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Article Summary: The author’s family moved from Missouri to Nebraska City in 1863. Her father managed J. Sterling Morton’s farm there, and her reminiscences include this personal account of life at Arbor Lodge.

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Photographs / Images: Kate Winslow Davis; J Sterling Morton and Caroline Joy, 1854; Charles Henry Winslow family; Joseph Brown’s steam wagon, a playhouse for the Winslow and Morton children in the 1860s



NEIGHBOR TO THE MORTONS

By KATE WINSLOW DAVIS

INTRODUCTION

As the Civil War was being fought back and forth across Missouri, hundreds of Missourians and some Kansans moved to southeast Nebraska. They were following the trail of earlier refugees driven out of northwestern Missouri and northeastern Kansas during the years of border warfare prior to the Civil War. Nebraska City was a favorite stopping place for these often pro-Southern pioneers. Among these pioneers was the family of Charles Henry Winslow, who arrived from Kansas by steamboat at Nebraska City, on May 23, 1863.

Winslow was born at Hallowell, Maine, on November 8, 1813. By trade he was a stone cutter and monument letterer. His first wife, Martha Noyse, died young, leaving him three children. After her death, he moved first to New York, then New Jersey, out to Michigan, and finally to Missouri. There he was married to Sarah Hunter on November 8, 1851. He followed his trade in the Missouri towns of St. Louis, Glasgow, Brunswick, and Kansas City. When his monument business failed about 1860, Winslow was hired to travel throughout Missouri delivering orders of blasting powder and gunpowder, a dangerous job during that period of border warfare and civil war. On his travels Winslow was arrested by both Northern and Southern soldiers. Having served as grand worthy patriarch of the Sons of Temperance, Winslow had contacts with both sides, and he found them helpful on numerous occasions. After the beginning

of the Civil War, Winslow moved his family to a farm just west of Kansas City, Kansas. Even there the family faced dangers and finally Winslow decided to move his family farther north, where sectional rivalries were not so intense. In the spring of 1863, he started north by team, hoping to find a farm in Iowa. The roads, however, were so muddy he gave up his quest at Nebraska City, where he rented a small Otoe County farm and sent for his family.

Mrs. Winslow with their two daughters arrived on May 23, 1863, and Mr. Winslow moved them out to his small acreage. In the fall Winslow went to work for J. Sterling Morton, managing his farm. The two families were very close, and it was learned by them that they were related, as Mrs. Morton and Mr. Winslow were second cousins. In 1865 the family moved to a farm in Liberty Precinct, Cass County, where Winslow lived the rest of his life. He died on September 10, 1878, a prominent farmer; for nine years he served on the Nebraska State Board of Agriculture.¹

Kate Winslow, the eldest of two daughters, was eleven years old when the Winslows arrived in Nebraska, having been born in Glasgow, Missouri, in 1852. She was very musical and very interested in education. After finishing school she taught for a time until she was married to Stephen Davis, a young Cass County farmer. After his death in 1902, Mrs. Davis moved with her five daughters to Lincoln, where all were graduated from the University of Nebraska. She continued to take educational classes herself until she was in her late seventies. Starting in 1923, Mrs. Davis began writing her reminiscenses, working on them at intervals until 1930. She died at her home in Lincoln, 1712 E Street, on February 7, 1935, with burial in the family lot at Nehawka, Cass County.²

Though they covered the whole of her life, we have selected the portion of Mrs. Davis's reminiscenses which cover the first years of the Winslow family in Nebraska. As this issue of *Nebraska History* is concerned with the 100th anniversary of Arbor Day, we felt that this very personal account of the home life of J. Sterling Morton would not be out of place. —PAUL D. RILEY, *Research Associate*.

REMINISCENSES

We reached Nebraska City about May 23, 1863. I have to guess at the day of the month, but I remember we were on the boat at St. Joseph on May 18, the day Jennie was five months old, for we put on her first short dress that day. It was a white dress with a peasant waist and short sleeves. It had a belt of blue and the neck and sleeves were bound with the same blue, which was just the color of her eyes. Her head was covered with tiny curls of golden hair. Father met us and took us to a boarding house for the night. This was on Kearney Hill, as the landing was there and not at the foot of the main street.

The next morning we went to the farm. This farm was on the north side of the road, that ran on the north of the Morton farm and cornered with it. I shall never forget how everything looked; the road and the houses along the way; and the house. If kodaks had been invented, I would have been glad to have even a little picture of the place. It was a one-room frame building with a door in the east, a window in the north and south, and a tumbledown log house behind. This log room had been the "claim shanty" and was almost past using. The cottonwood shingles had warped and rotted until it leaked everywhere. There were no windows — just an opening on one side without a shutter. It had a poor excuse of a floor.

Our furniture did not come as fast as we did, so we had just what Father was getting along with. There was a bed in one corner of the room. This was made of fence boards and had on it a straw-filled tick, Father had brought when he came. The pillows and covers he had also brought. There was a round heating stove in the middle of the room with what was called an elevated oven. This was an oven around the stove pipe. The oven would bake if you had a hot enough and long enough fire. A large dry goods box was the table, and smaller boxes, the chairs. For dishes we had a few plates, a couple of tin cups, a knife and fork and spoon, a skillet, two pans and a wash pan. This was all we had for two or three weeks. But it was home and away from the horrors of war, and seemed like such a safe retreat. "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

We got our water from the "Big Gum Spring" about forty rods from the house. We hauled water in a barrel to wash in and

for house use. Father had put in wheat and oats, and planted corn. I think he had in twenty acres of wheat and corn, and ten of oats. He had planted a big garden and had early things when we got there. I remember he cultivated his corn with one horse and a double shovel plow. Just after the Fourth of July the corn was tall enough to almost cover both horse and man. That year we had lovely watermelons, muskmelons, sweet corn, peas, beans, and beets. I was not back to my normal state yet and all summer when the vegetables were cooking, I would have to go out on the north side of the house in the shade. There were no shade trees near. We did not have cows nor pigs nor chickens, but a neighbor, Andrew Jessen (the father of Judge Paul Jessen) told Father he had a young cow that was roaming on the prairie with her calf, that we could milk, if we wanted to bother with it. This gave me the milk and nourishment I needed.³

Father had met a man in Nebraska City, whom he had known in Kansas City, Carey W. Lambeth, father of the Lambeth Brothers, who did business for so many years in Otoe County. Mr. Lambeth had a daughter, Lizzie, about my age, and they invited me to spend the Fourth of July with them.⁴ That was a great day. There was a barbecue. In the afternoon the "Earthquakers" paraded the streets. It was a grotesque parade of the most outlandish costumes and masks. I don't remember that they tried to represent any particular theme.

Everything was looking fine for the farmers, when there came a cold storm with frost, that injured the corn. This clipping I cut from the *Lincoln Star* for Friday, August 26, 1921:

RECORDS SHOW A KILLING FROST
ON AUGUST 25, 1863

"Beatrice, Nebraska, August 26. Fifty-eight years ago, August 25, 1863, there was a killing frost in Nebraska, according to the records kept by W. H. Robbins of this city. This is the earliest date of such occurrence, and is not likely to be repeated within the experience of men then living. The earliest frost in September was on the 12th of the month in 1902."

This agrees with my remembrance except that I would have placed it about ten days earlier. At any rate, it cut our corn, so we did not think there would be any that would ripen. It looked dark and discouraging, but with their usual trust and faith Father and Mother would not give way to regrets.

At this time every family that had ever owned slaves in Missouri and some that hadn't were trying to get away from that state. Many of them landed in Nebraska City. Every possible abiding place seemed occupied. Many were living in their covered wagons, but the frost made them think of winter and the great demand for better shelter became intense. A family had come up from the central part of Missouri, with several grown sons and daughters, and teams and cattle. They wanted some place to go into and offered Father one hundred dollars for his crop, if he would let them have the house at once. After thinking it over for a day or two, Father accepted the offer.

During the summer, Father had met J. Sterling Morton, and Mr. Morton had asked him to come to his farm and look after his hogs and cattle, and had made him a very good offer. When Father told Mr. Morton of the offer he had had for his crop, the latter renewed his offer of the house and work, if Father would come at once. The house was a good-sized room with a closet and a room upstairs, separated from the Morton house by the woodshed. In September we moved there, and so our acquaintance with the Morton family and "Morton Park" and "Arbor Lodge" began. Here we lived for eighteen months. Much of my knowledge of the early events of Nebraska's history was gathered from the stories Mr. Morton told to my father as we sat around the cook stove on winter nights.

The room was a good-sized room and Mother always had the knack of making everything look its best. We had the secretary and books in one corner of the room, then the sofa under the front window, the little table with the drop leaf and two drawers at the end of the room next to the door, and over this hung a mirror. The cook stove was at the west end of the room and in front of the west window, and in order to leave as much room as possible, the stove was turned with the side to the window. Next was the cupboard for dishes and the table. The closet under the stairs we used for storage of kettles and pans and supplies. The supplies were not very great, for sugar was twenty and twenty-five cents per pound; coffee, sixty and seventy-five cents; coal oil, which had just come into use, seventy-five and eighty cents per gallon.

Mr. Morton had quite a herd of Red Devon cattle and Suffolk



J. Sterling Morton married Caroline Joy in 1854. This is presumably their wedding picture. In 1863 they employed the Winslow family to work for them.

hogs. My father loved to care for cattle and he was a good milker, so we had plenty of milk and butter. I well remember our experiment in cheese making. We had cured the rennet according to the directions in "Agricultural Reports." We used the wash tubs for vats and a round wooden box for a mold. Father had made a lever press with a kettle filled with stone for the weight. We made some very good cheese and it cured and kept quite well, but I can't remember that we made much money off the venture.

How hard Father and Mother worked, but they never complained nor longed for the comforts they had before. They were cheerful and made the best of what they had.

Mr. and Mrs. Morton were very kind to us, and the boys, Joy, Paul and Mark, were fine boys and good playmates for me. They had a big Newfoundland dog, Brutus, that was a good playfellow, too. These boys were the best contented boys, and never seemed to give their parents any trouble. All day long they would play out doors and at evening after supper would get their books and games at the dining room table and amuse themselves. Mr. Morton was the editor of the Nebraska City News, of which Thomas Morton was owner and publisher. Although of the same name, they were not related, and as different as it is possible to imagine. Thomas Morton's family also became good friends of ours and his niece, Rosa Hubner, was my friend and playmate.

I can't remember any quarrels among the children, even when little Johnnie was there, and that made four boys. Johnnie was the son of John, the man of all work about the place. Johnnie's mother was dead and John, whose name was McCarthy, kept his son with him.⁵ Johnnie was a good little Irish lad, and was devoted to our baby, Jennie, which in my eyes showed his good sense. The other boys were fond of her, too, and were always ready to give her a ride in their wagon and to help take care of her. We used to play down in the pasture near the creek, and when Jennie had a spell of sickness and they thought she wouldn't get well, the boys made a little cover over her barefoot tracks in the soft dirt, to keep them for me. It was at this time that we had our playhouse in the Steam Wagon, which had been left close to the house. What wonderful times we had in it!

Sometimes it was a wonderful conveyance, taking us all over the world; sometimes a big store; at other times, a big house.

After we had been on this place for some months, my father found out that Mrs. Morton's father was his cousin, Hiram Joy. . . Her mother had died when she was a little child and she had been adopted by a family, named French. Sometimes both Mr. and Mrs. Morton would come to our room to spend the evening and sometimes just Mr. Morton would come. Often Father and Mother would go over to their rooms, but not as often as they came to ours. Mr. Morton enjoyed telling of the first years in Nebraska when they had come direct from Detroit and settled at the trading post, Bellevue. What must have been the young wife's thoughts as after seven days' travel, they reached the little two-roomed log house, so far from everyone they had ever known — and this the end' of their wedding journey. Together they faced the future — and conquered. I have heard Mr. Morton tell how Mrs. Morton would be homesick and would say she would surely jump off the bluff into the river, and he would answer, "Well, Carrie, if you are determined to do that, I'll hold your sunbonnet; then it won't be in your way." After Omaha was selected as the capital of the territory, the charm of Bellevue was gone. So these two young people went down the river aways where another settlement had been made, and located on a tract of land. David Brinson had squatted on this land but was bought out. Mr. Brinson went to Cass County and settled. Afterward when we moved to Cass County, I knew this family well, and went to school with Sade Brinson. In 1922 or 1923 I visited a younger one of the girls at Broken Bow, Nebraska. Martha A. Brinson married Silas A. Holcomb, who was afterwards governor of Nebraska.⁶ The memorial volume, published after the death of Mrs. Morton, says they moved to this place at Nebraska City in 1855. Of course Mr. Morton knew all the history of the country and my father was an appreciative listener. I was only a little girl but some of those talks left an impression.

We had found a number of friends by this time in Nebraska. Henry Baker's family were related to the Dofflemiers of Kansas City. Then the Joseph J. Imhoff and Heffley families and others gave us a home feeling and the realization that we had a part in the community. I would not fail to mention the girls I met that

first summer. One was Mary Allen, daughter of George Allen, where I had two or three such pleasant visits, and Etta Lathrope, whose mother, Mrs. Jerome Lathrope, had the most and finest cucumbers I ever saw. Then a little later was Ada Bennet, daughter of Elisha Bennet, who lived near the little brick school house, where the Morton boys and I went to school. This was called "Belmont School" and the addition was Belmont Addition. I attended school here part of two terms. One of the teachers was Miss Waller, and the other, the one I liked best, I can only remember her given name, Miss Edith. Strange how we will forget things!

On the Fourth of July of this year, 1864, the "Earthquakers" had their headquarters at the Morton farm and dressed for their parade there. This year it was a burlesque of the Negro question. The Steam Wagon was hauled out, and after much labor and many trials they succeeded in getting it into town and down Main Street by its own power, but I think it had to be hauled back by horses.⁷ The theme this year was the equality or superiority of the Negroes. Several wagons were fixed as a train and the Negroes had the most pleasant and important places, while the white people took back seats or stood up. Such wonderful costumes as were worn! The Negro women wore the very latest type of fashions with big hoops, full skirts, and the wonderful bonnets of that summer. They also carried tiny sunshades, the handles of which were jointed near the top, so they could be turned to make a screen. Numerous horsemen accompanied the "train" and bands played the popular music of the day, "Dixie" and "Maryland," mingling with "Yankee Doodle" and "the Star Spangled Banner" and "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean." I think this was the last attempt to run the Steam Wagon, and that it was hauled back and stood on Mr. Morton's farm until it followed the example of the "One-Horse Shay."

This was an exciting election time. Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson were nominated by the Republicans, and George B. McClellan and George Pendleton by the Democrats. This campaign gave me an interest in politics, for Mr. Morton was very active and made many speeches. Being right there, I heard many of the discussions and arguments.

When the big day at Nebraska City came with its procession, and the states being represented by the little girls, Mrs. Morton asked that I be one of them. I wore a white dress with a scarf of red, white and blue, that was fastened on my right shoulder with a big rosette and gold tassels that were on Father's Sons of Temperance regalia. My hair was curled and a red, white and blue turban was on my head. We carried pennants with the names of states we represented on them. I was very proud because I drew Virginia.

Soon after this General Clinton Bowen Fisk, who was an intimate friend of Mr. Morton, was sent up the river to Ft. Pierre, I think it was.⁸ He had his family with him. His wife, sister, and daughter, Mary, stopped with the Mortons for a week's visit. As Mary was about two years older than I, and not used to playing with boys, Mrs. Morton asked me to help entertain her. To my mind she was almost a young lady and the most beautiful girl with the most refined manners and such lovely clothes that I felt quite like a Cinderella. However I did know how to behave, thanks to my mother's training, and so this is one of my happy remembrances.

About this time I had a very severe attack of cholera morbus or something of that kind. My mother was awakened in the middle of the night by my moaning. When she got to me, I was unconscious with my limbs drawn up and the muscles knotted in hard bunches. Father started a man to Nebraska City for Dr. John Calvin Campbell.⁹ Mr. and Mrs. Morton came in to see if they could help. Dr. George L. Miller of Omaha was visiting them and he came in with them.¹⁰ He said to give me a few drops of turpentine and to rub turpentine on my abdomen and limbs and to put lots of flannels over them. This treatment was effective and by the time the doctor got there, I was better. It took some time, though, to entirely recover.

Another incident I remember was the Indian scare we had about this time. Some of the tribes from the southwest made a raid through western Kansas and southwestern Nebraska.¹¹ They killed some settlers and drove the others to the older settlements, burned the houses and stole the cattle. The friendly Pawnees were afraid to stay on their reservation, so they came into the settlements too. For about two weeks they thronged Nebraska City and the country around there, begging and

stealing. I was much frightened one day by two squaws coming into the house. That night I dreamed they came back and scratched my head with their poisoned finger nails. I had been reading a very thrilling East Indian story, in which a scene of this kind was described.

Mr. Morton had begun to plant trees, both fruit and forest. This incident I am going to tell shows his care for trees. He had set out some pear trees and one of the men had carelessly driven over one and had almost broken it off. There was a little strip of bark on one side not broken, and Father said he would try to save it. He raised it up and banked it well with dirt and drove some stakes around it. Some years later, Mr. Morton gave him some pears, saying they were from the tree my father saved. This enthusiasm for trees and tree planting developed into the nation-wide desire to increase our timber supply, and so "Arbor Day" originated. In honor of Mr. Morton and his efforts to interest settlers on these barren plains to plant trees, April 22nd, his birthday, was named and has since remained as "Arbor Day," and is now one of our national holidays. The United States Government soon recognized the importance of tree planting and established "Timber Claim" rights to settlers on government land, who would put out and care for a certain number of acres of trees. As we go over the central and western parts of this state, we see large groves far away from any streams of water, that were planted under this act, and in this way the very appearance and climate of our state have been changed. As I look out of my window at the lovely tree-shaded streets of our city and think that sixty years ago this was called the "Salt Basin," where nothing would grow, I feel that in my lifetime a miracle has been performed, and God's promise has come to pass, "The desert shall blossom as the rose and waste places shall be made glad." There have been many descriptions of the country and the hardships of these days written, but only those, who experienced these things, know all the heartache and longing of a treeless cabin, and the blistering heat of the summer day on the vast stretches of Nebraska plains.

Mr. Morton has been much interested in bringing thoroughbred cattle and hogs to his farm. He had Devonshire cattle, and his herd was a fine sight — the red sleek cattle with their long delicate horns, many of which had been tipped with brass

knobs. He had white Suffolk hogs, and I remember one was immense and weighed, I'm afraid to say how much, but I think it was more than five hundred pounds. He had about a hundred and twenty-five that were fat and ready to be sent to market in November of that year, but there was no market for them. Navigation had closed, and as there were no railroads, there would not be any shipping that way until spring. But there was a big demand for cured meat and bacon to be taken by freight wagons to Denver, Pike's Peak, and the newly discovered gold mines in Colorado. So Mr. Morton and Father decided to kill and cure those hogs and send this meat west.

They arranged a slaughtering place in the pasture, south of the house, where there was a spring. Then they fixed rooms for salting the meat in the granaries. There was a good-sized smoke house already built. They worked out doors until near Christmas, when the weather grew so cold they could not work with the sausage and the lard out doors, so an outside cellar was used. A stove was put in and a big iron boiler was used for rendering the lard. The sausage and lard were put in square tin cans that held about eighty pounds, and these were soldered up, making convenient packages to put in the big freight wagons. The indoor part of the work fell largely to my father and mother. I found that a twelve year old girl could cut up lard strips as well as older people. One little incident I must tell. Little Jennie could just walk under our table leaf and she had learned to push the support around and let the leaf down. One day my mother had put a large milk pan of hot lard on the table, partly on the leaf. Jennie walked under and pushed the support of the table leaf. Down it all came. Fortunately Jennie was far enough under not to get much on herself, but the floor was well oiled, at least in the middle.

My father had bought some lots in Belmont Addition to Nebraska City. He decided he would build a house and we would move to our own home. He had the house ready to plaster when he was offered such a good price, he sold it. Mr. Morton told him of an eighty acre farm in Cass County he could get very cheap. When Father went to see the place, he decided to take it. About fifteen or twenty acres had been cultivated for a year or so and then abandoned, but we could hope for something in crops the first year. He bought logs of an old



The Charles Henry Winslow family (c. 1874) included the mother Sarah (Hunter) Winslow, Kate Winslow, Henry Winslow, the father, and Jennie Winslow.

school house at or near the town of Wyoming. A new frame school house had been built. This he took down and hauled to the place. He got new cottonwood shingles and made a good roof. On the 18th of April, 1865, he moved the family into the new, real home in Nebraska.

This was the day that President Lincoln's funeral train started from Washington to Springfield, Illinois. I don't need to put in this story anything about that tragic event. It did not take many days for the sad news to reach wherever the telegraph was.

How well I remember the day we moved! The wagon was loaded with the things we had to have at last in the old house — the table, stove, beds, and some other things. Among the things was the marble baptismal vase, which Father had in his shop in Missouri. He had two of them and had given one to the Presbyterian Church in Brunswick. The other had always been a much-prized treasure in our family and still is. I had been baptized from it. Later it was used for my sister and brother and also for my own children. Part of the way my mother carried it and then I held it when Jennie wanted to sit in front to "see the horses go." We set the vase down in the prairie grass while we ate our lunch, and I so well remember my father saying "that was combining art and nature."

I wish I could find words to tell of our feelings as we drove up to the house. No tree or bush or any neighboring house was in sight, but it was "home," and many happy hours did we have in that little log house. Of course, that day there was a hurry to get the stove up and supper ready — it was "supper" in those days. We must also get some place to sleep.

I would not pass by the great events that were taking place in our country at this time. Child as I was, I realized a civil crisis was on in the United States. The week before, President Lincoln had been assassinated and an untried man had to take his place, a man whom many thought unqualified and even dangerous. The war was closed, but not over. Bitter hatred was in both North and South, and it was impossible to even guess what the end would be. As I think back over the days, I am amazed at the calm way we seemed to look at things, and the way events came about, and the country settled back to the important business of living. Although only a child I realized that it would

be a long time before the hatred that war or quarreling always brings out in man would be overcome.

Of course, many of our neighbors thought because we were from Missouri that we were traitors to our government. They were not very careful of their remarks, and many times my hands would clinch and my lips tremble when some especially disrespectful remark was made about my father. How I wished I were a boy so I could fight! Not all of the people were so narrow and bigoted, and in a short time my father's respect for law and his superior mental ability made for him an important place in the community. As for my mother, she was always a lady and her influence was acknowledged. Those who criticized us most soon became our warmest friends.

In the fall we got word that brother Frank, who had been in the Southern army all during the war, was back in Brunswick, Missouri, with brother Charlie, and was coming to see us before the boats stopped running for the winter. This brother had been a member of the band in Independence, when General Price raised the regiment for the service of seceding states and Frank went with the crowd, and didn't get home for more than four years. However, he did come back safe and stayed that winter with us, and there was room for all of us in that one-room log house. We had one big bed and a trundle bed, that pushed under the big bed. Mother, Jennie and I slept in the bed, and Father and brother Frank in the trundle bed. This was a cold winter and we had lots of snow. Frank played checkers with me and told me stories of his experiences in the South. I think he gave me a desire to improve my mind, as well as my writing and spelling. I still have the acrostic he wrote for me. In the spring he got work on the Nebraska City News and stayed there for some time. Then his rovings began and he went to St. Joseph, St. Louis, Nashville, Mobile, New Orleans, and finally reached New York City, where he died in February, 1877. Thus ended one branch of our family.

The first years on the farm were hard ones for us. We lacked many things for our comfort, but we never went hungry. I remember one very cold winter morning we were out of flour or meal. We made breakfast that morning on baked potatoes. The weather had been so stormy for a week that Father could not go to the mill, but when we scraped the bottom of the barrel

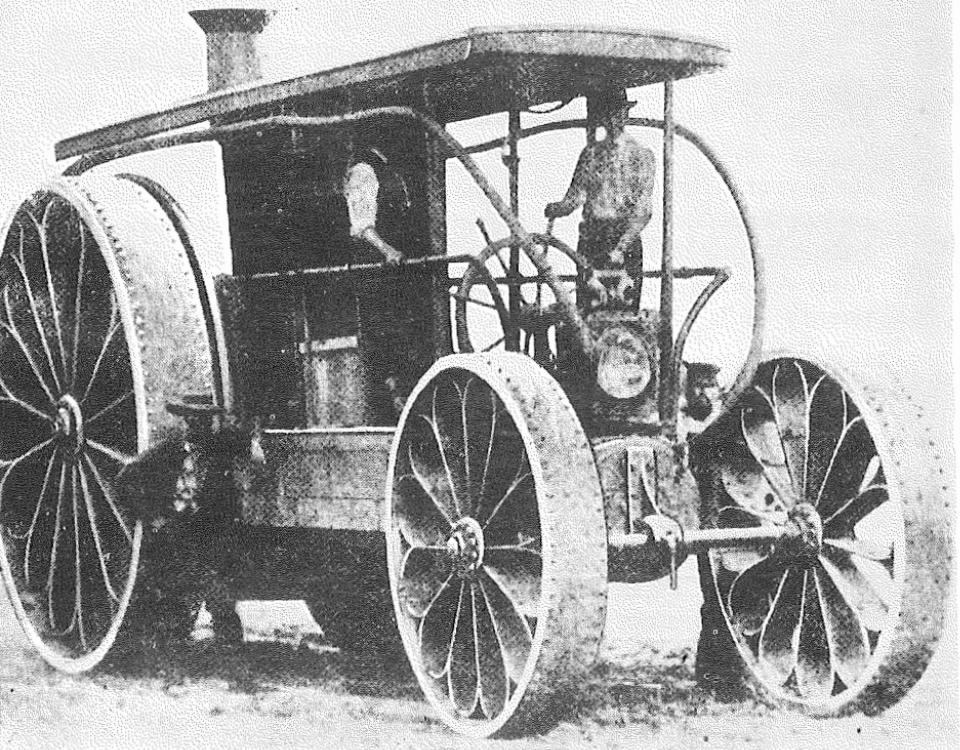
hard enough, the storm stopped and the roads were opened and we got flour and had biscuits again fit for a king. We were none the worse for the experience.

The first fall on the farm we went down to the Weeping Water creek and found the finest wild plums — great, big, yellow and red ones — and we actually gathered bushels of them. And not only that but Mother tore up her underskirt to get rags to tie on the best bushes and in the following spring, we went back and got the bushes and set out a long hedge of them back of the garden. Transplanting did not hurt them and for many years they furnished plenty of fine fruit for jelly and preserves.

Sugar was very high at this time, and we had to be very economical with it, only using it to sweeten coffee and tea. But sorghum was extensively raised and a very good grade of molasses was made. Uncle Stephen Hobson and Mr. Lewis Bird had an improved mill and evaporator and had paid quite a sum for a secret way to make good syrup. For six weeks they worked hard almost day and night to make up the cane that was brought to them. As money was so scarce they had to make it up "on the shares," and sell the surplus to get their money back. Father helped them some and took at least part of his pay in sorghum, so we had "sweetening" without sugar. What fine plums we had that winter, and pumpkin pies sweetened with sorghum! And gingerbread! No danger of starving then.

That first summer I began to do a little speculation on my own account. Mrs. Shryder wanted a piece of tatting I was making. She said she would set a hen on fifteen eggs and give me the chickens when they were hatched and lend me the hen to raise them, if I would give her the tatting and I got eleven chickens. I was very proud of my bargain.

Not all of our days were spent in hard work. We had some social life, shall I say? At least we met together. The winter Brother Frank was with us I remember a party at Mr. Pell's, to which I was invited, although I was only a little girl. I remember how they played "Clap In, Clap Out," "Post Office" and "Weavely Wheat," and that kind of games. Then we had Sunday School and Church in the summer. Of course, too, there were Fourth of July picnics. Later we had Debates and Spelling



Joseph Brown's steam wagon was a spectacular failure in hauling freight on the Nebraska City-Fort Kearny Cut-off, but it served as a magnificent playhouse for the Winslow and Morton children in the 1860's.

Schools. The Debates were very interesting to the older people. Mr. Buck, Mr. Todd, and my father were standbys in our neighborhood for debating, but there were also others from other neighborhoods, who could debate too. Father was such a ready speaker and could prepare so easily on any subject, he always had the advantage. Once when Mrs. Buck thought that Father was getting the best of her husband, she threw a book at him, which struck him squarely in the chest. Father stopped speaking a moment, looked her full in the face and said, "Now, don't do that again," and went right on with his speech. Of course she apologized and they had many laughs over it later.

I think it was the spring of 1866 that we had a bit of bad luck or bad judgment. When we left Nebraska City not all of the meat and lard from the butchering venture had been sold. Father turned his share that was left over to Frederick W. Rottman, who had a store and was sending groceries and supplies to Denver and Pike's Peak.¹² Mr. Rottman did not buy them outright, but agreed to handle them for a per cent, and we were to get what we needed at his store. Thus it had run along

for a year. When the returns came in, there was not as much as Father expected and we were in debt. We had a horse that Father thought he could spare, so when a man came along buying horses, Father sold his horse for ninety dollars — four twenty dollar bills and a ten dollar bill. He went to Nebraska City, paid off the indebtedness, and came home happy. A few days later a young man from the store came out and said the money was counterfeit — at least we found the four twenty dollar bills were. So we were out the horse and still had the debt to pay and only ten dollars to pay it with.

This was a cold spring. I think it must have been in March that a bad snow and high wind caused so many of Mr. Upton's sheep to smother in their pens. The fleece was heavy and as the weather got warmer, the wool would pull out in great bunches, much faster than it could be cut off with shears. Mr. Upton said Mother could have all she could pull. Mother and I pulled wool until we had enough to make a pair of blankets and enough flannel to make Mother and Jennie a dress apiece. We picked and washed the wool and sent it to the carding mill. Then Mother spun it and Mrs. Bird wove it, Mother helping her with her work for the weaving. There was a good deal of black wool in the yarn, so the blankets were not so white as some, but Mrs. Todd exchanged with Mother and gave her a white pair. The blanket we have with the red "K. W. D." in one corner is one of those blankets. Mother gave one to Jennie and one to me.

The next spring Father set out more fruit and forest trees and berries. We planted a big garden and had lots of flowers as well as flowering shrubs. Father also began to plan to enlarge and fix the house over and build an addition to it. As he did all the work himself and the work on the farm, too, it did not grow very fast.

During any leisure he had, he was fixing our house over. He had built a room on the north of the log house and a shed across the whole length, which made a kitchen and woodshed. He had covered the log part with boards up and down, and strips over the joinings, and had put a floor in the attic, and a stairway up, so I had a nice little room up there. Of course, the cottonwood shingles had warped some and snow could sift in several places on my bed, but what of that? It would melt.

Then we had such a lovely yard. The orchard was doing well

and we had all kinds of berries, and the plum trees we had put out seemed to like the new place, and gave us quantities of luscious fruit. Then we always had a good garden — all kinds of vegetables, and lots of corn and melons. Mother dried corn and sold it to the stores at Nebraska City, and so helped to get the things we couldn't raise. Our flower garden was such a vision of beauty. I don't believe anyone ever enjoyed roses, phlox drummondi, and verbenas any more than we did those years. And the dreary, desolate place was blossoming in all the gorgeous beauty that God has promised to those who try. Better than all else, there was peace and contentment . . .

We went to church and Sunday School at Mt. Pleasant, near Nehawka, and east of us at Mr. Beatty's and Mr. Cannon's houses. Service was also held at Folden settlement, now Union. Uncle John Beatty, as we all called him, was postmaster and the office was called Union then. A little farther north was the Three Grove post office, where Mr. Wiley was the postmaster. This was one of the earliest offices in Cass County. Mr. Buck had had the office at his home for the earlier years .

We were not in the country in the exciting days of the first claim locating, when there was so much trouble with the lawless element that goes with new settlements, but I have heard of some of the thrilling times of those days.

There were some very fine people living in our farm neighborhood, and I wish I could picture them to you as I recall them. I remember they all tried to do what they could to make a good home community and have a good time.

NOTES

1. Raymond E. Dale, "Otoe County Pioneer. A Biographical Dictionary" (unpublished manuscript, Nebraska State Historical Society), 2813-2815
2. *Lincoln Star*, February 7, 1935; Interview with Mrs. Frank T. Darrow, Lincoln, February 2, 1972, surviving daughter of Mrs. Davis.
3. Andrew Jessen, a native of Schleswig-Holstein, was born in 1827 and came to this country in 1851; he settled in Otoe County in July 1854. He died March 22, 1867, leaving his widow and six children. Dale, *op. cit.*, 1362-1364.
4. Carey W. Lambreth (1814-1881) arrived in Otoe County from Missouri in 1863, where he had suffered severe financial losses. He was an agent, later the state agent, for the St. Louis Life Insurance Company. His sons William C. and Thomas Crafton Lambreth were prominent dry goods merchants; they were survived by their sister, Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Elmore. *Ibid.*, 1476-1477.

5. This is apparently John McCarthy (1831-1888), who came to Otoe County in 1857. Part of the time he farmed while living with his brother Robert H. McCarthy. He was involved in overland freighting during the 1860's and was married to Emma Grosjohn in 1866. He was survived by nine children, one of whom was a John E. McCarthy. This John McCarthy, however, was born in Canada rather than Ireland. *Ibid.*, 1585-1587.

6. David Brinson (b. 1818) came to Otoe County in 1855, where he was a farmer. He moved to Custer County in the 1880's, where he was living in 1889. Silas A. Holcomb served as governor of Nebraska from 1895 to 1899, elected on a Populist-Democrat fusion ticket. *Ibid.*, 321-322.

7. The steam wagon was invented by Joseph R. Brown of Minnesota, and was built in New York for \$9,000. It was brought to Nebraska City in 1862. It was to be used for hauling freight to Colorado. On its first trip, it broke down about five miles west of Nebraska City. Before it could be repaired, Brown learned of the Minnesota Indian war of 1862 and that his family had been captured. Though his family was later released, Brown never returned to Nebraska and the steam wagon was abandoned. It was equipped with an upright tubular boiler and four engines of ten horsepower each.

8. General Fisk (1828-1890) at this time was commander of the Department of Northern Missouri. Born in New York, he had been a Michigan banker prior to the war, where Morton knew him. After the war he was appointed to the Freedmen's Bureau, and he founded the Negro school at Nashville, which developed into Fisk University. He later served as president of the Board of Indian Commissioners, and he was the Prohibition Party candidate for President in 1888. Fisk was at Nebraska City the week of September 16, 1864, Mark M. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary* (N. Y.: David McKay Co., 1959), 281-282; Brownville, *Nebraska Advertiser*, September 22, 1864.

9. Dr. John C. Campbell (1814-1905) attended Miami University, and after practicing in Iowa came to Nebraska City in November 1854, as the town's first doctor. He served several terms in the territorial legislature and was a founder of the Nebraska Republican party, though he soon returned to the Democratic party. He was a leading anti-war member of the legislature, being the only member to vote against a law to allow soldiers to vote, as well as against allowing relief to the families of Nebraska soldiers. Unlike many Democrats, he was a strong proponent of statehood. Dale, *op. cit.*, 422-426.

10. Dr. George L. Miller is seldom referred to in the role of physician. From his earliest arrival in the territory he took an active role in Democratic politics, but it was his role as long-time editor of the *Omaha Herald* that insures his place in Nebraska history.

11. In August 1864 a concentrated attack was made by Cheyenne and Dakota Indians against overland travelers, road ranches, and stage stations. Many lives were lost across Nebraska, and the troubles continued for several months. The raids did not extend to the settlements along the Missouri river.

12. Frederick W. Rottman (1834-1888), is a native of Westphalia, came to Nebraska City in April, 1858, where he clerked in various stores before opening his own in 1865. He later became involved in building construction, though he continued to be a leading merchant. Dale, *op. cit.*, 2211-2213.