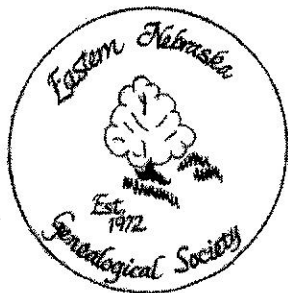


11 May 2015 - 7 p.m.

Can you find a certain book? We will give you a clue as to who, what, where, Renee & Claire will aid you.

NO BROWSE NIGHT!

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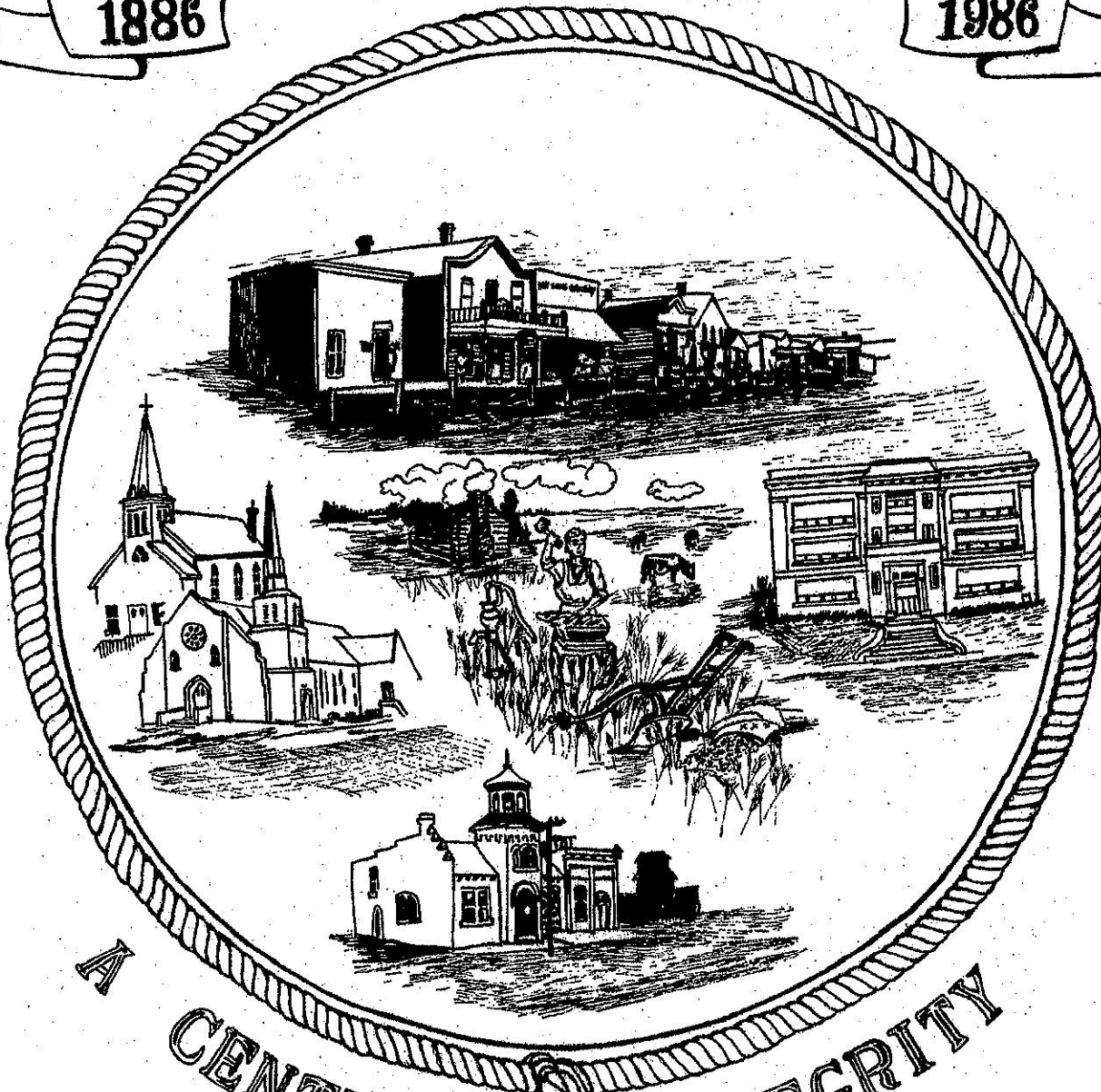


Eastern Nebraska Genealogical Society Newsletter

DODGE, NE.

1886

1986



A CENTURY OF INTEGRITY

Early Nebraska

Our history is old, but only a fractional part of it can be documented, and the history of the white man occupying this region dates back scarcely more than a century, a few grains of sand in the hourglass of time.

Indians once inhabited this area, verified by our early settlers who encountered them and by the arrowheads found northeast and west of our townsite.

Spaniards in Francisco Coronado's party were the first white men to view the vast plains of North America and may have explored as far north as Nebraska in 1541.

France had sent numerous explorers west looking for an all water route to China. As they kept pushing west, they began to learn more about the nature of the plains. In 1673, Joliet and Marquette had discovered the mouth of the Missouri River, and by 1714, de Bourgmond had ascended the Missouri all the way to the Platte where he called the river Nebraska from the Otoe Indian word, "Nebrathka," meaning flat water.

French traders and trappers, including the Mallet brothers are the first known white visitors. They traveled through Nebraska from 1700-1760.

Because of politics back in Europe, the area between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains was ceded to Napoleon Bonaparte, the French dictator. He dreamed of a great empire in America, but because of financial difficulties, the French leader sold the entire Louisiana Territory to the United States Government in 1803 for \$15,000,000.

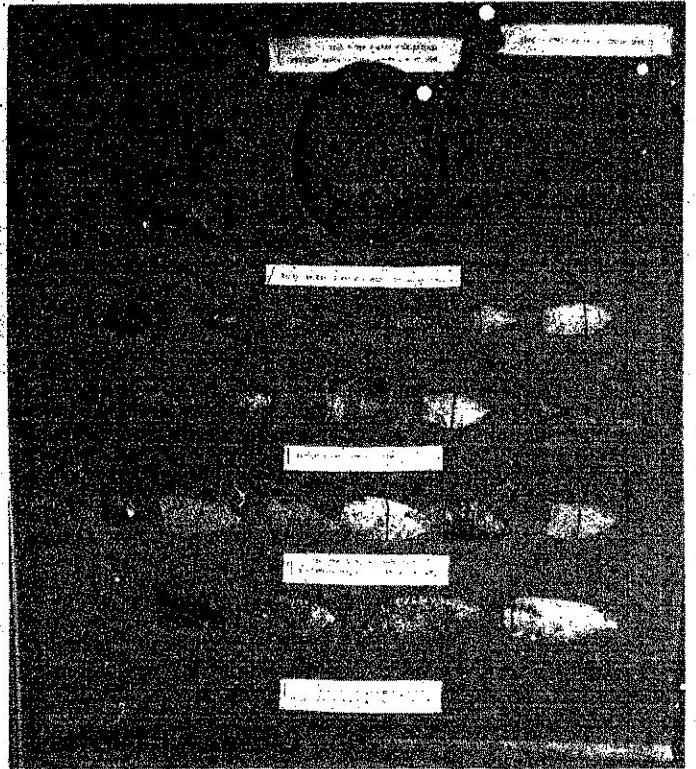
President Thomas Jefferson chose Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to lead an expedition into the vast region in 1804. When the 8,000 mile expedition was over in 1806, they had returned with a vast array of information on the geography, plant and animal life, and the inhabitants of the area.

Lewis and Clark opened the door to the newly acquired land. In their wake would come hunters, traders, soldiers, and finally growing streams of settlers.

In 1807, Lieutenant Zebulon Pike returned from his exploratory mission, but he was not very impressed with the part of the country in which Nebraska is located. He described this area as a vast desert, a label which would characterize this region for many years.

Major Stephen Long was in charge of the scientific portion of the Yellowstone Expedition of 1819 along the Platte to the Rocky Mountains. He, like Zebulon Pike, was not favorably impressed with what he saw, and wrote of the area as being wholly unfit for cultivation and uninhabitable by anyone depending upon agriculture for their subsistence. This and other comments were to give rise to the notion that this area was a desert, and for many years the Great Plains was labeled on maps as "The Great American Desert." Most historians agree that this belief greatly slowed up the settlement of the plains.

By the early 1840's, much of Stephen Long's report was being challenged by John C. Fremont, who led an expedition



This arrowhead collection belongs to Gerald Maresh. Most of them were found on the Maresh property, 2¼ miles northeast of Dodge. His grandmother, Katerina Mares, homesteaded the land in 1871.

along the Platte Valley to South Pass and on to the Pacific.

Although Americans were quick to explore the Louisiana Territory, the fur trade was the principal activity in this region from 1806 until the 1840's when pioneers began their emigration to Oregon and California.

During the middle decades of the 19th century, the Platte River Valley became the great highway west for thousands bound for Utah, Oregon, and California. For the pioneers of the 1840's, Nebraska was just a highway, simply a few hundred miles of trail that had to be covered in order to reach their destination.

As thousands made the journey across Nebraska, many evidently saw something the explorers had not. The land along the Platte Valley showed promise to them, and in their letters to loved ones back East, these pioneers mentioned what they had seen.

Because of the efforts of Senator Stephen A. Douglas from Illinois, the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed in 1854, and the territories of Kansas and Nebraska were created.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act officially opened up this region for settlement. Towns began to spring up, one of the most important being Omaha City, and the settlement of Nebraska was on its way.

Most of the land in eastern Nebraska was acquired under the pre-emption law. It was under this pre-emption law that the first claims made in Dodge Co. were by John and

First picture in the mid 1890's of the Faltin Homestead, 1 m. W, ½ m. N of Snyder. Gilbert Faltin lives on this farm now. Pictured are Paul, Grandpa Pavel, Antonia and Peter Faltin.



Arthur Bloomer, near the mouth of Maple Creek early in April 1856.

There were what was known as 'squatter's rights' claims, which permitted one to locate on chosen claim within what was recognized as Indian lands, but which was contemplated becoming United States property; then upon such acquisition, the squatter's claim came under the pre-emption law.

Perhaps no law had more impact on the movement to Nebraska than the Homestead Act of 1862. This law stated that any person at least 21 years of age, a citizen or an alien intending to become a citizen, and head of a household could obtain 160 acres of free public land. A person had only to pay the \$10 filing fee, and live on the land for five years. It was also possible to pay \$1.25 an acre in place of the residence requirement.

In 1864, the U.S. government allotted to the Union Pacific Railroad Company all lands within every odd numbered section to a distance of 20 miles out from the railroad right of way. This land was then sold to anyone by the railroad company, at prices from \$2.40 to \$7.50 per acre on a partial payment plan extending over a term of twenty years.

Another method of becoming owners to tracts of public lands was the Timber Claim Law. Under its provisions, one had to file claim on a selected tract not greater than 80 acres and agree to certain stipulations to establish tree growing areas. Its principal purpose was to establish and promote the growing of trees on the prairie lands. Homesteaders could hold such claim in addition to their homesteads.

The railroad distributed advertisements for "rich farming land located in the great central belt of population, commerce and wealth" throughout America and Europe.

Many of the homes of this area were established on tracts purchased from the railroad company. Other oncomers purchased the rights of original homesteaders and completed the requirements and became owners.

The settlers had extraordinary optimism, and they usually emphasized the advantages of their home rather than the disadvantages.

So, the homesteaders came to the plains, they built their homes, and they planted their crops. During the years 1850-1880, the face of the prairie began to change,

and nothing would ever be quite the same again. They overcame personal hardships and natural disasters such as grasshoppers and drouth, and this land would become so productive, that someday it would earn the title, "Breadbasket of America." Those first settlers were a very special breed, and because of their strength, determination, and vision, they made Nebraska what it is today.

Town Builders

Another type of pioneers were the "town builders." These energetic individuals came to the plains for one reason, to build a town. A group of men would organize a town company, purchase the deed to the site, divide the site up into lots, and then promote the town.

In order for a town to succeed, it had to be established near sources of wood and water and located on the line of a railroad.

Town builders played a big part in the growth and success of early Nebraska.

The railroaders, the homesteaders, and the town builders all made their contribution to the early history of Nebraska. They each looked at the land as it would be, not as it was, and because of their dreams of a brighter tomorrow, we have a richer life today.

From the thundering hooves of the buffalo,
to the sonic boom of the SAC jets;
From the herbs and bark of the medicine men,
to the computer and laser of modern science;
From smoke signals,
to satellite communication;
From the "Great American Desert,"
to the land of overabundance;
From 40,000 Indians from eight tribes,
to 40 times 40,000 citizens from many nations.

