

REMINISCENCES OF MRS. ANNA J. KOTMEL, CRETE, NEBRASKA!

We came to Omaha in 1887. At that time the bridge ^{across} the river was being built, so we had to cross by boat. From Omaha we went to Crete, and from Lincoln to Crete we made the trip on cars used for transporting sand. There was no depot in Crete so we had nowhere to leave our trunks. We came on July 4th. and the town was full of people. Pretty soon a Bohemian came and asked us if we do not want the trunks taken to the hotel. He was Mr. John Svoboda, now long dead. We were glad to go with him, he took us to a hotel, and as there were many farmers in town, we soon had offers to help with harvest, although we had to be shown how to tie bundles. It was new work for us. After harvest we bought 80 acres from Mr. Rademacher, paying him \$114 for ^{his rights.} ~~pre-emption~~ Only three acres were under cultivation and there were no buildings on the land. We paid him \$100 and \$14 we owed. After harvest my husband worked for Mr. John Nedela, father of Mr. Frank Nedela, he helped haul in the crop. When the work was done Mr. Nedela said: Now you must buy a stove and we will pay you for your work and you will buy provisions for that. But we had no money for a stove so Mr. Nedela sold us one for \$10, we to work for him until it was paid for. And he told us to come to him if we needed anything else. They were always our best friends and later were godparents to our children. We will never forget their kindness. My husband put up a shack of fencing, we put our featherbeds and trunks in it, but the stove we had to set up outside. My husband was gone from Monday to Friday, working to earn money. Before winter we made a dug out 7 x 12 x 8. Mr. Svoboda gave us a beam and some boards, and our home was quite warm, but we had no furniture except the stove and trunks. We lived in that "residence" several years. But what was worse, how were we to cultivate the land without a team of any kind. You may think that my husband earned

money, but you must remember that the pay was meagre and usually consisted of agricultural products. We had to take what we could get and so the second year we had earned eight calves . That was the beginning of our herd. In three years we were able to buy a team. In the mean time my husband worked for Mr. John Nedela and Mr. M. Kubicek, and they in turn broke our land for us. Before we had a team, we had to carry everything to and from town. One night when my sister, now Mrs. Antonia Kostka, slept with me, we heard a queer sound. I got up and locked the place over with a lamp and found a snake behind the flour barrel. I ran for father, to come and kill it. The next day I found another snake sunning himself on the window sill, but the dog got him. Had we known that the snake was there all night, we would not have slept a wink. Gradually times grew better and now we are quite contented.