



Eastern Nebraska Genealogical Society Newsletter

P O BOX 541
Fremont NE 68026-0541

**Please provide
feedback by
completing
and returning
the enclosed
questionnaire!**

Sept 2018

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**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 from 6pm  
to 7pm (immediately preceding each  
meeting). Access to the library is down  
the stairs on the south side of the  
Museum.**

**Sept 10: Annual "Show and Tell". Everyone is  
asked to share a brief story about recent  
research efforts**

**Oct 8: Humanities Presentation by Doug Rung  
Nebraskans Remember World War II  
St Timothy's Church Fellowship Hall  
- Open to the public—  
Please invite your friends and family**

**Nov 12: Jeff Kappeler will share his latest  
Swiss family research discoveries**

**Dec 10: Everyone is invited to tell about  
their Ancestral Family Christmas Traditions**

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A variety of member's relatives were highlighted at the Aug meeting as family "Black Sheep". Their were some with family feuds and confusing name changes and others were sentenced to prison, wanted by the FBI for auto theft, a founding member of a chapter of Hells Angels, and escaped to America to avoid debtors prison.

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Do you or someone you know need a Microfiche reader or a small Microfilm reader? One of each is available to the first person who is willing to provide transportation. A note can be sent to The ENG's address at the top of the newsletter or email to [reneeunck@gmail.com](mailto:reneeunck@gmail.com) to claim either item.



**Burt County Nebraska is the topic of the month.**

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

BURT County is in the eastern part of Nebraska. It is bounded on the north by Dakota County, on the east by the Missouri River, on the south by Washington and Dodge Counties, and on the west by Dodge and Cuming Counties.

The bottom lands along the Missouri vary from no width to eight miles, averaging about four miles wide, and, together with those of Logan Creek, in the western part of the county, compose about one-fifth the area of the county. The remainder of the surface consists of valley and rolling prairie, the average elevation of which above the bottoms is 100 feet.

Burt County is watered by Logan Creek in the western part, having numerous tributaries on either side; Bell Creek, which rises in the northern part of the county and flows southeastwardly into the Elkhorn; Blackbird Creek, in the northeastern part of the county; by Elm, Silver and Tekamah Creeks, and several smaller streams. Silver and Tekamah Creeks lose themselves in a slough, about three miles east of Tekamah, which extends from north to south about five miles, and is half a mile in width. The Commissioners of Washington and Burt Counties, on October 4, 1881, decided unitedly to drain this and other sloughs in the two counties, and thus reclaim and fit for cultivation some fifty thousand acres of land.

The county is as yet mostly covered with the original prairie grasses, blue-joint and other varieties, and they furnish an abundance of pasturage and hay; but, as the county becomes more thickly settled, the tame grasses must be introduced, and will undoubtedly succeed. Timothy and Kentucky blue grass have been sown to some extent.

The native timber of the county consists mostly of cottonwood, elm, and walnut on the Missouri River; and on the smaller streams, elm, walnut, box elder and ash. The farmers have given considerable attention to tree-planting, the kinds cultivated being generally cottonwood and walnut.

The soil is exceedingly fertile, not only in the bottom lands, but also in the valleys and on the rolling prairie. The bottom lands are especially adapted to the raising of corn, grass and vegetables. The yield of corn is sometimes as high as ninety bushels of ears to the acre. The Loess formation, as in most other counties in Northeastern Nebraska, underlies the soil, and is from twenty to seventy feet thick, furnishing an inexhaustible substratum of fertility.

## INDIANS

The Omaha Indians occupied this county previous to and at the time of its settlement by the white people. In the Spring of 1855, they were removed to their present reservation in Blackbird County, in accordance with the treaty between them and the Government, effected in March, 1854. In Burt County there never were any serious difficulties between the Indians and the settlers. Petty thieving was the most of which the red men were guilty.

In July, 1855, there was considerable excitement and alarm felt by the white people on account of the killing, near Fontanelle, of two young men by the Sioux. This murder occurred, as nearly as can be ascertained, on the 16th of the month. In view of the dangers to which the settlers were supposed then to be exposed, Hon. B. R. Folsom made a requisition on the Governor for arms and ammunition with which they might defend themselves. The requisition was complied with, and a company was organized with, B. R. Folsom, Captain; W. B. Beck, First Lieutenant; and Rev. William Bates, Second Lieutenant. Eighteen persons were enrolled, and military drill was kept up for some time twice a day. No Indian disturbances occurred, and the settlers returned to their labors, their fright gradually wearing away.

*Note: The Lewis E. May Museum recently received a donation of one of the "arms" that was requisitioned by Folsom and delivered for use in Dodge County for defense against the Indian attacks. Watch for it to show up in a display sometime in the future along with other artifacts of the 1855 era.*



## HARD TIMES

In most, if not in all new countries, the pioneer settlers see hard times. Those of Burt County was no exception to the rule. In the year 1855, there was a protracted drouth, one of the effects of which was large fissures in the ground, in some cases four inches in width and three feet in depth. Following this drouth was one of the severest winters so far known in the State. On the 2d day of December, the great snow-storm came. It continued six days and nights, snowing incessantly. On the level, the ground was covered to the depth of four feet, and in drifts, to the depth of from five to fifteen feet. Communication with Omaha and Council Bluffs, the settlers' sources of supply, was cut off, and, had it not been for what they considered providential relief, any, if not most of them, would have experienced the horrors of starvation. The extreme cold had driven from the bleakness of the prairies to the shelter of the timbered bottom lands of the Missouri great numbers of deer, antelope and elk, and these furnished an abundance of food until the melting of the snow.

Two of the settlers had a narrower escape than any of the rest. F. E. Lange and Ernest Sandig, who were living in a shanty near Gillick's Bend of the river, were cut off from communication with the others by the river overflowing its banks between them and

the bluffs. They subsisted a number of days on the carcass of an ox that had died from starvation. At length this supply was exhausted, and they had nothing left but a dog, that had died in the same manner as the ox; and the alternative was presented of eating the carcass of the dog or of risking their lives in an attempt to cross the stream. They preferred the latter, and their effort was crowned with success.

## ORGANIZATION

Burt County was so named in honor of Hon. Francis Burt, of South Carolina, Nebraska's first Governor, and its first temporary boundaries were defined by Gov. Cuming's proclamation, issued November 23, 1854. They were as follows: "Commencing at a point on the Missouri River two miles above Fort Calhoun, thence westwardly, crossing the Elkhorn River, 120 miles to the boundary of lands ceded to the United States; thence northerly to Mauvaise River, and along the east bank of the same to the L'Eau qui Court, or Running Water; thence easterly to the Aoway River, and along the south bank of it to its mouth; and thence southerly along the Missouri River to the place of beginning."

Afterward the boundaries of the county were changed by the Legislature at different times, and, until February 22, 1879, the present boundaries remained, except the northern. Up to that time, the forty-second parallel had been the northern boundary, but on that date, it was extended eight and one-quarter miles to the northward, and was then made and is now, "the middle line of Township 25 north". This was done for "elective, judicial and revenue purposes," for the reason that the reservation afforded a convenient retreat for parties desiring to avoid arrest by State officials for criminal practices, or to which to remove personal property to prevent the collection of taxes thereon. The remainder of the reservations was similarly attached to Cuming and Dakota Counties.

The first election in Burt County was held December, 1854. All who had taken the oath, as required, that they intended to make Nebraska their future home, were allowed to vote. In this election, Burt and Blackbird Counties were joined, and were entitled to one Councilman and two Representatives. B. R. Folsom was elected to the Council, and Gen. Robertson and H. C. Purple to the House.

B. R. Folsom was appointed Probate Judge on May 16, 1855.

The second election in the county was for county officers, on the 6th of November, 1855, and resulted as follows: For Probate Judge, William Bates; Sheriff, John Nevett; Treasurer, Lewis Peterson; County Surveyor, William F. Goodwill; Register, Peter Peterson; Justices of the Peace, Olney Harrington and Adam Olinger.

The present county officers are: County Judge, C. Blanchard; Treasurer, Andrew Palmquist; Clerk, W. B. Roberts; Sheriff, A. A. Thomas, County Superintendent, George G. Gates; Coroner, Austin Nelson; Commissioners, P. L. Cook, P. S. Cook and Titus E. Hall.

The Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad was completed to Tekamah in the fall of 1876. It was then called the Omaha & North-Western. It was completed to Oakland in 1879, and to Lyons and Bancroft in 1880.

The public schools of the county are among its most valued institutions as they were among its first. There are fifty-five school districts in the county, and fifty-one school houses, mostly frame. The total value of school property in the county, including houses, sites, books and apparatus is \$33,000.

....Look for more about Burt County next month...