

FROM EARLY DAYS

by Nancy Garton
DeWitt, Nebraska

Mrs. Alf Garton, known to her friends and neighbors as "Aunt Nancy," told me about this story. Mrs. Garton was a sister of Jep, Lou, Wes and Milt Cox, all well-known to the old settlers and a niece of Abe Cox the trapper and Indian scout of early days. She is now at this time, March 1926, 83 years old, strong, and rugged never hardly sick a day in her life, with a memory as clear as one of twenty, except that dates bother her, though this is true of most people. They remember the facts but the time they happened is apt to be confused.

Hers has been a long and interesting life, troubles, conflicts and all that go to make up a life time. Dear ones have passed away until she is the only one left, yet she does not complain and is as cheery as if life had been all sunshine. Mrs. Garton, her husband, Alf who was known to every one, and a little boy reached this locality Sept. 19, 1864 just as the settlers were getting back from Beatrice, where they had gone for protection from the Indians who had made raids over the country just west of where Fairbury now stands.

The little boy was taken sick about the time they crossed Missouri river into Nebraska. There were no doctors at Nebraska City or Brownsville and when they reached here there were none either and not long after that the little fellow died. Later a little girl came and she too died while young.

In 1865 they had a Fourth of July celebration, not such a big crowd but probably all who were here at the time came and with them a girl, Laura Roper, who had been stolen by the Indians in their raids in 1864 was present and was quite an attraction. This may have been Saline Counties first celebration. A while after this Mr. and Mrs. Garton decided that they wanted to see more of the west, so as Mr. Garton had a brother out in Washington, they went out there, stayed part of a year and came back to Saline, no place looked as good to them and she has lived here ever since. Mr. Garton died in 1908. They homesteaded on Turkey Creek near where Abe Cox lived in 1867. Early in September 1868 the grasshoppers made them a visit. The new corn tasted good to them so they cleaned it up. They began coming down at noon and by night it was a sorry sight. A man by the name of Snell, when he

saw everything going got wrathful, swore and tore up good air around him, said he hoped Jesus Christ would send a hail storm and kill everyone of them.

That night a storm did come up, the wind blew, and a deluge of rain fell and such hail had never been seen before. It was terrible they told a story about Snell, that when the storm came with all its force and the hail was coming down that he said "Oh Lord, I didn't mean it." Whether it is true or not Mrs. Garton said the people tormented him about it till he finally left the country. This hail took every thing the grasshoppers had left and the next day lots of dead fish were floating down the streams. The supposition is that the fish came to the top of the water to get the grasshoppers in the water and were hit and killed by the hail.

Another time Mrs. Garton said their garden was down near the creek it was doing fine. One day Mr. Garton came in and said he was going down to see it. Mrs. Garton, said: "Wait, I am going with you." They had looked it over and were ready to go back to the house, when hearing someone calling they looked around and saw a man coming on horse back at top speed. It was Al Garton a brother who lived farther up the creek and as he came nearer they heard him say: "Get out quick, the creek is coming up." It was coming in waves and so fast that before they got back to the house they had to wade water. It hadn't rained a drop here but farther away they had, had nearly a deluge. This drowned all their chickens but two. Still another time some of their folks from the east were coming to visit them. They had a dugout, farther away that they did not use and she thought she would go and build a fire in it to dry it out inside as it was damp and this would make them more room. While doing this two big Indians came and demanded she get them something to eat. She said all right but she would have to go out to get the food and for them to wait. As quick as she got outside she started to run and never stopped till she got to Al Gartons. How long the Indians wated she never knew.

From Early Days. By Mrs. Nancy Garton

Mrs. Alf Garton, known to her friends and neighbors as "Aunt Nancy", told me about this story. Mrs. Garton was a sister of Jeph, Sam, Wes and Milt Cox, all well known to the old settlers and a niece of Abe Cox the trapper and Indian scout of early days. She is now at this time March 1926, 83 years old, strong and rugged never hardly sick a day in her life, with a memory as clear as one of twenty, except that dates bother her, though this is true of most people. They remember the facts but the time they happened is apt to be confused.

Her life has been a long and interesting life, troubles, conflicts and all that go to make up a life time. Dear ones have passed away until she is the only one left, yet she does not complain and is as cheery as if life had been all sunshine.

Mrs. Garton, her husband, Alf who was known to every one, and a little boy reached this locality Sept. 19-1864

(2) Mrs. Garton,
just as the settlers were getting
back from Beatrice, where they had
gone for protection from the Indians
who had made raids over the
country just west of where Fairbury
now stands.

The little boy was ^{taken} sick about the
time they crossed Missouri river
into Nebraska. There were no doctors
at Nebraska City or Brownsville
and when they reached here there
were none either and not long after
that the little fellow died. Later a
little girl came and she too died
while young.

In 1865 they had a Fourth of July
celebration, not such a big crowd
but probably all who were here
at the time came and with them
a girl, Laura Roper, who had been
stolen by the Indians in their
raids in 1864 was present and
was quite an attraction. This may
have been Saline county's ^{first} celebration.
A while after this Mr. and Mrs. Garton
decided that they wanted to see more of

(3) Mrs. Garton.

the west, so as Mr. Garton had a brother out in Washington, they went out there stayed part of a year and came back to Saline, no place looked as good to them and she has lived here ever since. Mr. Garton died in 1908. They homesteaded on Turkey Creek near where Abe Cox lived in 1867. Early in September 1868 the grasshoppers made good to them so they cleared it up. They began coming down at noon and by night it was a sorry sight. A man by the name of Snell, when he saw every thing going got wrathful, swore and tore up good air around him, said he hoped Jesus Christ would send a hail storm and kill every one of them. That night a storm did come up, the wind blew, a deluge of rain fell and such hail fell, had never been seen before. It was terrible. They told a story about Snell, that when the storm came with all its force and the hail was coming

down
n that he said "Oh Lord, I did not mean
it." Whether it is true or not Mrs.
Garton said the people tormented him
about it till he finally left the
country. This hail took every thing
the grass hoppers had left and the
next day lots of dead fish were
floating down the streams. The
supposition is that the fish came
to the top of the water to get the
grass hoppers in the water and
were hit and killed by the hail.

Another time Mrs. Garton said their
garden was down near the creek
it was doing fine. One day Mr.
Garton came in and said he was
going down to see it. Mrs. Garton said:
"wait, I am going with you."
They had looked fit over and were
ready to go back to the house when
hearing some one calling they looked
around and saw a man coming
on horse back at top speed. It was
Al, Garton a brother who lived
farther up the creek and as he came

(5) Mrs. Garton

nearer they heard him say: get out quick, the creek is coming up. It was coming in waves and so fast that before they got back to the house they had to wade water. It hadn't rained a drop here but farther away they had, had ~~a~~ nearly a deluge. This drowned all their chickens but two. Still on other time some of their folks from the east were coming to visit them. They had a dug out, farther away that they did not use and she thought she would go and build a fire in it to dry it out inside as it was damp and this would make them more room. While doing this two big Indians came and demanded she get them something to eat. She said all right but she would have to go out to get the food and for them to wait. As quick as she got outside she started to run and never stopped till she got to Al Garton's. How long the Indians waited she never knew.