



Eastern Nebraska Genealogical Society Newsletter

P O BOX 541
Fremont NE 68026-0541



~~~~~  
**ENGs Meetings are held at 7 PM on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month at the**

**Louis E. May Museum  
1643 N Nye Ave, Fremont, NE**

**The library will be open for research on Wednesday afternoons 1:30-4pm through December and - on meeting nights - one hour prior to the meeting. Access to the library is down the wide concrete stairs on the south side of the Museum**

~~~~~  
At our November meeting, Jeff Kappeler offered a cultural immersion into Switzerland in the stories of his recent visit. He opened with a question to the group - "What do you think of when you hear Switzerland?" Responses of - Alps, Heidi, Chocolate, William Tell, Watches, and Cheese - sent him into historical references of the significance of those items. Jeff shared tales of his trip and details about Swiss souvenirs and artifacts displayed around the room. We learned about the languages spoken, a special Swiss artist, onion pie, the Canton Bern Bear, public fountains, chestnut puree and more.

~~~~~  
During our business meeting, the decision was made to discontinue monthly ENGs newsletters as we move into 2019. The Winter 2018 "Roots and Leaves" Quarterly will be mailed in December. The 2019 Quarterlies will include the meeting schedule for the quarter with information about the scheduled programs. If you would like to have an email reminder about the meeting each month, please send a brief note to our email volunteer: cemeterystroller@gmail.com

The February 2019, the Spring 2019 "Roots and Leaves" Quarterly will include information about improvements made to area homes and businesses as reported in January 1909. It will be sent to 2018 ENGs members along with the Dodge County Historical Society Quarterly. There is no additional cost to ENGs members for the Historical Society Newsletter. We hope that you will enjoy both newsletters.

In January, It will be time to renew your ENGs membership for 2019. As always, you will receive the Spring 2019 Quarterly as a part of your 2018 membership. Please be sure to send your \$15 ENGs membership renewal by April 1 so that you will be on the mailing list for the Summer 2019 "Roots and Leaves" Quarterly in May. A renewal form is provided at the bottom of this page for your convenience.

Please consider contributing your family stories to be shared with other Eastern Nebraska researchers. During 2019, we are especially interested in documenting family memories of early schools and teachers in Dodge county and the surrounding counties. For the Winter 2019 "Roots and Leaves", we have a member who is compiling early photos and stories about Fremont Bergan. We hope to include both urban and rural schools.

If you have information that you can share about an early school, please let us know what you plan to send so that we can coordinate publication of your stories with others from the same area. Email: reneebunck@gmail.com or write to ENGs PO Box 541 Fremont NE 68026.

We do have volunteers who will type your memories if you provide information that is not ready to be inserted into a publication. You have plenty of time to gather your stories, but please don't procrastinate too long. We need your stories to keep the "Roots and Leaves" interesting and informative for all of our members.

~~~~~  
Eastern Nebraska Genealogical Society 2019 Membership Form

Name _____ | Membership # _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code +4 _____

1 Year \$15.00

Mail to: ENGs
P O BOX 541
Fremont NE 68026-0541

~~~~~



**The final Eastern Nebraska Counties to be included in this series are Butler, Sarpy, and Scranton.**

From **Andreas' History of the State of Nebraska, 1921**

### **Butler County**

Probably the exploring party of Gen. John C. Fremont were the first whites who stepped upon Butler County soil. The Mormons came next, on their long, weary and perilous journey to Salt Lake, leaving their foot-prints in the shape of a winding, deeply-beaten roadway, familiarly known to early settlers as the "Old Mormon Trail." This historical trail enters the county in the southeast part of Section 24, Town 13, Range 4, on the east, thence following up one of the continuous divides to the table-land, and thence around its northern edge to the point where Deer Creek leaves the hills, where it descends another short divide to the Platte bottoms. Subsequently, the overland travel to California, and later, to Pike's Peak and the mountains generally, then an immense travel across the county, established two great trails, of which, perhaps, the most remarkable was first traveled by the military, and is now, as then, called the "Old Government Road."

This road also entered the county on the east, at a point near the line dividing Skull and Oak Creek Precincts, winding in a very crooked manner along the divide to Section 6, Town 14, Range 4 east, the site of Dave Reed's Ranch, established in 1862 and operated for five years after. From this point it took up the Mormon trail, and followed it to Fort Kearney. The old "Fort Kearney Road," or "Pike's Peak Trail," hugged the Platte, passing through the old sites of Waverly, on Skull Creek, Ellsworth, on Bone Creek, and "Gardner's Ranch," established in 1859 by David R. Gardner, and afterward the site of Savannah, the first county seat. In 1858, an addition was made to the travel on the famous overland thoroughfare, by the location of Shinn's Ferry, at a point midway between the county limits, east and west, near the present residence of Mr. Tennis Hoekstra, on Section 6, Town 16, Range 3 east. On the portion of the old Government road between Deer Creek and the county line west, and dispersed along the foot of the bluffs, were several ranches: McCabe's on Deer Creek, established 1859; Thompson Bissell's, on Elm Creek, established 1860 and Simpson's, afterward Grant's, also established in 1859. Thompson Bissell removed to Saunders County in 1865. D. R. Gardner and David Reed yet claim Butler County as their home. They are among the very oldest citizens and have frequently been vested with positions of honor and trust by those who have since followed them into this prairie domain.

Several graves of "Forty-niners" may yet be seen on the hill points, near McCabe's ranch, but of the old ranch little is visible beyond a profuse growth of gigantic weeds. Ranch life in Butler County covered a period of about ten years, ending about 1868, when the county was organized, and "freighters," customs and road laws give way to legislative enactments. Although no longer traveled, these comparatively ancient roads are still plainly visible in their entire length, running at random through meadows, groves and grain fields, always marked by clumps of huge wild sunflowers, endless patches of yellow mayweed, cockle-bur, plantain and other domestic growths, fetched from the trans-Missouri country by the cattle and mules of the freighters and emigrants.

The first attempt to settle in the county was made in 1857 by the Waverly Town Company, of Plattsmouth, upon the banks of the Skull Creek, so named from the surprising number of Pawnee skulls found strewn about near the ruins of an ancient village of that tribe, which once flourished near the spot where Linwood now stands.

At this date, this region was still in the possession of the Pawnees, not to speak of an occasional visit by marauding bands of the Sioux. Messrs. Hultsizer, Barker, Garrison and nine others were the members of this pioneer company, which was of brief existence, owing to the Pike's Peak excitement of the next year (1858-59). They erected the first house in Butler County, which was situated about a half mile above the Linwood mills, on the west bank of Skull Creek.

The next year (1860), only two settlers came into the county. These were William Butler and S. D. Shinn. They located in the vicinity of Savannah. Mr. Shinn afterward became proprietor of Shinn's Ferry. In 1861, A. U. Briggs settled near Grant's ranch. Jehiel Hobart, F. C. Johnson and two or three others, are the only settlers who located here in 1862.

**For more information on Butler County, visit:**

<http://www.usgenwebsites.org/NEButler/>

### **Butler County books in our library:**

Cemeteries  
Census 1885  
Marriages 1861 – 1904  
Plat Book 1977  
1890-91 Business Directory + Farmers Directory  
Brainard, NE Centennial 1878-1978  
Brainard, Nebraska 125 yr History 1878-2003  
Bruno NE Centennial 1888-1988  
David City NE 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

From *Andreas' History of the State of Nebraska, 1921*

**SARPY County** was named in honor of one who, in the early days of Nebraska's history, was a central figure--Col. Peter A. Sarpy. Although containing the oldest settlement in the State, Sarpy County was among the last of the river tier to be organized, having up to February 1, 1857, been a part of Douglas County. It is surrounded on three sides by water; on the east by the Missouri, and on the south and west by the Platte. The principal river is the Papillion, originally known as the Papio, which has two well-known branches, the Little



PETER A. SARPY

Papillion and South Creek, the South Fork of the Big Papillion. The Big Papillion flows in an easterly direction and empties into the Missouri. All other streams in the county tend to the south, and swell the waters of the Platte.

Spread upon the records of the county are the records of still-born towns in great numbers, with those which finally achieved existence. Among the earliest of these was Fairview, laid out in 1856, by Rev. C. C. Goss. It had a town site of 160 acres. Plattford was laid out about this time by the Plattford Town Company, and was a port of entry. There is in existence a beautiful view of this town, in which large steamers are lying at its docks, and the streets are crowded with people.. They town site raised a fair corn crop in 1881.

The city of Hazelton came forth full fledged at about this date, being created a town by the petition of a majority of the taxable residents, and O. F. Parker, William A. Guyer, Samuel Darnall, Ralph H. Hall and H. L. Hall were appointed Trustees. On August 18, 1858, an act incorporating Forest City was passed, and it was allowed to hold elections and have a Mayor and police. Barney Scott, Peter Forbes, M. I. Shields, William Sayles and George B. Ackley were appointed Trustees.

The earliest record of the proceedings of the County Commissioners of Sarpy County bears the date of February 7, 1857, and gives the boundaries of the county, then recently separated from Douglas, as follows: "Beginning at a point in the middle of the main channel of the Missouri River, due east of a point in the main channel of the Platte Rivers, where the same disembogues into the said Missouri River, thence up the main channel of the Missouri." The boundaries of the county have never been altered.

On June 30, 1857, appears the petition of Louis Gramlich, and twenty-five others, asking for a road from Bennett's Ferry, at Cedar Island, thence by Saling's Grove and the Otoe Mission, to intersect the road from Omaha to Fairview.

In the following August, the County Commissioners, who had been meeting at the Benton House in Bellevue and adjourned to the office of W. H. Cook, divided the county into two election precincts, and the County Clerk was ordered to give notice of election in Bellevue, at the Bellevue House, and in Sauntee at the house of Simon Rouse.

At the meeting held September 22, 1857, a loan of \$100 was ordered for contingent expenses, and the County Clerk was ordered to endeavor to sell a bond executed for that amount. As

will be seen by the moderate amount sought, money was anything but plentiful in these early days. This fact is attested by a statement of expenditures published just two months before, in which the account footing \$2,261.96 is followed by the laconic statement, "No money in the county treasury up to the present time. Stephen D. Bangs, County Clerk."

On April 5, 1858, the county was divided into eight road districts. The same year the number of election precincts was increased to three--Bellevue, Plattford and Forest City. On October 29, 1859, the Commissioners received an application from Axel Slaght, keeper of the Larimer Hotel, at Larimer City (La Platte), for permission to sell malt and spirituous liquors. This was granted upon payment of a fee of \$25, and giving bonds of \$500.

Papillion became the county seat of Sarpy County only after a bitter fight of considerable duration. Bellevue, it must be remembered, was the original county seat and for a number of years after its settlement the only town of appreciable size in the county. As long as this state of affairs continued, as long as Bellevue could muster her voters by hundreds against the scores of any others aspirant, she was secure. But when, after the action of Gov. Cuming, the State capital was removed to Omaha, and the bulk of the adventurous population followed, the opening wedge which should topple her from her vantage was driven.

In the palmy days of the city of Bellevue, a suburb had grown up on the plateau back of the town, and then the civilization had worked westward. Sarpy Center, and later, Papillion, had risen from the position of "cross-roads" to the dignity of villages, although the latter has never been formally incorporated. It was not long after affairs had reached this position before the acute politicians of the younger towns realized the dawning possibility of securing to their respective homes the prestige and profit of the county seat.

The first movement looking to this end was made in the fall of 1874, the words "for removal" and "against removal" being deposited at the time of the regular October election to decide the question of the right to remove the county seat. The balloting having resulted in a majority for removal, a special election to decide what point should become the county seat, was called for September, 1875. Prior to this election, it was decided that the two points having the greatest number of votes should be left to fight the matter out, all other candidates retiring. The contestants for the honors were Bellevue, Sarpy Center and Papillion. Upon counting the vote, it was found that Sarpy Center had a clear majority, and that Papillion stood second. This, of course, resulted in the retirement of Bellevue.

The next political move would seem to be the choice, at the regular October, 1875, election, of one of the two remaining contestants, but Major Spearman, of Sarpy Center, introduced a new feature, which came near cleverly upsetting the plans of the Papillion party. This new move was the introduction in the Legislature, of which he was a member, of a bill appointing Sarpy Center the county seat, and doing away with all the necessity of another election. This bill was with difficulty defeated, and at the ensuing election Papillion became the county seat, a position which she bids fair to hold for many years to come.

The public schools of this county have an enrollment of 1,656 scholars, of whom 911 are males and 745 females. The teachers employed number thirty-nine. The expense of maintaining the schools during the year ending on April 2, 1882, was \$14,833. The amount of money invested by the county in school buildings is \$31,740. This is represented by three stone, two brick and thirty frame school buildings.

For more information on Sarpy County, visit:

<https://sites.rootsweb.com/~nesarpy>

### Sarpy County Books in our Library:

Laborde Cemetery-Gretna NE  
Papillion, NE (A Bridge from the Past) 1870-1970  
Gretna Heritage  
Springfield NE At It's Source 1882-1982  
Cemeteries- Vol I and II  
Marriages 1857-1896  
Old Settler Association Book  
School Census 1896  
Census 1876

---

From **Andreas' History of the State of Nebraska, 1921**



*W. L. Kendall*

**STANTON** County was named after Edwin M. Stanton in 1867, when its present boundaries were defined. Before that time it had been known as Izard County, and it contained one row of precincts, which now form the western boundary of Cuming County. It is situated north of Platte and Colfax, east of Madison, south of Wayne, and west of Cuming Counties. It is one of the smallest counties in the State, containing only twelve precincts.

The first building in Stanton was a residence built by C. M. Densmore, and occupied by Cornelius Nye, who lived in the lower story, and used the garret for Clerk's office. The building was 16x24 feet, twelve feet in height. It was built by Charles Mason, a carpenter, who came from Washington County to do the job. During the same summer, the store building was erected, and was 18x32 feet in size. Kendall & Densmore opened their store as soon as it was completed. The building is now used by Mrs. Zahn for a millinery store. The first man who ever slept on the town site was Densmore, who sheltered himself under a lumber pile.

In the following spring (1870), Cornelius Nye opened a tin shop in the new town, and in the fall Lewis Ley left his dug-out store and opened a harness shop. Shortly after, Ley and Nye went into partnership, and erected a small building which they occupied. During this same season, John Wright opened a saloon. The year following their opening, Kendall & Densmore secured the Pleasant Run post office. It had been located about a mile and a half west of town, and Frederick Helmerick had been Postmaster. The early resident still laughs as he thinks of the odd doings of the old sea captain who mistook a floating log for a shark, and set forth to capture that ferocious animal which had dared to disturb the quiet Elkhorn by its presence. This is the same individual also who allowed his water-melons to rot, under the impression that they would get yellow when they were ripe. However, Mr. Helmerick soon became accustomed to the tricks of farming, and afterward became a Justice in the county.

The post office which they wanted was the Clinton office, but they were unable to secure it, though they offered Fred Biehle, the Postmaster, \$10 for it. The actual fees of the office amounted to about \$7 per year. William Kendall was the first Postmaster. John A. Ehrhardt next held the position, and, on December 5, 1881, the office passed to the hands of the present occupant, William T. McFarland.

The town site at first included forty acres, which was platted by L. C. Lehman, S. L. Holman and George Graves, in 1871. The records bears the date June 21. December 6, 1874, Graves' Addition to the town was recorded. September 17, 1879, Holman and Graves made another addition, and, in the same year, Lehman also added to the plat. This last addition was west of the original town site, and at present the business portion is largely located there. The change was caused by the location of the depot, which was placed a mile west of the old town. In September, 1882, the town was incorporated, and the following Board of Trustees was appointed by the commissioners: C. L. Lamb, Chairman; F. McGiverin, Adam Pilger, Julius Poessnecker and J. L. Everson, Trustees. Karl Ley was appointed Clerk, and W. L. Kendall, Treasurer

The present population of the town is estimated at four hundred. For a place of its size, it is well provided with educational, religious, social and business facilities.

The first school in Stanton was opened in 1877 in a building owned by Mr. Murphy, which was taught by F. A. Frost. The school continued to be held in the Murphy building until 1880. In the fall of that year, the present building was erected by the district at an expense of \$1,300. The number of children of school age in the town in 1882, was 105. The average attendance is seventy-five. The school is taught by W. T. Sharp and Rose McKenzie. There are three members of the Board of Directors--F. McGiverin, Treasurer; James McKenzie, Moderator; S. S. Canfield, Director.

In 1873, Lewis Ley started the Stanton *Bugle*, the first paper published in the county. It was a six-column folio sheet, devoted to the interests of the county and the Democratic party. The first issues were set up and printed in Omaha; then the printing was done at West Point, and finally at Madison.

*The Stanton Register*.--This is the only paper now published in the county. It was started in 1879, the first issue appearing October 8. It is issued weekly as a six-column folio. J. H. Slater, the editor, has had considerable experience in Western journalism, and furnishes the people with an interesting and valuable paper. It has constantly advertised the advantages of Stanton County as a location for settlers, and in every way labored for the best interests of the country. Although neutral in politics, it has decided opinions, which are expressed freely upon occasion. In addition to the general outfit, there is also a complete job office connected with the paper.

---

For more information on Stanton County, visit:

<http://negenweb.net/NEStanton/menu.htm>

### Stanton County Books in our Library:

Pilger NE Centennial Book 1887-1987  
History 1865-2007  
History 2008  
Pioneer History