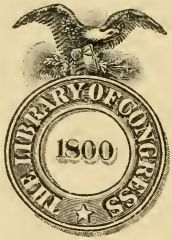
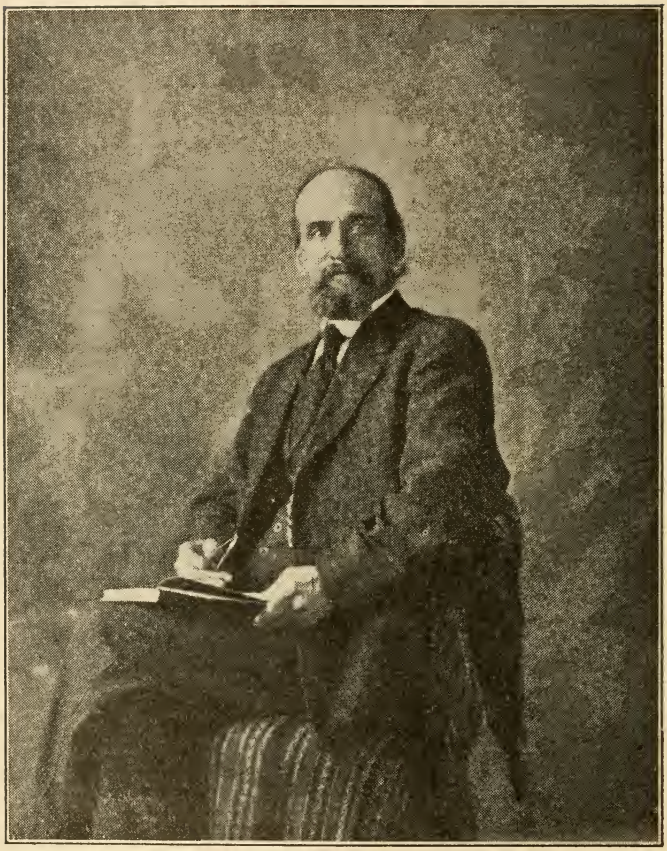
NORTH PLATTE
AND ITS
ASSOCIATIONS



This work is dedicated to the memory
of her who shared the joys and sorrows
of the author for forty-six years.



Archibald R. Adamson.

North Platte
And Its Associations.

BY

ARCHIBALD R. ADAMSON,

Author of "Rambles Through the Land of Burns," Etc.

"The days of old to mind I call,
And often think upon."
—Old Song.

THE EVENING TELEGRAPH,

NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA.

PREFACE.

The purpose of this work is to review the gradual growth of North Platte, and incidents associated with it, with such brevity as will lay the story before the reader in a condensed form. Therefore, the narrative is restricted to the simplest recital of events and modest mention of a few pioneer citizens, who, under unpromising conditions, aided to make North Platte the fairest city in western Nebraska.

Material for a work of this kind is not abundant, as few stirring incidents are interwoven with the city's history; so, on this account, the following pages contain nothing more than a retrospection that will recall events and incidents to the minds of elderly citizens, and serve as a flash-light on the past, which it is hoped a new generation will appreciate.

Of late, death has claimed many old settlers, and only a surviving few are left with whom to consult. With two exceptions, they seemed pleased to be call-

ed on, and proved reminiscent, and talked with zeal of occurrences that took place when Indians and buffalo were numerous and frontier life perilous. Such recollections, combined with gleanings from the County, City, School and church records have aided greatly in tracing the progress of local events, and adding interest to the narrative.

Andrew J. Miller, who was intimately and prominently identified with the county and city when they were emerging from the primitive, has been resourceful and obliging, and has supplied information that will prove interesting. Maj. William Woodhurst, who was sheriff of Lincoln County when law and order were loosely observed; has also supplied what will engage attention.

Appreciation of help received from these gentlemen, and from Mrs. W. C. Reynolds, Franklin Peale, James Belton, James Babbitt, and others, is gratefully acknowledged.

THE AUTHOR.

North Platte
And Its Associations.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Exploration and pioneer settlement of Nebraska.—The Mormon invasion.—The gold seekers of 1849.—Nebraska becomes a Territory.—The Bill for the construction of the U. P. Railroad passed.—Ceremony at breaking ground.—Speeches.—Durant calls for a million ties and gets laughed at.—First rail laid.—Arrival of first locomotives and first engineers.—Perils of track laying.—Track reaches North Platte.

Less than a century ago, Nebraska was considered to be nothing more than an uninviting wilderness with few streams, and for the most part consisting of treeless, waterless plains unfit for cultiva-

tion, and consequently useless to civilized man. Indian tribes, living in the most primitive manner, occupied the region, and vast herds of buffalo roamed the trackless waste, living luxuriously upon the withered-like grass that clothed the barren soil. Deer and antelope were numerous, and the Indian, a born hunter, lived by the chase in comparative comfort, the buffalo supplying his wants; the hide furnishing clothing and shelter, the flesh, food, and from the bones and intestines he fashioned implements and useful articles.

One Coronado, a Spanish cavalier, is credited with being the first to explore the region constituting Nebraska. He came in 1541 expecting to find cities, and silver and gold in abundance, but was disappointed. Hakluyt, an ancient chronicler, states that he came from the southwest accompanied by a large body of men, and that "when they came to Quiuira, they found Tarrax who they sought, an hoarie-headed man, naked, and with a jewell of copper hanging at his neck, which was all his riches. The Spaniards seeing the false report of so famous riches, returned to Tiguex, without seeing either crosse or shew of Christianitie; and thence to Mexico."

Two brothers, Perre and Paul Mallet explored the valley of the Platte in June, 1739, tracing the river as far west as the forks, and were followed by other adventurers and hunters.

In 1804, President Jefferson commissioned and fitted out an expedition under command of Captain Meriweather Lewis, and Lieutenant William Clark, "to explore an expanse of country shrouded in mystery," west of the Missouri river.

In 1819, an exploring and scientific expedition headed by Major S. H. Long, penetrated the wilds and followed the Platte river to its source.

In 1842, John Charles Freemont, statesman, soldier and explorer, accompanied by a party, was commissioned by the government "to explore and report upon the country between the frontiers of Missouri and the south pass of the Rocky Mountains, and on the line of the Kansas and Great Platte rivers." He passed along the Platte valley and has left an interesting account of the journey. It took a year and a half for him to reach Sutter's mill in California, and the journey is now made in less than three days amidst practically all the comforts of home. Senator Benton, so noted for wisdom, declared at the time

that God himself had set up a barrier to the advance of the white man's civilization, and he doubtless believed it to be so, but many barriers have been swept away, and the unmapped wilderness of his day has become the home of several million people.

Nebraska long continued to be exclusive Indian country, but the tide of immigration began to flow westward, and its outposts gradually reached the banks of the Missour river and white settlers invaded the soil of Nebraska.

In 1844, when the Mormons were compelled to leave Illinois, they moved west, and endeavored to establish colonies on the Nebraska side of the Missouri river. The main colony squatted about six miles north of where the city of Omaha now stands and named the settlement "Winter Quarters," and in two years the population numbered over ten thousand. The requirements of such a concourse of people were great, and the slaughter of game and destruction of timber so disturbed the Indians that they appealed to the United States Government, and as the land was theirs, the Government compelled the Mormons to go elsewhere. Many, although indifferently equipped, entered upon the perilous journey to

an expectant home at Salt Lake, leaving quite a number to become settlers and test the adaptability of Nebraska soil to cultivation.

Another item in the colonization of Nebraska is the gold panic which seized the people of the East in 1849 when it was announced that gold had been discovered in California. The valley of the Platte being a natural avenue to the mountains, especially from the northern states, great number of people arrived at fords of the Missouri river, and for a time they were crowded, there being no available means to gain the opposite bank. A shrewd observer named William Brown, seeing an opportunity to make money, organized a company, and soon had a ferry in operation from Council Bluffs to the Nebraska shore. This same gentleman conducted a hotel in Council Bluffs, and in 1853 took a claim which nearly covered the town site of Omaha as it was afterwards laid out; marking its bounderies by blazing trees with a hatchet.

The gold seekers were a diverse crowd composed of all classes, making their way across the plains as they best could. Some had mules, others ox-teams, some rode horse back, and not a few went on foot,

and being ill prepared, many perished on the long weary marches. Not a few gave up the attempt at acquiring wealth in such a way and began life as pioneers in the new country, despite the fact that the Indians looked upon all settlers as invaders of their domain, and harrassed them by thefts of stock and pilferings.

Notwithstanding unfavorable criticism, the wealth and population of Nebraska increased so rapidly that it was considered advisable to elevate it to the dignity of a territory, and it was so organized, February 2, 1853.

Prosperity being assured, a railroad was wished for, and it was hoped one would be constructed through the valley of the Platte to the Pacific coast and open up the new country. The Legislature, and every Governor from Cumming to Saunders advocated the measure, and it had the support of a majority of the people, although many laughed at the proposal, considering the whole scheme wild and visionary.

It is needless to go into details regarding the passage of the bill for the construction of the Union Pacific railroad. Suffice it to say, that after run-

ning the gauntlet of amendments, postponements, and other parliamentary experiences, it was finally adopted, and became law, July, 1862.

On December 2, 1863, Peter A. Dey, the chief engineer of the proposed road, received a telegram from New York, announcing that the President of the United States had authorized him to formally break ground, and that it had been decided to make Omaha the initial point of the proposed railroad.

Omaha and Council Bluffs were little more than sprawling settlements at the time with no bright future before them, but the assurance that a line of railway to the Pacific coast would be constructed changed the aspect of affairs, and property suddenly increased in value, and an excited crowd of would be homesteaders besieged the Land Office. Business men and leading citizens being hurriedly called together, agreed to appropriately celebrate the event of breaking ground, and fixed the hour for the ceremony at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The day was pleasant and the sun shone brightly, and at the hour named, a crowd of fully 1,000 people assembled and marched to the place where ground was to be formally broken. Flags fluttered, people cheered, and can-

non boomed on both sides of the river in honor of the event. Every body felt happy, for the day was one to be remembered. The exercises were opened with prayer by the Rev. T. B. Lemon, in which he invoked a blessing upon the great work about to be inaugurated. Afterwards, the chief engineer, assisted by Augustus Koutze, of Omaha, George Francis Train of New York, Dr. Atchinson, of the Western Stage Company, and William E. Harvey, Territorial Auditor, with pick in hand, commenced to clear the ground preparatory to removing the first shovelful of earth, which was done amid the roar of artillery from either shore of the Missouri, and shouts of the assembled multitude. These proceedings were followed by addresses by Governor Saunders, Mayor Kennedy, A. J. Poppleton, George Francis Train and others.

Mr. Poppelton said in part: "On the 13th of October, 1854, about seven o'clock in the evening, I was sent down by the Western Stage Company of yonder city of Council Bluffs. At the rising of the sun the following morning, I climbed to the summit of one of the bluffs which overlook that prosperous and enterprising town, and took one long and linger-

ing look across the Missouri at the beautiful site on which one sees in full vigor of business, social and religious life, the youthful but thriving, and this, day, jubilant city of Omaha. Early in the day I crossed the river, and along a narrow path cut by some stalwart man through the tall rank prairie grass, I wended my way in search of the Postoffice. At length I found an old pioneer seated apparently in solitary rumination upon a piece of hewn timber, and I inquired of him for the Postoffice. He replied that he was postmaster, and would examine the Postoffice for my letters. Thereupon he removed from his head a hat, to say the least of it, somewhat veteran in appearance, and drew from its cavernous depths the coveted letters. On that day the wolves and Omahas were the almost undisputed lords of the soil, and the entire postal system was conducted in the crown of this venerable hat. Today radiant faces gladden our streets, and the postal service sheltered by a costly edifice, strikes its Briarean arms towards the north, the south, east and west, penetrating regions then unexplored and unknown, and bearing the symbols of values then hidden in the mountains and beneath the streams, of which the world in its wildest

vagaries had never dreamed. Then it took sixty days for New York and California to communicate with each other. Today, San Francisco and New York, sitting upon the shores of the oceans, three thousand miles asunder, holds familiar converse. Iron and steam and lightning are daily weaving their destinies more closely with each other and ours with theirs as the interoceanic city whose commerce, trade and treasures leave the last great navigable stream in their migration from the Atlantic to the Pacific sea board. It is natural, therefore, that you should lift up your hearts and rejoice. And although we have watched for nine long years, during which our fortunes have been, like Antonia's treasures, 'mostly in expectancy,' we at last press the cup in full fruition to our lips.''

Mr. Popeleton was followed by Judge Larimer, who, after the cheering subsided, said; ''The heavens are reverberating around us and above us from cannon planted on either shore of the river near by, which divides the State of Iowa from your Territory, but they are not deluging the soil with blood of fellow countrymen. No, it is another cause in which they are speaking; it is the cause of progress, of civil-

ization and peace, and this the day we celebrate, is one of its days of triumph. Although I have thought and hoped with you for years for the consummation of the event we are here today to celebrate, and with which the interests of the people of Omaha and Council Bluffs have ever been so intimately identified, yet it has remained until this hour a subject of which we could not speak with any degree of certainty. But it is that the President, as he was authorised to do, has designated this as a point, and that there, on the banks of that turbid stream which rolls at our feet—which takes its course thousands of miles above us, where it is so small that a single ox could drink it dry of a summer day, is to be the crossing of that great national thoroughfare which is to unite and bind together with bands of iron the Atlantic and Pacific. We look upon this as an event in the history of this country and of our people as worthy of commemoration. As yet this is a sparsely settled country, but with all the elements for the creation of agricultural wealth which is the basis upon which all others rest, we may now, by the location of this road, expect a large accession in numbers. With such a country as we have here, with such a future as there

is before it, the odious relations of landlord and tenant, which is only another name for that of master and slave, now existing in the older States, will be placed in progress of gradual extinction."

A stirring and witty speech was delivered by the somewhat erratic George Francis Train, in which he stated that he happened to be lying round loose in the locality and had availed himself of the opportunity of being present at the inauguration of "the greatest enterprise under God, the world ever witnessed."

The statement of Train in this speech that the Union Pacific Railroad would be completed before the year 1870, was received with a burst of derisive laughter. The statement seemed extravagant, but the prediction came true, the last rail being laid, and the last spike driven on the 10th of May, 1869.

When Mr. Train concluded his address the crowd dispersed, well satisfied with the proceedings, and in the evening Omaha was brilliantly illuminated and a banquet and ball took place at the Herndon House; there being great rejoicing that before long a railroad would open a way for immigration into the valleys of Nebraska.

Preparatory arrangements were immediately en-

tered into for the construction of the road, and T. C. Durant's call for one million cross ties for immediate use, and three million more within two years was received with derision, as no person believed that such a quantity could be procured. Mr. Durant, however, was not to be deterred by apparent impossibilities, and emphatically declared they must be had.

Every source was applied to and good prices offered, and very soon a perfect torrent of ties began to come in.

Some grading was done in the Autumn of 1864, but it was not until the 10th of July, 1865, that the first rail of the Union Pacific Railroad was laid along the bottoms between Cut-off Lake and the grade leading through the hills out of Omaha, and it may be remarked, that it was the first rail of the first railroad in the State of Nebraska. Towards the end of the same month, the first locomotive arrived. It was named the "General Sherman," and was brought up the Missouri river by steamboat in charge of Thomas Jordan who put it together on the track and ran it for some time. Jordan was an expert engineer, but becoming unsettled, drifted away from the Union Pacific, and after a variety of fortune died

it is said, in Denver. Two weeks later the second locomotive arrived in charge of Luther O. Farrington. It was named the "General McPherson," and was brought from St. Joseph, Missouri on the steamboat "Colorado." Mr. Farrington put this engine together on the track, and commenced running it on August 3, 1865. There was but one and one-half miles of track built out of Omaha at the time, and the country was almost exclusively inhabited by Indians, and herds of buffalo, deer and antelope roamed the plains.

Mr. Farrington remained in the employ of the Union Pacific Company until February, 1905, when he was retired and placed on the pension list. He was born in Calledonia County, Vermont, March 12, 1840, and became a member of Division 88 of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers when it was organized at Grand Island in July, 1867. He was an early citizen of North Platte, and ran a passenger train between it and Grand Island for many years. He enjoyed a comfortable leisure up to about the close of 1909, when broken in health, he went to Excelsior Springs, Missouri, for treatmen, and from thence to a hospital at Omaha. Being sick unto

death, he longed to be at his home at North Platte, and in an endeavor to reach it, was conveyed on board a train, but died when it neared Brady, on the night of June 12, 1910.

When the building of the Union Pacific Railroad was entered upon; General Grenville M. Dodge was chief engineer of construction, and General Jack Casement and his brother Dan had charge of the track laying. They were men of undoubted ability and courage, and well qualified to carry on the work intrusted to them.

The working force was almost entirely composed of retired soldiers whose experience during the Civil War admirably fitted them for encounters with hostile Indians and to endure the privations of camp life on the plains. At an alarm, when hostile Indians were seen approaching the camp,these men would fall into line and prepare to meet the attack with the readiness and decision of veteran soldiers.

To General Dodge belongs the credit of forwarding the work of track laying with unwonted rapidity. Being an enthusiast, he not only communicated his spirit to his working forces, but skillfully managed hostile Indians, laborers, and the ruffians

and gamblers who followed the camp. Having distinguished himself during the civil war, he was intimate with commanding officers of garrisons and military posts along the route, and was enabled to avail himself of military aid against marauding Indians, and also frequently to maintain order when worthless camp followers became unruly. His system of track laying was unique. In the lading of construction trains with material brought up on boats from St. Joseph, each car was assigned a certain number of rails of the same length, and the exact number of spikes required to lay them. When the scene of track laying was reached, the rails were thrown off; the train backed, and the rails transferred to small cars. Horse power was used to move these to within a couple of feet from the end of the rails already laid down; and before the car had well stopped, a dozen men grasped a rail on each side, ran it down on the already laid ties, gauged it, and before the clang of its falling had ceased to reverberate, the car was moved ahead and another pair of rails drawn out. Men followed up and dropped spikes, and some thirty others drove them. The moment a car was emptied of rails, a number

of men seized it and threw it off the track, and a second one followed with its load of rails. By this process, it was estimated, that on an average, eight hundred feet of track was laid in the brief space of thirty minutes.

The first government inspection of the track took place on January 26, 1866, and at that time about thirty miles had been laid, and it is worthy of remark that the equipment consisted of four locomotives, five box cars, and thirty flat cars. By the Fall of 1866, two hundred and sixty miles more of track were completed. Grand Island was reached on July 8, 1866, and the construction train was run to that point; the train being drawn by the engine "Osceola," which was captured by the Indians west of Plum Creek about two years afterwards.

At that date, the road was finished so far, and in operation, with depots and water stations, and substantial bridges spanned streams which were the terror of emigrants in days when the slow, toiling team carried the family and household goods to the mountains, or the green valleys of the Pacific Slope.

The track was completed to North Platte in November, 1866, and there the terminus remained until

the following year; continuance of the work being delayed by Indian hostility.

Few have any idea of the difficulties under which the line of the Union Pacific was constructed. Chief Engineer General G. M. Dodge in a statement to the eastern owners, said: "During the entire construction of the road, a relentless, determined war has been waged all along the line by the tribes of the plains, and no peace found until we had long passed the hostile country and got beyond their reach * * * Every mile had to be run within range of musket, and there was not a moment's security. In making surveys, numbers of our men, some of them the ablest and most promising, were killed; and during the construction, our stock was run off by the hundred; I might say by the thousand. As one difficulty after another was overcome in the engineering, running and construction departments, a new era in railroading was inaugurated. Each day taught us a lesson by which we profited for the next, and our advances and improvements on the art of railway construction were marked by the progress of the work."

Everything was done at enormous cost. None of

the Iowa railroads had reached the Missouri river, consequently all material, machinery, fuel, provisions, men, everything in fact, had to go to St. Louis and be transferred by boat to Omaha. The treeless plains of Nebraska furnished no ties, and they had to be transported from remote points at great expense, sometimes costing as much as $2.50 apiece. The cost of labor and provisions was also greatly enhanced by lack of direct communication with markets; and in the absence of wood and coal, fuel had to be shipped in at a frightful cost; therefore, all honor to the men who constructed the Union Pacific railroad and braved danger and almost unsurmountable difficulties, to blaze the way for civilization.

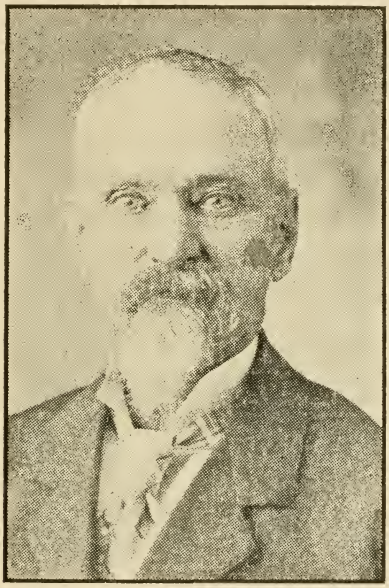
CHAPTER II.

First house built in North Platte.—First store.—The Peniston & Miller homesteads.—Coming of the U. P. Railroad creates a large population.—The first newspaper.—A military post for town protection. — Building the U. P. shops and Round House.—First houses.—Early residents.—Workmen sleep and cook for themselves in "the shops" —The Cedar Hotel.—Indian troubles.—The Peace Conference.— First weddings.—Shop associations. —Indians threaten the town.—To the Round House for refuge.

When the site of the fair city of North Platte was buffalo pasture, and the surrounding country the home of the Indian, William S. Peniston and Andrew J. Miller conducted a trading post called "Gold Water" at a point twenty-five miles west of Plum Creek. The country was without civil government, Indians numerous, and white men few, and the few were generally voyagers or in some way con-

nected with the United States army.

In the summer of 1866, the track of the Union Pacific Railway was built past this trading post, and Mr. Miller, learning while in Omaha that the termin-



A. J. MILLER, North Platte's First Citizen.

us of the first division of the road would be located between the rivers above where they were building the North Platte bridge, a better location for the

business conducted by Peniston and himself was suggested. Having a quantity of lumber and building material brought from Denver, they hauled it to the newly platted site of North Platte, and Mr. Miller, with his men and teams, camped there the last of September, 1866. Stillness reigned, and there was little to encourage settlement, but he felt assured that before long the silence would be broken by the hum of human activity. The town site was newly staked off, and looking round, he selected and bought a lot at the corner of what is now Locust and Front streets; and put up a frame building for a store, which was the first building built in North Platte. He afterwards paid the first freight bill, and opened up with a stock of goods on the 9th day of November.

Early in 1867, he moved the log store building that he and his partner had at Cold Water, to Cozad, and shipped it to North Platte, and put it up where it now stands. The frame building, and half of the lot was afterwards sold to Althimer & Co. for $1,111. This firm shortly thereafter, took the building down in sections and following the construction camp, set it up where convenient. After a time the

half lot was bought back for $150, and such is the account of a very early real estate deal, and the origin of the well built, bustling city of North Platte, as related by A. J. Miller, its first citizen.

Peniston & Miller were associated in business up to 1870; when they dissolved partnership. Mr. Miller carried on the business until 1872, when deciding to retire, he sold the merchandise to Otto Uhling, and the historic building to Charles McDonald who conducted a popular grocery business in it for several years.

After Mr. McDonald vacated the building, it assumed a dilapidated and abandoned appearance, the activity by which it was characterized having departed. The building, however, was a land mark, and was pointed out as a relic of early days, but on the morning of April 21,1910, it caught fire and despite heroic efforts of the Fire Brigade and citizens, it was thoroughly wrecked before the flames were subdued. The cedar logs of which the walls were constructed were exposed by the fire, and appeared as solid as when put in place.

W. S. Peniston nd A. J. Miller were the first to take up land adjoining, and likely to be included with

in the limits of the proposed city at some time. It appears that they had a stretch of land on the south fenced in. Col. J. B. Park was surveying in the neighborhood and noticing this, interviewed Mr. Miller. In course of conversation he said that if he was allowed to homestead part of the land they had inclosed, he would give the number of the section. As the land was not officially announced as surveyed, this was agreed to, and it was arranged that the Colonel should homestead one hundred and sixty acres, and that he and Peniston, take eighty each; and such is the origin of these additions to the city.

As stated, the Union Pacific Railroad was completed to North Platte in November, 1866, and there the terminus remained until the following year. Then, the country was in a state of nature, wild and open, with no sign of civilization. Deer, antelope and buffalo were numerous; ducks and geese swarmed on the sloughs and along the rivers, and Indians roamed at will in primitive freedom. The advance of civilization, however, was fated to change all this; for with the railroad came a motly crowd of construction camp denizens; amongst whom were roughs, toughs and gamblers, and saloons and questionable resorts

were soon doing business in canvass tents, and all manner of hurriedly constructed abodes. This cosmopolitan crowd is said to have numbered some three thousand persons, and no governing power controlled it.

A. J. Miller tells of a mammoth tent east of his store; in which there was a saloon bar; billiard tables, and all kinds of gambling devices. A man by the name of McDonald, he states, ran it, and made a large amount of money by following the construction camp. Less pretentious resorts where vice was pandered to were numerous, and on the whole, the North Platte of that day was a lively and somewhat picturesque place.

It is worthy of mention, that a newspaper called the Pioneer on Wheels, came with the railroad and supplied the camp with news of the outside world. It was printed in, and published from a box car by a man named Clark, and without doubt was the first news sheet issued in North Platte. A copy would be a curiosity, but search and inquiry have failed to locate one. This paper is referred to in the Platte Valley Independent, an early local paper, and James M. Ray, a pioneer citizen, speaks positively of it.

Work on the Railroad was resumed in July, 1867; and when the construction camp moved west, the bulk of the floating population followed, and it was not long until there was barely one hundred and fifty people left, most of them being employed on the railroad.

The Indians were never very docile or easily managed, but early in 1867, they became restless and overbearing. Small parties of white men had been attacked, and unprotected, killed and scalped. Stock was also run off when opportunity afforded, and many depredations committed. Peniston and Miller had eighty head of cattle stolen by them when filling a wood contract at Willow Island, and others lost heavily by raids.

By the close of 1867, North Platte was becoming quite a village; and as it showed signs of growth; the Government, to protect it and suppress Indian troubles, established a Military Post, garrisoned it with two companies of cavalry and maintained it until 1880. About that date, the Indians in Lincoln County were deported to a reservation, and as there was no further need for Military protection; the buildings of the Post were disposed of, and the site is now

built on and traversed by streets. This historic Post or Barracks was situated a little west of town near the railroad track.

Early in 1867 the Railroad Company began the erection of their Round House, and shops. The Blacksmith shop was first built. Arthur P. Wood, Civil Engineer of Omaha superintended the work, and remained until all the buildings were completed.

The first houses were built of sod and not a few of logs, but by the close of 1867 several frame houses were erected; notably, the two still standing at the corners of Locust and Sixth Streets. The one on the west corner was the home of A. J. Miller and the one on the east, that of W. S. Peniston. The late David Day, Franklin Peale, and Joseph and Andy Picard, were the first shopmen to build. Their homes were on Sixth and Chestnut streets, but by the Fall of 1868 the prairie became dotted with small houses. These were mostly unplastered, but secured against the penetrating winds of winter by robes, skins and such like tacked to the walls. With these, and a hot cook-stove going day and night while cold spells and blizzards lasted, the inmates managed to get along. But families kept com-

ing and were made welcome, and it may be truthfully said that there was more friendly intercourse amongst neighbors than there has been since.

Among the families of these early days were those of David Day, Franklin Peal, Albert Marsh, Frazier, Struthers, W. J. Patterson, M. C. Keith, Lew Baker, Lamplaugh, Daugherty, Peniston, Miller, Van Doran, A. P. Carlson, Russell, Austin, Morin, R.J. Wyman,W. M. Hinman and others, all worthy citizens, and although many of them have entered the silent halls of death, all names are familiar and associated with days when North Platte was a frontier settlement and the Indian and buffalo roamed the wilds of Lincoln County in unrestricted freedom.

The Union Pacific pay roll for January 1868 shows there were five blacksmith, twenty-two machinists, and one boilermaker in the employ at North Platte, and that J. P. Marston was master mechanic, Albert Marsh, foreman of the blacksmith shop, James Van Claim of the machine shop, and a Mr. Granger of the copper shop. Work at that time, and for years after, was plentiful and pressing, and continued from seven in the morning until half past ten at night, and often until twelve and one next

morning; Sundays being as other days. Big money was earned, and as it was spent freely, others were made prosperous.

In those days, boarding places were few and crowded, and many workmen slept in bunks in the machine shop and round house, the carpenters sleeping on their , work benches. Some cooked their food and roughed it ,while others took their meals at the Cedar Hotel, a rough log structure that stood on the site of the Timmerman building on Front Street. It was the only hotel in town at one time, but served requirements as well as any at the present day. One fine morning, however, it burned, and as the town was increasing, the late M. C. Keith erected a larger and better building on the site and successfully ran a hotel for some time; but his building also shared the fate of its predecessor. Shortly after its destruction, the Nebraska House was built, and it and other boarding places began to offer accommodation to railroad men and the traveling public.

The Indians continued surly and dissatisfied. They claimed that they had been deprived of their lands by the encroachment of the whites, and that

certain remuneration for their loss had been denied them. They also complained that the government had not kept its promise, that at stated times, blankets and other necessities would be issued to them, and that upon going to appointed places to receive supplies, they were disappointed. To negotiate with the Indians, and obtain a cessation of hostilities,a conference was suggested, and the Indian chiefs agreed to meet commissioners appointed by the Government at North Platte, on September 24, 1868, Toward the end of July small bands of Sioux began to arrive; but by September, not only Sioux, but Pawnees, Cheyennes, and other tribes came in force, and it is stated by citizens who saw them, that it was a never-to-be-forgotten sight to see the various bands filing slowly along west of the round house clothed in garments made of hides of deer, antelope, buffalo and elk. Many had ponies with poles attached to them, the ends trailing on the ground. On these improvised, wheelless wagons, baggage was piled, and what could not be put on, squaws and ponies carried. This quaint, picturesque throng toiled slowly to the North river, crossed by a ford, and went into camp. The chiefs, headmen, and interp-

reters, with their squaws and families; and also half-breeds and squaw-men with their families, camped a little to the west of the round house.

Skins, buffalo robes and pelts were all the Indians had to exchange for desired commodities, and the result was that the stores of Peniston and Miller, and Otto Uhling (the only stores in town at the time) were packed with them. Buffalo robes were a drug on the market, and Indians gladly accepted a silver dollar for the finest. These Indians are said to have been fine specimens of mankind, being moderately tall, and physically vigorous and strong. The Society of Friends of Philadelphia sent boxes of clothing,the articles to be distributed amongst them, but they had no use for coats or vests, and as for pants, they changed them to approved Indian fashion by cutting the legs off at the knees, and making a flap in the seat.

General Sherman, General Harvey, and John P. Sanborne were appointed by the Government to confer with the Indian chiefs. The Union Pacific machine shop was just built, and as the machinery had not been placed in it, it was considered a suitable place in which to hold the conference, and

there it was held. The Indian chiefs, Standing Elk, Swift Bear, Pawnee Killer, Spotted Tail, Man-that-walks-under-ground, and Big Mouth arrived on the day, and at the hour appointed with their interpreters, and after a long conference and much discussion, a Treaty of Peace was entered upon.

By this time, North Platte was getting to be a town of some importance, and during their stay the commissioners were well entertained by the citizens. Parties were given in their honor, and at a wedding they attended, Gen. Sherman was the first to kiss the bride. Previous to this, W. M. Hinman officiated at a double wedding in the old Union Pacific Hotel which was celebrated in true Western fashion. This hotel was destroyed by fire in May, 1869. These weddings were the first in North Platte, but such celebrations steadily increased, and are far from becoming obsolete.

After the Peace Commission, the first meeting of Free Masons in North Platte was convened in the machine shop, and held in a small room in the loft, then, and for long after reached by a stairway. The object was to get the brethren in the locality together, so that by spending a social hour they would

become acquainted. In this same room were rifles and bayonets for the workmen should the Indians at any time make a raid on the company's premises. They were never required, and when Indian troubles ceased, were appropriated by youths in the employ of the company and converted into rifles for hunting. So late as 1881, a few of these weapons were found covered with dust and rust and for some time bayonets lay about the machine shops.

The ten stall round house of that day, blown down in 1881, also had its associations. To it women and children fled when terrorized by a report that the Indians were going to attack the town and murder the inhabitants. This was in the spring of 1868. It seems that a report had been circulated that the Indians were on the war path in large force perpetrating their usual atrocities. The tale spread on all sides, and was supplemented and enlarged by all kinds of variations that imagination and fear could suggest. Settlers thronged to the military Posts for protection, and the women and children of the town sought refuge in the round house. Men armed themselves and looked out for the expected Indian attack, but as it failed to materialize, the

scare subsided. That the local report was not wholly without foundation is made evident by the statement of A. J. Miller. He says: "Peniston and I had been over on the south side of the river, and coming back to town, noticed many Indians. They all had their bows strung and arrows in their hands, and I told Peniston it looked as though we were going to have trouble. I drove up to the store and found that many people in town had already gone to the round house. I ran over to my house and tried to get my wife and Mrs. Peniston to go there too, but my wife refused to go. I then ran out and found High Bear and asked him to harangue the Indians and tell them their hearts were bad, and that I wanted to see them at the store. In a short time the store was full of Indians, and I made a talk to them, telling them that I could see that their hearts were on the ground, but that I was their friend and wanted them to feel good. I then gave them about two hundred and fifty dollars worth of goods so they could have a feast, besides giving them some hats and clothing and things of that kind. There was no further trouble. The Indians afterwards told General Harney at the Whetstone Agency, that if it

had not been for 'Sharp Nose', (the name they gave me) they would have killed everybody and burned the town."

CHAPTER III.

North Platte's rapid growth.—Becomes the County Seat.—First meeting of County Commissioners.—Circuit Judge holds Court.—First County Warants.—Cattle raising.—Judge Daugherty and the school fund.—North Platte in '68.—First saloon licenses.—U. P. Engines levied on for taxes and chained.— The old Log School house, its teachers and associations.—An Indian scare, and the gun that scared the teacher.—First Sunday School in North Platte.

About the close of 1867, North Platte had so increased in population and importance that it was considered more suitable to be the county seat than Cottonwood Springs where it was located at the time. That this idea was universally entertained is evident by the following enteries in the County Records: "At a special term of the County Commissioners' Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska, at their

usual place of holding court at Cottonwood Springs, Nebraska, on the 27th day of September, A. D., 1867. Present, W. M. Hinman and John A. Morrow, Commissioners; the following proceedings were had: It was ordered that all that portion of Lincoln County south of the Platte river shall constitute Cottonwood Precinct; and all that portion of said county lying between the North and South Platte shall constitute the North Platte precinct. It is also ordered that an election be held in Lincoln County on the 8th day of October, A. D., 1867, for one member of the House of Representatives; one Commissioner for district No. 2; one Probate Judge; one Coroner; one County Treasurer; one County Clerk; one County Surveyor; one Prosecuting Attorney for the precinct of North Platte; two Justices and two Constables; also for the location of the County Seat of Lincoln County, Nebraska. No other business, the Court adjourns to meet at the same place on the 25th day of October, A. D., 1867."

Charles McDonald was County Clerk, and the Commissioners met at his house. How many ran for these offices, or to what poiltical parties they belonged, is not recorded, but twenty-one votes were

cast, and the proposition to make North Platte the County Seat carried. and the following gentlemen were elected to guard the welfare, and shape the destiny of County and City: B. I. Hinman, Representative; W. M. Hinman, Judge; Charles McDonald, Clerk; O. O Austin, Sheriff; Hugh Morgan, Treasurer; A. J. Miller, Commissioner.

As arranged, the Commissioners met at "the usual place of doing business," on the 25th of October, 1867; and after appointing an assessor for Lincoln County and transacting other business, "It was ordered that on the 12th day of November, 1867, the County Seat of Lincoln County, and all records of said County shall be transferred to the town of North Platte, State of Nebraska. On motion, the County Commissioners adjourned to meet at North Platte, Nebraska, at noon, on the 12th day of November, A. D., 1867."

They met on the day and at the hour appointed; but North Platte had no municipal building, or place wherein to transact County business; so the first, and several other meetings were held in a log house used as a residence of W. M. Hinman who that fall had removed to town.

There being no business to transact at the first meeting of Commissioners in North Platte, an adjournment was taken.

Towards the close of 1867, Judge Gantt, then Circuit Judge for the entire State of Nebraska, convened Court at the Railroad Hotel, and although a jury was impaneled, no indictments were brought in.

It was during this year that the first county warrants were issued.

Mr. A. J. Miller states that when he was elected County Commissioner in '67, there was no money in the treasury, and County Warrants were hardly worth anything, many being sold for ten cents on the dollar. To carry the County along, Peniston and Miller took them at their face value in exchange for supplies to the Sheriff for the jail and other county requisites during years 1868 and 1869; and in this way acquired a pile that figured up to between ten and twelve thousand dollars. Being anxious to realize on them, Mr. Miller took warrants amounting to $10.000, to Omaha, and was told by the president and cashier of the First National Bank that they would not loan ten cents on the dollar on them, as they did not consider they were worth any thing.

They said that it was doubtful if North Platte was in Lincoln County as the west line was east of it. Disheartened but not discouraged, Mr. Miller returned home, and it was not long before Lincoln County warrants were freely accepted.

Owing to the aggression of the Indians, cattle raising had not been carried on to any extent around North Platte previous to 1868. About that date, herds were brought in by Nathaniel Russel, Peniston and Miller, M. H. Brown, Keith and Barton, John Bratt and others; and this may be said to have been the beginning of the vast cattle business so long carried on in Lincoln and adjacent counties.

Hundreds of miles of Government and Railroad lands lay unoccupied, and it might be said that range for cattle was unlimited. The winters were less severe then, and really rough wintery weather was of short duration, and cattle came through in fairly good condition. Putting up hay to winter stock was considered unnecessary; and so matters went on until the winter of 1880 when cattle perished by the thousand, and the prairie was strewn with carcasses. Many had invested, and a few made fortunes, but this catastrophy ruined several. Ever after, cattle re-

ceived attention; and all went well until homesteaders invaded the range. Cattlemen fumed and swore, and tried to drive them away; telling them the land was unproductive and they would starve. To this the homesteader turned a deaf ear, and continued to plough and sow, and see crop after crop fail for lack of moisture. He experienced privation and hardship, but hope sustained him and in the expectation of better results, he plodded along. Threats did not deter homesteaders, for they continued to come until it became impossible to run herds, and cattlemen had to give up business, or leave for other pastures. Moisture gradually became more abundant, and in course of time, a grazing country became a rich farming country.

In January, 1868, Charles McDonald was re-elected County Clerk, but having neglected to qualify for office, R. C. Daugherty was appointed. Daugherty was also Justice of the Peace, and on February 4, 1868, fined a man $21.50 for stealing an overcoat. This was the first money paid into the public treasury, and was the first contribution to the school fund, the law of the state being, that all money collected as fines go to support public schools. Daugh-

erty is said to have been a stern judge who never scrupled to impose a penalty. "Go on with your school," he would say, "and I'll find funds for it," and he did; for every one brought before him was fined to the limit.

At that time, North Platte was infested with reckless desperados, brothels, gambling dens and unlicensed saloons that ran wide open all days of the week and hours of the night. Most men went armed, and few law abiding citizens ventured out alone after dark. There were some small buildings arranged along what is now Dewey Street, and where the First National Bank stands, was a notorious saloon much patronized by gamblers and questionable characters of both sexes. Front Street, however, was the business street, and from Walnut to Ash Street were many one storied shanties in which drinks were dispensed. Then cowboys would ride long distances to have "a good time" at North Platte, which generally consisted in patronizing its saloons and resorts. They were a frolicsome lot and seldom gave trouble, no, not even after a round up when they spent their hard earned dollars freely, and made things lively, and it was not uncommon for one or

more to ride into a saloon, order drinks and in wild glee, shoot out the lights; or ride at a furious pace through the town, whooping and yelling as they shot in the air. Then, many a man died with his boots on, and it was a question with the law abiding, whether white men or Indians were most to be feared.

The transactions of the County Commissioners were somwhat formal at first, but at a meeting held, March 23, 1868, they got down to business, and instituted reform that startled the community. At that meeting it was ordered that O. O. Austin be appointed Assessor for North Platte precinct, "and that he be directed to assess the property of the Union Pacific Railroad company in this precinct which consists of the district of country between the Platte rivers, to the western boundary of the State of Nebraska. Also to assess all town lots in the town of North Platte and Julesburg; and further ordered that all persons be prohibited from selling spirituous or malt liquors in less quantities than five gallons, unless they obtain license from the County Commissioners as provided by law. Also, that all persons applying to sell liquor pay the sum of twenty-five dollars as a license fee for one year from date of application, into the

County Treasury, and that the County Clerk post notices giving ten days to all retailers of spirituous and malt liquors to comply with the order."

To pay for license was considered an imposition, and an infringment of western liberty and the saloonists refused to comply. However, the Commissioners remained firm, and at a meeting held on the 6th day of April, 1868, the bonds of seven saloon keepers were approved, and license granted; and all went well until the following year when the Commissioners saw fit to increase the fee to one hundred and fifty dollars for twelve months. This order caused great dissatisfaction and was so vigorously opposed, that it had to be rescinded and the former fee restored. Then, and long after, whiskey retailed at twenty-five cents a drink, and other beverages were proportionately high priced Wages were high, and so were the necessaries of life; a quarter having no greater purchasing power than a five cent piece has today.

The assessor, acting upon the order of the Commissioners, levied on the property of the Union Pacific Railroad Company in North Platte Precinct, and made an assessed valuation of $49,000. This tax-

ation the Railroad Company refused to pay, and the case was tested before the courts of the state and finally brought to a settlement by the Sheriff locking and chaining the engines in the round house under a writ of attachment procured by the County Treasurer. Major William Woodhurst was sheriff at the time, and he states that he chained the engines and left an armed guard in charge, and that the process speedly brought about a settlement. Since that time, there has been no trouble with the Union Pacific Company regarding the payment of taxes.

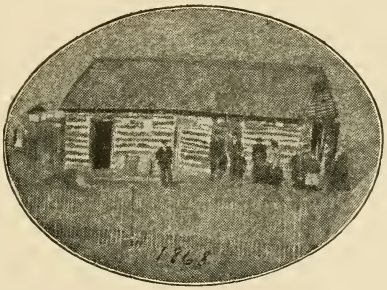
The effort of the County Commissioners to control the liquor traffic is commendable, but no effort was made to improve the moral condition of the people. There was not a place of worship in the city, and the means for educating children was limited and crude. The old log school house that stood on the corner of Fifth and Dewey Streets, was newly built when they began to legislate, but there is no record that the Commissioners had any thing to do with its erection. Mr. A. J. Miller states in a communication that it was built by money subscribed by citizens for the purpose, he thinks, not before 1868. "When it was built, ', he says, "we had no teacher,

so I wrote to an uncle in New York and told him if Mary Hubbard would come out, I would meet her in Omaha, and we would give her the school to teach at $100 per month, and she could live with my family. She came and taught in the first Public School in Lincoln County."

In the records of the Public Schools of North Platte, there is an entry signed, "James Belton," stating that "the origin of our district like that of our ancestors is lost in gloom, but tradition tells us that in the year 1868, a few citizens of this place met and organized School District No. 1 by electing L. H. Baker, E. Morin and Mr. Probin, school officers. who proceeded to the erection of a log school house. Lou Baker was elected to the honorable office of Treasurer, and as the district had no money, he went down into his own pocket every Saturday and paid the workmen. Mr. T. M. Clarke, the brother of Mrs. Lou Baker was the first teacher. The school attendance was about eight pupils. The foregoing was obtained from Mr. L. H. Baker as no record is now in existence."

Local tradition has it that the first public religious service in North Platte was held in the log school

by an itinerant Lutheran minister named Cook, in August 1868, and that the voice of the first school teacher in Lincoln County also woke its echo. He is said to have been a young man named Clarke; but he did not take kindly to teaching, and resigned before the term expired. He was succeeded by a Mr. Garman who also resigned after a brief stay. The next appointed was Miss Mary Hubbard, a young



First School House in North Platte.

woman in all the bloom and blush of early womanhood, and school was opened by her, November 30, 1868. She had less than a dozen scholars, and few school books; only one Fourth Reader, and it was monopolized by the only one in the class, a tall young man, so tall, that the teacher had to look up to him, and when the class was to be heard, the one book

difficulty was got over by the pupil sitting down so the teacher could see the page from which he read. Miss Hubbard is now Mrs Gilman, and although somewhat aged, retains much of her youthful vivacity. No pioneer citizen is more esteemed than she, and her family is alike a credit to herself and the city.

A report was circulated that the Indians were about to invade the town and scalp all and sundry, people became excited. A school director called at the school house and gave the teacher a revolver to protect herself and the children. The weapon was laid aside, but she eyed it with suspicion, and spent the afternoon in fear and trembling, not of the Indians, but of the pesky gun, lest it might go off and kill some one.

In course of time the population increased, and children of school age soon taxed the capacity of the log school house. To obviate this, an addition was built to it in 1875, and Misses Holcomb and Hall engaged to teach. This enlargement, however, only gave temporary relief, and a more commodious building was necessary. In 1873 a two-story brick school house was erected, and the log school house having served its day was sold at public auction, February

9, 1874, and knocked down to Joseph McConnell, his bid being six hundred and eleven dollars. It was long occupied by Mrs. Thompson as a residence and millinery store, and was looked upon as a relic of pioneer days.

Mr. Hershey came to own it, moved it to make space for the erection of the Warner building. It presently stands in the Alley behind the Lock residence on Fourth Street, covered with sheet iron and converted into a stable. Its identity is gone, and it is to be regretted that it is thus desecrated. There was nothing very lovable or attractive about the old building, but it was an interesting relic of the past; and it was with genuine regret that several who received the rudiments of their education at it, witnessed its removal.

It is worthy of remark that the first Sunday School in North Platte was held in the log school house. The late Mrs. E. J. Cogswell of blessed memory, came to North Platte in 1868 intent upon missionary work. She was a Unitarian, but no sectarian, and willingly co-operated with people of all shades of belief for the moral good of the community. Near the colse of that year, aided by Mrs. M. C. Keith,

Mrs. A. J. Miller and Mrs. Kramph, she had the school room arranged for the reception of scholars to form a Sunday School class, but to the vexation of these excellent women, only three children attended. Mrs. Cogswell, however, was not easily discouraged, and visiting every family in town, in which there were children, she solicited their attendance and was rewarded by having quite a number of scholars. This school was organized as a Union Sunday School, and continued as such for many years.

CHAPTER IV.

Necessity for a jail.—Log jail built.—Prisoners escape.—The town expands.—The Vigilant Committee.—First church built.—South Platte bridge built.—Buffalo hunting.—McLucas store robbed. —Suspects arrested.—Man lynched at railroad bridge.—Mob at jail.—Suspects brought into court. —Seized by mob.—One hanged to telegraph pole. —One escapes and dies through exposure.

At the close of 1868, and well into the seventies; North Platte was a pretty tough town, and very indifferently equipped to enforce the law and maintain order. It had no jail, and on this account crime often went unpunished, but when occasional arrests were made, culprits had either to be kept in the guard house at the Post; sent to Fort McPherson, or other places for safe keeping. Prisoners were a costly encumbrance as will be seen by the following extracts from the county records: "October 16, 1868.—

At a meeting of Commissioners it was ordered that the claim of the Union Pacific Railroad Company for the transporting of prisoners to Fremont, the sum of one hundred and twenty-eight dollars and fifty cents be paid."

"January 19, 1869: The claim of William Pateny for guarding prisoners eight days; the sum of twenty-five dollars."

"January 24, 1869: The claim of Dodge County, Nebraska, for keeping and trying John Burly for the crime of murder; the sum of four hundred and sixteen dollars, and fourteen cents."

"February 1, 1869: Ordered that the claim of Company D; 18th United States Infantry for boarding and guarding prisoners, the sum of two hundred and thirty-eight dollars be paid."

"February 19, 1869: Ordered that the claim of Col. Bracket for keeping prisoners at Fort McPherson, the sum of twenty-two dollars be paid."

"March 3, 1869: Ordered that the claim of the Union Pacific Railroad Company for transporting prisoners from Omaha to North Platte, the sum of eighty-seven dollars and twenty-five cents, be paid."

The commanding officer at the Post seems to

have tired of his guardhouse being used as a city jail, and intimated as much to the sheriff, who in turn, informed the county commissioners, but from an entry in the county records, its appears they had the erection of a jail under consideration, for, as it states, "The court met on the 28th of September, 1868, at the county clerk's office at two o'clock p. m. Present, A. J. Miller, and W. M. Hinman.

"It was ordered by the Board that proposals be received at the county clerk's office on the 5th day of October, 1868, to build a jail in the County of Lincoln; said jail to be divided into two rooms, twelve feet square, and bids for larger or smaller rooms will be considered. Ordered that the county clerk issue notices to secure proposals for building a jail or furnish material for same; said proposals to be received up to the 15th day of October 1868; the Board reserving the right to reject any or all bids."

On October 17, 1868, a contract is entered into with W. S. Peniston, in accordance with his bid to build a county jail; and on January 16, 1869, it is ordered "that he receive the sum of twenty-five hundred dollars for building jail and furnishing cot. That this sum stands on motion."

Afterwards, it was "Ordered that the deed of Peniston and Miller, for the west half of lot number three (3) block, one hundred and three (103), in the town of North Platte, upon which the jail of Lincoln County now stands, be received under contract with W. S. Peniston, until the Union Pacific Railroad Company can make a title; and it is further ordered, that the claim of Peniston and Miller for extra work to county jail, the sum of five hundred dollars, be audited and allowed from county general fund."

Readers who remember the low-roofed, rough log cabin designated "the jail," that stood on Front Street, a little west of the railroad depot, with its small barred windows and heavy door, may consider that the commissioners paid liberally for it, but every thing was high priced in those days.

The log jail, like the log school house, had its associations, and some of them are gruesome and grim. It often had in its keeping, cattle and horse thieves; murderers and assassins; yea, criminals of all grades; and upon two occasions at least, it was assailed by a mob of would be lynchers. One sheriff stood in its doorway, revolver in hand, in front of an excited mob wishing to wreck vengeance on a prisoner, and de-

clared in defiant tones, that any who crossed the threshold of the jail, would do so over his dead body. All knew he meant what he said, and none ventured. The old building, strong as it looked, was not over secure, and it was harder to keep prisoners in it, sometimes, than it was to catch and put them in. It had no foundation and some gained freedom by digging under a sill, but a favorite mode of escape was through the shingled roof. A ventilator also served as an avenue to freedom, and slim fellows occasionally availed themselves of it. Escapes were so frequent that it had to be patroled, and the cost of guarding, and supplies to the jail, made it an expensive institution.

There is frequent mention in the county records of money paid for guarding the jail, and one entry, dated December 1, 1871, states that the bond of T. Redmond, who is to watch the jail at sixty dollars a month, is approved.

During 1869 many houses were erected, and although somewhat scattered over the still open prairie, it was evident that the industry and frugality of railroad employes, and the ever increasing traffic on the road, would, in course of time, make North Platte

a place of importance. Many doubted this, but wise ones whose faith was well founded, secured town lots and land in the vicinity, and turned a deaf ear to pessimists, and today, several in their old age benefit by such investments.

Like other frontier towns, North Platte was infested by toughs and tramps who beat their way from place to place on the railroad, and assaults and holdups were so frequent, that leading citizens got together and organized a Vigilent committee to which was assigned the duty of ridding the city of undesirable characters. Undersirables selected were notified by a letter containing a rude drawing of a skull and cross bones, and a piece of rope with a noose. The postoffice at that time was on Front Street; and the late R. J. Wyman, was the postmaster. He frequently found such letters in the mails, and the parties to whom they were addressed, generally left town hurriedly.

On the first of January, 1870, a newspaper called the Platte Valley Independent appeared in the city, and the editor in its columns denounced the Vigilants for being over vigilant, and going too far with their system of intimidation. It is related

that this editor, when asked about the circulation of his paper, said, "My paper goes every where, and it is as much as I can do to keep it from going to h—l." It did not go there, however, but to Grand Island after running one year in North Platte and has been published in that city ever since as the Grand Island Independent.

Up to 1870, there was not a church in town, but in that year, the Baptists, who had affiliated and worshipped together in private houses, appealed to the citizens for aid to build one, and the handsome sum of eight hundred and fifty dollars was subscribed. This church was erected on the lot occupied by the Oddfellows' Hall, but was removed to its present site on Fifth street in 1874.

Unfortunately, the records of this church are lost, but it is safe to state that its members were never numerous, and that it has had many pastors; and for many years, a struggling existence. At present it is fairly prosperous.

When the Rev. R. B. Favoright, the present pastor, was inducted, there were but sixty-eight members, twenty-two of them being non-resident. This was discouraging, but by close application and zeal, he has

succeeded in the four years of his pastorate in increasing the number of adherents to one hundred and sixty; only thirty-nine being non-resident.

This congregation purchased the Unitarian property, corner of Fourth and Locust streets, at a cost of $3,000, and expect to build a church edifice on the site of what was at one time, the Unitarian Hall; the locally historic building having fallen into decay.

Before coming to North Platte, Mr. Favoright was stationed at Berwick, Ill., for nigh on three years. He is a native of Indiana; being born in that state in 1873. Acquiring a taste for the ministry in early manhood, he entered Shurtleff College, Upper Alton, Ill., in 1895, and in seven years, graduated. He was ordained at Atlanta, Ill., in August, 1903, and served as student pastor of different churches for six years.

The building of this, the first church in town, was much appreciated, and the Commissioners, in an endeavor to reduce the number of saloons, increased the fee for a liquor license from twenty-five to fifty dollars.

Many needed improvements were suggested to

the commissioners, among them the necessity for a bridge over the South Platte river, the only bridge at the time being that of the railroad. The mode of crossing the North and South rivers was by fords, and the task at times was perilous. A ford of the South Platte much used by persons going to, or coming from Fort McPherson was below the present bridge; and many a wild ride drunken soldiers and cowboys had across it. One soldier named Thomas Casey, in his eagerness to cross, when the river was in flood, was drowned.

After much deliberation, the Commissioners at a meeting held in March, 1870, ordered a special election to vote $30,000 in bonds for the purpose of bridging the South Platte river near town. The election was held, the bonds voted, and Wells, French & Co. of Chicago awarded the contract to build a pile bridge, which they did to their own satisfaction. J. B. Park surveyed a road from the Union Pacific Hotel to where the bridge is, and from thence to Fort McPherson, and from it to a point known as Bent's ranch. A. J. Miller and John Hornby were County Commissioners at the time, and sketched a design for the bridge bond warrants. It was sent to J. W. Mid-

dleton, Lithographer, Chicago, to be printed from, but Lincoln County had no standing, and he would do no work for it unless paid in currency; Mr. Miller, however, had faith in the county, and paid the required $105.50, and accepted a warrant for his pay. The first offer the Commissioners had for bridge warrants was seventy cents on the dollar, but afterwards, seventy-seven cents was procured, and the Wells, French Company accepted them at that, and went on with the building of the bridge.

A bridge east of town was equally requisite, and the Commissioners applied to S. H. Clark, assistant superintendent of the Union Pacific Railroad to find upon what terms their bridge could be used by the general public. They were informed that the use of the bridge for highway travel could be had for three years, with the privilege of five, for the consideration of fifteen hundred dollars in Lincoln County warrants. The terms were accepted by the Commissioners, and thus approaches to the city from south and east were secured.

Parties frequently came from the eastern states, to hunt buffalo, getting off the cars at North Platte and making their headquarters there or at Fort Mc-

Pherson. When the Indians were peaceable, soldiers had leisure and often accompanied hunting parties, or went on their own account. In the fall of 1870, a grand hunt was projected by General Sheridan for the entertainment of James Gordon Bennett, of the New York Herald; General Anson Stager of the Western Union Telegraph Company; Charles Wilson, editor of the Chicago Evening Journal and other distinguished men of the period. They hunted round North Platte for a time, but went to Fort McPherson where they were received by a company of cavalry under General Embory, Major Brown and Buffalo Bill. They had an extended hunt to the south where buffaloes were abundant, and where they met with great success.

Many hunters went after buffalo then, with no other object than wanton slaughter, but others hunted for profit as well as sport. Hunting parties of citizens and soldiers often went after buffalo and returned from the chase rejoicing.

It was in December, 1870, that such a party, officered by Colonel Lieb, Major Urbain and Lieutenant Thomas of the Fort, and Lieutenant Tracy of the Post, returned from a foray with the spoils. In

a day and a half they killed fifty buffaloes, of which Buffalo Bill brought down thirty-three. They had six wagon loads of hams which were divided, the share of the Post being twenty.

Little wonder that the noble Bison is exterminated, and that the buffalo hunter was succeeded by the hunter of buffalo bones.

Lynching is not an inviting subject, but as one took place at the railroad bridge and another in town February, 1870, they cannot very well be omitted in these associations of North Platte. It was considered that the Vigilants had been fairly successful in ridding the town of undesirable individuals, but when a section foreman named O'Keif was held up by two men armed with revolvers and robbed of some ninety odd dollars at the depot of the Union Pacific Railway in presence of the Company's watchman; and that some time during the same night, the McLucas jewelry store was broken into and robbed, it was evident that some had been overlooked. This burglary seems to have been well planned and neatly executed, as nothing was found in or about the premises to give the least clue to the perpetrators. Nathan Russell was sheriff at the time, and Major

William Woodhurst deputy, and they were as anxious as any that the burglars be apprehended and punished.

A simple incident often leads to the detection of crime, and the finding of a tray that jewelers display their wares in, which McLucas claimed as having belonged to him, gave ground for the supposition that the burglars had dropped it while going east by a circuitous route. It was known that some tough characters had taken up their abode in an abandoned dobie or sod shack near the railroad bridge, and the sheriff and his deputy went to interview them. On their way they met a man carrying a bundle and searched him, but he made it evident that he was in no way connected with either robbery. When the dobie was reached, the sheriffs entered, and finding it occupied by two men, disarmed them and put them under arrest, Mr. Woodhurst telling them that his companion was sheriff and he deputy, and as a robbery had been committed, they had come to search the place. "All right," said one, "we know nothing of a robbery, and have no hand in this one." They searched, but found nothing to criminate the men. Not satisfied they decided to detain the pris-

oners and marching them to town placed them in jail, returning afterwards they searched more thoroughly, and found the stolen jewelry under a board buried in the sand. Letters were also found, which showed that the men in custody belonged to an organized gang of thieves. When the sheriffs returned to town and announced that the jewelry had been found, great excitement prevailed. The Vigilants met in the log school house to discuss the situation, and agreed to proceed to the bridge and investigate, and if possible find the companion of the men in jail, who, as they stated, had gone hunting. Followed by a crowd, they proceeded along the track to the bridge and found the dobie unoccupied. Soon a man was seen coming across the bridge, who, upon being threatened, said they were the men who robbed the jewlry store. Not satisfied, the questioners insisted that he tell all he knew about them. The terrified wretch did so expecting to be released, but the mob was excited, and like all mobs, unreasonable, and on the assumption that he was one of the gang, a rope was produced; an end flung over the limb of a Cottonwood tree near the river, and in a brief space the victim of mob violence dangled in air.

Satisfied with what was accomplished, the crowd returned to town intent upon getting the two men confined in jail. Finding this to be no easy matter, Judge Daugherty was seen, and induced to hold court at six in the evening, and give the supposed robbers a preliminary examination.

A board building east of the jail served for a court room at that time. Court being opened with the usual formality the prisoners were brought in. The room was packed, and a mob had gathered outside, the proceedings were watched with interest. Evidence given, proved them guilty of the robbery, and it soon became evident that many on the outside were anxious to lay hold of the prisoners. When the trial was about concluded, the lights were suddenly extinguished, and the same instant the prisoners were seized and dragged to the street, and one that resisted was brutally beaten on the head with the butt of a revolver. A leading business man with a rope in one hand and a revolver in the other led the way to a telegraph pole to the east of the jail followed by an orderly, but determined crowd. One of the prisoners made a dash for liberty, running, as only a desperate man would, in the direction of the South

Platte river, and although pursued and shot at, escaped. The other prisoner, a powerful dark visaged man, neither pleaded or flinched, but walked with a firm step, and when the rope was being placed round his neck, growled, "If you are going to hang me, make a good job of it, and don't hang me like a dog." He was hanged, and it is said the object lesson proved beneficial, for many toughs climbed on trains and got out of town.

As already stated, Major William Woodhurst was deputy sheriff at the time of these lynchings. He kindly furnished the main facts in the foregoing account of the disgraceful affairs. He got into communication with the father of the last victim of local lynch law, and forwarded to him the personal effects of his son, whose end did not greatly surprise him, for seemingly, a bad boy had developed into a bad man.

It is said that the body of the man lynched in town was taken to Fort McPherson by an army surgeon for dissection and that the body of the man lynched at the bridge was secured by local doctors for the same purpose, and that in ripping the clothes off, a belt around the waist contained several hun-

dreds of dollars in bills was found. The late Dr. F. N. Dick was well versed in local lore, and when speaking of these lynchings, would say that the story about dissecting was possibly correct, but he had his doubts about money being found.

The culprit who escaped from the lynchers and ran towards the South river was supposed to have gotten away, but some weeks after the lynchings, a cowboy informed Deputy Sheriff Woodhurst that he had found the body of a man near Fremont Slough. Upon investigation, it was found to be that of the escaped prisoner. Dr. Dick, who examined the body, said, the man had been shot through the arm and had bound the wound with a handkerchief, but the wound was slight, and not sufficient to cause death; but having forded the river in his terror and fear of pursuit, he had been so chilled that he succumbed and died from exposure.

Several who took an active part in these lynchings are dead, and others have moved away, but he who placed the rope round the neck of one of the victims, lives, and bitterly regrets that he got mixed up in the disgraceful affair.

The tree at the bridge upon which the unfortun-

ate man was lynched, despite his pleading, has long since disappeared, but it was looked at with superstitious awe by many for it was supposed that a curse clings to a tree upon which a man has been hanged, and that it withers and dies.

CHAPTER V.

Indians steal horses.—Soldiers give chase—Kate Manning murder. —Her brother arrested.—A mob at the jail.—Soldiers called.—Brick making.—First brick buildings.—The old grave yard.—Hinman remains. —The new cemetery.—Col J. B. Park dies.—The Episcopal church and history.—The Unitarian Hall and associations.—Grasshoppers. —St. Patrick's church and pastors.—The parsonage burns.

Indians seldom hesitated to appropriate the property of white settlers when the prospect of escaping with the booty was favorable.

On a Sunday morning in March, 1871, the late M. C. Keith had thirteen head of horses grazing between the section house and the Cody residence, when, to the surprise of witnesses, eight Indians rode furiously toward the herd, rounded it up, and drove westward at a rapid pace. An alarm was given, and

as soon as Major Brown, who was stationed at the Post with a company of the Fifth Cavalry was informed, he ordered his men out and gave chase; but the Indians, having a good start were seen far ahead, apparently making for a ford of the North river about seven miles from town. When the soldiers reached the ford, the Indians were disappearing in the hills with the stolen horses. Nothing daunted, the pursuers followed until darkness hid the trail. A fall of snow completely covered it by morning, and Major Brown gave up the chase and returned with his men, all hungry and tired.

On the afternoon of the day on which the horses were driven off, three Indians and a squaw came to town from a camp of ninety lodges camped on the Republican near Blackwood Creek, and asked for traders, stating that they had five hundred robes, and that Red Cloud and Spotted Tail and all Indians except the Winnebagos are going down there if they can get permits; and that buffalo blacken the prairie from near North Platte, to Smoky Hill fork. They were asked about the morning raid, and said that three days ago they came upon a camp of eight Winnebagos who had mistreated them the previous win-

ter, and they had no doubt that they were the Indians that ran off the horses. There was every possibility of their story being correct, but the horses were never recovered. In this narrative we have a glimpse of the wilds of Lincoln County during the early seventies and the buffalo that blackened the prairie.

"The guilty fleeth when no man pursueth," so many loafers with no visible means of earning a livelihood, impressed by the significance of the lynchings got out of town, and people began to go round at all hours without fear of being molested. This tranquility, however, did not last long, for, on the morning of April 9, 1871, a young woman named Kate Manning was found dead on the claim she had been holding down, a little southeast of town. It was evidently a murder, but as Kate was well known and respected, and had no enemies, the question was, who committed the deed? Major William Woodhurst was sheriff at the time and he speedly had the case in hand. To find a clew, the ground about the tent or shanty was examined, and footprints in soft soil evidently made by some one wearing a peculiar shoe were observed. Kate's brother Pete, who kept a sa-

loon on Front Street, had a deformed foot, and he was arrested on suspicion and placed in jail. Being of a happy disposition, and a general favorite, no one believed him capable of committing such a deed; however, he had threatened to "jump" his sister's claim, and this and other circumstances wove a net of circumstantial evidence around him. The shoe he wore on his deformed foot was found to fit the impression in the soft soil so neatly that he was accused of the murder. Lynching was openly spoken of, and a mob of some 300 citizens assembled in front of the jail. Leaders of the previous mob were on hand, and one of them— a then prominent citizen, but now dead— walked up to the door and knocked. Mrs. Woodhurst opened it and asked what was wanted. Being told they wanted admittance to the room in which Pete Manning was confined, she said Mr. Woodhurst was from home, but a well armed deputy was inside prepared to protect the prisoner, and if any one enters the jail he would do so at his own risk. Mrs. Woodhurst's calm demeanor surprised the crowd, and with true American politeness, a deference was shown the feminine defender that would not have been accorded the sheriff or his deputy. At this stage, an-

other leader stepped forward and said: "We do not wish any one hurt, but we are going to get Manning." "If you want Manning," Mrs. Woodhurst replied, "get him in a legal way; but I think you had better go home to your wife, for I know she never would sanction you leading a mob." With this admonition she went inside, closing and bolting the door.

In the meantime Sheriff Woodhurst returned and comprehending the situation, went to the Commander of the Post and asked for a guard to protect the jail. This was granted, and the leaders of the mob changed their tactics and presented a petition asking him to turn Manning over to them, and censuring him for protecting a murderer. His reply to this was, that being sheriff it was his duty to protect the prisoner, and he would do so. Not to be foiled and lest Manning should be spirited away, the citizens put a guard at the jail to prevent him being removed without their knowledge. This state of affairs continued for five days, to the annoyance of Major Brown and the sheriff, but the sheriff was equal to the occasion, and procuring a soldier's uniform caused Manning to put it on in the morning and march to the Post with the guard when it was relieved. The scheme worked, and

in this way he was taken to Fort McPherson guarded by soldiers, to be kept until called for.

The Vigilants soon discovered that the prisoner was gone and where he had been taken to, and sent a committee to Fort McPherson to wait on General Embory and demand the surrender of Manning. When the general was informed of their mission, he told them that he would give them ten minutes to get off the reservation, and they did so without demonstrance. When a week had passed, Sheriff Woodhurst went to the fort and brought Manning to North Platte and put him in jail, but there was no further trouble, the excitement having subsided.

Manning had a hearing and stoutly maintained his innocence, declaring that he was in no way connected with the murder of his sister. Circumstantial evidence, was strongly against him and he was committed for trial, but owing to local prejudice was granted change of venue to Grand Island. After a trial that lasted several days, he was acquitted and returned to North Platte, financially and physically ruined, and after a seige of ill health, died within three years.

Manning's bar-tender was suspected of being

implicated in the murder, or having a guilty knowledge of it, and although arrested and examined there was no evidence to connect him with the crime, and he was turned loose. The citizens, however, were not satisfied, and the Vigilants waylaid him and tried to induce him to make a confession, and to emphasize the request, produced a rope and used him roughly, but to no purpose. Although threatened with death, he denied all knowledge of the crime, and maintained that he knew nothing about the guilt or innocence of "Pete" Manning; where he was, or what he did on the night of the murder. If he knew, he kept his own council, and who murdered Kate Manning remains an unsolved mystery.

The Manning incident past, quietness and order again reigned in the city. Houses were built at intervals, mostly by Railroad men; for to their frugality, the phenomenal growth of North Platte is mainly due.

The cost of building material greatly retarded the erection of homes. The making of brick from clay found in the neighborhood of the city had been thought of and tried, but with no great success; yet, on April 17, 1872, A. M. Oliver, then road supervisor,

appeared before the Commissioners and proposed to burn a kiln of one hundred thousand brick made of clay found near town, and to test its capability, asked them to advance him the sum of two hundred and twenty-five dollars. Said brick, he averred, could be profitably made and delivered for fifteen dollars a thousand. The Commissioners did not comply with the request, but promised to take it into consideration. The result was, they concluded to offer a reward of five hundred dollars for the first five thousand good merchantable brick made of clay found in the vicinity of North Platte. On May 31, 1873, A. T. Gillet appeared before the Commissioners and claimed the reward. To quote from the County Records: "The Commissioners and many citizens having gone and examined the kiln of brick burnt by A. H. Gillet, was fully satisfied that said brick are as good as are made in the State of Nebraska, and the Commissioners order that said A. H. Gillet be paid the $500 reward for making the first 5,000 merchantable brick in the county."

The first brick house in the city was built by A. H. Gillet, and still stands on the corner of East 4th and Pine streets, and after its erection brick began

to be used as building material to a degree that changed the architectural features of the city; all stores, public buildings and a few residences being constructed of the material. The Smallwoods, Wilkinsons and others, tried to make brickmaking a business, but owing to the cost of fuel and the difficulty to find proper clay it could not be made profitable, and the making of brick is now a vanished local industry.

In the early seventies, dwelling houses were somewhat scattered, but none of them were far from Front Street. The corner of 4th and Locust Streets at that time was on the outskirt of town, and there North Platte's first burying ground was spread out. It extended south into the lot now occupied by the Peniston house and west beyond the old home of Joseph McConnell. There was a number of unmarked graves, but a few were indicated by small memorial stones and boards; and as late as 1881 several remained, but the street grader swept them away, and the traffic on Fourth Street rumbles over the remains of persons whose identity is forgotten. In digging a trench for a main pipe in 1887, waterworks workmen unearthed human bones and pieces of cof-

fins, and, it is affirmed, the bodies of two soldiers who probably died at the Post; and in digging a cellar on the McConnell lot, a much decayed coffin containing bones was found ,and Fred Marti frequently found remnants of mortality under the soil near his dwelling.

Old residents fail to remember when this burying ground began to be, but undoubtedly, like other frontier towns, some one had to get killed before a graveyard could be started ,and this one, according to A. J. Miller, had its beginning in like manner. It seems that early in 1867, a would be bad man got crazy drunk, and flourishing his revolver endeavored to find trouble. Failing, he threw it on the ground which it no sooner hit than it exploded and killed him. That this man was the first buried there, is possibly correct, but at least two "old timers" affirm that there were graves there when he was buried and they were supposed to be of persons murdered by Indians, and travelers who died on the way when going west in search of wealth. Be that as it may, it is said that many men lie there who died with their boots on in days when every man carried a revolver and was not slow to use it when fired by pas-

sion and whisky. That the people of North Platte buried their dead there is well known, and also that a few bodies were moved to the new cemetery when the town began to encroach.

Probably the last person buried in the old burying ground was a prominent Free Mason named Richard Ormsby who died at Fort McPherson on the 11th of January, 1870, and was interred the follow- the day with Masonic Honors.

The funeral was the largest ever seen in North Platte, there being one hundred and twenty-five present. The funeral services were conducted by the Rev. Rees of Fort McPherson, and at their conclusion the Free Masons engaged in their solemn ceremony.

It is stated in the County Records that a deputation waited on the Commissioners and asked them to have the bodies in the old graveyard exhumed and buried elsewhere, but after giving the request due consideration, they concluded they had no jurisdiction.

An increasing population soon made a cemetery beyond the city limits an absolute necessity, and a meeting of citizens was held on December 13, 1872, to talk the matter over. The result was that Jona-

than Rogers was elected temporary chairman; R. C. Daugherty, secretary, and B. I. Hinman, treasurer. Matters being so far arranged, another meeting was held on June 13, 1873, and at it the North Platte Cemetery Association was organized, and an arrangement made that five acres of land be purchased from Franklin Peale at twenty dollars an acre, and that the purchase money draw ten per cent interest until paid. Also, that the price of double lots in the cemetery be twenty dollars, and single ones ten.

John F. Kramph was the first man buried in the new cemetery, and Kate Manning the first woman. Mr. Kramph is remembered as being diligent, and of a genial sympathetic disposition. Kate had many friends, and her tragic and untimely death evoked much sympathy. A marble slab erected to her memory, states that she "died May 9th, 1871, aged 27 years, 10 months and 15 days" Her grave was long attended to and kept neat, but it is now forgotten, covered with rank grass, and the slab lies broken into.

In August, 1884, the Association purchased ten acres of land adjoining the cemetery from Mrs. W. F.

Cody to make a much needed extension, as the repository of the city's dead was slowly but surely becoming inadequate.

At this date, the cemetery presents a somewhat bleak appearance, having been swept by prairie fires on several occasions. There are many tasteful memorial stones and neatly kept graves, but the neglected and forgotten predominate.

The cemetery books were long kept without method or order, and on this account, the number of interments is unknown, but since they came into the hands of George French, entries are made in a way that the identity of persons buried can be ascertained, and their graves located.

It was on June 27, 1873, that the eyes of Col. Josiah B. Park, a popular pioneer citizen, were closed in everlasting sleep after a somewhat eventful and arduous life. He was born April 1, 1831, and served in the Fourth Michigan Cavalry ,and saw much active service during the war of the rebellion, and it is supposed that his death was accelerated by wounds he then received.

He came to Omaha with his family in August, 1866, and soon thereafter procured surveying con-

tracts from the Government. The pursuit of his profession brought him to western Nebraska, and it is said that in his time he drove corner stakes for nearly every section in Lincoln and adjacent counties; and that one day he stepped out on a bluff overlooking "The Points" and unexpectedly beheld the waters of the North and South Platte rivers meet and mingle, and a long stretch of the Platte Valley in all its primitive beauty. He was a lover of Nature, and the scene so impressed him that he longed to locate in it, or in its immediate vicinity, and at once began to seek a location, and this is what induced him to homestead land in the immediate vicinity of North Platte as narrated in the second chapter. Like most men, he had hobbies, and his chief one was irrigation. This he put to the best by conveying water by ditch to his claim from the South Platte river, and demonstrated that crops could be successfully grown on the then arid soil of Nebraska by the application of moisture.

He was accomplished in many ways, and had a taste for literature as well as for agriculture. He issued the "Lincoln County Advertiser," a successful newspaper that held the field for some time, but

surveying was his forte, and his services were often called for by the Government, the Union Pacific Railway Company and the County.

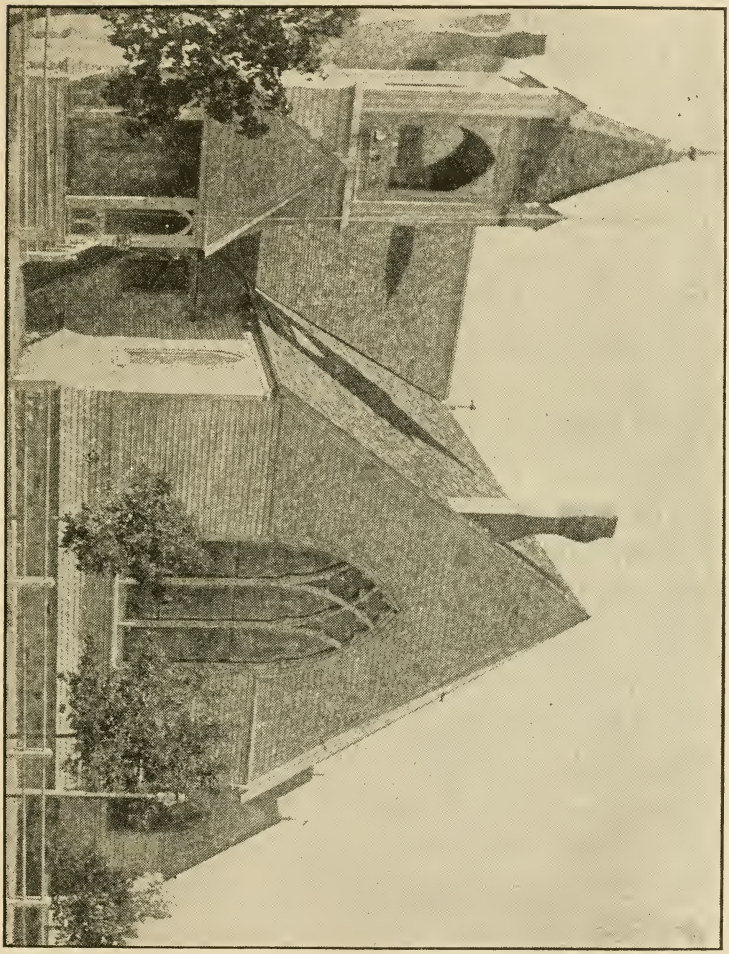
He left a widow and two children, a boy about thirteen, and a girl about twelve who died. The boy, William Lee Park, went braking out of North Platte at the early age of sixteen. He worked diligently, saving what he could from his earnings until he got sufficient money to enable him to take a course at Baylie's Commercial College at Keokuk, Iowa. At the age of eighteen he was promoted to freight conductor, and at twenty-two was permanently assigned a like position on a passenger train. All along he made railroading a study, and labored assiduously to master its intricacy. At thirty, he was appointed Assistant Superintendent of the Union Pacific Railway at North Platte, and in 1900 was given charge of the Wyoming division, and in February, 1904, was made General Superintendent. At this date, 1910, he is Vice President of the Illinois Central Railway; and such is the remarkable career of a North Platte boy whose only capital was confidence in himself and the diligent discharge of duties assigned him.

The Episcopalians built a small frame church on

West Fourth street in 1873, when the district was sparsely built up. This church was moved in 1892, and replaced by the present building, which is somewhat imposing in appearance. Internally, it is compact and neat, and the stained glass windows with which it is adorned, shed a hallowed light. The most conspicuous is one to the memory of Susan C. Keith, a founder of the parish, who died September 23, 1877; and another over the altar, to the memory of John McNamara, D. D., a former rector, who died, October 24, 1885, aged sixty years.

Dr. McNamara entered upon his duties as pastor of this church September 21, 1884, and ministered until the time of his death. He was highly esteemed, and under his care, the parish prospered. He was born in County Down, Ireland, December 27, 1825. He served during the civil war in the First Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, and was afterwards assistant rector, Church of the Holy Communion, New York City, and chaplain of St. Luke's Hospital, New York, 1875, and President of Nebraska College, Nebraska City, 1882, previous to coming to North Platte.

This church which bears the name of the Church of Our Saviour, like other churches in the city, had



Episcopal Church, North Platte.

its beginning in the harmony of beliefs and ideas, which in some way influence people to combine and worship together, as will be seen from the following excerpt from its neatly kept records:

The first services of this church were held by Bishop Clarkson in a room of the Union Pacific Hotel before a missionary was appointed. The dates of these services were about 1869-70.

The Rev. John Lyon, missionary at Grand Island held services during 1870-4, and the families prominently connected with the church, were those of M. C. Keith, Mr. W. J. Patterson, and also Mrs. Mary E. Kramph.

Mr. Patterson and Mr. Richard Rogers were the first wardens, and were appointed, probably in 1872.

The Union Pacific Railroad Company gave the half block of ground on which the church is erected, and a prominent citizen gave Bishop Clarkson fifteen hundred dollars privately, towards the cost of erecting a church building. This fact was made known to Mr. William Patterson by the Rev. John Lyon immediately. Mr. Patterson prepared a subscription paper, and in a few hours secured eight hundred dollars. A pencilling on the wall of vestry

room read as follows: "This church was consecrated by the Right Reverend Robert H. Clarkson on the festival of the Ascension, 1873." Beach I. Hinman, M. C. Keith and William Patterson were amongst those that gave the most liberally. The ladies of the town led by Mrs. M.C. Keith, were untiring in their labors for the church from the first.

Early in the year 1874, the Rev. Frank E. Bullard deacon, was appointed by Bishop Clarkson to take charge of the perish. This registry of official acts began during his pastorship. The last official acts of Mr. Bullard in the parish were done in July, 1879.

During 1880, the Rev. A. J. Graham of Grand Island frequently visited the parish, his visits were highly appreciated. It was during the vacancy of the rectorship, that the ladies led in a movement for a rectory.

Early in the year 1881, the Rev. W. G. Hawkins of central New York was called to the rectorship. The people became very earnest in church work. Mrs Mary Nichols, Miss Mollie Keith and Mr. H. N. Jones are at this time specially noted. The Ladies' Church Guild accomplished much good. The rectory was completed at a cost of about $3,000. The

ladies securing at least $1,000, Mrs. Mary Nichols bestowing much necessary furniture.

The Clarkson school was set on foot—the building cost $800.

In February, 1882, a great desire was expressed that the Rev. A. J. Graham might be secured to take the rectorship, the Rev. W G. Hawkins having resigned, but his health would not allow him to accept.

The parish remained vacant from February, 1882, until the following October, when the Rev. Alexander Allen of Dorcas, Toronto, Canada, was called. Mr. Allen resigned at Easter, 1883. The parish remained vacant from the latter date, until September, 1884, when John McNamara, D. D. was called. The parish was very prosperous under his care, but on October 24, 1885, he died suddenly from a stroke of paralysis. The Rev. John H. Babcock of Red Oak, Iowa, accepted the call, and entered upon his duties, December 23, 1885, and resigned, May 26, 1886, having been sent by the bishop to take charge of the work at Sidney, Nebraska.

The parish continued without service until November 6, when the Rev. John M. Bates of Topeka, Kansas, at the invitation of Bishop Worthington, as-

sumed charge of the parish, on November 15. He received and accepted a call to take charge of St. Paul's Mission in the city of Omaha. At the bishop's suggestion, and invitation of the vestry, the Rev. George Grimes spent the month of September 1888, in ministering to the parish, and accepted a call to the rectorship at a salary of $1000 per annum, together with the use of the rectory, and entered upon his duties. He found almost sixty communicants. Frequent and long vacancies in the rectorship had left matters in a disorganized state, and the people more or less scattered, but lively interest induced them to draw together. A large guild of ladies was formed, and work began immediately and the rectory was repaired and put in a satisfactory condition for occupancy.

A Sunday school was organized with sixteen pupils in September, 1888, and by Easter day, 1890, they numbered sixty-five, and the parish was in a united and flourishing condition. Since that time, the Episcopal church has been progressive, and a moral influence in the city. It has had several able and popular rectors who have aided to build up a congregation that includes many prominent families.

Presently, 1910, there are 250 communicants, and 220 scholars attending two Sunday schools connected with the church.

The present rector, the Rev. C. F. Chapman, B. A. B. D., was appointed to the charge October 13, 1905. Mr. Chapman was born at Piedmont, West Virginia, on the 17th of April, 1872, where his father, the late Ephraim Chapman, practiced medicine but afterwards removed with his parents to Keyser, W. V., where he spent his boyhood. When ten years old, his father died, and his mother, himself, and three other children were reft of a loving protector. After the bereavement, Mrs. Chapman and children lived with her father, Mr. John Russell of Berlin, Pennsylvania, where Mr. Chapman graduated from the public school and acquired a trade. Being of a studious disposition and cultured mind, he took a preliminary course, and entering college at Dealware, Ohio, graduated in 1895 with the degree of B. A., and after spending three years at Bexley Theological school, was ordained to the deaconate, and in 1899, to the priesthood of the Episcopal church; and shortly thereafter was appointed rector of Emmanual church, Cincinnati, Ohio, and coming to Nebraska,

assumed charge of Christ Church, Central City, May 1 1902, and the same year, married Miss Carry Garlick, of Cincinnati.

The snug parsonage, adjacent to the church, is occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Chapman and their three healthful children. Mr. Chapman is justly popular, and esteemed by his congregation and the general public.

It is safe to state that the Rev. George A. Beecher, who was rector of this church for eight years, was the most popular clergyman, in and out of the church the town ever had. He was born at Monmouth, Illinois, in 1868, and came with his parents to Kearney, Nebraska, when fourteen years old. He attended the University of Nebraska from 1886 to 1889, and then the Divinity school at Philadelphia, graduating in 1892. He was ordained to the deaconic in 1892, and went to Fort Sidney, where he was stationed until 1895. Being ordained to the priesthood, he was called to the pastorate of the Church of Our Saviour, and from this charge was transferred to St. Luke's church, Kearney, and from thence to Omaha in 1904 as dean of Trinity Cathedral. In that city he distinguished himself as a leading sociologist;

for in every field of charitable work among the poor, and in every endeavor to improve their condition, and rescue children from paths of vice and crime, Dean Beecher was active. In October, 1910, he was appointed bishop of Kearney, an honor, universally conceded, he well merits.

Up to 1873, North Platte had no hall or suitable place in which to hold meetings or entertainments, and the few Unitarians who had gathered round Mrs. E. J. Cogswell, a missionary of the faith, concluded to erect a building that would serve for a public hall and place of worship This they did at a cost of $3,300, and it became known as the Unitarian hall. It still stands, battered and weatherworn at the corner of West Fourth and Locust streets, and has passed through many vicissitudes. Unitarianism was never popular in North Platte, and the consequence was, that adherants were few, and funds scant. The American Unitarian association gave liberal financial aid, and sent several pastors in an endeavor to establish a church, but limited audiences and an uncertain salary were not encouraging and none of them remained long. This small body of christians struggled along for years, some times with a pastor

but more often without, until it became almost extinct. Archibald R. Adamson endeavored to rally local Unitarians who had become indifferent, and succeeded in keeping a congregation together for a lengthened period, but he was the last to conduct services in the hall under the Unitarian banner, for dissention caused disruption, and in 1902 the property got into the hands of a very few who sold it and appropriated the money. It was by Mrs. Cogswell's unwearied zeal that money was raised to pay for the building, and it is questionable if they who profited by the sale ever contributed a cent. The parties in that deal will doubtless feel small when they meet Mrs. Cogswell "in the sweet by and by," for it was a poor requital for her devotion and labor.

As already stated, Mrs. E. J. Cogswell came to North Platte in 1868 and organized the first Sunday school. She afterwards engaged in teaching and missionary work, and held religious meetings before there were any resident ministers. She also taught music and singing, and performed funeral services in the absence of a clergyman, and was first and foremost in all enterprises for the improvement of the people. Many friends in the east were inter-

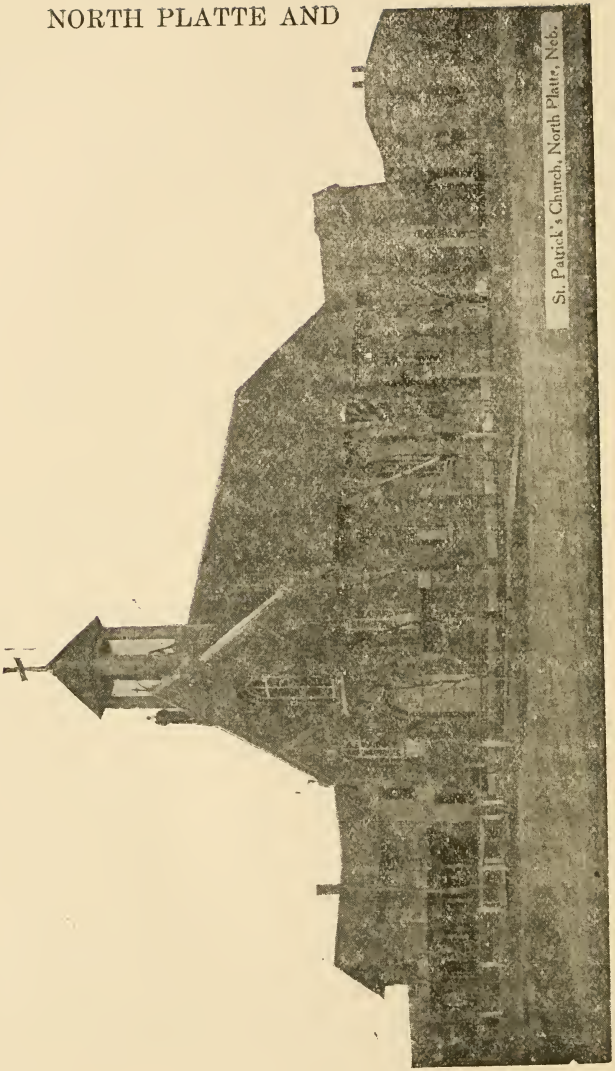
ested in her work, and contributed books for her Sunday school, money for the support of the church, and clothing for destitute families. She was always planning to help the uniortunate and suffering, and ready to render service to others. Owing to failing health, she returned to her early home in Lexington, Massachusetts, and after two years of feebleness, died on the 23rd of July, 1897. Her devotion to the Unitarian faith continued to the last, and it is to be regretted that the latter days of her life were embittered by the knowledge that her work at North Platte was a failure.

1874 is memorable as the year of the first grasshopper plague in Nebraska. The pest came in clouds and ate up every green thing. The grasshoppers covered the ground to a depth of from two to three inches, and on occasions the Union Pacific railway trains were stopped, the moisture from the crushed bodies of the hoppers on the rails causing wheels to slip. This visitation caused great destitution amongst farmers and homesteaders, and in response to an appeal for aid to the ever generous American people, food and clothing were sent from the east to Nebraska and neighboring states. In 1875 the plague

was not so virulent, but in 1876, grasshoppers clouded the sky and obscured the sun; trees being stripped of leaves the prairie of grass and crops devoured. Again destitution ensued, and again a generous public responded to an appeal for aid.

In the fall of 1875, the Knights of Pythias erected a two-story building for a hall which was much admired at the time, but it has undergone many internal changes, and the Knights are no longer a popular order in North Platte.

No body of christians are so attached to their church as Catholics, and no clergy so devoted and self-sacrificing as theirs. Early in 1867 when North Platte was remote, and far from civilization, Father Ryan of Columbus came and sought out Catholics and celebrated mass in a sod house west of the depot, and a gentleman who was present states that he believed it to have been the first mass celebrated in the district. Afterwards, he came at intervals and officiated until the appointment of Father Lynch in 1875. Father Lynch was the first resident priest, and it was mainly through his exertion that St. Patrick's church, a neat frame building, was erected. In 1880, he was succeeded by Father Conway, and it was during the



St. Patrick's Church, North Platte, Neb.

Rev. Conway's incumbency that the frame church was removed and the present brick church and parsonage built at a cost of $10,000. Several clergymen have succeeded the Rev. Conway, notably, Fathers O. Tool, Fitzgerald, McCarthy and Haley. The present incumbent is the Rev. Steven F. Carrol. The old frame church, converted into a school, stands near the new church.

In 1879 the parsonage caught fire and came near being consumed. There was no fire brigade in those days. When a fire occurred the Union Pacific shop whistle blew and everybody grabbed a bucket or other utensil and ran, and in brief space every pump in the neighborhood was brought into requisition. This fire was valiently fought and extinguished, but not before great damage was done and the building rendered untenantable. The Rev. Burns was officiating at the church at the time, and resided at the home of Mrs. Dwyer on Front street until repairs were made, and received the care and attention the delicate state of his health required.

Next to the Dwyer home was a notorious saloon kept by two burly Irishmen named Brady which was a resort of cowboys and the rough element of the

town. The cowboys would often ride up and down in front of the saloon, and by whoops, yells and firing revolvers in the air, render night hidious. People thought little of this, but the Rev. Burns being sick, the kindly heart of Mrs. Dwyer sympathised with him, and fearing the unusual noise of a particular night disturbed her patient, she went into the saloon and asked the Brady's to induce "the boys" to quiet down. They blankly refused. "Have you no respect for the clergy?" she asked. "We have," said they, "but we will not have our business interfered with." Mrs. Dwyer informed the invalid of her interview with the Brady's, and he languidly said, "Never mind Mrs. Dwyer, the green grass will grow on the place where their saloon now stands." And so it came to pass. The Brady's did not live a great while after, and where their saloon stood is now a blue grass lawn.

Mrs. Dwyer was a benevolent, kind-hearted soul, but she now rests in our cemetery with other pioneers.

At that time, the Union Pacific shops being unusually busy, industrious workmen prospered, and the town continued to grow.

CHAPTER VI.

First Mayor and City Council.—Court House built.—Second city election.—Women debarred from saloons.—First grading of streets.—Third city election.—James Belton elected mayor—Condition of city streets.—North Side in 1878.—An Indian scare.— Presbyterian church history.—The town goes dry.—First sidewalks.—Keith block and its associations. — McDonald block and first bank in city.—The M. E. church and its pastors.

There were two factions in North Platte in 1874. One held that the simple method of early days by which the city was governed was satisfactory, and the other, that it would be moreso if a mayor and city council elected by the people conducted local affairs. Details of the controversy being of little importance at this date, it is sufficient to state that North Platte had the population and standing at the time to entitle it to municipal government, and that

the popular party applied for a charter and got it. There was little to attract public attention in those days, and the novelty of a local election caused considerable excitement. Candidates were put forward, an election held, and the following gentlemen chosen to fill city offices: Anthony Ries, mayor; Alexander Struther, treasurer; E. H. Barrett, clerk; A. H. Church, judge; A. Walker, marshal; J. W. LaMunyon, engineer.

Councilmen— First ward, W. J. Patterson, and J. D. Wilson; Second ward, Russell Watts and E. D. Thoelecke; Third ward, Claus Mylander and W. C. Bogue. Anthony Ries took his seat as mayor, April 14, 1875, and presided at the first council meeting held at North Platte. This council had much to contend with, and accomplished little in the way of city improvements during its brief term of office.

Early in 1876 the court house was finished and turned over to the commissioners. It was pronounced a well arranged, imposing building, which it certainly was at the time, but times have changed, and so have the requirements of Lincoln county, and what was never dreamt of, it is now in the heart of the city.

The second election of city officers was held in 1876, and resulted as follows: Anthony Ries, mayor; J. Rogers, treasurer; E. H. Barrett, clerk; W. S. Peniston, police judge; A. L Walker, marshal, J. W. LaMunyon, engineer,

Councilmen— First ward, W. J. Patterson and J. Schatz; Second ward, W. F. Wright and A. J. Miller; Third ward, W. C. Bogue and George F. Snelling.

At the first meeting of this council, the mayor drew attention to the condition of the streets, several being almost impassable after rain, and urged that vice in every form be suppressed. There was ample room for reform, for saloons were numerous, and women of questionable character frequented them, and it was nothing unusual to see cowboys and maidens fair having "a high old time" in such places in full view of passers by. After appointing committees, the mayor selected Bogue, Miller and Schatz to frame "An ordinance to prohibit lewd women from entering or visiting saloons." This was done and approved, and became law January 16, 1877, and no ordinance has been so rigorously enforced or observed, for women are never seen in or around such

places in North Platte.

It was during this council's administration that city streets were first graded, and the first sidewalks and crossings laid down. The members had high aspirations, and had a scheme to beautify the city with a system of irrigation ditches, water to be obtained from the north river, but after careful surveying the city, engineer pronounced the scheme impracticable.

The election of candidates for municipal honors to serve during the year 1877 was spirited, and resulted in the following gentlemen being elected: W. M. Hinman, mayor; J. Rogers, treasurer; E. H. Barrett, clerk; W. S. Peniston, police judge; G. Butterfield, marshal; J. W. LaMunyon, engineer.

Councilmen— First ward, J. Worthley and J. Schatz; Second ward, Charles McDonald and A. Ferguson; Third ward, W. C. Bogue and George Mason.

This council found little money in the treasury, and being unable to make many city improvements were caustically criticised; a petition signed by James Belton and sixty-seven others calling for its "total abrogation" being presented. This petition did not worry the council, for after being read, it

was "laid on the table" and the council went plodding along undeterred until the time came for it to step down and out.

At the somewhat hotly contested election of city officers to serve during the year 1878, James Belton was elected mayor with a majority of 168 votes; T. J. Foley, treasurer; T. Keliher, clerk; A. H. Church, police judge; Samuel Watts, engineer.

Councilmen elected were: First ward, J. Worthly and J. Schatz; Second ward, James Babbitt and Charles McDonald; Third ward, George Mason and Goodale.

When James Belton took his seat as mayor of North Platte, April 15, 1878, the few streets of the city most frequented were in a deplorable condition with mud and filth after rain. A resolution presented to the council in the spring of that year gives a graphic word picture of their appearance. It follows:

"Resolved by Charles McDonald that the present condition of Locust street, between Fourth and Front streets, and of Fifth street, between Locust and the southeast corner of the government post is a standing disgrace to our fair city, being a nuisance that

should be at once abated. Therefore, resolved that the committee on streets and bridges be, and they are hereby authorized, and made their duty to proceed at once and have said streets well repaired by ditches, bridges and putting in cross-walks so that the citizens of our city may be able to travel those streets, and the frog ponds of filthy, stagnent water be dried up."

This resolution was adopted, but it does not appear that it was ever put in force, however, in it we have a glimpse of the city streets as they were in 1878.

There were few dwelling houses on the north side then, but among the residents were W. C. Bogue, S. W. Bye, Clause Mylander, the Frazers and VanDorans. It may be remarked that Mylander planted the first trees on the north side, and that they were a land mark for many years. For a long time there were no other trees, and the scene, east, west and north was uninviting prairie containing many sloughs and marshes difficult to cross, but the council remodled this by having foot bridges built.

During the Belton administration, the Indians got on the warpath, and committed deeds of rapine

in the district no great distance from the city. For home protection, a body of citizens called the North Platte Guards was organized. These patriots were commanded by Major North of Pawnee fame, and had John Bratt for first lieutenant. The mayor and council petitioned Silas Garber, then governor of Nebraska, to send arms, and in due time, 180 rifles with ammunition reached the imperiled city. This scare, like previous ones passed, but the council chamber looked like an arsenal while it lasted and when the rifles were returned, a resolution signed by the mayor, was sent to the governor, thanking him "for his consideration for the lives and property of the citizens of North Platte."

James Belton served the city faithfully as mayor, but at the next election, R. J. Wyman was elected with a majority of 263 votes, and Mr. Belton retired, generously donating his salary to the city.

When R. J. Wyman took his seat as mayor, April 5, 1879, he announced in his inaugural address that he was opposed to all forms of vice in the city, and as liquor was at the root of most evils, its sale within the city limits ought to be suppressed. The majority of the councilmen agreed with him, and despite

reasons given by the minority that a crusade of the kind would be ineffectual, applications for renewals of saloon licenses lay on the table disregarded, and it was "Resolved, that his honor the mayor notify, through the city marshal, all persons engaged in selling intoxicating liquors, that no licenses to sell liquor in North Platte will be granted by the council."

The foregoing resolution became law May 6, 1879, and the town was declared "dry" and it may be remarked that North Platte was the first (supposed to be) "dry" town in the state of Nebraska.

Law in those days was loosely administered and western life too free and easy for saloon keepers to be deterred from selling liquor by any such measure, and they went right along doing business, with the slight difference that beer was called "buttermilk" and sold under that name.

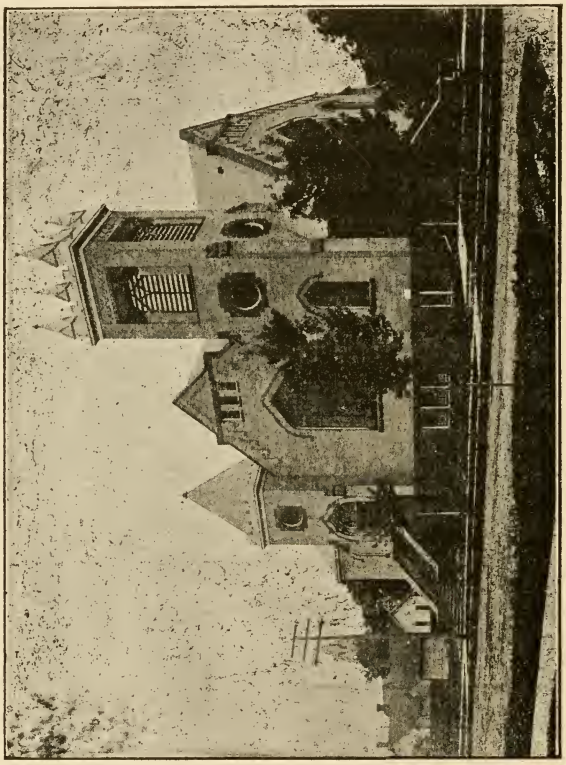
The fact that saloon keepers continued doing business being brought to the attention of council the marshal was ordered to suppress the sale of liquor, and close all houses of prostitution within the city. The order of the council and the marshal were alike unheeded, and matters went on, the mud in the

streets becoming deeper, and pools of stagnant water undiminished.

Although this council's idea of prohibition was somewhat crude, it passed some good measures one being an ordinance to prohibit shooting within the limits of the city, and carrying deadly weapons; also, making the construction of sidewalks compulsory. Such is a glimpse of the doings of the city fathers in days gone by, when North Platte was emerging from the primitive and becoming a fit claimant for a place among the cities of Nebraska.

Persons of the same creed have a tendency to get together and worship in unison. Ten Presbyterians combined in 1873, and at a meeting held in the Baptist church in June of that year, a church was organized by the Rev. N. C. Robinson, superintendent of missions for southwestern Iowa and Nebraska. The congregation worshipped in the Baptist church until the autumn of 1877, and afterwards in the court house hall until the summer of 1878 when it moved into a small frame church built by the congregation. This church stood on the west side of Dewey street on the site now occupied by the Keith theater. In course of time it came to be sandwiched

between much higher buildings and looked the most unpretentious place of worship in town. The congre-



The Presbyterian Church, North Platte.

gation, however, had high aspirations, and in 1905 the sanctuary was moved from shade to sunshine and

placed on the corner of Fourth and Willow streets, and there it remained until the fall of 1909, when it was torn down to make room for the finest church building in the city. It is in the Gothic style and constructed of pressed brick, and has a belfry and tower. The property including lots, is presently valued at $28,000.

The interior of this church is spacious and fitted with every modern convenience. The windows are of brilliant art glass. One portrays Christ in Gethsemanie, and another a luminous picture of "The Creation." A melodiously toned organ that cost $2,500 completes this well arranged place of worship.

This fine sanctuary was dedicated Sunday, June 26, 1910. Dr. Thomas B. Greenlee, a former pastor, preached the sermon, and following the simple ceremony of dedication Dr. W. H. Kearns offered an impressive prayer, and at its conclusion, all understood that the building was set apart for the service of God.

The Rev. George Franklin Williams, M. A., is a son of the late Rev. George Williams, D. D. He received his education in Bellevue college and Princeton Theological Seminary, and did post graduate work in Princeton University. He was ordained by

the Presbytery of Omaha, in September, 1899, at Bancroft, and was inducted to the charge, May 1, 1909. Mr. Williams is a fluent and attractive speaker, and since his settlement, the congregation has increased and become prosperous. During the ten years of his ministry, all of which has been in Nebraska, he has gained a wide acquaintance over the state, and at a meeting of the Presbyterian Synod in October, 1910, was elected moderator. He is, presently, the most popular clergyman in and out of the church the town has known.

Early in 1880, several shacks and a frame building on the corner of Front and Dewey streets in which P. J. Cohn & Company had a clothing store were moved, and on their sites a brick block was built. It was much admired at the time, but it was only the forerunner of similar buildings. "Beache's Bank," as it was termed, was in this building, and the Star clothing house, conducted by the late H. Otten, occupied the corner store room up to May, 1886, when he vacated the premises in favor of the newly organized First National bank which went into business with a paid up capital of $50,000. The upper floor of this building has been transformed sev-

eral times. At first it figured as the Keith hall and was rented for entertainments, but as that did not pay, it was divided into rooms designed for offices. The land office was located in it, and many lawyers procured a precarious livelihood acting for homesteaders in contest cases and such like. The North Platte Telegraph had its birth in one of the rooms in 1881, the redoubtable James McNulty being proprietor and editor. James sold out, September 1st, 1883 and left the city, but the paper survives after many vicissitudes as a daily and weekly.

Early in 1882, Charles McDonald erected the fine brick building on the west corner of Front and Dewey streets and installed therein the McDonald State bank, which is the oldest banking house in town. It began as the McDonald and Walker bank, and was located in a small frame building on Dewey street, but in 1878, Mr. McDonald purchased his partner's interest in the business and carried it on in his own name. In 1891, he bought the imposing building corner at Sixth and Dewey streets, and transferred his bank to the corner room, February 22, 1902, and there the McDonald State Bank prospers.

The North Platte National bank occupied the premises in which the McDonald State bank is located. The late Dr. A. D. Buckworth, who came from Hastings, Nebraska in 1872, to be register of the United States land office, was its president, and Samuel Goozee the cashier, but in some way, its affairs got tangled up, and after a brief existence, its door was closed on December 19, 1894, and its affairs passed into the hands of a receiver.

It was in 1882 that the corner stone of the first Methodist Episcopal church was laid, but it was not until 1883 that the building was completed and dedicated to the worship of God by Bishop F. Hurst. The cost was $3,500.

This church was organized in February 1877, with fifteen members, and as near as can be ascertained, they were, Mrs. J. H. McConnell, Mrs. Charles McDonald, Miss Alice Darly, Miss Alice Tinkham, Mrs. B. L. Robinson, Charles Ormsby, Mrs. Makinson, Mrs. Morgan Davis, Mrs. Emma Marsh, Mrs. George Simpson, Mrs. J. Beattly, Mrs. Charles Hall, Mrs. A. B. Hall, Mrs. D. W. Adamson and Mrs. A. M. Mason.

The first meetings for worship were held in the

court house hall, afterwards in the Unitarian hall, then in the Baptist church, and again in the court house hall until a church was built.

The first pastor was the Rev. J. C. Stoughton who was appointed in 1877 and removed in 1878. He was succeeded by the Rev. Edward Thompson who was appointed in March, 1878, and removed in October, 1879. He was followed by the Rev. P. C. Johnson, October, 1879, and it was during his pastorate the first church building was erected. The Rev. Johnson was removed in October, 1882, and was followed by the Rev. Joel A. Smith who remained one year. The Rev. W. G. Vessels was appointed in 1883, and remained until September, 1886, when the Rev. W. A. Amsbury was appointed and removed in 1887, to take the district. The Rev. George W. Martin followed and was removed in 1888, to give place to the Rev. A. J. Clifton who remained until the close of 1890. The next pastor was the Rev. Erastus Smith who served two years. The Rev. W. E. Hardaway was appointed in October, 1892, and was removed in September, 1895. The Rev. C. C. Snavely followed and served the charge until September, 1898, when the Rev. C. C. Wilson was appointed. Since the Rev. Wil-

son's time, C. P. Wimberly, R. Randolph, E. J. Robinson, J. W. Morris and S. J. Medelin have served. The Rev. W. S. Porter succeeded Medelin, and is the present incumbent.

The clergymen whose names are recorded above, were well known in North Platte Several of them were eloquent speakers and had the gift of fascinating an audience, and were influential outside their own church circle.

The Rev. W. S. Porter was inducted to the pastorate on the 11th of October, 1908, and is fully as popular as any of his predecessors. He was ushered into this world of care in Louise county, Iowa, on May 15, 1868. His parents moved to Kansas when he was about two years old, and remained until he was about seven, when they again moved and located on a farm near Monmouth, Illinois, where he attended the district school during the months of winter, and from spring to fall, worked on the farm from early to late. His lot was no worse than that of other farmer boys, but unlike many, he had a thirst for knowledge and self-improvement, and shortly after attaining his majority he took a full course at Helling college, Abingdon, Illinois.

After six years, two in preparation work, and four in the College of Liberal Arts, he graduated in 1895 as valedictorian of his class with the degree A. B. In September, 1895, he joined the Central Illinois conference of the Methodist Episcopal church and served four years at Victoria, Illinois; three years at North Henderson, Illinois; two at Burnside, Illinois, and two years at LaHarpe, Illinois. In the fall of 1906, he transferred from the Central Illinois conference to the Western Nebraska conference, and was stationed at Holbrook, Furnas county, Nebraska, where, after serving two years he was transferred to North Platte. On December 20, 1894, the Rev. Porter was united in marriage to Miss Nellie Childs, and their home is now blessed with four children, three boys and one girl.

The first presiding elder of the M. E. church was the Rev. T. B. Lemon. Rev. W. A. Amsbury followed him, and he in turn was followed by the Rev. James Leonard. Afterwards, R. S. Moore and A. Chamberlain were appointed

Associated with this church is a branch of the Epworth League, organized in May, 1889, and also, a Ladies' Aid society

Many entertain pleasant memories of the old M. E. frame church, the original home of the congregation, which caught fire from a defective flue

Methodist Episcopal Church, North Platte.

while a prayer meeting was in progress, on the evening of December 7, 1898. The calamity was deplored by the congregation, but with them, to think was

the act, and getting together, plans were laid and arrangements made to erect a better church building. Solicitation for aid to do so met with a hearty response and the result was, that the corner stone of a brick edifice was laid by the Rev. C. C. Wilson on April 12th, and on July 23, 1899, it was dedicated to the service of God by Dr. Lewis Curts. The cost of the church when completed was about $8,000. It makes an imposing appearance and is a credit to the city.

CHAPTER VII.

The city in 1884.—J. H. McConnell—Business streets and stores. —Presidential campaign. —Judge Church.—Store buildings erected.—Building and Loan Association.—City waterworks.—The Lutheran church built.—The Tucker saloon burns.—Erection of First National Bank building.—The new jail.—Old Settlers' reunion.—Town first lighted by electricity.

In 1884, North Platte was a city of nearly 3,000 inhabitants, with well defined streets, and a business center containing many stores, law and other offices. Some three hundred and fifty men were employed in and about the railroad shops, and the pay roll averaged about $30,500 per month, and sixty per cent of the employees owned city property. As liberal buyers make successful merchants, business prospered and the city continued to grow, prosperity being the reward of industry.

J. H. McConnell was master mechanic in those days, and it is noteworthy that he materially aided in every movement tending to the advancement of the city. He was small of stature, but an expert in mechanics, and was the master mind in many undertakings; notably that of the North Platte Irrigation company when organized, and the providing of free bath rooms and a library of upwards of 1,000 volumes, for employees. This library was merged into that of the Railroad Young Mens' Christian Association when that institution was established in the city in 1890.

The city was scarcely eighteen years old in '84, but to get a comprehensive view of its development, it will be well to take a retrospective glance at the business streets, stores and industries of that day.

The city could then boast of two banks and two newspapers, the Nebraskan and Telegraph. The leading grocery stores were those of Charles McDonald on Front street and T. J. Foley corner of 6th and Dewey streets. They were well patronized and always crowded on pay car nights. Less pretentious groceries were kept by A. J. Minshall, C. F. Ormsby and J. D. Jackson. I. E. VanDoran dealt in mens' furnishings, newspapers and cigars, and old man Nixon

in notions and confectionery while J. F. Schmalzried manufactured cigars and supplied smoking requisites. Then there was the Warner book store and the jewelry stores of P. H. McEvoy and Thoelokie.

The clothing stores were those of H. Otten, Robert Douglas and A. Holzmark; and well stocked stores in which hardware, furniture and stoves were displayed were kept by James Belton, Thomas Keliher and Conway & Wiggans The drug stores were those of James LeFils, J. Q. Thacker and Dr. F. N. Dick, and the popular doctors were F. H. Longley, C. M. Duncan and F. N. Dick. There were lawyers plenty, the best known being William Neville, Alonzo H. Church, E. M. Day, Oliver Shannon, J. W. Bixler and Hinman & Nesbit, and real estate and insurance had several representatives. Beside the Railroad hotel, there was the Hinman house and several boarding houses. Livery stables were conducted by Dickinson, Besack and VanDoran; and the blacksmith shops were those of John Ottersteda, and the late much esteemed William J. Patterson who had his place of business on West Sixth street, a short distance from Dewey. Cash and Iddings, Birge and Frees had lumber yards and were kept busy supply-

ing the wants of a developing district. R. J. Bangs was sheriff, and G. T. Snelling probate judge, but quietness and order reigned supreme and their duties were light. Twenty-six years have passed since then, and with the exception of tobacconist Schmalzried, there is not a storekeeper or blacksmith in business today that was in business then, and the city has grown and been improved to such a degree that it would scarcely be recognized by the long absent.

During the presidential campaign of eighty four there was great enthusiasm and excitement in North Platte. In the evenings, old fashioned torch light processions paraded the streets with banners and emblems and bands of music. The Republican nominees were James G. Blaine and John A. Logan and those of the Democrats, Grover Cleveland and Thomas A. Hendricks. Both parties were energetic, and large audiences assembled in Lloyd's opera house on successive nights to hear the best speakers of both parties eloquently extol their candidates and the platforms upon which they hoped to be elected. The tariff was the all important subject of discussion, the Republicns upholding and the Democrats denouncing the measure. John Tracy, a staunch Democrat, as-

pired to a seat in the legislature, and to further his ambition, was ever ready to say a good word for his party and his own candidacy. In an address at a crowded meeting almost wholly composed of Democrats, John scathingly criticised Republican views of the tariff, and in a burst of eloquence declared that he had been "robbed, shamefully robbed" by it. The statement seemed to pass indeed, but it did not, for Judge Church was taking notes; and the next night when Republicans were out in force and the opera house packed to suffocation, he spoke eloquently, and reviewing statements of Democratic speakers at their meeting the previous night, said: "Right here, John Tracy declared that he had been robbed, shamefully robbed by the tariff, but mark you, what did John Tracy do? Why, he sent to the old country for his brother Bob to come over and be robbed too. That's what John Tracy done." The laughter and applause following this sally shook the building.

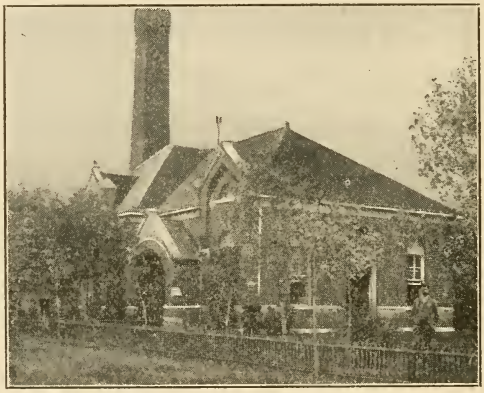
Judge Church was one of several talented men that figured in the public life of North Platte in eighty-four. He was a ready and often eloquent speaker, and popular as lawyer and politician, and

when death claimed him, it was universally regretted. In 1885, B. I. Hinman erected a two-story brick business building on Dewey street, and in 1886 some frame buildings at the southeast corner of Sixth and Dewey streets were removed, and on the sites a brick block was erected in which are fine well stocked stores. "Jim" LeFils' drug store on the corner was long a favorite rendezvous of railroad men, and there, quick runs were run over again and railroad gossip dispensed. Alexander Streitz succeeded LeFils in the business and carried it on with success until failing health compelled him to retire. That same year, J. K. Ottenstein erected a substantial store, and in doing so, displaced some ancient wooden structures that disfigured Dewey street.

Important local events of 1887 were the formation of a Mutual Building and Loan Association and the erection of a waterworks plant by the North Platte Waterworks Company.

The Mutual Building and Loan Association has been an active agency for making North Platte a city of homes. It grew steadily from the first, and homes have been built and purchased by its assistance that never could have been obtained otherwise by people

of limited means, and the waterworks has proved a blessing to the community by bringing an abundance of pure water to the door of every householder and making it possible to have trees, shrubs, flowers and blue grass lawns about residences. In those days of hand pumps and windmills there was difficulty in



Plant of City Waterworks.

maintaining vegetation about a home owing to the dryness of the climate, therefore, residence lots generally had a brown, burned-out appearance.

It was in the fall of 1880 that citizens of the Lutheran faith met and affiliated, but it was not until May, 1881 that the first Lutheran church of

North Platte was organized by the Rev. J. F. Kuhlman with twenty charter members.

Different pastors and missionaries served the congregation until June, 1884, when the Board of Home Missions appointed the Rev. Charles Anderson of Rockford, Illinois, who remained about a year. The Rev. Adam Stump, of York, Pennsylvania, took charge of the work December 1, 1885, and remained until September, 1890. During the Rev. Stump's pastorate, the present church, which was the first church in town built of brick, was erected at a cost of $8,000 This substantial building was dedicated to the service of God December 2, 1889. The Rev. Stump's pastorate was very successful, the membership increasing to ninety-two.

After the Rev. Stump came the Rev. J. F. Kuhlman who served the congregation as "supply" for a time, but was afterwards appointed the regular pastor. Rev. Kuhlman resigned, May 21, 1893. During his pastorate the congregation received no aid from the Home Mission Board.

The Rev. David J. Foulk became pastor January 1 1894. During his pastorate, the indebtedness of the church was cancelled, a bell for the tower purchased,

and needed repairs made. Rev. Foulk was pastor for over five years, and was succeeded by the Rev. N O. Wolfe, who served the congregation for over two years, but resigned when called to another field.

The Rev. John Seibert was the next pastor, and took up the work November 1, 1900, and after an eminently successful pastorate of nearly nine years, resigned to become missionary of the Synod of Northern Illinois. In 1901 the parsonage was enlarged and beautified, and in the year following, the church was renovated by being painted, papered and carpeted. Electric lights were also installed and the Altar and Chancel improved.

The new parsonage was built in 1907, the old parsonage being removed to its present location on Sycamore street.

The Rev. Seibert did more for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the congregation than any previous pastor. He infused new life in the church and gave it a standing in the community; and when he left the members were thoroughly organized and united on a distinctively Lutheran basis, irrespective of nationality.

The Rev. C. B. Harman began where the Rev.

Mr. Seibert left off, and is concluding a year of successful church work, having gained the esteem and co-operation of his people. He began his labors as pastor near the place of his birth and scenes wherein he spent his early life, and has served as pastor of churches in Pennsylvania and Illinois. He received his college and seminary training at Selin's Grove, Pennsylvania, graduating from the college in 1897 with the degree of B. A., and from the seminary in 1900, with the degree of B. D., having taken the full collegiate and logical course.

The property of the North Platte first Lutheran church, notwithstanding its humble beginning, is valued at $13,000 and the baptized membership numbers 370, with a large number of adherents.

In 1889 there was a den called "the Tucker saloon" on the northeast corner of Sixth and Dewey streets. It was a celebrated place of its kind in early days and a favorite resort of cowboys, gamblers and thirsty citizens. It had a sinister reputation, and no one was particularly grieved when, on a bitter cold night in November of that year the place caught fire, and it and some low roofed buildings close to it were consumed. It was a big fire, and

the first to which the newly organized fire brigade had been called, but despite their efforts, there was nothing left but a heap of smouldering, blackened ruins. In the burned off space the directors of the First National Bank saw a desirable site for a bank building, and at once interviewed the owner, the late John Neary, who accepted terms offered as they were favorable alike to himself and them, and the erection of the fine building in which the banking business of the First National is now conducted was at once begun, and completed in January, 1890. The original quarters of this bank was on the corner of Front and Dewey streets.

Prisons are necessary in all civilized communities, and will be, so long as avarice and evil passions rage. The old log jail was never a safe or suitable place in which to confine law breakers. North Platte having ceased to be a frontier town, a jail that was sanitary, secure and commodious was requisite. This was long under consideration, but it was not until 1889 that bonds were voted, and it was near the close of 1890 when the modern two-storied brick jail on Locust street was erected. There is nothing remarkable about the institution, and so far, no very des-

perate or notorious criminals have been confined in it, and escapes have been few. The several sheriffs who have had charge of it were men of decisive character who delighted in discharging the duties of the office.

Residents of North Platte in early days were more than neighbors, they were friends, and it is no wonder that a feeling akin to clannishness bound them together when the town became populous. We have evidence of this, for on the 6th of March, 1890 they met with their families and friends to recall events and incidents that occurred in days when the city (such as it was) was on the frontier of civilization. W. F. Cody acted as toastmaster, and the meeting was put in his charge. W. H. McDonald, the first white child born in Lincoln county, was the guest of honor. There was among those present, W. H. Hinman and B. I. Hinman and many other old settlers who helped to lay the foundation of our city. M. C. Keith, George Vroman, Robert E. Peale and Superintendent W. L Park responded to toasts. The meeting was highly uccessful, and ended by W. F. Cody inviting all old settlers to a banquet at Scout's Rest Ranch.

In 1892 an Electric Light company was organized most of the shareholders being residents of North Platte. The plant was built north of the railroad yards, poles erected and wires strung, and when in operation, many visited and viewed the generator with wonder. All admitted the superiority of the new light, but the change from coal oil to electricity was not appreciated to the extent expected, as only a limited number of business places and a few homes had it introduced. Electric lighting at the time was new and not well understood, and when lights went out—and they had a habit of doing so frequently—people would strike matches and attempt to light them as they would a lamp, but failing, ignorance begat prejudice, and many holding that the old system of lighting was more reliable and cheaper, returned to its use. This resulted in the expenses of the company exceeding the income, and after a valiant struggle, it went out of business in 1895, having sunk some $15,000. The plant lay for several years in a ruinous condition, but the power house was ultimately moved to the fair grounds, and there it stands a memento of a well intentioned endeavor to light North Platte by electricity.

The failure of the Electric Light Company did not disturb business in the city; things went on as usual—the industrious prospering and the city expanding.

CHAPTER VIII.

The city fire of '93.—Progress of the flames.—Incidents.—Dr. Dick dies.—Telephone system introduced.—The Spanish war.—Our local volunteers.—Off they go to meet the foe.—Scene at the depot.—Dewey's victory.—Volunteers return disappointed.— Methodist church burns.—M. C. Keith dies.—The story of his life.—City schools; teachers and pupils.

On the morning of April 7, 1893, a vast prairie fire, rushed by a fierce wind and entending from river to river was seen approaching the city from the west. Locomotive whistles shrieked an alarm and the fire bell rang to warn the citizens of coming danger. The fire brigade turned out, and people ran westward to fight fire and help to save property. People whose homes were in the path of the fast approaching wall of fl mes made hurried preparations to save property, and a few were more or less success-

ful. Charles Wyman by strenuous exertion succeeded in saving his dwelling house and barn, but pens, fences and hay burned. Wash Hinman, considering his home doomed, had much of his household goods conveyed to some ploughed ground. Despite the precaution, fire reached them, and they and all he possessed was consumed. The Freeman family had barely time to escape from their blazing home and lost everything. The McDonald ranch and everything combustable about it was consumed. Between this ranch and the western outskirts of the city was a space burned over by a previous fire which was considered sufficient to stay the progress of the flames. It would have been under favorable circumstances, but the fierce wind sent burning embers flying, and wafted the fire around it. Despite the almost superhuman efforts of citizens, fire got among the houses with astonishing rapidity and in brief space many were in flames; and blazing shingles wafted by the wind spread fire in very direction. Women and children fled in terror, while men scorched by heat, and well nigh blinded by smoke did what they could to save life and property.

People whose homes were in the path of the

fire, and no great distance from it, loaded their household goods on wagons in an endeavor to reach a place of safety but blazing shingles, in some instances fell among the goods and they burned so rapidly that there was scarcely time to unhitch the horses. Many people expecting their houses to burn, conveyed furniture nd needful articles to supposed places of safety, but there were instances where the fire became freakish and instead of burning the house consumed the articles removed.

Numerous buggies and wagons were kept busy conveying women and children to the round house and places of safety, and the city being considered doomed, a train was held to help convey people out of town.

Towards evening, the fire, much subdued, reached Locust street, having been checked near the Iddings property, and dividing, burned fiercely north and south of town, sweeping the Miller and Peniston additions, at the time sparsely built up, and eastward to the river, consuming barns, sheds, fences and sidewalks, yea, everything in its course. The bottling works were wiped out, and the creamery, in which some $8,000 had been invested was a total loss. Some

thirty-five houses were burned to the ground. Several people were rendered homeless and many lost all they possessed.

Strange acts are sometimes performed by individuals when crazed by excitement. One man is said to have heroically dragged his cook stove out of the kitchen into the yard, and returning, he gathered up the breakfast dishes and threw them out the window. Another, in a frantic endeavor to save his house with water from a half inch hose gave up in despair, and falling upon his knees, prayed fervently that his property would be spared as it was all he had. The fire was getting hold, and the house was in a fair way of being burned down when the practical Joseph Weeks of the fire brigade happened along, and taking in the situation, yelled, "Get up, confound you, and take a hose." He did, and his home was saved.

Ninety-four and ninety-five passed without any very important local event occurring, but on December 29, 1896, the community was startled by the announcement that death had claimed Dr. F N. Dick, a pioneer citizen and one of the early resident physicians. He was popular in his profession, in social

and Masonic circles, and his familiar personality and pleasant manner are doubtless remembered by many. He was a native of North Carolina, and a graduate of the University of Virginia, and Washington college of Baltimore, Md., and came to North Platte in 1868. His drug store was at the corner of Sixth and Locust streets and served as office and dispensary, and in it he practiced medicine and ministered to the afflicted until death laid its icy hand upon him.

In 1867, the North Platte Telephone company was started by G. T. Field and O. W. Sizemore, and a franchise was granted them by the city council to run lines in the streets and alleys.

The first exchange was located in the rear of Sizemore's barber shop, and was started with some thirty-three subscribers.

As the business grew, these quarters proved too small, and in 1900 the exchange was moved to the present location in the McDonald block on Dewey street.

In 1903, Mr. Field bought out Mr. Sizemore's interest, and the same year incorporated the North Platte Telephone company; and on June 1, 1907, sold

out to the present company, who have made the service highly efficent, and communication can be had with places near and far.

When President McKinley called for 200,000 volunteers to help settle our little difficulty with Spain, April 21, 1898, the boys of North Platte were eager to enlist, and many joined Company E, second regiment, Nebraska Volunteer Infantry, organized in the city, November 21, 1893. Like Job's war horse, Company E sniffed the battle afar, and being anxious to go to the front, assembled at the Union Pacific depot on the morning of May 9th to go to Lincoln to be mustered into the United States service. A big crowd was there to see "the boys" off. Flags fluttered in the morning breeze on many buildings, a band played, and cheers rent the air, but a sad feature of the scene was the tearful faces of wives and sweethearts of volunteers who had come to say good-by to loved ones, not knowing but the parting might be forever.

When the train pulled out, bells rang, locomotive whistles shrieked and cheer after cheer woke the the echoes, and a then popular Episcopal minister in exhileration threw his hat in the air, so joyous was

he that North Platte would be represented at the front. From Lincoln, Company E went to Chickamauga, and shortly thereafter were joined by some twenty recruits, enlisted at North Platte.

Much to its disappointmen, Company E never got to the front, for Spain, finding resistance useless, made overtures for peace, and on August 12, 1898, a protocol was signed by representatives of both nations providing for cessation of hostilities, and on October 24, Company E was mustered out, and the boys returned to their homes and occupations, not altogether without causalities, for John Krajicek, a private, died in the hospital. Harry Brown returned sick, and shortly thereafter died, and is buried in our cemetery. William D. Adamson came back on crutches being seriously wounded. It seems he was taking his blouse off a peg in a tent when a revolver dropped from a pocket of a comrade's garment, and exploding sent a bullet through the calf of his leg.

Company E was wholly made up of men belonging to North Platte or its immediate vicinity, and if it did not find reputation at the cannon's mouth, and return covered with gore and glory, it

displayed a patriotic spirit, and a willingness to maintain the dignity of the United States.

On May 2, 1898, Admiral Dewey's victory in the bay of Manila caused great rejoicing in North Platte. Flags fluttered from house tops, and the Union Pacific company's offices, workshops and hotel displayed Old Glory. Everybody wore a smile of satisfaction and wished in some way to honor the hero of the most brilliant navel battle in the world's history. The city council in a burst of patriotism, devised a cheap and efficient plan to do so, and announced that the principal street in town should no longer be called Spruce street. but henceforth and forever Dewey street, and so it came to pass; and Spruce street is known as Dewey street until this day.

A noteworthy local event of 1899 was the death of M. C. Keith, an early pioneer resident, and the most financially successful man in the district. No figure was more familiar than his as he rode in his buggy through the city streets behind a team of spirited horses. Of a retiring disposition, he took no part in local affairs, yet, with keen business instinct he saw the future of North Platte and invested large-

ly in real estate and erected buildings in the city at a time when there was little encouragement to do so.

Morell Case Keith was born at Silver Creek, New York, November 21, 1824. In early manhood he married Susan C. Smith of Smith's Mills, New York, and shortly thereafter moved to Topeka, Kansas, where he conducted a hotel. From there he moved to Applegrove, Iowa, and engaged in the same business, but having an opportunity to try his fortune in another line, he went to St. Joseph, Missouri, and secured freight contracts from the government, and for a number of years freighted between St. Joseph and Leavenworth, and also between Leavenworth and Denver when the route was infested by Indians, and beset with many danger. It is not exactly known when Mr. Keith relinquished freighting and came to Lincoln county, but it must have been about the time the scream of the locomotive whistle first broke the stillness of the prairie. It is known with certainty, however, that he early associated himself in the cattle business with Guy C. Barton, and that the firm of Keith and Barton had a statewide reputation. When civilization moved westward, homesteaders

gradually encroached upon the vast cattle ranges and several who had invested in cattle retired; Keith and Barton being among the number. Afterwards, Mr. Keith did considerable contract grading on the Union Pacific railroad and associated with Mr. Barton, conducted the Union Pacific hotel for some time, being succeeded by David Cash. His ranch at Pawnee Springs east of town greatly interested him, and he derived much pleasure attending to it up to near the time of his death.

Mr. Keith's wife died September 23, 1877, leaving a daughter named Mollie, a much esteemed young lady. Mr. Keith afterwards married Cassie Casey, a popular teacher in the city schools, who, after a brief married life, died February 3, 1884. Mollie Keith married the Hon. William Neville, and after a short yet happy married life, died March 1, 1884, leaving a baby boy who was named Morell Keith Neville who grew to manhood and inherited the Keith estate. The Hon. William Neville died April 5, 1909, and is buried in the Keith burying place in North Platte cemetery. M. C. Keith and his first and second wife lie side by side, and Mollie Keith and her husband repose at their feet.

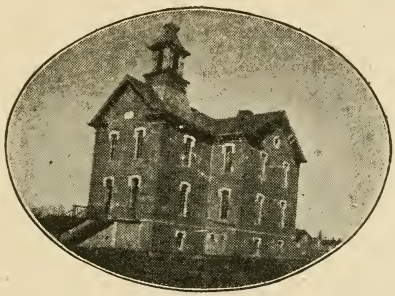
In 1899, serious rents appeared in the walls of the high school building that called for immediate attention, and the Board of Education requested an architect to make an examination and report. The result was, the building was pronounced unsafe, and, after due consideration, the board decided to have it replaced by a modern and more commodious structure, and that while the work of destruction and construction was going on, schools would be conducted in the court house and Unitarian halls. As already stated, the brick, or high school succeeded the log school house, and being comparatively new, its collapse could not be well accounted for.

The at one time, much admired high school was speedily torn down, and before the year 1900 closed, it had become a memory; and on its site stood a school building worthy of the city, and equal to any in the state of Nebraska. It contains an auditorium, seven school rooms, five recitation rooms, offices for secretary and superintendent, toilet rooms, shower bath and athletic dressing rooms.

Besides this well appointed school building, there are schools in the First, Second and Third wards. That in the First is a substantial four-room frame

building. The Washington school in the Second ward, and the Lincoln school in the Third ward (both built in 1909) are spacious two-storied buildings constructed of diamond brick and of the same architectural design. Each contains an auditorium, six school rooms, principal's office, library, toilet rooms, manual training and domestic science rooms.

A board of six members have general oversight



First Brick High School Building.

and control of school affairs, and annually elect a city superintendent who is under their jurisdiction, and has immediate control of the system. Each school has a principal appointed by the board who is responsible to the superintendent for the regulation and government of the school under her charge.

The district maintains eight grades, and it takes

nine years to complete them. Pupils starting at five years of age may graduate at eighteen by taking a grade each year. The graded schools teach all of the common branches and music.

The high school is accredited to the State University, the State Normal schools, and the North Central association of Colleges and Universities. Graduates may enter the Freshman class of the State University without examination, and it is recognized by the State Department of Education as a normal training school, and receives a grant of $350 a year. A music supervisor gives instruction from the first grades to the twelfth.

Including teachers, supervisors and administrators, there are thirty-one men and women connected with the schools who teach all or part of their time.

The total enrollment numbers 1055 scholars, but this is under the average. It is gratifying that edution has kept pace with the growth of the city, and that from a beginning of a one room school, one teacher and eight scholars, such educational facilities have developed.

CHAPTER IX.

School records.— Teachers and their salaries.—New school building.—A school squabble.—The school bell.—First north side school.—Schools for First and Second wards.—W. J. Patterson.—Lighting the city by electricity.—U. P. strike.—Strike breakers shipped in.—Boisterous strikers.—Military aid asked for.—Unexpected settlement of the strike.

It is a pleasant task to turn over the leaves of the school records and trace the progress of education at North Platte. Of course, the volumes are of no great antiquity, as citizens who resided here when school district No. 1 began to be, are still with us: notably, Charles McDonald, who has the honor of having been the first superintendent of schools, although the fact is not mentioned in the records referred to. The first entry is prefaced by the state-

ment that "after diligent search, no record of education can be found;" and is dated Stepember 1, 1869, and refers to a contract between the school board and Maggie T. G. Eberhart of Omaha to teach school for three months at $75 per month, commencing December 8, 1869, to March 8, 1870. At the time, Andrew Struthers was moderator; R. J. Wyman, director and W. J. Patterson, treasurer; all good men and true, but alas, they long since ceased from troubling, and are laid away in our cemetery with other pioneers.

That the school board was perplexed by lack of funds and fell in arrears with teachers' salaries is painfully evident throughout the records. On April 4, 1870, Miss Mary Hubbard is paid $530; Miss Maggie T. G. Eberhart $450 and F. Fulton Gant $225 for teaching. At that time there were eight-eight children between the ages of five and twenty-one years in the district.

It appears that Miss Mary Hubbard taught three months at $100 per month, and received $300 on September 7, 1870; and that Miss Eberhart taught six months at $75 per month and gets $450 on same date; and that the school board owned "One build-

ing of logs, valued at $275."

About this time the long unsolved problem of school accommodation loomed up, and the school board, with a depleted treasury was in a quandry. The log school house, even with an additional room recently added to it was altogether too small to accommodate the ever increasing number of children and something had to be done.

The citizens seem to have taken the matter up, for an entry in the records states that the school board is authorized to borrow a sum of money not to exceed three thousand dollars at twelve per cent, for the purpose of erecting and furnishing a school house, on condition that the Union Pacfic Railroad company donate a block in the town of North Platte for school purposes.

Although badly handicapped, the board seems to have struggled valiantly along, hiring teachers when necessary; one by the name of F. M. Beche and another named D. B. McQuarrie being engaged at $75 a month each.

The board seems to have procured the three thousand dollars, for further on they are authorized to borrow two thousand more for the proposed school

building, and on April 11, 1873 it is "Resolved that the school board be instructed to build a school house by the first of December, 1873, to cost not less than ten, and not more than fifteen thousand dollars, and if they cannot procure good merchantable brick or stone in a reasonable time, that they build of wood."

On January 3, 1874, B. I. Hinman moves "that the old log school house be sold at public sale, May 1st, 1874; and on January 7th, same date, the board ordered that notice of sale be inserted in the North Platte "Enterprise," to be published four weeks, that the log building now occupied as a district school house will be sold at public auction on the 9th day of February, between the hours of two and three o'clock, p. m; terms of sale, cash. Possession to be given when the new school building is ready for occupation."

On February 9th, 1874, "The school board met in accordance with the foregoing resolution. As already stated the old school house was sold to Joseph McConnell for six hundred and eleven dollars; the money paid to the treasurer, and a full claim deed given, signed by G. C. Barton, moderator, and Joseph

Mackle, director. Possession of the old school house to be given to the purchaser, not later than May 1st, 1874.

On April 6, 1874, the director reports that he had taken a careful census and found in school district No. 1, 270 children between the ages of five and twenty-one.

"April 6, 1874: On motion it was ordered that the board be authorized to borrow the amount of money necessary to complete and pay for the school building now being erected in the district."

April 25, 1874: Committee had borrowed $850 of J. R. Ottenstein and "Gave note of district, signed by moderator and director, and C. H. Street, treasurer had paid amount to them and indorsed their warrant and took receipt."

In the many efforts to raise money to complete the school building the board permitted the teachers' salaries to fall sadly in arrears, and even Mrs. Stebbins, the janitor, who received $15 a month for her services, had not been paid a cent for four months; but the financial horizon began to brighten, and on June 27, 1874, a committee of three is appointed to examine the school house when finished, and settle

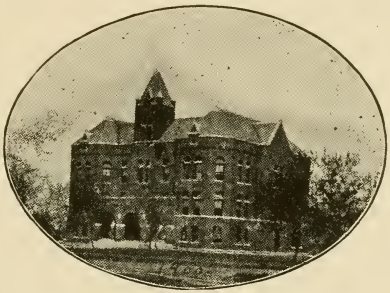
with Gillett and Thompson. Three teachers are also employed for the ensuing year, and Mr. Church is appointed to offer W T. Stockdale $1,000 dollars for his services as principal for the next school term.

On August 27, 1874, the committee report that "the new brick school house is completed in a good and workmanlike manner as contemplated by contract;" and as "all's well that ends well," everybody was jubilant.

At this stage, a difference of opinion regarding school matters arose which resulted in the formation of a school district which the organizers called "No. 5". The seceders opened a school in the Unitarian hall and the squabble became so virulent that it got into court and was tried before the chief justice of the state, the Hon. George B. Lake, who decided against insurgent "district No. 5" making it plain that it had no jurisdiction. A leader of the insurgent band, however, although defeated, argued still, and at his suggestion, the school in the Unitarian hall continued, seemingly to the annoyance of the members of the school board, for they order that their attorneys be instructed to draw up a basis of settle-

ment "to settle the difficulties existing between school district No. 1, and so called district No. 5." Like other local squabbles, this one is forgotten, and most of the citizens who took part in it have shared a like fate.

For some reason, teachers were frequently changed, their deportment after school hours being watched and criticised. One young lady who was consid-



The Present High School Building.

ered an expert teacher, incurred the displeasure of the board and the parents of several of her pupils, by attending an occasional dancing party. Her dismissal being demanded, it depended upon a vote whether or not her services would be retained. The broad-minded John Bratt, who was on the school board at the time, happened to be on a ranch some

twenty miles north of the city when he learned from a party from town that the young lady's fate would be decided by a close vote in the evening. She had his sympathy, and he determined to aid her to retain the situation. Selecting the best horse he had, and although it was late in the afternoon, he rode with all haste towards the city. All went well until he came to the river, which happened to be in flood. The hour of meeting was near; but unfortunately, a boat used by ranch people to cross the stream, was on the other side. Determined to reach the city, like a chivalrous knight, he rode his horse into the surging river and swam it across, and got to the school house, wet as he was, in time to cast his vote. It gave the young lady a majority, and she retained the position.

In July, 1875, the board orders that teachers be advertised for "to teach school at North Platte;" and also, that the windows of the school house be boarded up and the premises properly secured during vacation. Seemingly, window panes were shining marks to naughty boys of that period, same as they are to some juveniles of this.

From among several applicants, Miss Daly, Miss

Laura Michall and Miss Annie Ferguson were elected to teach; the first at $70, and the others at $60 per month.

A school census taken in April, 1877, shows that 120 boys, and 135 girls attended school.

In September 1877; M. M. Babbitt was hired as principal at $100 per month, and Miss Honn as first teacher at $60, the condition being, that "they are to be dismissed if not qualified." Miss Nellie Graves and Miss M. E. Kelleher were engaged at the same time as assistant teachers, at $60 a month each. "On same conditions as the foregoing."

The principal, first teacher and her assistants are called before the board and told that if their services proved acceptable, they could teach for ten months, but if not, they would be dismissed at the end of the first month.

The citizens seem to have been well pleased with the new school building, for on September 15, 1877, $51.50 was raised by voluntary subscription to purchase a bell for it. When the bell arrived, the members of the school board and a crowd of citizens assembled to see it put in place in the tower, and when all was completed and approved, a vote of thanks

was tendered George B. Nettelton for doing the work.

A census taken in April, 1878, showed that 212 boys, and 225 girls of school age were in the district, making, it is stated, an increase of sixty-one.

A petition for a school on the north side, which the board had under consideration, was urged by a second, signed by forty-three residents; and the late Anthony Reise moved that a building large enough to accommodate seventy-five children be built, as he considered that a building of that size would meet the requirements of the north side for many years. Seemingly, Mr. Reise and his colleagues had no conception of the district's future, for a motion was adopted that a school house of the size should be built and four lots purchased without delay. Pat Walsh, a popular builder at the time, was given the contract, and on November 4, 1878, pronounced the building finished. Miss E Cassie Casey was chosen by the board, and it was ordered "that she be engaged to teach in the school house of the Third ward at $60 a month for one year.' '

In April, 1880, the school board had in their employ one principal and five assistants. This staff, however, was inadequate, for there were 364 children

attending school in the city at the time; and the school rooms were taxed beyond their capacity. The board was in a quandary, for funds were limited. and the result of an increasing population was more children. Another room was urgently needed, and the basement of the brick school was converted into a school room and another teacher employed, but this did not lessen the troubles of the school board, for an addition to the north side school was called for, coupled with a request for two more teachers, and a suggestion that there should be a primary school in the First ward near the Catholic church, and one in the Second ward near the barracks.

At a meeting of the school board, April 4, 1881, it was stated that there was 756 children of school age in the district, being fifty-five more than the previous year. At the same meeting, the problem of school accommodation was again discussed, and all agreed that the room in the basement of the brick school occupied as a primary department was too small, having a very low ceiling and no ventilation. and that, although there was seating capacity for sixty children, eighty-five were crowded into it. To mend matters, B. I. Hinman made a motion that a

site be procured and a school house erected in the Second ward west of the old barracks. After discussion, it was agreed that bonds be issued for $3,000 to make it possible to purchase sites and build a school in the First and Second wards. These bonds were voted, May 11, 1881.

On June 1, same year, it was resolved that the board employ M. S. Honn, Jennie L. Dillon, M. E. Keliher, Nora O'Conner, Cassie Casey and Etta Stebbins to teach in school district No. 1.

On September 7, 1881, an addition to the Third ward school was completed and approved by the board, and Cassie Casey appointed to teach in the new room as well as the old with an increase of salary of $10.

In 1884, schools were erected in the First and Second wards which met requirements for a time, but they in turn became crowded, hence the spacious school buildings of the present day.

Now that the progress of education in the city has been traced from the time the voice of the first school teacher in Lincoln county was heard in the old log school house, it will be well to revert to local occurrences.

It was on November 30, 1900, William J. Patterson, one of North Platte's pioneer citizens passed to everlasting rest at the age of seventy-six, and they who knew him best, regretted it most, for he was straightforward, candid and upright.

He came to the town in the fall of 1867 and went to work in the Union Pacific shops as a blacksmith. The house he occupied so many years, was either the third or fourth frame building built in town then, for, as already pointed out, dwellings prior to 1868, were constructed of sod or logs. However, the march of improvement has swept away the Patterson home, and the Goozee block on East Sixth street occupies the site of it and its once much admired garden.

Mr. Patterson did not live wholly for himself, but for others, and took an interest in whatever tended to improve social conditions. He helped to organize the first school in town and was its treasurer, taking care of its scant funds. He was also a justice of the peace, and as fines went to support the school, he imposed and collected from all culprits brought before him. He was one of the founders of the Episcopal church, an earnest worker for its promotion, and a liberal contributor to its funds, as the records testi-

fy. He was a member of the school board and its treasurer, and represented the First ward in 1875 and 1876, when Anthony Ries was mayor.

After working in the shops for eight years he drifted into a blacksmith business of his own and employed several men. His shop was on West Sixth street, a short distance from the McDonald bank, but a brick building occupies the site, and every trace of it is effaced. He was of a happy disposition, and an excellent conversationalist, and scattered sunshine wherever he went.

The Electric Light Company erected an electric light plant north of the railroad yard and established the North Platte Electric Light and Power Company.

The original capacity of the plant was 1.200 lights but in 1904 this capacity was doubled, and in December, 1908, new generators were installed, giving a capacity of 5,000 lights. With electric lighting better understood than it was when the former plant was operated, and lights made reliable, the efforts of this company are appreciated, and the streets, stores and dwellings are lighted by its agency.

1902 is memorable as the year in which the machinists and boilermakers in the employ of the Union

Pacific Railroad Company struck against a threatened introduction of piece work, a system of labor forbidden by the rules of the machinists' union and objected to by the men. It was considered that this strike would not last many days, but it proved to be the worst and most prolonged labor trouble in which workmen in the shops at North Platte were ever involved.

As prearranged, fifty-two machinists, and some forty helpers laid down their tools at 10 o'clock on the morning of the last day of June, and joined the boilermakers, who quit work the previous week. The striking machinists made the hall in the First National bank building their headquarters for a time, and met there to discuss the situation and arrange for a campaign by appointing pickets to watch all trains, and patrol the approaches to the shops and round house so that men going there in quest of employment might have the situation explained to them.

Things remained passive for several days, no truce or concession being asked for, when, to the surprise of all concerned, Messrs. Barnum and Baxter, Union Pacific railroad officials, requested an in-

terview with all striking machinists and boilermakers. This was at once granted and they were invited to visit the strikers' headquarters. Both gentlemen were popular and received an enthusiastic reception and spoke at some length, and did all they could to persuade the men to accept the situation and return to work. Mr. Barnum spoke kindly, but seeing his words did not impress his hearers. he warmed up, and in conclusion said: "Do not think that we are going to keep these shops standing idle; depend upon it, that if you do not return to work they will be filled with men."

Little attention was paid to this prediction, but in a few days it was fulfilled to the letter. A deputation from the Commercial club of North Platte next interviewed the strikers and endeavored to pour oil on troubled waters and avert a continuence of the strike, but their effort failed and the deadlock remained.

Among the striking machinists were several transient workmen who had no interest whatever in the city or intention of remaining. Such had industrously talked strike, but when trouble came, they lit out and left men who owned their homes or had their

all at stake, to work out their own salvation.

Time, tide and passenger trains wait on no man, and as nothing short of an earthquake could stop traffic on the Union Pacific railroad, the company shipped in men to replace those who had gone on strike, not only at Omaha, Grand Island, Cheyenne and other places disorganized by the walkout of skilled workmen.

At North Platte, elaborate arrangements were made for the reception of the new men, or "strikebreakers" as they were termed. The boiler shop and numerous box cars were fitted up with bunks, and cooks and waiters hired to minister to their wants, and at night the yards were illuminated with electric lights, and deputy police and armed guards patrolled them to preserve the peace and prevent interference with the new arrivals.

Three car loads of these breakers under a strong guard arrived at the shops one morning, and large orderly crowds on the depot and Front street watched them leave the cars and file to the office for enrollment.

Strikebreakers in closed cars well guarded, arrived at and passed through North Platte daily, and

although strikers in plenty were on the depot, they found no opportunity to interview the incomers, and all that they or their sympathisers could do was to hoot and yell "Scab" and this demonstrative clamor at times was so great that townspeople thought that a riot was in progress.

At night the scene was novel and picturesque upon the Union Pacific Company's premises, the whole being lit up by a blaze of electric light and guarded by an army of armed watchmen and deputy police who scrutinized and questioned persons who attempted to cross the track or approach the shops or round house.

The railroad officials soon found it difficult to retain the services of strikebreakers, many of them being birds of passage and of low moral character, and others had conscientious scruples about what working men call "scabbing" and made their stay short. This made it necessary to ship in more strikebreakers to fill vacancies in all shops on the system, and car loads of them arrived at, and passed through North Platte almost every day.

The strikers got to know in some way when trains bearing strikebreakers were due, and they and their

sympathisers were generally at the depot in force to give them an ovation and voice their disapproval of men accepting employment under prevailing conditions. These tumults often had the semblance of a riot and alarmed timid people so much that his hon or, the mayor of North Platte, was prevailed upon to request the governor of the state to send troops to maintain order, as the strikers carried sticks and and had hung a Union Pacific railway official in effigy, a circumstance of which every citizen was aware. The governor, however, acted with deliberation and personally investigated the situation, and after interviewing the strikers and local authorities, concluded that troops were unnecessary, and that the sheriff and his deputies were sufficient to maintain law and order.

The governor's decision, however, did not satisfy certain parties, and the mayor was prevailed upon to issue a proclamation prohibiting strikers from carrying sticks and frequenting the railroad depot. Such precaution proved wholly unnecessary, for as weeks passed without sign of settlement, enthusiasm cooled, and strikers became orderly and attended strictly to their own business.

The strikebreakers were as closely guarded as convicts in a penitentiary, eating and sleeping on the company's premises, and when a thirst induced any of them to venture over town and visit saloons, they were frequently subjected to rough treatment by loungers who hang about such places. They were a promiscuous crew made up of foreigners, few Americans being among them, and the few that were, disliking restriction and the class they were compelled to associate with, generally left when sufficient money was earned to enable them to get away.

Strikers were successful in persuading many to leave the company's service, and as competent mechanics could hardly be retained, locomotives got out of repair, and boilers leaked so badly that engines frequently "died" on the road. Trains were late, and although the officials had much to contend with, surrender or compromise was never mooted, and months of suspense passed; the strikers drawing in weekly stipend from their unions and doing "picket duty" with an air of indifference. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick," and several hoping against hope for a settlement of the strike, procured situations elsewhere, and the ranks of the strikers gradually became

so depleted that there was barely sufficient men left to "hold the fort" and vigilance relaxed to such a degree that strikebreakers walked the streets without fear of molestation.

Strange as it may appear, the sympathy of the people, the merchants and the local press was with the strikers from the first. Merchants would not sell anything to strikebreakers, and barbers would not shave them, and when some brought their families, landlords refused to rent them places to live in, but as the prospect of the strike being settled waned, restriction relaxed, and landlords, merchants and others gradually favored them, and in this way they gained what seemed a permanent settlement, and it was conceded that the strike was as good as lost.

To the surprise of all, the result was otherwise, for the officers of the machinists' union had been in communication with the directors of the Union Pacific railway, and at a conference it was arranged that all men who had been engaged in the strike be restored to their former positions without prejudice, and that machinists receive one and a half cents an hour advance in wages and resume work June 8, 1903 The question of piecework was nullified, but the re-

quest that all strikebreakers be discharged was denied.

The strikers returned to work jubilant, and the strikebreakers gradually faded away, and in less than three months all were gone. And thus ended the worst labor trouble that ever occurred on the Union Pacific railroad.

CHAPTER X.

Death of Warren Lloyd.—Sketch of W. S. Peniston's life.—Wave of city prosperity.—Masonic Temple built.— Dedication and banquet.—The old Masonic hall and it associations.—Origin of Platte Valley lodge.—Additions to city.—North Platte's possible future.

After the settlement of the strike, business on the Union Pacific railroad and in the shops regained wonted activity, and peace and good will reigned supreme, and 1903 glided away without any notable local event.

On April 13, 1904, Warren Lloyd, a pioneer citizen and old time locomotive engineer, died after a brief illness at the age of seventy-four. He witnessed the city's phenomenal growth and interested himself in its advancement. He built the Lloyd opera house, a popular place of amusement in its day, and

conducted it up to the time of his death. He was a model citizen, and served as councilman for the First ward for a considerable time, and even although he had theological opinions more radical that popular, he was universally esteemed.

He came to Grand Island when that city consisted of less than a dozen houses, and entered the employ of the Union Pacific Railroad Company as engineer. At the time, vast herds of buffaloes roamed the plains, and hostile Indians made railroading perilous. Mr. Lloyd never had any serious Indian adventures, but on one occasion escaped death by missing a trip on account of sickness, for the engineer and crew that took his train out were murdered at Plum Creek, the train being ditched by Indians.

Mr. Lloyd ran a passenger engine up to about 1890 when he was retired on account of old age and defective eyesight, and given charge of the stationary engine at the shops, and afterwards was made yard policeman, which position he held until he resigned so he could give more attention to his opera house.

Mr. Lloyd at the time of his death was in fairly comfortable circumstances, but all he had so indus-

triously accumulated went to distant relatives, and he now rests beside his wife in the North Platte cemetery. A tasteful memorial stone marks the spot.

Depression of trade throughout the country during the year 1905 did not perceptably change the routine of business and everyday life in North Platte, and that year also slipped away without anything important occurring. 1906 was also uneventful, but towards its close (October 14) W. S. Peniston, who had had wide experience of frontier life, and whose name is associated with early days in North Platte, laid down the burden of life and entered the silent halls of death.

William Star Peniston was born at Kingston, Jamaica in 1834, and relatives of his still reside there. He was of good lineage; Lord Peniston of England being his uncle, therefore by right of birth, he belonged to the nobility of that country. His father at one time was the largest shipowner in North America, and resided in Quebec, Canada. Mr. Peniston was educated in this city and resided there until early manhood, when, being of a restless disposition, he drifted to Minnesota and joined a surveying party, which occupation he continued until the spring of

1858. He afterwards passed down the Missouri river to St. Joe, Mo. In that year, the contract to carry the first weekly mail from St. Joe, Mo., to Salt Lake City was let to Hockaday, Burr & Company, and Mr. Peniston being engaged, drove the first stage with the mail from there to Salt Lake, he driving a four mule team, while a whipper up, riding alongside kept it going with a blacksnake whip. Mr. Peniston and his outfit camped out, for at that time there were hardly any stations, yet it was so arranged that at certain places a change of mules could be made. When Ash Hollow was reached, another man took the stage, and went on with the mail, and by such relays Salt Lake City was reached.

In 1859 Mr. Peniston drove a trip or two from Ash Hollow to O'Fallons Bluffs and at that place made the acquaintance of A. J. Miller. Mr. Peniston and a friend named Dan Smith, having a business project in view, spoke to Mr. Miller about the advisability of starting a trading post. He gave the idea favorable consideration and suggested that a good place for one would be about twenty-five miles west of Plum Creek. Mr. Miller was called away, and during his absence, Peniston and Smith built at the

place mentioned and called it Cold Water. The business promised well, and Mr. Peniston, having recognized Miller's business ability, informed him that he and Smith would be pleased to take him into partnership. Mr. Miller threw in his lot with them, and in the fall of 1860 they built another trading post ten miles west of the original and named it Spring Villa. Peniston and Smith conducted it and Mr. Miller looked after the business at Cold Water. In the spring of 1861 this partnership was dissolved. Mr. Peniston and Mr. Miller retained the Cold Water post and accepted sufficient cattle, horses and money to make good their share of the estate.

In January, 1865, Mr. Peniston and his partner went from Nebraska City to Auburn, New York, and on March 15, both were married; Mr. Peniston marrying Miss Annie M. Webb, of that city. By way of a wedding tour, they started west, and after a long weary journey landed at Nebraska City and put up at the home of their friend, J. Sterling Morton. After a stay of three months, Mr. Miller struck across the plains with the intention of fixing up the Cold Water trading post so that their young wives could have a tolerably decent place to come to. To his as-

tonishment it was wrecked and badly burned. The Indians had been there, and Peniston and Miller lost more than any traders from St. Joe, Missouri, to California ever lost by Indians. On August 12, 1864, M. C. Keith, W. A. Paxton, Guy C Barton and others, estimated the loss at $200,000. The firm never obtained compensation. Disheartened, but not discouraged, Mr. Miller fixed the place up, and Mr. Peniston, accompanied by his wife and Mrs. Miller, came by stage in the latter part of July, and life on the plains was entered upon.

In the summer of 1866 the Union Pacific railroad was built past the Peniston and Miller trading post. Learning that the terminus would be at North Platte for some time, the partners concluded to move their stock and buildings there. The cedar log store building was taken apart and conveyed to North Platte and set up on what is now the corner of Front and Locust streets. It weathered the storms of winter and the sunshine of summer for many years, and was long looked upon as a relic of early days.

Peniston and Miller built cosy homes on the corners of Sixth and Locust streets which still stand, and carried on a successful general store business up

to 1870, when they dissolved partnership, Mr. Peniston retiring.

Mr. Peniston was police judge for several years, and county judge for some time. He also served in the land office, and filled other positions in the city.

No one knew Mr. Peniston better than A. J. Miller and he states that he was "highly educated and a polished gentleman."

North Platte awoke from its lethargy in 1907 and was greeted by a wave of prosperity and building activity. In that year seventy residences were built and seven miles of cement sidewalks laid, and the Burlington Railroad Company surveyed for a roadbed through the south part of town and purchased $200,000 worth of property. The Odd Fellows also reconstructed and enlarged their lodge building at a cost of $20,000 and the Free Masons erected a temple creditable alike to Masonry and the city at a cost of $30,000.

The Masonic Temple was built towards the close of 1907, and dedicated February 22, 1908. The ground floor is occupied by spacious stores, and the second by a banquet hall, reading and lodge rooms,

cloak rooms and kitchen, and contains all modern improvements.

The dedication was quite an event in North Platte, occurring as it did on Washington's birthday when most people had leisure. It was not wholly local, however, for delegates came from Masonic

The New Masonic Temple.

lodges located at Sidney, Chappell, Ogalalla, Gothenburg, Cozad, Lexington, Gandy Elm Creek, Kearney, Gibbon, Shelton, Wood River and Grand Island, to the number of between thirty and sixty from each lodge. At 2 o'clock nearly two hundred Masons

formed in line on Dewey street, near the Temple, and proceeded to the Pacific hotel to meet members of the grand lodge and escort them to take part in the dedicatory exercises.

When the assembly had gathered in the lodge room, the proceedings were conducted in due and ancient form by Grand Master Ornan J. King, assisted by officers and members of the grand lodge, and in conclusion, Henry W. Wilson delivered an oration ,the subject of which was "Washington and Masonry."

In the evening the proceedings were concluded by a banquet served in the dining hall of the temple, at which over two hundred and thirty Masons participated. All spent an impressive, never-to-be-forgotten evening of social joy, and the day will ever be a red letter one for Masonry in the annals of North Platte.

When the temple was dedicated, Platte Valley Lodge No. 32, had one hundred and seventy members in good standing, and at the time, John G. McIlvane was master; Frank L. Mooney, senior warden; John F. Seibert, junior warden; Frank E. Bullard, secretary; Samuel Goozee, treasurer; Robert Armstrong,

senior deacon; Dr. O. H. Cressler, junior deacon, and Platte J. Gilman, tyler.

Besides what is designated the Blue Lodge, there was at the time Euphrates, chapter 15, A. A. M., organized in 1876, with a following of seventy members; and the Palestine Commandry, No. 13; Knight Templars, organized in '83 with a membership of sixty-eight. There is also the order of the Eastern Star, to which none but Mason's wives, daughters and sisters are admitted. The membership of this order is one hundred and fifty.

The modest two story frame building, long known as the Masonic hall, that occupied the site of the temple was erected in 1872 at a cost of $2,600. The amount was raised by the sale of shares at $50 each to local Masons. The site narrowly escaped being that of a church building. It seems that while the Episcopalians were considering purchasing it, Major William Woodhurst, at the time an enthusiastic Mason, made a trip to Omaha and secured it for "the craft."

The old building was in a sense historical, for before the erection of the court house, the ground floor was leased to Lincoln county and used as a court

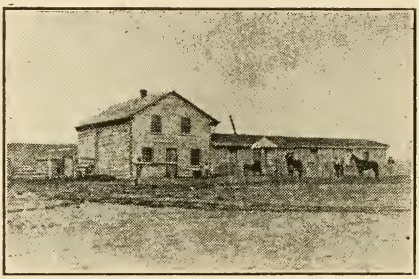
room and office for the transaction of county business. The old lodge room too had its associations, and will not be readily forgotten by Masons who first saw the light within it. It will also be memorable to

Second Masonic Building.

many as the scene of social events at which pleasant hours were spent and friendships formed which time cannot efface.

Platte Valley Lodge No. 32, ancient, free and accepted Masons, had its birth at Cottonwood Springs.

November 15, 1869 in a room 24x24 feet in size, in the second story of the Charles McDonald store building, a rough frontier structure more useful than elegant. $60 was spent on furniture for this modest lodge room, and at the first meeting five Masons were present, and as their names have been preserved, it is a pleasure to give them: Rev. A. A. Reese, army chaplain and first master of the lodge;



Birth Place of Platte Valley Lodge.

Captains A. B. Taylor and W. H. Brown; Edward A. Lieb and Lieutenant Charles B. Brady.

Shortly afterward, Charles McDonald, Dr. F. N. Dick and Eugene A. Carr were admitted, and at the first meeting after letters of dispensation had been granted by the grand lodge of Nebraska, eight petitions for membership were presented, and follow-

ing the first installation of officers was a modest banquet at which the military band furnished music.

The first emergency meeting was called January 13, 1870, to attend the funeral of Richard Ormsby.

When Masonary began to assert itself at Cottonwood Springs, Fort McPherson was garrisoned by a contingent of the Fifth United States Cavalry under the command of Col. W. H. Emery, who was bitterly opposed to Masonry in general, and the local lodge in particular, and did all he could to crush it by persecuting officers and men who attended its meetings. As there was no abatement to his hostility, the brethren concluded to remove the lodge to North Platte, and the erection of the frame building which gave place to the more enduring edifice, was the result.

The Odd Fellows' hall, or rather the home of Walla Walla lodge No. 56, I O. O. F., was dedicated January 14, 1908, and is a credit to the city and that fraternal order.

Adjacent to the Odd Fellows' hall is the Keith theatre, a well arranged place of amusement with capacity to seat 650 persons. It was erected in 1908 at a cost of $40,000.

The erection of fifty residences and the laying down of some four miles of permanent sidewalks made the above year a prosperous one for North Platte.

In August, 1909, bonds for $100,000 were voted for the erection of a waterworks plant to be owned and operated by the city, but the Waterworks Company filed an injunction to prevent the sale of the bonds, claiming that the city agreed to purchase their property at an appraised valuation of $85,000. At this writing, the matter is still in court.

By the close of 1909, North Platte had secured fifteen miles of cement sidewalks, and the streets had been wonderfully improved by grading, and with an elaborate sewer system, the city is sanitary and healthful.

In the spring of 1909 the city purchased four blocks of the Riverdale addition for a public park and set out 250 trees.

Beside the Peniston and Miller additions to the city, and they are extensively built on, there are the Hinman addition, included by the city, April 4, 1887; the Trustees addition, laid out May 5, 1908; and the Riverdale addition, twelve blocks, laid out

in the spring of 1910; then the Selby and South Park which were laid out about the same time.

Just now the citizens have in anticipation the erection of a public library for which Mr. Andrew Carnegie has generously offered to give $12,000, on condition that the city furnish a site and provide a fund for its maintenance.

That the government will erect a federal building in the near future is assured. Building goes on, and the town keeps expanding. Among the substantial buildings erected, may be mentioned the Timmerman Hotel, the Elk block, and Goozee building on Sixth street.

North Platte is classed as a city of the first class, and the largest in Western Nebraska with a population of nearly 5,500. Although a railroad town, it is much more important than such towns usually are; for it is a distributing point, and enjoys all the agricultural trade of the Platte Valley, and when the North River branch of the Union Pacific railway, and the branch line of the B. & M. railroad are in operation, who can predict its possible future?

CHAPTER XI.

COTTONWOOD SPRINGS AND FORT McPHERSON

Cottonwood Springs—First buildings.—Dick Darling —The rush to California.— Travel along the Platte Valley.—Trains of freight wagons.—First marriages in Lincoln County.—Indians come to trade.—Indian hostilities.—Fort McPherson built and garrisoned.—Soldiers killed in Cottonwood canyon.—Other atrocities.—Indians wreck freight train—Dutch Frank.—John Burke.—Buffalo Bill and his Pawnee scouts.—Pawnee soldiers on parade.

As Cottonwood Springs and Fort McPherson were intimately associated with North Platte in the early part of the city's history, it will be well to peer into what is fast becoming the misty past, and rescue

from oblivion the little regarding them that lingers in the memory of people still living.

The at one time scattered village of Cottonwood Springs was a place of considerable importance up to the cessation of Indian hostilities and the abandonment of Fort McPherson. In its palmy days it was the county seat, had attained a population of nearly four hundred, and had a postoffice, but after the Union Pacific railroad reached North Platte and the fort was demolished, it dwindled into insignificance, and houses were sold, torn down, or moved away until nothing was left to indicate that a village had been there.

The name the village bore is that of the precinct of today, and is derived from some springs that were in a slough east of the site of the fort, but the slough and springs have long since dried up, and the cottonwood trees by them have disappeared.

In 1858, the first permanent settlement in what is now Lincoln county was made at Cottonwood Springs in the fall of that year by Boyer, Boyer & Robideau. They erected a log building for a trading post, and traded with the Indians, but in the fall of 1859 a typical plainsman named Dick Darling came

along and began the erection of another building, which was the second. Few equaled Dick at horsemanship, and it was during the Morman war, while employed by the government as dispatch carrier that he made his famous ride from Fort Bridge to Fort Leavenworth in four days, during which he never slept, but ate his food as he best could while riding at full speed, and only stopped long enough to change horses at relay stations.

Dick sold out to Charles McDonald, who completed the building, and put in a stock of supplies for freighters and emigrants. At the time a great rush of emigrants and goldseekers to the Rocky mountains and California was on, and the south side of the Platte river valley was lined with long trains of emigrant and freight wagons heading for the land of promise and hope. Ranches were soon established along the route by parties who kept supplies for the pilgrims. These ranches were a long distance apart at first, but increased in number until they came to be from ten to twelve miles distant from each other. Mail and stage lines were also established along the route, and until the completion of the Union Pacific railway, a constant stream of travel poured along the

valley, and it was a novel sight to see those trains moving across the prairie, some going east and others west as the case might be, and occasionally the scene would be varied by a picturesque band of Mormons on the march, some with mule and ox teams, and others with their worldly possessions loaded on hand carts often hauled by women, while men walked leisurely alongside. During the summer months, it was nothing unusual for from 700 to 1,000 wagons to pass through Cottonwood Springs in one day. This seems incredible, but when it is taken into consideration that the Russell, Majors & Waddell Company were transporting millions of pounds of freight for the government at the time, and it was but one of several companies engaged in the freight business, and that they employed 2,000 men, operated 6,250 wagons with a team force of 75,000 oxen, and had $2,000,000 invested, t will be convincing.

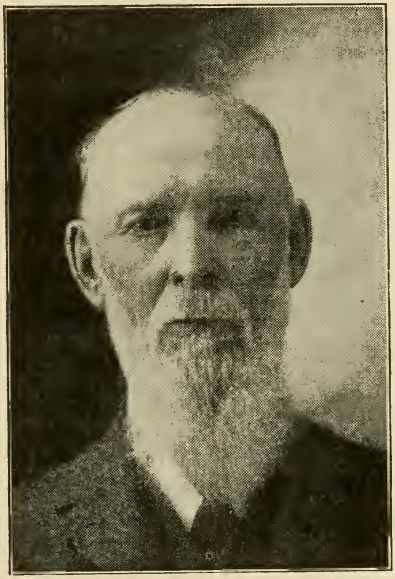
A freight train in those days was composed of twenty-five large sized wagons made to haul 6,000 pounds or more each, and each wagon was drawn by six yoke of large oxen. The crew consisted of a wagon master, who acted as captain, then the assistant wagon master, the extra hands, the night herder

and the cavall, whose duty was to attend to the extra cattle. Beside these, was a driver for each team, making a complete force of thirty-one men for a train. The wagon master was called the "bull wagon boss," the teamsters or wagon drivers, "bull whackers," and a train a "bull outfit." Every man was expected to be thoroughly armed, and know where to "fall in" when an attack was made by hostile bands of Indians. Such attacks frequently occurred, and many a bullwhacker poured out his life blood on the prairie, and died, "unwept, unhonored and unsung."

As stated, Charles McDonald opened an overland general store at Cottonwood Springs, which in time became an important depot for supplies for emigrants and a place of shelter. Despite business interests, Mr. McDonald found time to look after the welfare of the settlement, and aid in the organization of Lincoln county, which at first was called Shorter county. He was the first county official, being elected judge for the county, immediately after its organization and in his time, he held the office of county clerk, and county commissioner, and was the first county superintendent of schools.

The first marriage that took place in what is now

Lincoln county, occurred on June 10, 1861, at Cottonwood Springs, which was the county seat in those days. Charles McDonald being probate judge, issued the license and performed the ceremony, the con-



Charles McDonald.

tracting parties being Camille Pettier and Malinda Hall. The second marriage did not occur until May 21, 1863, and the third couple married were Robert Rowland, and Dolly Grooms. Shortly after this wed-

ding, the marriage of Washington Hinman and Virginia Hall occurred, Mr. McDonald tying the nuptial knot.

Mrs. Charles McDonald joined her husband shortly after his settlement at Cottonwood Springs, and was the first white woman to permanently locate in Lincoln county and probably on that account she was considered the best looking lady in the district. She was called Milla Huska by the Indians, which interpreted, means white squaw. In a sense, she came from the haunts of civilization to those of savagery, for Cottonwood Springs was infested by Indians more or less hostile, but she was a woman of strong personality and not easily intimidated and adapted herself to circumsatnces. Her son, W. H. McDonald, is said to have been the first white child born in Lincoln county. Mrs. McDonald died at North Platte, December 28, 1898, and rests in the family lot in the city cemetery.

It could always be told by the howling of the wolves when Indians were coming to Cottonwood Springs, and they frequently came by the hundred, braves and squaws to trade, and indulge in a feast of bread and coffee, and the merchant who feasted

them most was generally awarded their trade. Buffalo, beaver and other furs were exchanged for ornaments and merchandise, and as the ordinary price of a buffalo robe was about one dollar, traders made immense profits. Fire-arms and ammunition were always in demand, and Indians would pay an enormous price in furs and ponies to procure them.

Indians were always hungry, and occasionally, forward and menacing, and would come about houses and peer through the windows, and by times, seek to pry a sash open with a tomahawk, and even squaws would make themselves objectionable by covering panes with their faces to an extent to exclude the light.

In 1862, the settlement was disturbed by rumors that the Indians were on the war path, and watch was kept day and night to guard against surprise. Hostilities between Sioux and Cheyennes were in progress at the time, and many depredations were committed. A number of white people were killed and scalped, and as life and property had been insecure for a lengthened period, the government concluded to restrain the Indians by military supervision. For this purpose, Fort McPherson was built

at the mouth of Cottonwood canyon in 1863. The buildings were constructed of logs procured by cutting down trees in the canyon and neighborhood.

The fort was first occupied by Captain Hammer, Company G, Seventh Iowa Cavalry, and a detachment of troops; but Captain Bedford arrived from Brownville the same year with one company of soldiers. At that time, or shortly after, an Indian was killed by a squad of soldiers from Fort Kearney, and in imitation of the manner in which the Sioux Indians disposed of their dead, the body was placed on a framework of poles. This incident greatly offended the Indians, and increased their hatred of the white.

Fort McPherson was built none to soon, for Indian atrocities in its vicinity became alarmingly numerous and frequent.

On August 8, 1864, the Cheyenne Indians killed eleven men and two women near Plum Creek (now Lexington) and "On the 9th," says the Omaha Nebraskan of August 17, 1864, "a hundred Indians attacked a wagon train, killing, sacking and burning with characteristic savagery."

Col. Summers of the Iowa Cavalry, found that be-

sides thirteen men killed, there were five men, three women, and several children missing. "At Plum Creek," says a man giving evidence, "I saw the bodies of eleven other men whom the Indians had murdered, and I helped to bury them. I also saw fragments of wagons still burning, and the dead body of a man who was killed by the Indians at Smith's ranch, and the ruins of the ranch which had been burned."

Lieutenant George P. Bellen stated that the men killed at Plum Creek were first wounded and kept lying on the ground while the savages had a war dance around them. They were finally tortured to death and scalped, and two women were taken into captivity.

This massacre was the most atrocious of all Indian raids in Nebraska, but it did not suffice, for on the following day, they killed two men three miles east of Gilman's ranch, and shot Bob Carson as he was mowing east of Cottonwood Springs.

On September 16, 1864, General Robert B. Mitchel and several soldiers, while gathering plums in Cottonwood canyon were surprised by a band of hostile Indians who attacked them without warning.

The general miraculously escaped by dashing into the thicket, and creeping unperceived to a safe distance, reached the fort by a circuitous route, but when he returned with aid, it was found that every man had been murdered, scalped and mutilated.

That same day four stage drivers going west were killed by Indians on the road between Kearney and Cottonwood Springs.

Troops at the fort were kept busy endeavoring to control the Indians, but despite their vigilance, stock was run off and depredations committed, and so matters went on.

In the spring of 1867, the popular Major Frank North then stationed at Fort McPherson, was commanded to enlist four companies of Pawnee Indians to serve as guards for the construction gangs of the Union Pacific railway. The experiment proved satisfactory, but they were discharged in the winter of 1868, and other two companies enilsted, of which more hereafter.

In the fall of the latter year, a freight train was wrecked and plundered by Indians west of Plum Creek. It seems they demolished a culvert, and after tearing up the rails, watched a train approach,

and waited results. The train was ditched, and some of the crew killed by the Indians, among them was the engineer who, when dying, called to the fireman to tell the superintendent to look after his wife and children. The Indians were too busy plundering the train to pursue the very few who saved themselves by flight. Everything was taken from the cars the red men cared for, and many ornamented themselves with things found, while others unrolled bolts of calico, and securing the ends to their ponies, rode about at breakneck speed and high glee with the cloth fluttering behind in the wind. After enjoying themselves, they fired the train and danced round while it burned.

Along in 1868, some ten companies of cavalry and infantry were garrisoned at Fort McPherson and kept busy guarding emigrants, settlers, stage coaches and construction gangs of the Union Pacific railway from Indian attacks.

Despite military vigilance, white people at times were murdered and depredations committed; the men working on the Hinman farm in the vicinity of Cottonwood Springs being attacked and five killed.

About this time a popular engineer called

"Dutch Frank" had a startling adventure when coming from Grand Island to North Platte with his train. Upon rounding a curve a few miles east of the Platte river, he observed an unusually large band of Indians crowded on the track to all appearance intent on mischief. There was no time to reverse the train, and to stop, meant certain death, so, pulling the throttle wide open, he went plowing through them, killing some and maiming others. The train received a volley of bullets from the rifles of the Indians, but escaped injury, and when it reached the depot, the front of the engine was found to be bespattered with blood, and the wonder was that it escaped being ditched.

Among several who lost heavily by Indian raids was John Burke of blessed memory. On his way to Pikes Peak, he reached Cottonwood Springs early in 1864, but owing to serious Indian troubles along the route, concluded to abandon the trip and locate. He built a road ranch on the California trail some seven miles west of Fort McPherson, and did some farming by irrigation, bringing water by ditch from the Platte river which flowed about a miles north of his place. He was energetic, and secured mail con-

tracts, and contracts with the Union Pacific railroad to supply ties and telegraph poles, and also with Fort McPherson for hay and wood. He prospered, but one day in the fall of 1868, the Indians swooped down on him, burned his ranch, drove off his stock, and appropriated whatever they fancied, and he and his family, after narrowly escaping death, reached Fort McPherson in an exhausted condition.

Mr. Burke afterwards purchased the old Ben Holladay stage station, located about two miles west of the fort, and to facilitate the fulfillment of his contracts, he built a wagon bridge across the Platte river, some mile and a half west of the fort. In June, 1872, high water took out several spans of this bridge, and as he had a consignment of government freight to deliver at the fort, he constructed a boat and loaded it, intending to cross the open channels and gain the opposite bank. All seemed favorable, but through some unaccountable accident, the boat sank, and Mr. Burke went down with it. His body was recovered, and interred in the family plot on the old homestead, and his decendants are esteemed citizens of North Platte.

Mr. Burke was a man of determination, and

neither obstacles nor danger detered him from carrying out his plans, and it was not easy to turn him aside from a purpose. On one occasion, a small band of Indians drove off some of his stock, and so determined was he to recover the animals, that he followed the trail alone for nearly two hundred miles, but did not succeed, and returned weary and disappointed.

On another occasion he was more fortunate. It was on the morning of January 7, 1870, while a small herd of cattle belonging to him were grazing near Fort McPherson, that a band of roving Indians rounded it up, and hurriedly drove it off. An alarm was given, and Lieutenant Thomas with a portion of Company I, of the Fifth United States Cavalry started in pursuit of the red skins without breakfast or rations. After a hard chase of about sixty miles across a rough country, they, on the morning of the 8th, succeeded in surprising the Indian camp and recapturing all the stolen stock and about thirty head of Indian ponies. Three Indians were killed and quite a number wounded. The entire camp was captured, including blankets, buffalo robes, saddles, and other articles and what could not be brought away

was burned. The famous Buffalo Bill accompanied the party and did valuable service.

During 1868, the enmity of the Indians towards the whites seemed more virulent, and it was wholly owing to the presence of military at Fort McPherson and North Platte, they were kept in anything like subjection. The garrison of the fort had been increased, and General Carr put in command, and besides the regular soldiers was a band of some three hundred Pawnee Indians under command of the popular Major Frank North, and a band of scouts under command of Buffalo Bill, who was chief, and noted for his persistency in following a trail until the quarry was run to earth. At the time, the Sioux Indians were somewhat on the warpath, and revelling in unrestricted freedom, were committing depredations in the Republican Valley, and when opportunity afforded, were not slow to do likewise in Lincoln county. As the Pawnees and Sioux were inveterate enemies, the Pawnees rejoiced at having an opportunity to square matters with their ancestral foes, and fought with such zeal, that their services were invaluable in a campaign against the Sioux. The band organized by Major North under orders from General

Auger, were so thoroughly drilled as to understand what was required of them, and any command given by Major North was obeyed with alacrity, for he spoke their language fluently. To show how they appeared on parade when showing themselves to advantage, it will be well to quote from the autobiography of W. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) chief of scouts.

"The Pawnee scouts were also reviewed, and it was very amusing to see them in full regulation uniform. They had been furnished regular cavalry uniform, and on parade some of them had their heavy overcoats on (in summer); others their large black hats, with all the brass accoutrements attached; some of them wore pantaloons, and others only wore breech clouts. Others wore regulation pantaloons, but no shirts, and were bareheaded; others again had the seat of their pantaloons cut out, leaving only leggings. Some wore brass spurs, but had neither boots nor moccasins. With all this melange of oddity, they understood the drill well for Indians. The commands of course, were given in their own language by Major North, who could talk it as well as any full blooded Pawnee."

The Pawnees were bold and reckless in battle,

and performed numerous deeds of daring, and heroically endured hardship. On the other hand, the Sioux, although far from being cowards, were natural born thieves, desirous of securing property without trading or recompence. and to them, a majority of the depredations were traced.

CHAPTER XII.

General Carr and command pursue Indians.— A sharp fight.—A decisive battle.—Indians run off horses.—The pursuit.—An Indian defeat.—Fort McPherson during the '70s.—The bugle call.—Indians raid Mrs. Cody's kitchen.—Duke Alexis of Russia arrives at North Platte.—Goes with escort to hunt buffalo.—Buffalo Bill as guide.—Spotted Tail and his warriors.—Miles of buffalo.—A hunt.—The grand dinner.—Spotted Tail's speech.

As reports of murders and depredations committed by the Sioux came in, General Carr decided to go after them and administer chastisement, and started out in pursuit with several companies of troops and the band of Pawnees just described. Buffalo Bill and six Pawnee scouts set out to locate the horde, which they did on the extent of country between the Platte and Republican rivers; the Sioux

numbering several hundred lodges. General Carr and his command followed slowly, keeping well in the rear, but after the lapse of some hours, Buffalo Bill was seen riding rapidly toward them to inform the general of his discovery, and the fact that the Sioux were all unconscious of their approach. The general marshalled his forces preparatory to the attack and approached the enemy at the double quick. The Sioux were on the move towards the Platte river, but they no sooner discovered the near approach of the soldiers than they took to flight, leaving their baggage and everything that would impede a rapid march. To puzzle their pursuers, they scattered in small bands, striking out in different directions. The troops also separated, and in companies followed in the direction of the Platte river. Darkness coming on, they camped for the night, but early in the morning, the troops were on the move, each company striking out on a different trail. One company came up with a band of one hundred Indians, who took to flight. After passing a short bend of the Platte river, the tracks were observed to come together, and the several companies of soldiers also joined each other at the spot. On the third day, Buffalo Bill's di-

vision discovered six hundred Sioux warriors near the Platte river. The soldiers sought to shelter themselves in the ravines, but there was plenty of time to make preparations, as the Indians seemed in no hurry to begin the attack. However, a simultaneous assault was made by both sides, and a sharp fight followed, but the position of the soldiers being secure, the effort to dislodge them failed, and their loss was but slight. Many Indians were killed, and among them the famous Sioux chief, Tall Bull, who fell by the unerring aim of Buffalo Bill.

This engagement was satisfactory so far, but in ten days after it, General Carr, with his entire command started out in pursuit of the Sioux Indians again. The Scouts, led on by Buffalo Bill, struck a trail, and following it, the soldiers came up with the Sioux, who were in force, at a place called Summit Springs, on Sunday morning, July 11, 1869. The Indians at once put themselves on the defensive, but the soldiers attacked, and a battle was fought. There was much determination and bravery on both sides, and although the fight was of short duration, it was fiercely waged, and resulted in the utter defeat of the Sioux Indians. Many soldiers and Pawnees

were killed, and more than six hundred Sioux fell, and among them were many of the bravest warriors. Several hundred squaws were made prisoners, and a large number of ponies captured.

This engagement was practically the last encounter between the United States troops and Indians in this part of the country deserving the name of a battle. The crushing defeat practically ended war with the Indians, for it broke the spirit of the Sioux, who were a restless horde and always at war with other tribes, and ended troubles along the line of the Union Pacific railroad in Nebraska.

Although many depredations were committed afterwards, they were confined to attacks on settlers, and to the stealing and running off of horses and cattle. Fear kept the Indians in subjection ever after and any skirmishes that occurred were only of a nature common to an Indian country.

During the spring of 1870, Indians raided a stock ranch near Fort McPherson and ran off twenty-one head of horses, and with them Buffalo Bill's fast running horse, "Powder Face." The fort being the base of military operations, the garrison was always ready to respond to the bugle call, and when this

raid was made known to the commander, a company of cavalry was ordered out to pursue the raiders and capture the stolen horses. Buffalo Bill acted as guide and led the way to the southwest. They rode thirty miles the first day, and when nearing Medicine creek, where Bill thought the Indians would camp for the night, he called a halt, and went forward to reconnoiter. Finding the Indians where he supposed they would be, he rode back and brought the soldiers to a ravine near the creek the Indians could not very well learn of their presence, and as darkness was coming on, arrangements were made to attack the camp before daylight next morning. Accordingly, at early dawn, the cavalry rode into the Indian camp with a shout, and with pistols and sabers drawn. The Indians were completely taken by surprise and in no shape to offer resistance, but they made a stand, and a short, sharp fight ensued, during which quite a number were killed, but they were soon put to flight, and being pressed by the cavalry, many were overtaken and slain. It is told that during the flight, Buffalo Bill brought down two Indians with one shot. The stolen horses were recovered, but Bill's favorite horse "Powder Face" was not

among them, and although every effort was made to locate it, it was never found.

Fort McPherson has many association, and tales of Indian raids, and conflicts with the military might be continued, but the atrocities narrated, will suffice.

Mrs. W. F. Cody, so well known and respected in North Platte, lived for three years at Fort McPherson, coming there from St. Louis in November, 1870. Her home was a typical log cabin built on the reservation outside the fort, and in it she experienced all the dangers and excitement of frontier garrison life.

Although the worst days of Indian warfare in the locality had passed, there was no lack of excitement. Scouts were constantly coming and going, and unexpected visits from Pawnees and Sioux had to be guarded against. Frequent departure of garrison troops equipped for skirmish duty could be seen, and often the fort would be thrown into confusion in the night time by the bugle call, and then would follow the hasty gathering of troops, and the quick sally out upon the dark prairie. The return too, was often saddened by the ranks being thinned, and many weak and weary after a long march, and fre-

quently many suffering from arrow wounds would be brought in.

Even with all the routine of fort life, amusing incidents cropped up. Upon an occasion, Mr. Cody invited a number of personal friends from the east, and some officers of the fort to dinner. Mrs. Cody exerted herself to have as ample a feast as the limited resources of the fort would permit; but great was her dismay, when after greeting her guests, she entered the kitchen and found a band of Sioux devouring the dinner with seeming relish. Her indignation was inexpressible, but the result was, the guests had to dine elsewhere.

It was at Fort McPherson that "Ned" Butline of dime novel fame, just from the east with silk hat and broadcloth, "discovered" W. F. Cody, and by writing him up, introduced him to notoriety, wealth and fame as Buffalo Bill, a circumstance that did not only make the wild west show possible, but a success.

A noteworthy association of Fort McPherson which must not be overlooked, is the grand buffalo hunt gotten up for the entertainment of the Grand Duke Alexis, of Russia, in which Buffalo Bill figured as guide.

The duke and party arrived at North Platte by special train, about the middle of January, 1872, and were received by Captain Hays, Buffalo Bill, and Captain Egan, with a company of cavalry. General Sheridan introduced the duke to the leaders of the party, and Buffalo Bill tendered him the use of his celebrated horse, "Buckskin Joe."

General Palmer had established a camp for the occasion at Red Willow creek which consisted of two hospital tents, in which meals were served; ten wall tents and a tent for soldiers and servants. There was a stock of 10,000 rations each of flour, sugar coffee, to say nothing of wines, choice liquors and other beverages, and also a supply of 1,000 pounds of tobacco to be distributed among the Indians.

General Sheridan had sent out two members of his staff, General Forsyth and Dr. Arsch, to visit Fort McPherson and make arrangements for the hunt. Buffalo Bill was appointed guide, and he made all due preparations, and General Forsyth and Dr. Arsch conceived the idea that it would prove a source of amusement and interest to the grand duke to induce a large number of Indians to participate in the hunt, and give an exhibition of their peculiar ceremonies and skill with the bow and arrow.

That such an arrangement might be made, Buffalo Bill visited the camp of Spotted Tail at Red Willow creek, and engaged one hundred of the leading chiefs and warriors, and arranged with them to meet at the camp established for the occasion.

As the grand duke seemed to be as much interested in the Indians as the buffalo, General Sheridan had a tribe of Brules, consisting of fifty warriors and all the squaws and children of the tribe under command of Spotted Tail, moved bodily into camp, so that the guest might have an opportunity to study them at his leisure.

From Fort McPherson, the party proceeded to the camp at Red Willow where arrangements were complete, and the Indians waiting. Spotted Tail was attired in a suit of ill-fitting government clothing. which made him uneasy, and showed how unused he was to the clothes of the white man; but upon being introduced to the grand duke, he extended his hand with the customary "How." The exercises of the evening for the amusement of the duke, were samples of Indian horsemanship, lance throwing and bow-shooting. There was also a sham fight to illustrate the Indian mode of warfare, and a war dance, in all of which Alexis took great interest.

While the fetes were in progress, General Custer sent out scouts to look for buffalo, and about midnight, it was reported that there was a herd within three miles. The duke was so elated at this, that he turned in, in joyful anticipation of coming sport, and was up in the morning when the cavalry bugle sounded reveille, and strolling round, found General Custer on the picket line, inspecting the horse he was expected to ride.

Before breakfast was over, scouts came in and reported that the main herd was between the Red Willow and Medicine creeks about fifteen miles from camp, and the order to mount was at once given.

Before the start was made, however, General Custer announced the following rules for the chase: The first attack to be made by Alexis, accompanied by himself, Buffalo Bill and two Brule Indians, the main party to remain in the back-ground until the Grand Duke had made his first "kill," after which the hunt was to be open to all. An experienced buffalo hunter was assigned to ride beside each member of the grand duke's suit, and to instruct him in the game of getting along side and killing a buffalo.

On the way out, Alexis asked General Custer a thousand questions, and practiced shooting at imaginary buffalo. His hunting costume consisted of heavy gray cloth trimmed with green, with buttons bearing the imperial arms of Russia, and an Australian turban.

The herd of buffalo sighted, proved immense, and covered several square miles. The hunters approached against the wind, and halted in a hollow ravine, within three-quarters of a mile of the nearest bison, acting as sentinel. The ravine afforded concealment for another half mile, and then it was an open rush. The grand duke, Custer and Buffalo Bill spurring their horses to the utmost, dashed out of the ravine, and went full tilt for the herd. Alexis had selected a big bull for his victim, and when within one hundred yards, fired, but missed. Buffalo Bill, who rode alongside of him, handed him his rifle, and with it, the duke brought down the animal.

A free-for-all chase began, and there was a wild rush of counts and cowboys, troopers and Indians after the stampeded herd. Alexis stopped long enough, however, to cut off the tail of his first victim as a trophy, and then joined the rest.

Luncheon was served in the field, and several Indian warriors armed with bows and arrows hung about and begged for the scraps of food left. Alexis was in a perfect wonderland, and among other things wanted to know why the Indians carried their ancient weapons, and was told they preferred them to firearms for killing buffalo. Upon the duke expresing doubt, General Custer sent out two Brule bucks with orders to find a buffalo, run it into camp, and kill it with an arrow in presence of the grand duke. Within an hour, the Indians returned whooping and yelling, and chased a buffalo cow straight into camp, and there, Chief Two Lance, circling swiftly to its left with bow full drawn, sent an arrow whizzing into its body behind the shoulder, piercing the heart, and coming out at the other side. The animal fell dead, and so delighted was the grand duke with the exhibition of skill that he gave Two Lance a twenty dollar gold piece, and afterwards as much more for the bow and quiver of arrows which he wished to preserve as a souvenir of the event. On the same day, the grand duke performed the rare feat of killing a buffalo at one hundred paces distant, with a pistol shot.

There was a grand dinner in camp that night, during which Spotted Tail related remarkable stories of the skill of Indians with the bow and arrow.

Reminiscence of former hunts were recalled, and stories lost nothing by telling, as liberal libations of champagne and other drinks heightened imaginations. The hunt lasted one week, and is still fresh in the memory of old residents of North Platte.

Such are a few of many associations that cluster round Fort McPherson. As we have seen, it was a place of military activity in days of yore,but the advance of civilization, and the cessation of Indian hostilities rendered it unnecessary, and in 1880 it was abandoned, and the buildings dismantled and disposed of. The flag staff that stood in the center of the parade ground was the initial point of the original boundary lines of the military reserve, which was two miles east, two miles west, one mile south, and three north. This land, with the exception of what had been set apart for a national cemetery, was sold for agricultural purposes, and in due time, the husbandman subdued the stubborn soil, and the prairie gave place to cultivated, well fenced fields, snug farm yards and comfortable dwelling houses. The

village of Cottonwood Springs is now a memory, and crops are grown annually on the site of Fort McPherson; and the Indian, the squaw, the trader, the trooper and the buffalo are dimly remembered by old residents of Lincoln county, and are now ranked among the traditions of the locality.

The exact location of Fort McPherson's flag staff was long a source of dispute and inconvenience to surveyors, until excavation disclosed the cedar log socket, and the spot is now marked by a stone on which the letters "F. S." are cut.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NATIONAL CEMETERY.

The cemetery viewed from the gate.—System of marking graves—Grave of Spotted Horse.—Of Guss Hess.—Gratton Massacre memorial.—Dead brought from many places.—Cemtery records and superintentendents.—G. A. Haverfield.—Col. P. J. O'Rourke.

An association of Fort McPherson, yes, and also of North Platte, is the National cemetery where the "star spangled banner" waves over the graves of United States soldiers, who even in death are cared for by a generous government. This tree embowered cemetery is a prominent object on the landscape, and is no great distance from where the fort was situated.

On October 17, 873, a portion of Fort McPherson

reservation amounting to 128 acres was set apart for a National cemetery, and of this, four acres were enclosed by a brick wall, and within the enclosure a house for a superintendent was built.

Soldiers who died at Fort McPherson were buried in a plot of ground on the face of the hill a little southeast of the entrance to Cottonwood canyon, but when the National cemetery was made ready to receive the dead, these, and a few bodies of civilians were exhumed and interred in the southeast section.

Today, the scene is changed, and when the neat iron gate of the cemetery is entered, the eye rests on the substantial brick residence of the superintendent and gravel walk leading up to it. Beyond, are long rows of white headstones, uniform in appearance and size, that stud the green sward and mark graves of soldiers who nevermore shall answer the roll call, or be roused by the notes of the bugle. Numerous tall trees spread their foilage-laden branches and shade this "eternal camping ground," and make the whole a scene of silven solitude.

Close to the gate are two iron tablets with raised letters, on which is an extract from "An act

to establish and protect National cemeteries, approved February 22, 1867." Section third, is given, which states, that "Any person who shall willfully destroy, mutilate, deface, injure, or remove any monument, gravestone, or other structure, or shall willfully destroy, cut, break, injure, or remove any tree, shrub, or plant within the limits of any National cemetery shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof before any district or circuit court of the United States, shall be liable to a fine of not less than twenty-five, nor more than one hundred dollars, or imprisonment of not less than fifteen, nor more than sixty days, according to the nature and aggravation of the offense."

Close by these tablets is one giving an extract from General Order No. 80, September 1, 1876, forbidding the desecration of soldiers' graves by picnic parties in a national cemetery, by vending refreshments therein, and stating emphatically that such a practice will not be allowed in any national cemetery.

A little farthur on, on the south side of the walk, is another tablet bearing the following verse:

"Rest on embalmed and sainted dead,
Dear as the blood ye gave,
No impious footsteps here shall tread
The herbage of your grave."

On the south wall of the superintendent's residence is a large tablet bearing a long extract from the address of President Lincoln, at the dedication of the Gettysburg National cemetery, November 19, 1863, which every patriotic American knows or ought to know.

It is saddening to wander through this well kept burying place and reflet that

"Where the blades of the green grass quiver,
Asleep are the ranks of the dead"

silently fulfilling the immutable decree that pronounces man to be dust, and that to dust he shall return.

There are few stones erected by private individuals to the memory of loved ones, but stones furnished by the government to mark the graves of the known and unknown dead are numerous. Those to the memory of the known simply bear the name of the soldier, date of death, and the regiment he served in, and the number of the grave he occupies; but stones marking the graves of the unknown are less pretentious, and bear nothing more than the number of the grave, so they slumber on, all unknowing and unknown "to dumb forgetfulness a prey."

A stone, numbered 258, marks the grave of the Indian Chief Spotted Horse. He had a weakness for collecting the scalps of white men in the days of his youth, and got a few, but now he rests with the pale face, and his war whoop is silenced forever.

Near the grave of Spotted Horse is that of Gus Hess, one of North Platte's early citizens, whose figure, until recently, was familiar as he walked slowly along, leaning on his staff. He was proud of having "seen service" and talked entertainingly of his experience; he did his duty, and his life was blameless. The small stone at the head of his grave, is inscribed, "816, Gustavus Hess, Neb." That is all.

There is a square block of white marble resting on a pedestal, dedicated to the memory of the enlisted men, Company G, Sixth Infantry, killed in action near Fort Laramie, Wyoming (Gratton massacre) August 19th, 1854.

On three sides of this massive memorial the names of twenty-eight soldiers who fell are inscribed.

The bodies of these men were buried nine miles east of Fort Laramie at the place where they were killed, but were exhumed in 1888, and brought to this cemetery and are interred round the base of

the memorial. About the same time, the bodies of Indian chief, American Horse and his wife and children, prepared according to Indian custom and placed on a scaffolding of poles some twelve feet high, that braved the blast for many years in an old burying-place near the site of Fort Laramie, where many soldiers were buried, were interred in this cemetery.

Altogether, according to Capt. B. F. Baker, a former superintendent, referred to further on, 109 bodies of soldiers were brought from Fort Laramie and interred, and other military posts have consigned dead to its keeping. He credits Fort Bridger, Wyoming, with twenty-five bodies, Fort Fred Steel, with sixty-three, Fort Hale, S. D., with forty-two, Fort Sidney with nine, and during the superintendency of Col. O'Rourke, some 200 bodies were brought from Fort Kearney, and several from Fort Fetterman, and the bodies of fifteen soldiers drowned in Box Elder canyon by a flood of water resulting from a cloud burst were interred. The remains from Fort Kearney were mostly of men slaughtered by Indians in a never-to-be forgotten massacre. The fact is, Fort McPherson National cemetery, has been, and

will be a receptacle for the soldier dead of many places.

It is estimated that up to the close of 1910, 848 soldiers were laid away under the green sward of this cemetery, 487 known, and 361 unknown.

Access to the cemetery records can be had at the office of the superintendent, but they are of no great interest, although much regarding the cemetery's history may be gleaned from them. Interments are carefully recorded, and the grave of any "known" soldier can be easily located, but the entries are brief, the name of the soldier, the regiment he served in, the date of his death and the number of the grave is all that is registered.

Two books contain copies of letters, mostly of a business nature, but here and there are entries of interest.

A George Griffen seems to have been the first superintendent of the cemetery, and was succeeded by a John Ridgely, who entered upon the duties, January 30, 1874, and served until February 10, 1874. A Thomas Mulaeny next took hold and served from February 10, 1874, until June 14, 1876. He was succeeded by a battle-scarred veteran named George A.

Haverfield, who was appointed, June 14, 1876, and served until August 15, 1877. He had served in the 126th regiment, Ohio Volunteers, and went through all the various marches and battles in which it bore an honorable part. He was severely wounded several times, but was not knocked out until he lost a leg in one of the hard fought battles of the Civil war.

This man had a well stored memory, and narrated in a graphic manner, events in which he took part during the great struggle.

Col. P. J. O'Rourke succeeded Mr. Haverfield, and entered upon the duties of superintendent. August 15, 1877, and served, the record states, up to January 20, 1885, or until the time of his death. His son, Mr. J.J. O'Rourke of Brady, performed the duties of the office for ten months before a successor to his father was appointed.

Col. O'Rourke was born in the city of Cork, Ireland, in 1814, and when a young man went to England, and married Miss Mary Hodgson, at Bolton, Lankashire, in 1838. He and his young wife came to this country and settled in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania. He enlisted in 1861, and served continuously until the close of the Civil war He was captain

of Company E, first regiment of Pennsylvania Reserves, and was brevetted major for gallantry at the battle of Fredricksburg, and was afterwards brevetted lieutenant-colonel for "gallant and meritorious services during the war;" so reads the commission. He was with the army of the Potomac, and was in all the great battles during the war, and was severely wounded at the battle of Gettysburg. He experienced much hardship and suffering, and when gentle peace returned, was honorably discharged, and retired to private life. His name is in the list of heroes on the soldiers' monument at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. A gun and sword captured during a skirmish at Gettysburg are kept and highly prized by the O'Rourke family.

On November 4, 1885, Captain Benjamin F. Baker relieved Mr. J. J. O'Rourke, and discharged the duties of the office until February 12, 1892.

Captain Baker has materially aided with information regarding the cemetery, and the enumeration on a previous page, of re-interments by him, of bodies of soldiers sent from various forts is valuable. The office seemingly, was no sinecure, for he states that during 1890, he interred over 300 bodies of sol-

diers sent from various places, and that 344 interments had been made when he took charge.

A record, or even jottings of Captain Baker's experience while carrying arms in defense of his country would make interesting reading, but being of a retiring disposition, he sums up the whole by the statement that his record is the same as thousands of others.

Captain Benjamin F. Baker was born and raised in the state of Maine, and coming to Illinois in 1852 enlisted in Company D, 72nd Illinois Infantry, August 9, 1862. He was commissioned captain of Company H, 3rd heavy artillery, April 20, 1864, and was mustered out, May 1, 1876. He saw much active service, and experienced many of the hardships incident to that campaign, yet, with all, he was never seriously ill, and now enjoys a serene old age at Maxwell, Nebraska.

George W. Allen succeeded Captain Baker as superintendent of the cemetery, and entered upon the duties, February 12, 1892, and on October 10, 1895, was relieved by Ludwig Baege. Mr. L. H. Dow succeeded Baege August 6, 1897, and discharged the duties of the office until May 23, 1904.

Mr. L. H. Dow was born in the town of Yorkshire, Caldrauqus county, New York, October 19, 1838, and in early manhood drifted to Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, and married. He enlisted in Company D, 19th Wisconsin Infantry, September 23, 1861 and was afterwards transferred to Co. I, 11th Veteran Reserve Corps, June, 1864, and discharged from service, November 20, 1865.

Judging by the neat appearance of the cemetery, Mr. E. T. Ingle, the present superintendent, appointed November 1, 1909, fills the office with ability. He was born at Memphis, Tennessee, August 3, 1847, and enlisted in Company A, 11th Kansas Cavalry at Fort Leavensworth, Kansas, August 18, 1862, and was mustered out October 26, 1865. He saw service in the famous General Blunt campaign in Arkansas, and afterwards in Missouri Guerella warfare for over a year on the Kansas-Missouri line.

CHAPTER XIV.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

Life sketches of James Belton, Dr. F. H. Longley, Dr. Nicholas McCabe, George W. Vroman, John Bratt and C. F. Tracy.

A tradition in the Belton family is, that their ancestors went from England to Ireland with Cromwell and settled there. Be that as it may, it is certain that his father and mother came from Ireland to America, and that he was born at Sangerties, New York, on June 27, 1831. He attended the public school at Sundusky, Ohio, until 15 years old, and went to Buffalo, New York, to serve an apprenticeship to the trade of a coppersmith. At its completion, the money panic of 1857 had paralyzed business, and to better his fortune he started for New Orleans, but stopping off at New Albany, Indiana, circumstances in-

duced him to remain for several years. There he married Caroline Graham, a school teacher. A happy marriage makes a harmonious home, and Mr. Belton's was a model in this respect, for a cross word was never heard within it, and two daughters grew to womanhood amid pleasant surroundings, but sorrow came, for after a married life of forty-six years, Mrs. Belton died June 22, 1906, and the radiance of the home subsided.

His daughter Mary married William McDonald, cashier of McDonald State Bank, who is supposed to have been the first white child born in Lincoln County.

Mr. Belton came to North Platte in May, 1869, and entered the employ of the Union Pacific Railroad Company as foreman of the copper shop, and held the position for five years. In 1870, he went into the hardware business, and in 1871 was elected county clerk, and held the office over four years, and during the time he did not charge anything for recording deeds, mortgages or taking acknowledgements. with the exception of the cases of Thomas Keliher and James Fraser, and that was owing to time occupied going to their farms to take acknowledgements.

Mr. Belton was director of the city schools for over seven years, and showed his liberalism by ignoring all religious prejudice, and making ability to teach, the only qualification.

In 1878 he was elected mayor when the city was heavily in debt, but under his management, rigid economy, and a levy of five mills for current expenses, and two and one-half to pay off the debt, straightened out the affairs of the city, and two and one-half mills were returned to the taxpayers. When his term of office expired, all obligations were cancelled. It may be added, that he liberally donated his salary for services as mayor, to the city.

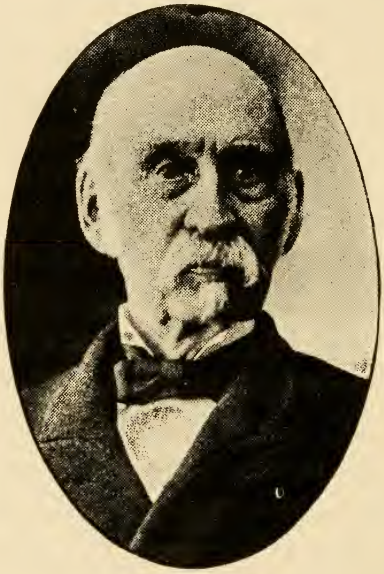
In 1889, Mr. Belton ran for the office of county commissioner and was elected, his object being to have county business conducted according to law; as, at that time, things were in a somewhat complicated condition. Mr. Belton labored for reform, and ultimately, had the satisfaction of knowing that the supreme court decided that his way of settling with the county treasurer was correct, and all counties have settled in that way since.

Mr. Belton has been a member of the Presbyterian church for over fifty years. He retired from ac-

tive business August 1, 1900, but continues to take deep interest in the affairs of the city, and everything tending to better social conditions.

DR. F. H. LONGLEY.

It is needless to apologize for enumerating Dr. F.



H. Longley among the pioneer citizens who materially aided in the upbuilding and development of our city. He is the oldest resident physician, and probably the oldest physician and surgeon in the state of Ne-

braska, as he came to Omaha on the 1st of March, 1867, the day the state was admitted into the union. He went to Blair and practiced for a time, but upon his appointment to become the first receiver at the United States land office at North Platte, in 1872, he came to the city and assumed the duties of the office. North Platte was then little more than a straggling village with three stores and many saloons. One of the stores was owned by Charles McDonald, who had recently left Cottonwood Springs and become a citizen; the other by Foley and Center, and the third by Otto Uhley. The northern portion of Spruce street (now Dewey) and Front street, from Pine to the military post was the business section, and they who built dwellings did so as near as possible to these thorough-fares. The north side had less than a half dozen houses; and the numerous sloughs by which it was interspersed, were the haunt of ducks and other aquantic birds, and a hunting ground for youths of the city. The late Dr. F. N. Dick was the popular physician, the pioneer drug store was that of McLucas and Dick, and the old log school house was the temple of learning. Such is a glimpse of the city when Dr. Longley arrived. He

held the receivership of the land office for three years, and resigned to devote his whole time to the practice of his profession, having gained a reputation for efficiency and skill. He is now chairman of commissioners of insanity, coroner of Lincoln county, and president of Lincoln County Medical society; and member of the State Medical association.

He has been financially successful and owns considerable property in the city and vicinity, and on the whole, has secured a competency that enables him to enjoy a well earned leisure.

Dr. Longley is a native of Bingham, Somerset county, Maine. He began the study of medicine in Gardener, that state with Dr. Stephen Whitmore and took his first course at Bowdoin Medical college, in Brunswick, Maine, and graduated from the Eclectic Medical Institute at Cincinnati in February 1867; and also from the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Keokuk, Iowa, in 1875.

DR. NICHOLAS McCABE.

Dr. Nicholas McCabe, in point of residence, is the second oldest physician in the city, and on this account, is entitled to a place in these annals, were it

for nothing more than the commendable interest he has taken in local affairs, and every public enterprise tending to advance the interests of the community.

He came to town in 1886, and began the practice of medicine under anything but favorable circumstances, for the population was under 3,000, and there were at least four resident physicians and about as many drug stores stocked with patent medicines. At first, recognition was slow, but he gradualy built up a practice, and in course of time his proficiency in physics and surgery was recognized, and he was selected for surgeon at this point for the Union Pacific railway employees. He has held the office for over twelve years and enjoys the confidence and esteem of the workmen.

His fine home and other possessions show that he has been financially successful, and that wise investments have secured for him a comfortable competency.

In politics, the doctor is a straight Democrat, and although devoted to his profession, takes deep interest in national and local politics. He discharged the duties of coroner for two years, and in 1906 was

elected mayor of the city, being an advocate of municiple ownership, and of the city owning waterworks. Like most public men, he had enemies; but despite their artifices, he was re-elected three consecutive times, and the last time, by a majority of two to one, in the face of bitter and unwarranted attacks upon his private character and official administration.

To judge by a well stocked library in his office, replete with modern literature and up-to-date medical works, it is evident he keeps abreast of his profession and in touch with the latest scientific developments. The works in his home library treating on a variety of subjects also show that he is broad-minded and liberal, and an earnest investigator.

The subject of this sketch was born at Dunleer, County Louth, Ireland, in 1854, and received a public school education, but in early manhood, he acquired a longing to go to the United States, the land of the free, where so many of his countrymen had, and were finding homes; so one day, from the deck of a vessel, he watched his native land recede from sight. In due time he arrived in New York to begin life as tens of thousands had done before him. He secured a position in the shipping department of a mercantile

firm at Batavia, New York, but soon thereafter entered St. Joseph's college, Buffalo, N. Y., and completed his preliminary education, after which he entered the medical department of the University of Buffalo, and from it received the degree of M. D.

JOHN BRATT

was born at Leek, Staffordshire, England, August 9, 1842. He came to America in June, 1864, and engaged in business in Chicago until October, 1865, when he invested his all in merchandise and took passage on the steamship "Victor" for New Orleans. The vessel was wrecked, and he lost everything in the Gulf of Mexico, but fortunately was rescued by the "Alabama," a merchantman loaded with cotton from New Orleans to New York where he and other passengers of the "Victor" were landed. Later, almost penniless and without friends, he took passage on the "Morning Star" for New Orleans where for some eleven weeks he was unable to obtain employment, and consequently, few meals. He finally secured "a job" on the levee at Morganzie, near the mouth of Red River, which was being constructed. In the spring of the following year he came to Nebraska

City and hired out as bullwhacker and drove an ox team to Fourth County post, afterwards called Fort Phil Kearney, which fort he helped to erect, hauling logs, wood and hay for the stockade. With others, he planned to go to the placer gold mines in the Gallatine Valley, but Col. Carrington, the commander, would not allow so small an outfit to attempt crossing the Big Horn mountain, as the hostility of the Sioux Indians under Red Cloud and other chiefs was so rampant, that a force of less than two hundred men could not safely do so. The expedition was abandoned; but a strange foreboding of calamity induced Mr. Bratt to leave Fort Phil Kearny that winter and proceed to Fort Mitchell. Strange to relate, his two partners, Kellog and Fisher, who remained, were killed in the Phil Kearney massacre. He remained at Fort Mitchell until August, 1867, part of the time in charge of that noted road ranch and stage station, and was often detailed to carry messages between Fort Mitchel and Laramie, a fifty-five mile ride (usually by night) in case of stage coaches being waylaid by hostile Indians who frequently cut the telegraph wires. Coe and Carter relieved him at Fort Mitchel ranch, and sent him to Pine Bluffs to

take charge of an ox train that hauled ties, logs and wood for the Union Pacific and the government. In the fall of 1867, he was sent with an ox train, loaded with corn, to Fort Sanders. He afterwards opened a tie and wood camp near Fort Sanders, and gave employment to several hundred tie and wood choppers Later, he opened tie and wood camps at Sherman station and Tie Siding, and filled a tie contract for the Denver Pacific railroad, floating the ties down the Cache La Poudre. In the summer of 1869, he went to Fort McPherson, and filled a 3300 ton hay contract for Gilman and Carter, and went into the cattle business that fall with Coe and Carter under the firm name of John Bratt & Company, being the first firm in Lincoln county to drive cattle from Texas for breeding purposes. He followed the cattle business for some twenty-five years, and assisted in organizing Frontier county, being one of its first county commissioners, combining with it the office of deputy county treasurer. Mr. Bratt was active in organizing the North Platte Guards for home protection, Major North of Pawnee Indian fame being captain, Mr. Bratt, first lieutenant and Frank Alexander, second lieutenant. He led the fight with the

Indians on the east Birdwood creek in the winter of 1878, and has held several county and city offices, having been mayor of North Platte two terms. Although bordering on three score years and ten, he is still alert and active, and leads a busy life. He contemplates publishing his autobiography, and as it is racily written and abounding with anecdotes of early day western life, it cannot fail to be a valuable addition to Nebraska literature.

GEORGE W. VROMAN

being a worthy pioneer citizen of North Platte, and a

preminent railroader, is given a place here. Born at Fitchburg, Wisconsin, September 27, 1841, he was

sent to school at the age of 7, and at 17 entered the academy at Albion, Wisconsin, and attended for one year. In 1859 he took one term at Wisconsin State University, but having a taste for mechanics, he went to Lafayette, Indiana, December, 1861, and secured a position as fireman on the Wabash railroad. In the summer of 1863, he was promoted to engineer, and in the fall took charge of the round house at state line between Indiana and Illinois and held the position one year. Resigning, January, 1869, he proceeded to North Platte to run an engine on the Union Pacific railroad. He ran freight until the latter part of 1870, and was assigned a regular passenger run. In 1881 he was appointed general foreman of the North Platte shops, and held the position until May, 1884, when he resigned and resumed the occupation of locomotive engineer.

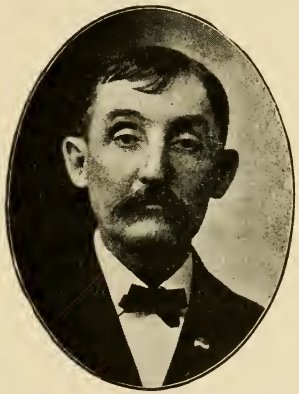
Mr. Vroman became a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in June, 1865. In 1877 he organized a committee of adjustment for the settlement of grievances, and was elected general chairman of the brotherhood, and filled the position up to the close of 1906. Having reached the age limit established by the Union Pacific Railway company, he was retired, March 31, 1908.

Although Mr. Vroman never met any serious mishap during his thirty-nine years of service, yet life on the rail with him was not without incident. In 1877, while coming east with the Overland express, the train was stopped by a gang of robbers who secured $60,000 in gold, and $1,000 in currency from the safe, and $2,000, and five gold watches from passengers. Mr. Vroman and his fireman were attended to by an armed bandit, and the train crew was kept together and guarded by others while the looting of the express car was in progress. Four days after the robbery, two of the bandits were traced to near Buffalo station, Kansas, by a sheriff's posse, and upon resistance, shot down. $1,000 in gold and currency was found on their persons. A third was mortally wounded near his farm house and a fourth was shot in Texas. A fifth was arrested and lodged in jail, and while awaiting trial, escaped, stole a horse, rode off, and was never heard of.

C. F. TRACY

in point of service, is the oldest locomotive engineer at North Platte at this date, having been forty-one years in the employ of the Union Pacific company.

Mr. Tracy was born at Port Kent, New York, June 13, 1851. Owing to the death of his father, he was thrown on his own resources and at the early age of 13 started the battle of life as clerk in a grocery store. Being desirous of an opportunity to run an engine, he secured a situation in the engine room of a ferry boat on historic Lake Champlain, running



between Plattsburg, New York, and St. Albans Bay, Vermont. With him, circumstances were adverse, yet favorable, for the boat ran aground one summer night, and the next day a storm came up and left it a total wreck, and the youthful Tracy without a job. The engineer of the boat had taken an interest in him, and knowing of his ambition to become an engineer,

wrote a friend who was running a locomotive between North Platte and Sidney, to find him a job as fireman. He was successful, and Mr. Tracy turned his face westward, and arrived at North Platte on the night of September 8, 1869. Next day, he was hired by the late David Day, who was round house foreman, and made his first trip as fireman with Engineer Hedding. In 1872, John P. Marston, master mechanic, was succeeded by J. H. McConnell, and Mr. Tracy was the first fireman promoted by him. Mr. Tracy made his first trip as engineer on an engine bearing the unlucky number 13, with Charley Hall as fireman, and got safely through.

Mr. Tracy's railroad experience is not without incident. In the spring of 1870, the engine he was firing ran into a washout near Chappell, and turned over with some thirty cars on top of it. His limbs were caught between the boiler-brace and seat box, and when found, pinch bars had to be used to free him, and it was three months before he could walk without crutches. Strange to relate, Mr. Tracy met with a similar accident at the same place, twenty-five years after this mishap.

With the above sketches, the author bids the

reader adieu. Materials for a work of this kind are by no means plentiful, but facts and incidents have been carefully gleaned and rescued from oblivion, and glimpses of the own in early days given. Of course North Platte never could boast of raids and battles, but nevertheless, with the advancement of eastern civilization, it has kept in the van, and its battles and victories have been those of industry and commerce.

The End

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