with them cows, pigs, farming implements, and their merry, joyous children, to help subdue the soil, to fill our schools and become useful citizens to our county and State. The granger had come to stay—God had made this land for him. Uncle Sam said he could have it, in 160-acre lots; and in the summer of 1885, when free range and herd law were voted for, by his vote he placed his seal on this county, making it henceforth an agricultural county.

He who has pushed out on the frontier, and has reclaimed the wilderness or the desert, has added to his county, his State, and his nation's wealth. He has also helped fill the world's storehouse with provisions, from the abundance of which its starving millions could be fed. The hope of the agricultural element of this county has been more than realized during the last decade. True, there have been two partial failures in crops; but in the remaining eight years we have raised such crops that, taking the ten years on an average, we would be able to compete with any county in the State, on an acreage yield.

The soil of Frontier County is deep and exceedingly rich. Wheat, corn, oats, barley, flax and potatoes, in fact all the principal crops, grow here and make a large yield. Receiving such large crops has caused our farmers to become reckless about the preparation of the land and the care of the crop. I will make out a bill of expense showing the amount of labor required by the average farmer for seeding eighteen acres to spring wheat: sowing, one-half day, man and team; cultivating, three days; dragging, one day. We have seen land that received about this amount of work yield from twenty to thirty bushels of wheat per acre.

The following is about a fair sample of planting and cultivating seven acres of corn: one day's listing, two days' cultivating; giving two and one-third acres of corn ready for shucking, for one

day's work for a man and a team. We have seen a field that had received just this, and no more, yield sixty-three bushels of corn per acre. This was an exceptional crop, and probably twenty bushels above the average of that year.

The above were given to show how large a crop can be grown in good seasons with a very small outlay of labor.

We believe that Nebraska is destined to outstrip its neighboring States, owing to its diversity of resources in agriculture. The sugar-beet industry, with or without legislative aid, will sooner or later become a leading industry of the State. The soil seems especially rich in those elements necessary for the growth of the sugar beet; and beets grown in this State have been tested, both in this country and in Germany, and have shown that Nebraska can produce beets as rich in saccharine matter as any country on the globe. In 1891 the State Agricultural Society offered a premium of \$90.00 for the greatest number of tons of beets, showing the largest per cent of sugar, grown on one-fourth of an acre. Mrs. J. W. Gates of this county received the award.

Alfalfa is another crop that is rapidly gaining in favor in this county. It seems to be the forage plant we have so long needed—capable to stand drouth. The number of crops cut from it yearly, the largest yield per acre, and the excellent quality of the hay, bespeak for it a place on every farm in the county. East of us cattlemen fat their cattle on corn. West of us cattle are fattened on alfalfa hay. The feeders of this county will soon be able to fat their cattle on corn and alfalfa hay, both grown in the county. Shall we not then be able to compete with any locality on cheaply fed stock?

BUILDING RAILROAD

In the years of 1886 and '87, the Holdrege Branch of the B. & M. built a railroad through this county. This was a great stimulus to the agricultural development of the county. Every farmer near the line of the road could sell corn, hay and surplus provisions at good prices. Corn sold readily at forty cents per bushel, and everything else in proportion.

We, who had been going forty miles to trade and taking three days to make a trip, thought then and still think that the railroad was one of the greatest blessings that ever came to the county. It brought to the farmer merchandise, and laid it almost at his door as cheaply as he before could purchase it forty miles away. It placed farm implements in easy reach; it enhanced the value of

all the land several dollars per acre; it built up four flourishing towns, viz., Eustis, Moorefield, Curtis and Maywood; and best of all to the farmer, it made an outlet for his fat stock in Omaha, in a few hours after it left his pens

From G. W. Crosby, general freight agent at Omaha, we learn that in 1892 there were shipped from Frontier County 1469 cars of grain and 258 cars of live stock; in 1893 841 cars of grain and 388 cars of live stock. In considering these numbers, we must remember that our county is new, that much of the land is unused either for grazing or agricultural purposes. All over this county you may see ten-acre lots of young timber; these are not only an ornament to our already beautiful landscape, but will soon furnish a supply of timber and help increase the rainfall of our county. Far-seeing was the legislature that passed the Timber Culture Act, for men planted to secure the patent to their lands, who would not have planted for ornament or usefulness.

During the short period that has elapsed since our county has become an agricultural one, it has made about as much advancement as could be expected under all the conditions and difficulties with which it has had to contend. Below will be given the record of 1893:

Personal property valuation	\$ 310,275.00
Real estate	921,386.00
Town property	53,806.00
Railroad property	122,094.00
<hr/>	
Total	\$1,407,571.00
Taxes raised ...	\$ 64,656.35

By comparison we find the valuation of property in 1893 was four and one-half times the valuation of 1883 and that the number of polls was more than six times as great. We now have 108 school districts, 115 schools, 3328 children of school age, seventy-two frame schoolhouses, three log and twenty-seven sod buildings. Our teachers now number 120. The valuation of our district property is \$42,616.68, which is ten times as much as in 1884. Seeing what progress we have made in the past, and knowing the enterprising spirit of our citizens, what could we predict for Frontier County but a glorious future?

The forty-niner, as he slowly wended his way across these plains, never dreamed they would become great centers of civiliza-

tion. But the pioneers came in from the crowded East, subdued the soil; the railroads attacked the wilderness; towns and cities which the mirage had prefigured have become an accomplished fact. The millions of buffaloes that sometimes impeded the movement of trains have been replaced by tens of thousands of graded cattle, while the unexampled yield of the products of the soil of the Wild West is fast becoming the granary of the United States.

The great achievements of Frontier County have not, like Aladdin's palace, been accomplished at a wish or by magic wave of the mystic wand, but by sturdy, earnest and laborious toil. We therefore cherish a deep and growing pride in the history and progress, socially and financially, of our county.

Finis

SUNSET

When sunset sheds its molten mellow rays
Of liquid gold spilling upon the plain,
Flowing from crimson fountains in the sky,
The heart is filled with rapture; if we sigh
At man's failure to measure Heaven's days
In recompense, more earnestly we gaze,
Then with true vision paradise regain,
And strength to grasp anew the higher ways
Of God's creation, and the meaning of:
"The word was spoken and His will was done."
Though man vainly searches for a source
And ending, looks for heaven high above,
Yet Truth and Life and Love are always one,
As timeless as the great Creative Force.

—Boyd Perkin.

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And strength to grasp anew the higher ways
Of God's creation, and the meaning of:
"The word was spoken and His will was done."
Though man vainly searches for a source
And ending, looks for heaven high above,
Yet Truth and Life and Love are always one,
As timeless as the great Creative Force.

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