



C. W. Giddings and the Founding of Table Rock

(Article begins on page 2 below.)

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Article Summary: Giddings helped to establish and develop Table Rock. He remained active until his death in the affairs of the town and of the Methodist Episcopal Church. (The article includes the Nebraska Settlement Company constitution.)

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Photographs/Images: C W Giddings; building material for Giddings shipped on the steamer Alonzo Child, 1857

Table: Nativity of the population of Table Rock Precinct 1860-1880

C. W. GIDDINGS AND THE FOUND- ING OF TABLE ROCK

BY DONALD F. DANKER

THE Charles W. Giddings papers in the Archives of the Nebraska State Historical Society contain documents which outline the story of the foundation and growth of the Nebraska town of Table Rock. In the papers are the original Constitution of the Nebraska Settlement Company, dated October 2, 1856 and the Articles of Association of the Company, dated February 3, 1857. Along with these two documents which mark the conception of Table Rock, are the deeds to land and lots, papers dealing with incorporation and with the coming of the railroad; documents which record its birth and growth. Also in the Giddings papers are the notices of sheriffs' sales for delinquent taxes and for court judgments which give indications of the setbacks and blighted hopes of many of the pioneers of Table Rock.

The story of the beginnings of Table Rock is to a large extent the story of the efforts of Charles W. Giddings. He was a prime mover in the establishment and development of

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the community. Giddings, the son of a New England sea captain, was born in Hartford, Connecticut, in May, 1810, but spent his boyhood and youth in Wayne County, Pennsylvania. He was ordained as a Methodist Episcopal minister at the age of twenty-two and preached in Pennsylvania and New York for the next twenty seven years.¹ Failing health led him to take a trip west to visit a brother-in-law in Manhattan, Kansas. He was impressed with the climate and opportunities of the vast new area of the Kansas-Nebraska territory that had been so recently opened to settlers. Returning to his home in Carbondale, Pennsylvania, he took a leading part in the organization of the Nebraska Settlement Company.² It is probable that Nebraska was chosen instead of Kansas as a site for settlement because of its less explosive political and social situation.

The Nebraska Settlement Company is said to have been composed of "Pennsylvania Capitalists." Giddings described them as "enterprising capitalists who having made considerable fortunes in the coal business of that state (Pennsylvania) had conceived of the idea of transferring their interest and capital to the West in hopes of a larger field of operations and a more ample remuneration of their enterprise."³ The *Nebraska Advertiser* attributed a more philanthropic if less realistic motive to the company. "This company was organized . . . by enterprising men who were desirous to afford an opportunity to families and young men of limited means of going west and securing a home at much less than they could in the old states. The enterprise was truly a commendable one. . . ."⁴

A constitution for the Nebraska Settlement Company was drawn up. It set forth the purposes of the organization and the methods and rules by which those purposes were to be obtained.

¹ *Enterprise*, Pawnee City, Nebraska, December 31, 1879, p. 2.

² Interview with Mrs. Sue L. Phillips, granddaughter of Charles W. Giddings, Table Rock, Nebraska, October 27, 1952.

³ Newspaper clipping in a scrapbook owned by Mrs. Allie Wood, Table Rock, Nebraska.

⁴ *Nebraska Advertiser*, Brownville, Nebraska, June 4, 1857.

We the undersigned wishing to form a company to purchase, settle and improve a tract or tracts of land in Nebraska for the purpose herein after set forth do agree to form ourselves into a company and to be governed by the following articles.

Art. 1st. This association shall be known by the name of Nebraska Settlement Company. The number of shares of capital stock shall not be less than ten nor more than five hundred of five hundred dollars each.

Art. 2nd. Every member of this association shall pay at the time of his or her subscribing to this constitution the sum of twenty dollars per share . . . for the use of the company; the balance of such shares to be paid in such manner and at such times as described and required by the Board of Managers. . . .

Art. 3rd. The officers of this Association shall be a President, General Superintendent, Treasurer, Secretary and seven managers, all of whom shall be chosen annually by ballot.

Art 4th. It shall be the duty of the General Superintendent to receive subscriptions for stock, to sell shares representing city lots, to attend to the correspondence and active business of the company. All monies received by him shall be paid to the Treasurer. He shall give bonds satisfactory to the Board for the security of monies in his hands and receive for his services such sums as may be fixed by the Board of Managers. . . .

[Articles 5 and 6 dealt with the duties of the secretary and treasurer.]

Art. 7th. The members of this company shall be all such persons of good moral character as shall with the consent of the General Superintendent subscribe to the constitution, own one or more shares of stock or receive donations from the company.

Art. 8th. Any member of this company may transfer a share or shares of stock to another person but before any transfer is made on the books of the association the person or persons to whom such transfer is made must sign the constitution and they shall then be subject to all the liabilities and entitled to all the privileges [sic] of the original members.

Art. 9th. The annual meeting of this association shall be held on the first Tuesday in February in each year, at such place or places as the President and Board of managers may designate until one third of the stock taken shall be owned by persons residing in the settlement made by the company in Table Rock after which time they shall be held in Table Rock, Nebraska. The officers shall hold regular meetings once in three months and on such day as they may direct. Special meetings may be called by the President and secretary. Special

meetings of the stockholders may be called upon the written request of ten members.

Art. 10th. Evry [sic] member shall have one vote for every share of stock held by him or her up to four shares and one vote for every two additional shares up to twenty but no member shall in any case be allowed more than twelve votes on any question and no stockholder shall be allowed to vote at any meeting who is at the time delinquent in the payment of his or her stock.

Art. 11th. No member or officer of this association shall have power to bind the company by any contract or to render them liable to any extent or for any purpose unless authorized to do so by the Board. . . . The Board shall not have power to sell to any one person to be held in their own rights at the same time more than eighty acres of lands lying within circles of three miles square, the centers of the city plots being the centers of such squares or circles or more than three hundred and twenty acres of land of said company lying outside such squares or circles. . . . The Board shall not have power to sell to any person any land till he or she shall have subscribed to the constitution of this company.

Art. 12th. Any stockholder shall be entitled to purchase property of the company at the current prices thereof to the amount of one thousand dollars and have a credit of seven years thereon provided he or she shall occupy the same by paying one seventh of the principle and all the interest annually, and one share of the purchasers stock and the property so purchased to be held as security for the payment thereof.

Art. 13th. No member of the company shall be allowed to sell intoxicating drinks or beverage within the bounds of any of the towns or settlements made by this company. In case any member of this company shall be convicted of so doing he or she shall forfeit all his or her right and interest in this company and these forfeitures shall be regarded real and stipulated damages to the company committed by such an offense, and the property so forfeited shall be appropriated by the Board to the benefit of schools in the town or ward where such an offense was committed.

Art. 14th. The Board shall have power to issue certificates of stock to be redeemed in city lots, the price of such stock shall be fixed at twenty dollars a share, but it may be raised at any time by the Board at a regular meeting thereof. Each share shall draw one lot of not less than one fourth of an acre. . . . The Board shall also have power to donate city lots for literary, moral and religious purposes.

Art. 15th. The President and the Board of Managers, the majority of whom shall form a quorum, shall have full power to manage the affairs of the company gen-

erally, to purchase real estate, to improve the same, and sell and dispose of the same under regulations provided by the Constitution and by laws, the property purchased shall belong to the stockholders of the capital stock to be enjoyed [sic] by them according to their respective shares and all profits arising therefrom to be semiannually accounted for, and so much of said profits as shall appear advisable to the Board of Managers shall be divided and a dividend shall be declared. . . .

Art. 16th. No city or town plot shall be laid out in the bounds of any settlement made by this company for the purpose of selling lots and building up a village thereon except by the advice and direction of the Board.

Art. 17th. In case any dispute shall arise between any of the members or officers of this company all such disputes shall be referred for final decision to arbitrators chosen in the usual way.

Art. 18th. This constitution shall be subject to alteration or amendment at any regular meeting of the stockholders by a vote of two thirds present and voting, provided that no alteration shall be made until such alteration shall have been presented in writing to a regular meeting of the stockholders at least three months previously.

A. Richardson
Thos. Ford
Edw. Wheeler
Col [?] G. Wood
David Butler
E. Ford
John Morley
William Fellers

We the undersigned agree to pay as Stock the amount set opposite our respective names to the managers and Company organized under the foregoing Constitution at Such times and in Such portions as may be called for by said managers or directors.—Witness our hands and seals this Second day of October Anno Domini, one thousand and eight hundred and fifty six.

October 2nd 1856

| | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| C. W. Giddings | Two Shares and a half | \$1,000.00 ⁵ |
| J. S. Wood | Two Shares | 1,000.00 |
| R. V. Muir | Three Shares | 1,500.00 |
| James N. Bronen | | 1,000.00 |
| Joseph Steele, Jr. | Two Shares | 1,000.00 |
| E. F. Ferris | One Share | 500.00 |
| H. Browncombe | | 1,000. |
| Jno. H. Hann | One Share | 500.00 |

⁵ Giddings probably had been awarded a half share for services rendered as General Superintendent of the Company.

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| E. A. Coray | One Share | 500.00 |
| James Giddings | One Share | 500.00 |
| Joseph L. Sharp | 3 Shares | 1,500.00 ⁶ |

Previous to the signing of this document on October 23, 1856, the Company had elected Giddings as its general superintendent and R. V. Muir as treasurer. In the spring of 1856 these two men came to Nebraska as advance agents of the Company for the purpose of selecting a site for the development in which the Company wished to engage. They chose a location on the Nemaha River in Pawnee County, Nebraska Territory, about 23 miles from the Missouri River.⁷

The location chosen was an attractive area. Robert W. Furnas, editor of the *Nebraska Advertiser*, described it in July, 1856:

Pawnee county is at present unorganized and attached to Richardson county for election and judicial purposes. We made a short tour of Pawnee county a few weeks since, and were agreeably surprised at the vast amount of good land, timber and stone. . . . Along Long Creek, Oak Creek and the Big Nemaha are as fine bottoms as can be found anywhere and plenty of timber. . . . The quality of timber on the Big Nemaha is the finest we have seen in the territory; mostly walnut, maple and oak, scarcely a cottonwood to be found. . . . The water power on this stream can not be surpassed. . . . Pawnee county, and especially this portion of it, is susceptible of a heavy population. It only wants to be found out, to have it fill up rapidly. It is immediately on the most practical route for the Territorial Road from Brownville to Fort Kearney.⁸

The township in which Table Rock was to be located had been surveyed in November, 1855. The notes and maps made by the surveyors indicated that an Indian Trail crossed the Nemaha about two miles above the future townsite and that a wagon road cut across the township running from northeast to southwest. The surveyors described the thick growth of maples, oaks and walnuts along the Nemaha. The land back from the river was described as "level prairie bottom,

⁶ Constitution of the Nebraska Settlement Company, Giddings Papers.

⁷ *Nebraska Advertiser*, June 4, 1857, p. 3. Edwin A. Curley, *Nebraska, Its Advantages, Resources and Drawbacks*, (New York, 1875).

⁸ *Nebraska Advertiser*, July 12, 1856.

soil 1st rate." The notes locate and describe the rock formations from which Table Rock was to take its name. "Tn3N R12E, north between sections 33-34. Here are some remarkable stones . . . composed of soft sand stone. They are about 18 or 20 feet high and seem to have no connection with the mass beneath. They are covered with unintelligible hiroglyphics and were once objects of reverence to the Indians. . . . Below this about $\frac{1}{8}$ of a mile is a fine mill seat on the Nemaha."⁹

The location near the "fine mill seat" seemed favorable for a townsite and in 1855 Robert Furnas, James Hinton and John Fleming organized the Table Rock Townsite Company and partially laid out a town. Their chief activity was to plan and begin the construction of a mill on the Nemaha.¹⁰

Giddings and Muir, as agents of the Nebraska Settlement Company purchased the interests of the Table Rock Townsite Company in 1857. Giddings thought these interests to be "more imaginary than real."¹¹

The Nebraska Settlement Company had hopes that coal mines would be developed in the area. It also believed that a railroad would be built from Saint Joseph up along the Nemaha Valley and on to the Pacific Coast. Table Rock was to be one of its principal stations. Giddings' own words best portray the optimism, enthusiasm and great expectations of the Nebraska Settlement Company and of its General Superintendent.

Southern Nebraska . . . is the garden of the West.
The sky is clear and brilliant. . . . The rains fall sparingly,

⁹ Field notes and maps of the Government Survey of the Territory of Nebraska—, Ms. in office of Board of Educational Lands and Funds, State Capitol, Lincoln, Nebraska, November 1855. pp. 108-109, 116.

¹⁰ Frank Taylor, "History of the Town of Table Rock," *Fifty Five Years, An Illustrated Booklet Descriptive of the Anniversary and Dedication Services of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Table Rock, Nebraska*.

¹¹ Newspaper clipping in scrapbook owned by Mrs. Allie Wood, Table Rock, Nebraska. Reminiscences of old settlers have it that the purchase price was \$1500 and that on the date it was due R. V. Muir arrived with the money only to find his way blocked by the Nemaha River at flood stage. He is said to have delivered the money by plunging into the Nemaha and swimming to the opposite bank. (*Nebraska State Journal*, June 10, 1916.)

yet in sufficient quantities aided by the heavy dews, to bring vegetation to perfection. . . . [The air] is highly charged with electricity which gives a kind of inspiration to the whole system and makes old people feel young again. . . . The whole country for two hundred miles might be made into one vast corn field yielding under the hand of ordinary cultivation, not less than 100 bushel to the acre. . . . Immense coal fields will soon furnish a profitable investment for capitalists; labor for thousands of our people and fuel for millions who are fast filling up the great valley of the west. . . . It is safe to presume that there is more salt in Southern Nebraska than in all the U.S. east of the Missouri river. . . . Iron ore [sic] and lime stone in great abundance and excellent quality are also found here. . . .

The locomotive with its train of cars will soon dash across the Missouri river and run far out into the interior of these great plains. . . . Six railroads are now in contemplation. . . . The Hannibal and St. Joseph road, connecting with eastern roads on the Mississippi is likely to take the palm. . . . This will connect with Southern Nebraska by a few miles of steamboat navigation to the mouth of the Great Nemaha. At this point commences the first link of the great trunk of the Pacific railroad west of the Missouri river. . . . When this road is completed southern Nebraska has as extensive commercial connections as any portion of our country. . . . The whole eastern trade is turned from the dangers of the oceans, to our overland route, and the Missouri Valley becomes the centre of commerce—The centre of empire—The centre of the World!¹²

In February, 1857, Articles of Association had been entered into by members of the Nebraska Settlement Company. These Articles were designed to unite members of the company into a partnership, aimed at carrying out the objectives set forth in the constitution of the Nebraska Settlement Company until such time as that company could become a corporation under the laws of the Territory of Nebraska¹³

The company attempted to achieve incorporation by special act of the legislature. Bills for incorporation of the Nebraska Settlement Company were introduced into the House and Council in January, 1857. They were limited by amendment and then failed to pass.¹⁴ The company finally achieved incorporation by another method. A general incor-

¹² *Nebraska Advertiser*, August 13, 1857.

¹³ Articles of Association, Giddings Papers.

¹⁴ *Nebraska House Journal* 3rd session, 1857, pp. 96, 129, 137, 158, 186, 194; *Nebraska Council Journal* 3rd session, 1857, pp. 131, 155.



C. W. Giddings

poration law was included in an Act of the Legislature of the Nebraska Territory entitled, "an act for revising, consolidating, and preparing a general code for the Territory of Nebraska, approved January 25, 1856." This act outlined the form and powers of corporations and stated, "The powers enumerated . . . shall vest in every corporation in this territory whether the same be formed without, or by Legislative enactment." Among the requirements of incorporation was the compulsory publication for four weeks of notice of incorporation in a newspaper near the source of business.¹⁵ This notice in the form of the above constitution of the Nebraska Settlement Company and now entitled "Articles of Incorporation of the Nebraska Settlement Company" was published the required number of times in the *Nebraska Advertiser*. The names of Robert W. Furnas, editor of the *Nebraska Advertiser* and future governor of Nebraska, and S. B. Cowles had been added as members of the corporation.¹⁶

The company sent out settlers in the "later part" of 1856 and in 1857 and a settlement was begun.¹⁷ In January 1857 a post office was established at Table Rock.¹⁸ The town was surveyed and a report filed June 8, 1858:

Table Rock occupies the South half of section number thirty two (32) in township 3, Range 12 east in Pawnee County, which the undersigned claim as a townsite under the law of the 4th of September 1841.

C. W. Giddings, Acting Agent
and General Superintendent
of the Nebraska Settlement
Company.¹⁹

Giddings spent the summer of 1857 in Nebraska acting for the company. He also had charge of the interests of certain members of the company remaining in Pennsylvania who had given him power of attorney to handle their shares

¹⁵ *Laws of Nebraska*, 2nd Session, 1855, p. 37.

¹⁶ *Nebraska Advertiser* June 4, 11, 18, 25, 1857.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, June 4, 1857.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, January 8, 1857.

¹⁹ Copy of an endorsement on the back of a plat filed in clerk's office of Pawnee County, Book No. 1 O.S., Giddings Papers.

of company property.²⁰ He estimated that some 200 families came out from Pennsylvania and New York in the years 1856-1857 in order to take advantage of the "opportunities" afforded by the Nebraska Settlement Company.²¹ The Giddings family remained in Oneida, New York, until 1858 when Giddings went back and brought them to Nebraska. They traveled by rail to St. Louis and from there by river steamer to Aspinwall,²² and by spring wagon the remaining miles to Table Rock.²³ It is probable that Giddings had a house waiting for his family. A bill of lading in the Giddings papers indicates that on June 19, 1857 there was received on "the good steamboat *Alonzo Childs*" lying in St. Louis and bound for Brownville N.T. the following goods to be delivered to C. W. Giddings.

3 Bndl 30 pcs 8 x 10 Sash
 1 Door 2¹⁰ x 6¹⁰ 1³/₈ M.B.L.
 8 Doors 2⁸ x 6⁸ 1¹/₈
 1 Box Hardware
 3 half Box Glass

Added to this bill of lading in pencil is the list of "5 kegs of nails, 1 stove, 6 chairs and 1 table."²⁴

The Nebraska Settlement Company combined a spirit for reform with the hope for profit. Article 13 of the constitution prohibited any member of the company from selling alcohol within the bounds of company settlement. This restriction was written into the deeds for lots purchased in Table Rock. "The sale of intoxicating drinks as beverages on any of the lots above described works a forfeiture of the title conveyed by this deed."²⁵ Giddings is said to have included this provision in the deeds to land sold by him after the company no longer existed.²⁶ R. V. Muir, treasurer of the Nebraska

²⁰ Power of Attorney from Ferris and others, Giddings Papers.

²¹ A. T. Andreas, *History of the State of Nebraska* (Chicago, 1882), p. 1254.

²² Aspinwall was located on the Nebraska side of the Missouri in Nemaha County approximately six and one half miles below Brownville. It was originally a trading post in the Half Breed tract. (Curley, *op. cit.*, p. 48.)

²³ Tecumseh (Nebraska) *Chieftain*, October 16, 1932.

²⁴ Bill of Lading June 19, 1857, Giddings Papers.

²⁵ Deeds to lots, Giddings Papers.

²⁶ Interview with Mrs. Sue L. Phillips, October 27, 1952.

Settlement Company and the surveyor of Table Rock, was a very strong advocate of prohibition and devoted the later years of his life to the prohibition movement.²⁷

The Giddings papers give no indication that the Nebraska Settlement Company was connected in any way with the abolition movement. It is probable, however, that most of its members were of anti-slavery inclinations and would have resisted vigorously any attempt to make slavery a permanent institution in Nebraska.²⁸

The settlement at Table Rock met with early reverses. The panic of 1857 restricted the activities of the "capitalist" backers of the Nebraska Settlement Company. In addition to the financial crisis a new hardship faced the community. During July and August of 1858 homes and crops were ruined by high water.²⁹ The settlers had for the most part built their homes and planted their fields along the river bottom. Not only were their houses and crops ruined but also they were afflicted with "various forms of bilious diseases, of which chills and fevers were the most formidable."³⁰ Many of the settlers, discouraged by these early misfortunes, returned to the east. It was during this exodus that the Reverend John M. Chivington, presiding Elder of the Nebraska Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held a meeting in Table Rock at which he prayed, "Lord send the people

²⁷ R. V. Muir Papers, Nebraska State Historical Society.

²⁸ In April 1867, Giddings and two others signed the following resolution adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Conference in Omaha: "Whereas Bro. Adonijah Williams formerly a member of the M.E. Church South, has given satisfactory assurances to this conference of his loyalty to the National government and hearty approval of the anti-slavery doctrines of our church, therefore, Resolved that he be and is hereby received into full membership in the conference." (*Nebraska Herald*, Plattsmouth, Nebraska, April 3, 1867.)

²⁹ The *Nebraska Advertiser* in reporting the floods took occasion to comment on the financial crisis as well. "The banks [of the Nemaha] are caving as rapidly as are Nebraska banks in general." *Nebraska Advertiser*, July 29, 1858.

³⁰ Andreas, *op. cit.*, p. 1254. The record of deaths in Pawnee County for the year ending June 1, 1860 lists thirty one deaths, of these five were adults and twenty six were children five years old and under. Chills and fevers are listed as causing six deaths. (U.S. Census, 1860, Nebraska, Death Record, Burt to Shorter. Ms.)

here, but make them so poor they can't get away."³¹

The Giddings family and others remained. The census of 1860 lists 201 persons as residents of the Table Rock area. In spite of the fact that large numbers of settlers from Pennsylvania and New York had returned home during 1858 and 1859 these two states still contributed more people to the population than did any other area excepting Nebraska itself. The ten years 1860-1870 saw the population of the area increase from 201 to 795. The number of foreign born residents had increased due to the heavy influx of immigrants following the Civil War. In 1870 Germans were the largest foreign born group and there was the beginning of a Bohemian settlement that was destined to double in the next ten years. The large size of the families of the settlers is attested to by the numbers of those born in Nebraska. In 1870 the Nebraska born group was the largest of all and by 1880, numbering 429 out of a total population of 1447, it had far outdistanced the others. The following figures show the nativity of the population of the precinct for the years 1860, 1870, and 1880.

³¹ Frank Taylor, *op. cit.* Chivington is better known to the student of western history as Colonel Chivington. He entered military service in 1862 and on November 29, 1864, he was in command of forces which engaged in the battle at Sand Creek, Colorado, known as "the Chivington Massacre." Some 150 Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians, including many women and children, were slain in this affair.

TABLE I

NATIVITY OF THE POPULATION OF TABLE ROCK PRECINCT
1860 - 1880

| 1860 | | 1870 | | 1880 | |
|----------------|-----|---------------|-----|---------------|------|
| Pennsylvania | 53 | Pennsylvania | 63 | Pennsylvania | 133 |
| New York | 21 | New York | 36 | New York | 64 |
| Nebraska | 21 | Nebraska | 134 | Nebraska | 429 |
| Missouri | 16 | Missouri | 24 | Missouri | 50 |
| Scotland | 13 | Scotland | 4 | Scotland | 1 |
| Indiana | 10 | Indiana | 17 | Indiana | 56 |
| Ohio | 8 | Ohio | 52 | Ohio | 92 |
| Virginia | 8 | Virginia | 9 | Virginia | 21 |
| Illinois | 7 | Illinois | 98 | Illinois | 179 |
| England | 5 | England | 14 | England | 9 |
| Wales | 4 | Wales | 2 | Wales | 3 |
| Kentucky | 3 | Kentucky | 18 | Kentucky | 14 |
| Iowa | 3 | Iowa | 36 | Iowa | 62 |
| New Jersey | 2 | New Jersey | 3 | New Jersey | 5 |
| Massachusetts | 2 | | | Massachusetts | 5 |
| Wisconsin | 2 | Wisconsin | 16 | Wisconsin | 18 |
| North Carolina | 1 | | | Connecticut | 4 |
| Connecticut | 1 | Germany | 136 | Germany | 63 |
| Germany | 1 | Switzerland | 9 | Switzerland | 3 |
| Switzerland | 1 | Ireland | 9 | Ireland | 8 |
| Ireland | 1 | Bohemia | 47 | Bohemia | 134 |
| | | Michigan | 25 | Michigan | 26 |
| | | Canada | 5 | Canada | 16 |
| | | Tennessee | 4 | Tennessee | 10 |
| | | California | 2 | California | 2 |
| | | Vermont | 2 | Vermont | 3 |
| | | Kansas | 1 | Kansas | 12 |
| | | Sweden | 1 | Sweden | 6 |
| | | West Virginia | 1 | West Virginia | 1 |
| | | Texas | 1 | Texas | 1 |
| | | New Hampshire | 1 | New Hampshire | 2 |
| | | Arkansas | 1 | Arkansas | 2 |
| | | | | Luxemburg | 13 |
| | | | | Minnesota | 4 |
| | | | | Austria | 1 |
| | | | | Maine | 1 |
| | | | | Maryland | 2 |
| | | | | Norway | 1 |
| Totals | 201 | | 795 | | 1447 |

Source: U.S. Census 1860, 1870, 1880, Nebraska, Ms.

The Nebraska Settlement Company never recovered from the blows it had received from the panic and the floods. It did not realize the profits for which it had hoped and documents in the Giddings papers indicate that the Company was

absorbed by its General Superintendent. In July 1863 Giddings filed suit for "money laid out and expended and for work and labor done." He named as defendants, J. S. Wood, Joseph Steele, Jr., E. F. Ferris, E. A. Coray, James L. Giddings, R. V. Muir, J. S. Cowles, Walter Lyons, and P. Bartlett. Property still held jointly by this group was attached by the Sheriff of Pawnee County.³² Giddings was awarded the sum of \$1,926.82. The lots were sold at auction and Giddings purchased them for \$2,026.80.³³ He purchased other lots at tax sales and from private owners,³⁴ and in 1878 he was listed as "proprietor of the townsite."³⁵

An act incorporating the town of Table Rock was approved on January 4, 1860.³⁶ Another bill had been introduced designed "to incorporate the Table Rock Seminary."³⁷ This incorporation was not acted upon until the next session at which time it was re-introduced and passed only to be vetoed by Governor Samuel Black. His veto message stated, "Under this act, if it becomes a law, this corporation is invested with extraordinary powers and privileges. In the name of 'education' there is conferred on a chartered company the power of a land monopoly, with exemptions to which I can never give my assent . . . such a grant as this is unjust to the people and is greatly liable to be abused."³⁸ It seems probable that Giddings and perhaps other members of the Nebraska Settlement Company were trying to establish a Methodist Seminary at Table Rock. Mrs. Chauncey Norris, daughter of Giddings, stated in a newspaper interview that her father had come to Nebraska with a purpose to establish a college or school.³⁹ Several members of the company were ordained Methodist ministers and it is un-

³² *Nebraska Advertiser*, July 16, 1863, p. 3.

³³ Warranty Deed, Wm. J. Aitkins, Sheriff, to C. W. Giddings, Giddings Papers.

³⁴ Deeds, Giddings Papers.

³⁵ *Pawnee County, Nebraska*, Immigrant Union, Atchison, Kansas, 1878, p. 74.

³⁶ *Laws of Nebraska*, 6th session, 1859, p. 165.

³⁷ *Nebraska Council Journal*, 6th session, December 12, 1859, p. 49.

³⁸ *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska 1854-1942* (Works Progress Administration, 1941), I, 143-144.

³⁹ *Tecumseh Chieftain*, October 6, 1932.

likely that any other church group would have been endeavoring to start a seminary at Table Rock in 1859.⁴⁰

Giddings did not regard the territorial government as being friendly to the Nebraska Settlement Company. The legislature had refused to grant "certain priveleges in the use of the waters of the Nemaha."⁴¹ That he was dissatisfied with the political situation may be inferred from the fact that he served on a three man delegation from Pawnee County to a convention held at Brownville January 9, 1859. This convention voted in favor of the annexation to Kansas of the region south of the Platte River. Giddings was appointed to a committee charged with drafting an address to the people of the South Platte region and Kansas.⁴²

Table Roble developed in the face of all its difficulties. A stone schoolhouse that was the town's pride for many years was built in 1861-1862. The first school in the community had been organized in 1857. Fannie Giddings taught the 1858 term.⁴³ The first church, a Methodist Episcopal, was erected in 1872. A Catholic Church followed in 1878.⁴⁴

The agricultural advancement of the Table Rock settlers was slow and somewhat uncertain. Joseph Griffing, from Pennsylvania, wrote the following report on the agricultural situation in a letter to the editor published in the first issue of the *Nebraska Farmer*, October, 1859.

R. W. Furnas, Esq.

We have scarcely commenced farming. Our means being generally limited, and our subject at present being to secure our farms and get ready to do something. Farming interests have suffered from the hard times but we look for improvement in that respect.

Many of our farmers are making additions to their cultivated fields, and preparing for more extensive farming operations another year. On the whole we are making

⁴⁰ The only religious denomination listed in Pawnee County for the year ending June 1, 1860, is the Methodist Episcopal Church which was reported as having 195 persons attending worship but owning no church property. (Nebraska 1860 Social Statistics, Burt to Washington, U.S. Census, Ms.)

⁴¹ Scrapbook owned by Mrs. Allie Woods.

⁴² *Nebraska Advertiser*, January 6, 1859.

⁴³ *Table Rock Argus*, December 12, 1919.

⁴⁴ Andreas, *op. cit.*, p. 1256.

some improvement but wish it were greater. Our prospects are rather more cheering for the future, though clouds have not all cleared away.

Our markets are not very well defined and our facilities for transportation are not what might be desired. The want of good bridges is severely felt by those who have a surplus of farm products to carry off. A railroad up the Nemaha would eventually remedy that difficulty. . . . We have been experimenting with wheat and have succeeded in raising some, though a very light crop—six bushels to one sown being about the average yield.

Corn looks very well, but it is somewhat uneven on account of defective seed—and here let me say to farmers, if you would have your corn come at first planting pick your seed before frost.

The potatoe crop will probably be light, though it may be slightly improved by the rain that just fell.

Chinese Sugar Cane is cultivated here to some extent. . . . Several acres of Hungarian Grass has been raised in the vicinity the present season, but we have not tested its merits as food for stock and can not speak definitely of its value.

Agriculture in Nebraska is yet in its infancy, and as it is the foundation upon which our future prosperity is to rest, it is important that it be firmly laid. Farmers must decide which is the most profitable crop to raise, and stock-raising must form an important item in their calculations; and the most profitable manner of feeding stock will be determined by experiment.

Yours Respectfully
Joseph Griffing
Table Rock, Pawnee County
Sept. 6, 1856⁴⁵

The first markets for the Table Rock farmers were the towns along the Missouri River, Brownville probably drawing most of the Table Rock surplus. A large share of the produce was consumed at home but the achievement of a degree of prosperity depended upon a satisfactory market for farm products. The marketing situation contributed to the discouragement of the years 1857-1859. After the farmer had transported his goods to market over unbridged streams and uncertain roads he found prices there to be low. Market prices at Brownville were as follows:

⁴⁵ *Nebraska Farmer*, Brownville, October, 1859, p. 9.

November 26, 1857, corn was .40 per bushel, flour \$4.50 to \$5.25 per sack, corn meal .75 per bushel. The report in July 1858 stated that the wheat crop was a total failure due to "so much rain of late" and quoted the following prices. Corn .50 per bushel, oats .40 per bushel, corn meal .75 per bushel, flour \$4.00 per sack, wheat—none on the market. June 16, 1859 prices were, corn .40-.45 per bushel, corn meal .70 per bushel, oats .40 per bushel, flour \$4.00 per sack and no wheat on the market. October 25, 1860, prices were, corn .30 per bushel, oats .40 per bushel, flour \$3.00 per sack, corn meal .50 per sack and wheat .65-85 per bushel. The February 6, 1862 market report announced that prices had been so low that the editor had thought it unnecessary to publish them. The current prices were, corn .10 to .12½ per bushel, wheat .30 to .50 per bushel and flour \$1.75 to \$2.20 per sack.⁴⁶

The opening of the Colorado gold rush and the development of the freighting of supplies to the West brightened the picture for the Table Rock farmers by giving them new and more lucrative markets for their goods. Giddings recalled shipping 80 bushels of oats to Fort Kearny in 1859. He believed this to be the first load of grain sent to the fort over the road opened from Nebraska City.⁴⁷

In the fall of 1859 the government was paying \$2.00 per bushel for corn at Fort Kearny.⁴⁸ Corn had brought .40-.45 in Brownville in June 1859. In the fall of 1861 the Fort Kearny quarter-master contracted to buy corn at \$1.35 per bushel and oats at \$1.20.⁴⁹ Giddings, in recalling the effect of the freighting on the Table Rock community, stated, "The day of prosperity dawned on us like the shining of a clear day after a long and dreary storm."⁵⁰

A degree of the hoped for prosperity was achieved. The following figures give some indication of the agricultural progress of four of the Table Rock settlers, C. W. Giddings,

⁴⁶ *Nebraska Advertiser*, November 26, 1857; July 1, 8, 1858; October 25, 1860 p. 2; February 6, 1862 p. 2.

⁴⁷ Andreas, *op. cit.*, p. 1255.

⁴⁸ William Stolley, *History of Hall County* (Lincoln, 1946), p. 71.

⁴⁹ Fort Kearny Daybook, 1858-1862. September 23, 1861, entry, Typescript.

⁵⁰ Andreas, *op. cit.*, p. 1255.

William Fellers, John C. Wood and George Griffing, all coming to Table Rock before the fall of 1858.

| | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| C. W. Giddings | 1860 | 1870 |
| improved land..... | 70 acres | 120 acres |
| unimproved land..... | 170 acres | 380 acres |
| cash value of farm..... | \$3,000 | \$10,000 |
| horses | 3 | 15 |
| cows | 9 | 7 |
| oxen | 2 | |
| cattle | 19 | 78 |
| hogs | 115 | 100 |
| value of stock | ,\$1265 | \$2,160 |
| wheat | 40 acres | 115 acres |
| corn | 1000 bu. | |
| oats | 40 bu. | 600 bu. |
| potatoes | 175 bu. | |
| butter | | |
| cheese | 200 lbs. | |
| hay | 25 tons | 100 tons |
| sorghum | 80 gals. | |
| value of animals slaughtered..... | \$20 | |
| Estimated value of produce, bet- terments and additions to stock .. | | \$17,710 |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|------------|
| William Fellers | | |
| improved land..... | 15 acres | 70 acres |
| unimproved land..... | 85 acres | 250 acres |
| value of farm..... | \$500.00 | \$4,500.00 |
| implements | \$37.00 | \$500.00 |
| wages paid..... | | \$50.00 |
| horses | 2 | 8 |
| mules | | 2 |
| cows | 2 | 8 |
| cattle | 3 | 15 |
| sheep | | 30 |
| swine | 18 | 13 |
| value of stock..... | 217.00 | \$1000.00 |
| wheat | | 200 bu. |
| corn | 300 bu. | 200 bu. |
| potatoes | 50 bu. | |
| buckwheat | 80 bu. | |
| wool | | 100 lbs. |
| butter | 100 lbs. | |
| hay | 8 tons | |
| sorghum | 30 gal. | |
| Total value of produce..... | | \$890.00 |

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| John C. Wood | | |
| improved land | 14 acres | 30 acres |
| unimproved land | 146 acres | 372 acres |
| value of farm..... | \$200 | \$4000 |
| implements | | \$20 |
| horses | | 4 |
| cows | | 2 |
| cattle | 1 | 3 |

| | | |
|--|----------|----------------------|
| swine | 3 | 13 |
| value of stock..... | \$15.00 | \$500.00 |
| wheat | 40 bu. | 100 bu. |
| corn | 13 bu. | 300 bu. |
| oats | | 245 bu. |
| tobacco | 50 lbs. | |
| peas and beans..... | 4 bu. | |
| potatoes | 50 lbs. | |
| sorghum | 30 gal. | |
| Total value of produce, including betterments and additions to stock | | \$800.00 |
| George L. Griffing | | |
| improved land | 28 acres | 60 acres |
| unimproved | 132 | 410 |
| value of farm | \$500 | \$4000 |
| implements | \$50 | \$200 |
| wages paid..... | | \$250 |
| horses | 2 | 9 |
| cows | 2 | 5 |
| cattle | 1 | 6 |
| swine | 23 | 10 |
| value of stock..... | \$233.00 | \$300.00 |
| corn | 400 bu. | 500 bu. |
| wheat | | 300 bu. |
| oats | | 50 bu. |
| Total value of produce, including betterments and additions to stock | | \$1200 ⁵¹ |

The dream that the Nemaha valley was to be the highway for a transcontinental railroad which would transform Table Rock into a great center of commerce vanished. A railroad did not reach Table Rock until the winter of 1871-1872 when the Atchinson and Nebraska Railroad was built into the town. Giddings played a substantial part in arranging for railroad development in Table Rock. An agreement between C. T. Abell, President of the Atchinson and Nebraska, and Giddings was signed March 5, 1872. It provided that in return for certain lots (in a section to become known as the Railroad Addition or Lower Town) the railroad company agreed "to try and make a town here, and soon move carpenter shops here, and soon as needed build a repair shop and round house." Giddings agreed to allow the Railroad Company to sell other lots that Giddings owned in the area and that he, Giddings, would aid in the development of the

⁵¹ U.S. Census 1860, Nebraska, Ms.; Agricultural Census 1870, Nebraska, Ms.

town.⁵² The railroad addition was constructed some distance from the original town and on lower ground. A railroad-built hotel, the Abell House, and several business houses were soon in operation. A rivalry developed between the upper and lower towns. The pamphlet, *Pawnee County*, published in 1878 by the Immigrant Union of Atchison, Kansas, stated that "These interests are now harmonized by one party (Rev. C. W. Giddings) gaining the controlling interest in both sites." The lower town met with a series of misfortunes which established the supremacy of the upper town. The low ground was subject to flooding and in 1881 two severe floods struck within the space of two weeks. They were followed in the same year by a fire which destroyed the Abell House and several other buildings. Most of those buildings which remained were moved to the upper town.⁵³

Giddings turned his energies in many directions. He was one of a group of Pawnee County men to organize a coal company in the spring of 1857.⁵⁴ In July, 1858 he advertised, "The undersigned brought out from Pennsylvania a number of new light spring wagons, admirably adapted to this country. They are all perfectly new, in good order and are on sale for reasonable terms for cash—C. W. Giddings."⁵⁵ In 1878 he was listed as proprietor of the Table Rock Creamery and as "Proprietor of the town site. Dealer in Real Estate and Collection Agent, all business entrusted to his care, whether buying or selling, collecting or securing of claims, will be promptly and carefully attended to. Mr. Giddings is perfectly responsible for any amount placed in his hands."⁵⁶ In August, 1878 the *Pawnee City Enterprise* announced that Giddings would sell cream cheese by the pound or by the ton at his factory in Table Rock.⁵⁷

C. W. Giddings was a man of driving energies. From the beginnings of Table Rock until his death in 1879 he was a

⁵² Agreement between C. T. Abell and C. W. Giddings, March 5th, 1872, Giddings Papers.

⁵³ *Table Rock Argus*, December 12, 1919.

⁵⁴ *Nebraska Advertiser*, March 21, 1857.

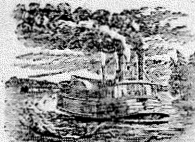
⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, July 16, 1858.

⁵⁶ *Pawnee County*, Immigrant Union, Atchison, Kansas, 1878, p. 74.

⁵⁷ *The Enterprise*, Pawnee City, August 7, 1878.

SHIPPED IN GOOD ORDER AND CONDITION, BY

William Wade & Co.



On account and risk of, whom it may concern, on board the good steamboat called the *Alonzo Child* whereof *Holland*

is Master for the present voyage, now lying at the Port of *St. Louis*, and bound for *Brownsville A S* the following

packages or articles, marked or numbered as below, which are to be delivered, without delay, in due good order, at the said Port, (unavoidable dangers of the river and fire

only excepted,) unto *C W Giddings* or assigns, he or they paying freight for the said goods at the rate of *As per Agreement*

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Owner, Master, or Clerk of said Steamboat hath affirmed to 5 Bills of Lading, all of this tenor and date, one of which being accomplished the others to stand void.

Dated at St. Louis, this *14th* day of *June* 1857

MARKS. ARTICLES. WEIGHT.

| | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>C W G. for</i> | <i>1 Bndl 30 pcs 8x10 Shk</i> | |
| <i>C W Giddings</i> | <i>1 Dorr 24x6 17 1/2 M.B.L.</i> | |
| <i>Brownsville</i> | <i>8 Dorr 28x6 17 1/2</i> | |
| <i>A S</i> | <i>1 Box Hardware</i> | |
| | <i>3 half Box Glass</i> | |

Carlson

[Signature]

5 Keys nails
1 stove
4 chairs
1 Table

Building Material for C. W. Giddings, Shipped on the Steamer Alonzo Child, 1857

community leader.⁵⁸ At the same time that he was active in the affairs of Table Rock and in his personal projects he was also actively engaged in church work.⁵⁹ The meetings of the Methodist Episcopal Congregation at Table Rock were held at the Giddings home from 1857 until 1861 at which time they were moved to the new schoolhouse.⁶⁰ The Nebraska Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church appointed Giddings as presiding elder of the Brownville District in 1865, the Nemaha District in 1866, the Nebraska City District in 1867, and the Lincoln District in 1869.⁶¹ This responsibility meant a good deal of traveling. The districts were large, including "that territory between the Kansas line and the Platte River and extending West from the Missouri River as far as settlements were found."⁶²

Giddings died on December 23, 1879. It is said that as he was dying his pastor and family heard him recite, "Not a cloud doth arise to darken the skies, Or hide for a moment the Lord from my eyes."⁶³

⁵⁸ On at least one occasion the community did not follow his lead. In 1864 three men accused of stealing horses were lynched in spite of the fact that Giddings addressed the crowd and "earnestly appealed to the people to desist from further violence." (Andreas, *op. cit.*, p. 1249.)

⁵⁹ "He was a thorough and devout Arminian Methodist of the old style . . . sin and error suffered mortal thrusts by the scathing shafts of his gospel logic." *Minutes of the Nebraska Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 19th session, October 8 to 13, 1879, p. 24.

⁶⁰ *Fifty Five Years*, p. 4.

⁶¹ *Minutes of the Nebraska Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1865, 1866, 1868, 1869.

⁶² *The Enterprise*, Pawnee City, December 31, 1879.

⁶³ *Minutes of Nebraska Conference of M.E. Church*, 19th session, October 8 to 16, 1879, p. 24.