



Nebraska History posts materials online for your personal use. Please remember that the contents of *Nebraska History* are copyrighted by the Nebraska State Historical Society (except for materials credited to other institutions). The NSHS retains its copyrights even to materials it posts on the web.

For permission to re-use materials or for photo ordering information, please see:

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/magazine/permission.htm>

Nebraska State Historical Society members receive four issues of *Nebraska History* and four issues of *Nebraska History News* annually. For membership information, see:

<http://nebraskahistory.org/admin/members/index.htm>

Article Title: Stockville, Nebraska: An Inland County Seat Town, About 1900

Full Citation: Robert Van Pelt, "Stockville, Nebraska: An Inland County Seat Town, About 1900," *Nebraska History* 65 (1984): 326-343.

URL of article: <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH1984Stockville.pdf>

Date: 1/22/2013

Article Summary: A project by Rudolph Wendelin in 1979 to produce a mural of Stockville as it appeared about 1900 created the opportunity for this article describing the research and the "rediscovery" of the historic Stockville. The article identifies various buildings in the drawing and some of the people who made up the town in its earlier history.

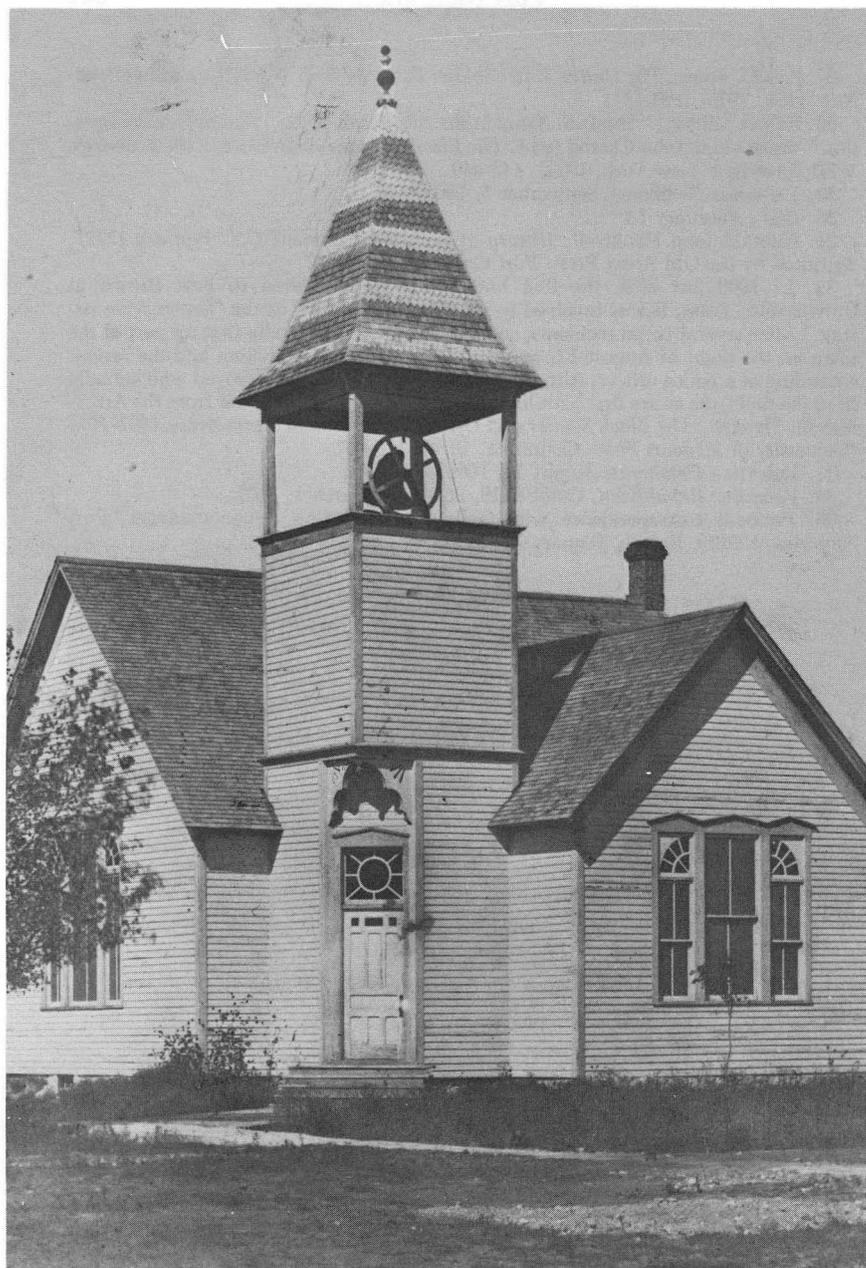
Cataloging Information:

Names: Rudolph Wendelin, Judge Robert Van Pelt, A H Kidd, Thomas Jensen, George Shelley, Dorothy D Arent, Elma M Nelson, W H Latham, Fred Schroeder, J L White, Lafe Carstensen, Earl Carstensen, Harry Wilkinson, Charlie Adams, Edgar Keith, Richard D Logan, Elma Davison, Roy Davison, W L McClary, Norman McClary, Judge William Gaslin, George W Norris, E B Perry, Charles E Eldred, Chris Vandenberg, Frank Morrison, Maxine Morrison, Biff Morrison, Loyal M Graham, Harry B Fleharty, John Hal, Fred Hall, Charlie Hall, Loren Messersmith, George H Stewart, Luke H Cheney, Wendell Cheney, Norris Chadderdon, Kenneth Williams, George Shelley, William McKinley Shelley, E L Hall, M T Wards, Arch Ward, Allen Ward, A G Williams, LaVerne Williams, Meredith Williams, Bret Simonds, Del Teel, Jack Powers, Luke Cheney, Mrs Clara Dobson, J H Bayston, George D Chadderdon, Sarah D Chadderdon, Lester Chadderdon, Glenn Chadderdon, Neil Chadderdon, Hester Chadderdon, Charles Best, Robert Best, Robert O Watkins, Tommy Watkins, Willis Hopton, Don Carlos Dye, Mary Dye, Roy Stryker, W F (Doc) Carver, Mary J Beauvais, Edward Colliste Beauvais, Joseph Robidoux, James Peter Beauvais, Mrs Margaret Waldraven, Colonel M E Waldraven, Lawrence Yearsley

Place Names: Stockville, Nebraska; Arapahoe, Nebraska; Indianola, Nebraska; Frontier County, Nebraska; Furnas County, Nebraska; Red Willow County, Nebraska; McCook, Nebraska; Medicine Creek; Curtis, Nebraska; Sterling, Colorado; Freedom, Nebraska; Cottonwood Springs, Nebraska; Fort McPherson; Quick, Nebraska; Fandon, Nebraska; Zimmer, Nebraska; Russell, Nebraska; Earl, Nebraska; Stowe, Nebraska; Lincoln, Nebraska; Omaha, Nebraska; Cambridge Arch, Nebraska; Boys' Industrial School [Kearney]; Whittier, California;

Keywords: Burlington & Missouri; Hi Line Branch Line; Arbor Cemetery [Stockville]; Bald Eagle [hotel]; *Faber; Sentinel; Republican*; Vernon's Store [in Freedom]; Kearney College; Peru Teachers College; Conn Musical Catalog; Whittier College [California]; Dye Store; Franklin (Nebraska) Academy; California Crossing Ranch;

Photographs / Images: Congregational Church, Stockville, built about 1903; Robert Van Pelt and his mother Mrs Sarah Van Pelt in front of her Stockville café about 1920; dodger [small printed handbill] printed in Stockville about 1895; Stockville from an eminence southwest of the business district about 1908. Boys in the picture are Roy Floro, Robert Van Pelt, and Bret Simonds; Stockville, Frontier County, Nebraska circa 1900 [with detailed information in the appendix]



Congregational Church, Stockville, built about 1903.

Stockville, Nebraska: An Inland County Seat Town, about 1900

By Robert Van Pelt

INTRODUCTION

In 1979 Rudolph Wendelin, retired artist for the Forest Service, US Department of Agriculture, at the suggestion of Senator Arthur Carmody, treasurer of the Nebraska State Historical Society, agreed to draw a scene from old Stockville in Southwest Nebraska. Started in the 1870s as a headquarters for cattlemen and chosen the county seat, Stockville still is the seat of government for Frontier County.¹ Wendelin, a native of the Beaver Valley village of Ludell, Kansas, southwest of McCook, now lives in Arlington, Virginia.

The project hinged on "reconstructing" Stockville as it appeared about 1900 in order that the artist would have something with which to work. The town today consists of few residences, a church, one business house, a post office, and the courthouse, and it plays host to the county fair each fall. This historical society owned a few photos of Stockville buildings but found a trove in those collected by US District Court Judge Robert Van Pelt over many decades. Pictures of the residential district were rare, but enough photos of the business district were found to gain a definite idea of how the downtown area near the courthouse appeared. One photograph was taken in 1898 by A. H. Kidd, a Beatrice attorney, at the time of the trial of Andrew Hawkins for the murder of Thomas Jensen, a client of Kidd's.

Judge Van Pelt assisted in coordinating information gained from photos, from personal interviews with George Shelley, retired farmer, and his daughter, Dorothy D. Arent of rural Stockville, and from County Treasurer Elma M. Nelson to produce a rude sketch of Stockville for the artist. Wendelin's resultant drawing becomes the cover of this issue of *Nebraska History*.

Nebraska History has asked Judge Van Pelt to identify the buildings in the drawing and recall some of the people who made up the community of Stockville when he was a boy there early in this century. His article, which follows, was annotated by the *Nebraska History* staff:

THE TOWN

It is difficult to describe this small inland town and do justice to its people, many of whom came to Stockville before any railroads were in the area.

Even its memory may soon be a thing of the past. There are but few left to recall its friendships, its days of celebration, its times of sorrow. What is remembered by me as a boy are not the days of privation or Stockville's dusty streets, but a friendly people who comprised the village that was once my home.

Etched in my memory is the lawyer who regularly would start the fire in the church furnace, ring the bell, and have things ready for Sunday School at a time when a minister could not be supported. It includes the encouragement of devoted teachers who urged pupils to study and prepare for additional schooling. Another lawyer (later a victim of delirium tremens), who, when it was expected my mother, Sarah Simon Van Pelt, would die of typhoid fever, brought us a pail of water every morning and did other household chores. Among my first recollections is carrying home from the town pump each afternoon water in a quart pail to cool my mother's fever. (The town windmill, from which the water was drawn, is shown in Wendelin's mural.)

Later my mother told me how another mother, whose father was the town's first Congregational minister and whose son became one of my best friends, set mother's mind at ease by assuring her that if it became necessary she could raise two boys as easily as one.

I remember the tornado which struck Stockville late one evening in 1906. As the wind abated, my mother opened the north door of our undamaged home and observed a block away a residence blown into the street and partially destroyed. I remember her wrapping her gray shawl, her hallmark, about her head and shoulders and as darkness fell going out into the

rain. She returned with a shaken family of seven, who were told that they could stay with us until they could build a new house, which took several months.²

I remember the Civil War veteran who, limping on his cane, came down town and offered me his Colt .44 for my protection when, as a first-year law student, I was leaving for Curtis to challenge votes on the day of the 1920 county seat election. I refused his gun, saying that I knew three lawyers in Curtis—W. H. Latham, Fred Schroeder,³ and J. L. White; the two Carstensens, Lafe and Earl; Harry Wilkinson, Charlie Adams, and Edgar Keith, all of whom would see that I was not harmed.

I see the first jury before whom I tried a case at Stockville. It resulted in a hung jury because two of the jurors would not join in any verdict for less than the amount which I requested on behalf of the client, telling the other jurors, as I learned later, that it was Robert's first case there, and they should give him all he asked for.

I see those who cared for my aged mother in the summer of 1938 when she longed to return home to Stockville, after spending a year and a half in a Lincoln hospital. At Stockville she was under the care of Richard D. Logan—the village druggist who, as a young man, due to finances, had dropped out of medical school—and also of Elma and Roy Davison. At the end I see the wife of a future governor singing at her funeral.⁴ These are only a part of the acts of friendship which created the Stockville I remember and which are a most important part of the pleasant memories of a lifetime.

In the 1870s and the early 1880s—prior to the building of the Burlington & Missouri Main Line to Denver—Arapahoe, Indianola, and Stockville were the principal towns of southwest Nebraska. Each was a county seat. As late as 1890, Frontier and Furnas were the most populous counties in the area. Each exceeded Red Willow County, which included McCook and Indianola, in population. When the railroad went through, Arapahoe and Indianola found themselves located on the railroad; nevertheless, each soon lost its county seat. The main line of the B & M to Denver and the Hi Line Branch Line of the Burlington both missed Stockville. Yet, it alone of the three retained its county seat. In 1890 the population of each was:

Arapahoe 734, Indianola 579, Stockville 227; in 1900, 701, 626, and 269, respectively. In 1980 Stockville had only 45 inhabitants, Arapahoe had grown to 1,107 and Indianola to 856.⁵

Frontier County was established in 1872. At its organization the name of the county seat, Stockville, and its approximate location were determined. W. L. McClary laid out the town site on his land. Norman McClary, his son, a resident of Canada, has furnished the Historical Society important diaries kept by his father of a period of more than 40 years.⁶

For several years Frontier County included the unorganized territory west to the Colorado line and the few settlers in that area paid their taxes at Stockville. Preliminary court functions also took place there.⁷

Three of the organizers of the county were married to daughters of an Indian woman whose burial was the first in Arbor Cemetery at Stockville. The first settlers related a story told by this Indian woman who was held in high regard by reason of her honesty and intelligence. She related that as a girl she witnessed a terrible flood, causing Medicine Creek and Spring Creek Valleys to be covered from bluff to bluff. She paddled her canoe down Medicine Creek, across what later was the southeast portion of Stockville, to Spring Creek.

The frame courthouse, which still stands in a square on the main street, was built in the late 1880s by a tax levied on real and personal property in Stockville and Sherman precincts only. The original courthouse burned in the early 1880s.⁸

Following the county seat election in the 1880s, three attempts were made—in 1920, 1930, and 1950—to remove the county seat to Curtis. The state law required that a county seat could not be moved without the affirmative vote of 60 percent of those voting. Curtis at each of the elections received over 50 percent of the vote, but never 60 percent.⁹

Most of the buildings pictured by Wendelin were built in the 1880s and 1890s. The town then had approximately 40 residences. A few structures, including a hotel, were moved to Curtis when the Hi Line Railroad was built in the late 1880s from Holdrege to Sterling, Colorado. By 1900 Stockville had two livery stables, always the busiest places in any southwest Nebraska town.¹⁰ It had a hotel, the Bald Eagle,¹¹ two board-



Robert Van Pelt and his mother Mrs. Sarah Van Pelt in front of her Stockville cafe about 1920.

ing and rooming houses; at least two lunch rooms with near-beer a leading commodity (Stockville seldom had a saloon). There was an ice cream parlor,¹² although the drugstore had the swankiest place for ice cream sundaes. Ice cream was shipped almost daily from Holdrege to Curtis by train, then 14 miles to Stockville by team. On arrival in Stockville, ice cream needed immediate repacking. There were two groceries and a meat market in addition to four general merchandise stores.

A real estate office was a usual thing in any new town, and, as the county seat, Stockville had two abstractors. Until World War I not less than three lawyers maintained offices. There was a bank, and part of the time two banks.¹³ Stockville had a

building and loan association, which held mortgages on many residences. Its lumber yard was destroyed in the 1906 tornado. At various times three newspapers were published, the *Faber*, the *Sentinel*, and the *Republican*.¹⁴

It had an undertaking parlor. A small boy's impression will always remain, namely, how many caskets there seemed to be for children.

Stockville never had a licensed embalmer. In 1915 I had the experience of "sitting up with a corpse." The chief duty was to see that the decedent's face was constantly covered with a damp cloth which had been soaked in a formaldehyde solution. The cloth was wrung out and changed every half hour. By this pioneer treatment, discoloration of the face of the unembalmed decedent was either prevented or retarded.

There were two churches—Methodist and Congregational.¹⁵ Money raised for a third never found its way into the church coffers. The man who raised the money claimed it had been stolen from him. He found his way to California, where he lived in a manner he couldn't afford in Stockville.

After the railroad was built through Curtis, there was daily mail service. A team left Stockville at 9 a.m. for Curtis, where connection was made with both the eastbound and the westbound Hi Line trains on this line, which connected with fast trains at Holdrege and Sterling, Colorado. The return trip to Stockville was made in the late afternoon. Separate mail service was provided from Bartley, to the south on the Burlington. This was a 25-mile trip with the driver changing teams at Vernam's Store in Freedom, the half way station.¹⁶ In the very early 1870s the mail came from Indianola to Stockville, then to a post office which later became Curtis, and on to the Platte River at Cottonwood Springs (Ft. McPherson).¹⁷

Mail service for many years prior to rural free delivery, was carried from Stockville to Quick, Fandon, and Zimmer, post offices in the southwest part of the county, on Mondays and Fridays; and to Russell, Earl, and Stowe, post offices in the south and east parts of the county, on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Letters deposited in the mail at Lincoln, Omaha, St. Joseph, and Denver in the late afternoon were almost unfailingly delivered in Stockville the next day, as were the afternoon newspapers from Lincoln and Omaha. This postal service, carried by train and by

team at a cost of two cents a letter, was superior to the service now available.

The village had four gaslights hanging from telephone poles. Three were in the town's main intersections and one at the crosswalk to the courthouse. Most houses had their own windmills. The town windmill and pump and the drinking tank for the horses was maintained by the village board, mainly for those visitors with teams who had courthouse business.¹⁸

In the fall of 1913, fire destroyed five of the buildings shown in the picture. Valiant efforts of a bucket brigade, whose pails filled at the town pump passed by hand from person to person in a line extending from the pump to the blaze, saved the remainder of the block.¹⁹

The first oil well in southwest Nebraska was drilled half a mile east of town in 1915; a dry hole resulted. It was financed by two men from Pennsylvania who made no attempt to raise money locally. They relied upon U.S. Geodetic Survey maps indicating the Cambridge Arch as a place to drill and the prospect of oil east of Stockville.

The big events of the year in Stockville were district court; the county fair, lasting three days, usually in September;²⁰ the teachers institute when 50 to 70 teachers, mainly female, came to town in the summer for a week of study with a faculty usually from the Kearney and Peru Teachers Colleges.²¹

Jury sessions of court were held two times a year, with an extra session each year at which only non-jury cases were tried. It was not unusual for a session of court to last three or four weeks. Judge William Gaslin was the first district judge to hold court in Stockville.²² George W. Norris later U.S. Senator;²³ E. B. Perry, later a Lincoln lawyer; and Charles E. Eldred are among the early judges of distinction.

The lyceum courses in the winter provided four and sometimes five varied programs with good speakers and excellent music. The main sports were foot racing, horse racing, and baseball, with sledding and skating in the winter. Betting on the foot races and the horse races was commonplace, with items appearing in the weekly newspapers well before such an event was held. The leading foot racer of the area, Chris Vandenberg, in the late 1890s was the fastest sprinter in southwest Nebraska. Horses by the name of Gray Ned and Whiskey Pete both won and lost

LEADING BUSINESS FIRMS OF STOCKVILLE, NEB.

STATE BANK OF STOCKVILLE.

BYRON G. LANE, CASHIER.

★Commercial Collections a Specialty.★

F. M. DAWSON,
PROPRIETOR OF THE
CITY MEAT MARKET.
FRESH AND SALT MEATS.
 Fresh Bread, Pies, Buns, Cakes, and Hot Coffee always on hand.
ICE CLEAR AS CRYSTAL BY THE POUND OR TON

J. R. SNODGRASS,
PROPRIETOR OF THE
NEW BLACKSMITH SHOP,
OPPOSITE BALD EAGLE HOUSE.
 ALL KINDS OF REPAIRING.
BEST HORSE-SHOER IN THE COUNTY

GEO. H. STEWART,
ATTORNEY AT LAW
AND NOTARY PUBLIC.
 WILL PRACTICE IN ALL COURTS IN THE STATE
Special Attention given to Last Wills and Estates

W. L. McCLARY, Proprietor
THE ENTERPRISE STORE.
-ALL KINDS OF-
General Merchandise

THE PHENIX DRUG STORE
R. J. LOGAN, Prop.
 PURE DRUGS AND CHEMICALS.
Special Attention given to Prescription Work.

A. S. SANDS,
ATTORNEY AT LAW
NOTARY PUBLIC.
 WILL PRACTICE IN ALL STATE COURTS
Special Attention given to Collections.

W. O. MINNER, Manager
COUNTRY & PRODUCE,
 BUTTER AND EGG DEPOT.
 WE LEAD THEM ALL.

H. I. MERRIMAN,
ATTORNEY AT LAW,
Notary Public, and Bonded Abstractor.
Special facilities at McCook and Washington for prompt and efficient attention to U. S. Land Business.

The Stockville Lumber and Implement Yards.

S. BINGER, Proprietor.

LUMBER, LATH, COMPLETE STOCK WAGONS, PLANTERS, LIME AND HAIR, PLOWS, HARROWS.

JOHN WEISS,
PROPRIETOR OF THE
STOCKVILLE BOOT AND SHOE STORE
Northwest Corner Public Square
 Boots and Shoes made to order. Repairing neatly done
ALL WORK GUARANTEED

THE
Stockville Opera House
SANDS & HARLAN, Proprietors.
 Only First-Class House Between Hastings and Denver.

J. A. SMITH,
Livery and Feed Stable
FIRST-CLASS RIGS. GOOD STABLING.

C. H. CRONK,
Real Estate Agent
 Lands bought and sold, and exchanged for Stock or Goods.

ELABORATE SCENERY.
 500 SEATING CAPACITY.
A. S. SANDS, Manager H. A. HARLAN, Director

JAMES WILLIAMS,
 *
LAWYER.

C. A. MELVIN,
DEALER IN
General Merchandise.
 At the Green Front you get the Best Quality and Lowest Prices.

P. V. QUICK,
HARNESSES,
North Side Square.
 Repairing Done with Neatness and Dispatch.

The only Democratic Paper in the County

THE STOCKVILLE SENTINEL.
B. A. HARLAN, Publisher.
 Our Job Work Can't be Beat.

TERMS:
 One Year, - - \$1.00
 Six Months, - .50
 Three Months, - .35

J. W. DOLAN, President GEO. J. KELLEY, Vice President W. SANFORD GER, Cashier
THE STOCKVILLE BANK.
INCORPORATED.
Does a General Banking Business.

Dodger printed in Stockville about 1895.

money for their supporters.

At the time the Wendelin mural depicts, school was held in two frame school houses. There were 10 grades with only two teachers. Later in the 1920s there were 12 grades and four or five teachers. The Methodist Church, which no longer had services, was used to house the high school.²⁴

In the early 1900s there were years when as many as nine boys and girls from Stockville went away to school. Among the favorites were Franklin Academy, Doane, the Kearney and Peru Normal Schools, the University of Nebraska, Valparaiso University in Indiana (where Senator Norris attended law school), and Yale.

At least monthly the town and country schools would have literary society programs usually on Friday evening. It was not unusual to travel 7 to 10 miles by buggy or wagon for the program and the social hour at rural schoolhouses. Box socials were more elaborate. Speculation as to who had prepared certain boxes always increased bidding for the benefit of some worthwhile cause.²⁵

A teenaged boy beamed when some farmer would ask his mother to let him go to a country literary society meeting to be available when the farmer picked his three-person debating team for the evening. Subjects such as these were debated: Resolved that water is more destructive than fire. Resolved that the United States government should own and operate all railroads. Resolved that the Congress should provide for free and unlimited coinage of silver.²⁶

Space will not permit the naming of all the former residents of whom the village has been proud. Heading the list might well be Governor Frank Morrison and Maxine Morrison, his wife. The governor began the practice of law in Stockville. Their son Biff Morrison, who is now a Montana Supreme Court Justice, was born in Stockville. The father of Nebraska Governor Ralph G. Brooks lost in his race in the 1890s as a Republican to become county treasurer. Loyal M. Graham, who introduced in the Oregon Legislature the first gas tax law passed in the United States, and became lieutenant governor of Oregon, started his practice here. Harry B. Fleharty, who became a prominent Democratic politician and Omaha lawyer, practiced in Stockville in the 1890s.

Early ministers produced in Stockville were John and Fred Hall, graduates of the Yale Divinity School. The town buzzed when Charlie Hall wrote his father in the early 1900s that he had sold his two football tickets to the Harvard-Yale game for \$20. Another minister was Loren Messersmith, who earlier had been a teacher.

Among the other judges produced were these: George H. Stewart, who homesteaded east of Stockville and later moved to Idaho where he served on the Idaho Supreme Court; Luke H. and Wendell Cheney; Norris Chadderdon; and Kenneth Williams.

I have concluded not to try to name all of the Stockville people who are entitled to be mentioned in this memoir. I wish I could do them justice and mention all of them.

A son of Ambrose Shelley, the first settler in the Stockville area other than the men who had Indian wives, named George Shelley, still resides in the Stockville area. His brother, William McKinley Shelley, was Stockville's most knowledgeable historian. Bill died only recently. He could have provided the content of this article better than I.

There were several families who provided college educations for from three to five children who had attended the two-room, two-teacher, 10-grade school. Among them: the E. L. Halls, who graduated five from Doane, including three boys who later attended Yale; the M. T. Wards, whose five included Arch Ward (later a physician), left-handed pitcher and the first University of Nebraska letterman from Stockville; and Allen Ward, who devoted most of his teaching life to the Panama Canal Zone; the A. G. Williams family, who had sons LaVerne and Meredith lettering at shortstop and catcher, respectively, at NU. Bret Simonds, Del Teel, and Jack Powers were professional baseball players of note.

The Luke Cheneys had three in college and there would be close to a score who had at least one. Mention should be made of Mrs. Clara Dobson, the county superintendent, who, when her son reached manhood, went to the hill country of Tennessee as a missionary. J. H. Bayston, early Stockville, was for many years superintendent of the Boys' Industrial School at Kearney.

George D. Chadderdon, paralyzed in both legs and walking only with crutches, and his wife Sarah sent four children away to college, while Hardy stayed at home and operated the farm.

They were Lester and Glenn, both Nebraska school superintendents; Neil, an Innocent at the University of Nebraska and later an Iowa banker; and Dr. Hester Chadderdon, a long-time professor of Iowa State University.

With pardonable pride, I mention the Charles Best family who supplied five of the eight pupils in the country school I taught 3-1/2 miles northeast of Stockville. Robert Best became an M.D., a graduate at Nebraska, and spent his professional life at Holdrege. Dr. Robert O. Watkins, Curtis dentist, recently deceased, and his cousin, Tommy Watkins, whose picture appeared in the Conn Musical Instrument Catalog during the '30s as one who played Conn instruments, and Willis Hopton, Nebraska school superintendent, also attended the two-teacher school.

Don Carlos Dye and Mary Dye, storekeepers who for many years ran the post office, were the town's only Quakers. They adopted three orphans early in life, and when a mother died on a farm near town, it was the Dyes who raised her four children and later provided them the opportunity for college at Whittier, California. This opportunity for free room and board was also offered the writer. In 1914, Whittier College seemed a long distance from Stockville. Townspeople could always obtain "sun time" at Stockville from the sun dial on the Dye Store front porch.

In fairness I should mention Roy Stryker. He was, for one year the sole teacher of the Stockville school for grades five through 10. He returned to Stockville in the spring of 1912 for the sole purpose of talking with parents of that year's graduating class, numbering 11, about the possibility of this class, which he had as ninth graders, going away to school. As a result of his conversations, all except two attended high school at Curtis, at Franklin (Nebraska) Academy, or as far away as Bloomington, Indiana. The two who did not, raised fine families in Wyoming and in Iowa. Five obtained college degrees, others attended college, and one became a registered nurse.

Two other names should be mentioned—one well-known and one obscure: (1) W. F. (Doc) Carver,²⁷ recognized in the 1880s as America's greatest rifle shot and until he had a falling out with William F. (Buffalo Bill) Cody, the marksman of Cody's Wild



Stockville from an eminence southwest of the business district (c. 1908). Boys in the picture are Roy Floro, Robert Van Pelt, and Bret Simonds.

West Rodeo Show. Carver settled in the 1870s on a farm a few miles north of Stockville.

(2) Mary J. Beauvais,²⁸ a quiet woman, wife of Edward Colliste Beauvais, spent many years of her life in Stockville. She was the granddaughter of Joseph Robidoux, the founder of St. Joseph, Missouri. Her husband was the son of James Peter Beauvais, who located as a trader at the old California Crossing on the South Platte in 1849. Her husband managed the California Crossing Ranch, later coming to Frontier County to manage the ranch on Red Willow Creek. She had lived the life of a rich heiress before depression and mismanagement wiped out their Frontier County holdings. Also buried in Arbor Cemetery is Mrs. Margaret Waldraven, widow of Colonel M. E. Waldraven, first mayor of Denver. Mrs. Waldraven was a sister of Ambrose Shelley's wives, Hannah and Nellie Lynch. The colonel was buried in a Confederate cemetery in Oklahoma.

I also mention Lawrence Yearsley, an Otoe County landowner. I represented him in the only case I ever argued in the Supreme Court of the United States. I obtained a jury verdict for him in the U.S. District Court, only to have it reversed in the Court of Appeals, and the reversal was affirmed after a writ of certiorari was granted by the Supreme Court. I had been taken into the case by another lawyer. Yearsley wanted his boyhood friend to argue the case. He reminded me, for I had not recognized him until then, that we had played together 40 years earlier on Saturday afternoons when his farm family would come into Stockville to trade.

Similarly, I was once recognized in Washington, D.C., by an ex-Stockville teacher. I was looking up some maps drawn in the 1700s in connection with a boundary dispute between the State of Texas and Louisiana in which I was a special master. After stating my mission at the Archives Building and requesting the maps, a lady who was working there asked if I was from Stockville, recalling that she, as a schoolteacher 30 years earlier, had boarded with my mother.

It may already be clear to readers that Stockville was settled by people who were not from the backwaters of civilization. They were conscientious, respectable, and I think would have chosen to be called God-fearing men and women. They were seeking a better life for their children than they had. The business tragedy of their lives was that the railroad missed their town. It is difficult to adequately portray these people, most of whom are long gone. *They* are the Stockville I remember.

The Wendelin mural shows Stockville at its best. Many of us are indebted to the people who built and lived in this pioneer village. I trust I am not alone in feeling glad that I was raised in Stockville.



STOCKVILLE, Frontier County, Nebraska (CIRCA 1900)

APPENDIX

View is towards the northwest. Town windmill is at northwest corner of Frontier County Courthouse square.

Bearing east (right) from windmill, buildings facing courthouse are: 2-story Citizens Bank (also Mrs. Doing's home), Cash Store-Hardware (Bradbury and Ward), J. M. Parrott, dentist, J. A. Williams, attorney, newspaper *Republican-Faber*.

Bearing south (left) from windmill, buildings facing courthouse are: Enterprise (Regulator) General Merchandise, 2-story Beggs Building (later Cronk), Dye Store, Logan Drug Store, Mrs. (Ed) Beauvais Store, Thompson's Cafe, 2-story IOOF Hall (restaurant in 1984), M. T. Ward Building; south across intersection, livery stable, not pictured.

Bearing west from windmill toward steepled Congregational Church are: 2-story bank and other offices, Van Pelt Cafe, Dr. E. S. Case Office, Weikert Store, Charlie Lewis Meat Market, Dawson Meat Market, Bald Eagle Hotel; across street, Postmaster D. C. Dye residence, Noyes Boarding House, Curtis residence, Congregational Church. Across the street (south) of hotel are a livery stable and blacksmith shop.

At left, center of picture, is the Methodist Episcopal Church, later used as a high school. To the right of the church is a lumber yard.

North at edge of the town is the grade school (flag in front); between school and business district is County Fair Building (actual location 100 yards east); on hill beyond school is Hopton family residence.

(The turnover in proprietorship of businesses makes it impossible to identify all locations as of a given year.)

NOTES

1. A. T. Andreas, Proprietor, *History of the State of Nebraska* (Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1882), pp. 878-880.

2. The June 28, 1906, *Republican Faber* described the damage resulting from "the most destructive storm ever known in this locality." A large number of homes, businesses, and outbuildings were severely damaged or destroyed. The storm caused the cancellation of Stockville's plans for a July 4th celebration. Declared the *Faber*, "Our citizens are too busy repairing storm damages to monkey away time and good money unnecessarily."

3. A brief account of the legal careers of W. H. Latham, the first attorney in Curtis and in Frontier County, and of Fred Schroeder Sr. is found in the Curtis 75th Jubilee Program for September 9-11, 1961, on file at the Nebraska State Historical Society.

4. Mrs. Sarah Van Pelt died December 14, 1938, in Stockville. The December 22, 1938, *Curtis Enterprise* noted in her obituary: "For over 40 years Mrs. Van Pelt served meals and provided rooms and by reason therefore enjoyed one of the widest acquaintances of any woman in southwest Nebraska. . . . [Her] activities in civic and church affairs are well known to this community. . . . The Rebekah Grand Lodge awarded her the Degree of Chivalry, the only such award to be made in this section of Nebraska." As early as 1906, the *Republican Faber* (February 1) commented: "When in town and you want a good meal on short order, go to the first door west of the old Stockville House and you can get it [at Mrs. Van Pelt's Cafe]."

5. U.S. Census Reports, 1890, 1900, 1980.

6. McClary Papers, at Nebraska State Historical Society

7. Preliminary hearings in the bizarre judicial proceedings which brought to trial W. H. (Hank) Dodge and Walter Hardin for the murder of James McGuire in 1876 were held here. The district court trial took place in far-away Nebraska City. E. S. Sutton, *Sutton's Southwest Nebraska* (Benkelman, Nebraska, 1983), p. 80ff.

8. Other information about early Frontier County history is etched on a marker near the courthouse in Stockville: West face—Mary Nolan, Anna Sanders, William R. Waits, 1874-75, first white children born in the county; South—County organized, 1872, in H. C. Clifford's Indian lodge. East—J. W. Kirby, clerk; Levi Carter, treasurer; S. F. Watts, judge; H. C. Clifford, sheriff; Elias Miller, assessor; E. G. Nesbit, supt. of schools; J. D. Kerr, register; John Y. Nelson, surveyor; A. S. Shelley, coroner; commissioners, John Bratt, W. H. Miles, M. H. Clifford. North—First homestead, John W. Lockwood and Arch M. Mason, 1873, Sec. 23-30, 31-32, T8, R28N, now a part of Curtis; Elton Perkey, *Perkey's Nebraska Place-Names* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1982), p. 78. Perkey further states that Stockville was named by Samuel Watts, early settler, for the surrounding ranch country.

9. A 1920 election resulted in a 1,700 to 1,439 margin for Curtis, but the advantage did not reach 60%, the figure necessary to remove the county seat from Stockville. A free barbecue, ice cream and cake, and dance played by the Freedom Orchestra at Stockville celebrated the victory. *Stockville (Nebraska) Faber*, April 8, 15, 22, 1920; *Curtis (Nebraska) Enterprise*, April 15, 1920.

In 1930 Curtis lacked 247 votes of reaching the 60% majority. The vote was Curtis 1,757, Stockville 1,582. *Curtis Enterprise*, August 14, 1930.

Stockville retained the county seat in 1951 with 47% of the vote. Curtis polled 1,509 votes, Stockville 1,147. *Curtis Enterprise*, May 31, 1951.

10. One was "Thomas Owens' Livery, Feed, and Sale Stable and the New Livery," operated by J. A. Lynch and C. C. Shinley. *Frontier County Republican*, May 14, 1896.

11. The Bald Eagle, in 1895 under the proprietorship of William Hopton, advertised itself as the "headquarters for farmers and the traveling public." *Frontier County Republican*, December 12, 1895.

12. The Stockville "Restaurant and Ice Cream Parlor," in 1892 operated by Mrs. S. J. Nall and daughter, featured "lemonaide [sic] and lunch of all kinds," as well as ice cream. *Frontier County Faber*, July 29, 1892.

13. The May 20, 1887, *Frontier County Faber*, published in Stockville, advised its readers: "The Stockville Bank opened last Monday morning under favorable auspices. The room is an elegant one—probably the neatest and most convenient bank building in the county. The safe is one of Hall's with time lock and all of the modern improvements. . . . John J. Lamborn, the well-known cashier of the First National Bank of Indianola has been assisting in getting the concern started off right." Later issues of the paper featured ads for the Farmers and Merchants State Bank of Stockville.

The lawyers were E. P. Pyle, James Williams, L. H. Cheney. *Frontier County Republican*, May 14, 1896.

14. Files of the *Stockville Faber* and *Republican* are preserved on microfilm in the State Archives of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

15. A listing of churches in the December 5, 1895, *Frontier County Republican* shows the Methodist and Congregational Churches holding services on alternate Sundays and a "Union Sabbath School" held every Sunday. A group of Seventh-Day Adventists held services "in school house building every Saturday."

16. Freedom had its own post office for little more than a year, from February of 1886 to October of 1887. It was "probably named by a Union Civil War veteran who recalled the liberation of the slaves." Elton Perkey, *Perkey's Nebraska Place-Names* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1982), 77. Some of the early settlers in the area came from Liberty, Nebraska, and Judge Van Pelt understands that Freedom was chosen to remind them of Liberty.

17. Fort McPherson underwent two name changes (Ft. McKean, 1863-1864; Fort Cottonwood, 1864-1866) before it was named Fort McPherson in 1866 for Major General James B. McPherson, killed in the Civil War. Cavalry stationed here guarded travelers on the old California-Oregon Trails and protected cattle ranches. Elton Perkey, *Perkey's Nebraska Place-Names* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1982), 126.

18. By 1906 Stockville founder W. L. McClary had built for himself "a first class water-works system." The May 31, 1906 *Republican Faber* reported: "He [McClary] has built a cistern on the hill west of town with a capacity of 300 barrels and has the water piped to his residence."

19. *Faber*, December 11, 1913.

20. As early as 1887 an "exhibition of the Frontier County Agricultural Society" was noted in the *Frontier County Faber* (May 20, 1887). By 1895 the Frontier County fair featured baseball, a band contest, and horse racing as well as agricultural exhibits.

21. The 1895 teachers' institute "followed immediately on the close of the Summer Normal. . . . The same teachers who instructed in the Normal were retained for the Institute, and additional teachers were secured for special work." *Frontier County Faber*, Aug. 15, 1895. The 1886 Frontier County teachers institute lasted for two weeks and was attended by 60-70 teachers from across Frontier County. The *Republican Faber*, May 31, 1906.

22. A recent biography of William Gaslin was published by his grand nephew John Haskell: *Judge William Gaslin, Nebraska Jurist* (Omaha, 1983).

23. The Nebraska State Historical Society now maintains the Senator George W. Norris home in McCook as a branch museum.

24. The church, a frame structure, still stands but is in poor repair. One church, the Congregational, shown in the Wendelin drawing, is active and in good repair.

25. A 1906 box supper was sponsored by "the baseball boys. . . at the courthouse. . . for the purpose of raising money to help defray the expense of the team." (*Republican Faber*, April 12, 1906). Later that year the Stockville school "realized something over \$30 from their box supper. . . . The money derived from the sale of the boxes will be used in putting

down a well on the school ground." (*Ibid.*, May 10, 1906).

The May 14, 1896, *Frontier County Republican* describes another form of entertainment: "The authors' club held an apple social at the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Griffith last Thursday evening which was a very enjoyable affair. After the regular program had been presented, apples were served, each person paying a penny for each seed his or her apple contained."

26. An 1895 literary society in the Moorefield area chose as its "question for debate. . . .Resolved: That Cuba should be annexed to the U.S." *Faber*, November 28, 1895.

27. A. T. Andreas, *History of the State of Nebraska* (Chicago: The Western Historical Company, 1882), 879.

28. John Howe of Stockville, in his January 8, 1929, address at the Annual Meeting of the Nebraska State Historical Society, recalled: "Mrs. Beauvais, perhaps the first white lady that lived in this part of Nebraska, passed through Frontier County in 1860 with her husband to his ranch about 80 miles west of North Platte. He was an Indian trader. Late in the '70s they moved back to Frontier County, where Mrs. Beauvais has made her home in or near Stockville until recently she moved to Phillipsburg, Kan., with her daughter."