



Eastern Nebraska Genealogical Society Newsletter

P O BOX 541
Fremont NE 68026-0541



July 2018

**ENGs Meetings are held at 7 PM on the 2nd Monday
of each month at the Louis E. May Museum
1643 N Nye Ave, Fremont, NE**

July 9: Judy Ekeler's presentation will center around visits to World War I battle sites, museums, and cemeteries. She discusses how American and French lives and societies were changed by "The War to End All Wars." She was able to visit many of the sites where her grandfather, Edgar Martin, of David City, served, and which he recorded in his daily log.

Aug 13: Come and share stories about a Black Sheep in your family.

In honor of her grandmother, Charlotte Young shared Jamestown history and memories at our June 11th meeting. She presented records, stories, and photos of early Danish settlers in the Jamestown community. A romantic story involved bachelor pioneers who were matched up with sisters of a family in the area who were willing to immigrate from Denmark to Jamestown.

The relocation of the library has continued gradually since the initial packing and moving efforts by ENGs members. Hopefully the new home will be in good shape for an unveiling at the July meeting. Members who were present shared a few family surnames that they are researching. Maybe some of these names are also in your families?

Lemay: Skinner, Morse, May
Loretta: Jensen, Ballinger, Sullivan
Denise: Larsen, Kay, Oberlander
Renee: Eaton, Marlar, Calvert
Jeff: Freeman, Kinder, Bachelder, Kennedy
Charlotte: Robinson, Sampson, Nielson

COLFAX is the selected county for a closer look this month:

From *Andreas' History of the State of Nebraska*

**First published in 1882 by The Western Historical Company,
A. T. Andreas, Proprietor, Chicago, IL.**

LOCATION AND NATURAL FEATURES.

COLFAX County is one of those rich, prosperous eastern counties of Nebraska situated in the great Valley of the Platte. Dodge County lies to the east, Platte to the west, Stanton to the north and Butler to the south. The county is 41° 30' north latitude, and is located in almost the exact geographical center of the United States. About 1,000 feet above the level of the sea,

the atmosphere is, as a rule, pure, dry and invigorating. The general surface of the county consists of undulating prairie highlands not broken or abrupt, but stretching out in long reaches. What timber land is left consists of cotton-wood, box-elder, ash, walnut and soft maple, found principally along the streams. About a million forest trees are still standing. The valleys are well drained by the Platte River and its tributaries, and as the soil therein is a rich loam, plentifully intermixed with sand, immense and fine quantities of hay are raised. Springs abound throughout the county. Shell Creek, which joins the Platte in the southeastern part of the county, and flows northwest, contains good water powers.

In 1868 the first grist mill was erected by J. P. Becker, on that stream, in the western part of Colfax County. It has now four run of stone. In 1870 Wells & Nieman erected their mill on Shell Creek. In 1874, W. Dworak built a grist mill five miles northwest of Schuyler. Messrs. Hansel & Nowak also built a fourth mill two miles northeast of town. The grist mill of Wells & Nieman has been discontinued, the firm having just built a fine steam mill at Schuyler. The Big Maple and the Little Maple creeks also water the county to the north and northeast, but have no improved water powers.

The farming lands which lie principally outside the valleys are prolific in the yield of corn, but wheat does not greatly flourish. Unimproved land sells usually at about \$7 per acre, while improved land will range all the way from \$10 to \$30 according to location. The railroad lands are now about all taken up; only about 30,000 acres lying outside the ten-mile limit being in the market.

Tracers of coal have been discovered both in Colfax and Butler Counties, but little has been accomplished towards developing the deposits.

As to live stock, Colfax County is well adapted to the carrying on of this business--especially as it has been noted above, in the Valley of the Platte which abounds in the fine quality of grasses. The best varieties of horses principally raised are the Norman and Clydesdale, of cattle the Short-horn, and of sheep the Merino and Cotswold.

Until the summer of 1866 the increase in population and property valuation was very slight. There were, generally speaking, no houses in the county which were not along the old military road, until the iron horse bounded over his own track; when not only did new settlers locate, but property advanced in value and the new civilization came into life. The military road followed quite faithfully the Platte River, while the railroad passed several miles to the north of it. It passed through the entire southern part of Colfax County, there being eighteen miles of road within its bounds. As early as 1860, the Western Union Telegraph Company put up one wire along the military road, but in 1869 this was taken down and a new set of poles and three wires placed in position. Two years later the U. P. R. R. put up a new set of poles and two wires. So that now Colfax county is bound by "all the modern improvements" to the outside world, and its means of communication are complete.

EARLY HISTORY.

In April, 1856, a company was formed in Omaha for the purpose of founding a city at some point on the Platte River beyond North Bend. Gen. Estabrook, Col. Miller, Isaac Albertson and E. W. Toncray, were among the prominent members thereof, and the latter two were sent out to fix upon a site. In crossing the Elkhorn, Mr. Albertson met with a mishap, which might have cooled the ardor of one less persevering, but not his. At the date mentioned there was no bridge west of Omaha, and when that stream was reached he prepared to transfer his team and other *impedimenta* the best way he could. After swimming over his animals he placed his wagon on a raft and started. The Elkhorn had other than peaceful designs upon himself and companion, however, and turned over everything human into its raging bosom. The raft and wagon sped down the stream and stuck fast in the mud and thick brush, and the wet, tired and hungry survivors had to carry on a long process of tunneling and chopping before they reached their wagon. The two men finally halted on the east bank of Shell Creek a little above where it enters the Platte, Range 4 east, and proceeded to found the town of Buchanan. The locality was a few miles east of Schuyler, and the date April 27, 1856. Isaac Albertson and E. W. Toncray afterward held many offices of local trust, being among the foremost citizens of the county. Mr. Albertson was the first Probate Judge of Platte county, and Mr. Toncray the second. Mr. Albertson lives at present in Fremont, E. W. Toncray at Buffalo. A month later the founders of Columbus passed through Buchanan. Soon afterward the erection of a log "town house" was commenced, but that was about the extent of Buchanan's growth.

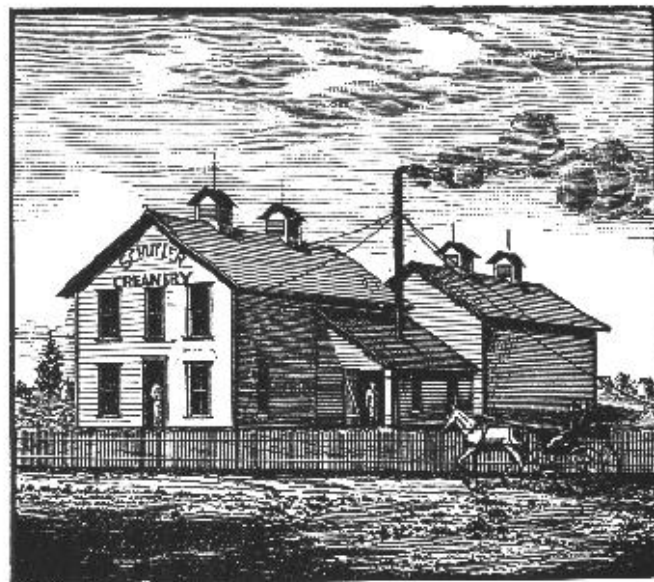
The following is a verbatim copy of the paper attached to the original plat of Buchanan:

We, Isaac Albertson and Lorin Miller, have this day taken of the public lands the following described parcels and laid the same out into lots and blocks according to the annexed plot, to-wit:-- the east $\frac{1}{2}$ of the n. w. $\frac{1}{4}$ and the n. e. $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 10, and the west $\frac{1}{2}$ of the n. w. $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 11, townships 17 north, range 4 east of the sixth principal meridian; and hereby locate the same as the town of Buchanan, the same being and lying in the County of Platte and Territory of Nebraska. This was sworn to in presence of A. B. Pattison. The plat was filed and recorded at 4 o'clock P. M., December 4, 1857, J. P. Becker. Register. Buchanan had seventeen streets running north and south, and nine east and west. A fine park was also laid out, dividing ranges 4 and 5 west; thence north to the northwest corner of township 20, north of range 4 west.; thence east by the 5th standard parallel to the line dividing ranges 1 and 2 east; thence south to the point of beginning.

But Columbus to the west and North Bend and Fremont to the east sapped its "life" away, and Buchanan went down finally as hundreds of other paper towns of the West have done. The next permanent settler after the arrival of Mr. Albertson was Daniel Hashberger, who arrived in October, 1856, and still resides upon a portion of the claim he then selected. At the time of his settlement, there were but twenty-five people in Platte County; among those were the families of Albertson and Toncray at Buchanan. These people were among the unfortunates who were obliged to suffer the hardships of the hard winter of 1856-57. Mr. Hashberger was one who braved the storm to Omaha and return. In February, 1857, his provisions being almost exhausted, he started to make the trip on foot, for the purpose of buying flour, etc. He was unable to return for over a week, on account of the terrible weather. At length hearing that the road was opened to the Elkhorn River he hired a team and managed in the course of two days to transfer himself and provisions to

that locality, where he rested long enough to "dump" his goods. Mr. Hashberger then continued his way afoot. The biting weather, however, soon enabled him to start back to the Elkhorn with two yoke of oxen and bring the precious freight to its destination. This journey occupied sixteen days. Fuel was also very scarce that winter, and so difficult to be hauled when obtained, that most of the families in the county were obliged to resort to hand sleds. To Fort Calhoun, Washington County, for flour and to Omaha for provisions, were the trips which had to be taken, rain or shine, frost or fire, in order to keep body and soul together. It was a fortunate circumstance for the early settlers, however, that game was so abundant. Mr. Albertson, for instance, during the first winter of his stay, shot thirty-three deer and eight elk.

Among the settlers best known who came during the next year, were R. W. Corson, who was the second Justice of the Peace of the county of Platte, Henry Kemp and Joseph Skinner. Mr. Kemp settled in the summer and Mr. Skinner in the fall. It soon became somewhat evident that Buchanan would never be a metropolis, and an attempt was made by parties from Council Bluffs to establish a town, the city of Neenah, five miles west of the present Schuyler. Another log shanty was erected, called the "town house," but the city was even shorter lived than Buchanan. This "city" was located near Shinn's Ferry. The schemes of speculators evidently did not flourish, and those who settled with the design of tilling the ground fared little better, when they had to pay \$3 a bushel for miserable soft, seed corn, which they obtained from the Pawnees.



SCHUYLER CREAMERY.

David Anderson, who was an early settler of Colfax County, writes the following, in the nature of a reminiscence: "When I first located in what is now Colfax County, in 1860, I found Judge Albertson and family on the homestead they now occupy; William Davis living on the farm he still owns, two miles east of Schuyler; R. W. Corson moved on to his present farm the same spring; and Daniel Hashberger was engaged raising corn and entertaining pilgrims, where he now resides. William Gillson owned a farm adjoining Hashberger's, that now embraces a portion of what is known as Clarkson's Addition to Schuyler. Mr. Rolfer, an old Hollander, lived and kept ranche at the slough bridge on the farm now owned by Mr. Hall. James Jeffries owned and lived on the Hurford farm, three miles west of Schuyler.

To be continued next month...