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NEBRASKA HISTORY AND RECORD OF PIONEER DAYS

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OUR NEW PUBLICATION

The plans for "Nebraska History" were made five years ago. Three years ago Miss Bernice Branson, of Lincoln, made the first sketch for the illustrated heading. It was then planned as a publication of the Legislative Reference Bureau. The union of the Historical Society and Reference Bureau work under one head, made in January, 1917,

CHURCH HOWE

A picturesque and striking figure in the history of Nebraska was Church Howe of Auburn. He served in nine sessions of the Nebraska legislature. He was speaker of the House and president pro tempore of the Senate. He was a soldier of the Civil War. He ably represented the United States in important positions abroad. He was one of the shrewdest politicians and hardest fighters Nebraska has known. His son, Herbert R. Howe, of Auburn, has promised to go over his father's papers and transfer to the Historical Society those of public interest.

THE FURNAS-MAXWELL-CHAPMAN PAPERS

In the summer of 1905 the editor spent a week at the home of Samuel Maxwell in Fremont going over the correspondence of fifty years active service in Nebraska public life, with Henry Maxwell, his son. These papers were sent to the fireproof vault of the Historical Society and were the first considerable body of private papers received by that Society. At a little later period the papers and correspondence of Robert W. Furnas were added to this collection and soon after, those of Samuel M. Chapman of Plattsmouth. These papers remained in the vaults in confusion until the summer of 1917 when they were assembled, arranged in chronological and alphabetical order in letter files and made part of the historical exhibit at the semicentennial celebration. It would be hard to name two men more influential in the formative period of Nebraska society than Governor Furnas and Judge Maxwell. One was the prophet of Nebraska agriculture, the

modified the original plan and delayed the first publication. It is the intention to make this Journal a piece of popular literature, - as distinguished from academic. It will aim to present in clear and attractive form fact, story, comment and criticism relating to the history of Nebraska. It will be a personal letter each month from the Historical Society staff to the members of the Society and the Nebraska public, giving the news of historical research and discovery, trying to inspire a sincere love for our commonwealth and an active interest in the truthful record of its affairs.

PREHISTORIC AND INDIAN REMAINS IN NEBRASKA

Scattered over Nebraska are hundreds of sites of old Indian camps and homes of prehistoric people. Their presence is revealed to the practiced eye by slight depressions and elevations of the surface, usually rings or ovals; by broken bits of pottery and flint and sometimes by other evidences. No subject is of more universal human interest than the subject of primitive man. He is a partial revelation of the mystery of man's origin upon this planet. Everyone is interested in that subject. Every locality in our state where was once the site at an Indian camp or a prehistoric house is certain, as the years go by, to take increasing pride in that fact and to wish more definite knowledge regarding it. About eighteen years ago beginnings were made upon a survey of these localities. Previous to that time there had been scattered observations and records going back as far as the time of Lewis and Clark. Since that time there have been the direct studies of J. V. Brower, Robert F. Gilder, F. H. Sterns, E. E. Blackman, S. P. Hughes and others. The location of probably two hundred ancient and modern aboriginal sites has been determined. Several thousand bone, flint and pottery specimens have been found. Definite information, never before suspected, regarding this early period of Nebraska history has been secured. The

other had a leading part in the framing of her constitution and interpretation of her laws. Judge Chapman was a positive, elemental force in our early politics and the intimate friend of Judge Maxwell. The papers of these three men are of primary interest and value for, the study of the first fifty years of Nebraska's history. They are the beginnings of a collection which should include the papers and correspondence of many other men and women who have had active part in the making of Nebraska.

THE FARMER'S PART IN NEBRASKA HISTORY

The most important part of Nebraska history is the history of her agriculture. Upon this fundamental industry all that Nebraska is or will be is based. Out of a total population at present of about 1,300,000 there are 700,000 actually living upon farms, and practically all the remainder in a direct way dependent upon farming. Now, the evolution of farming in Nebraska during the lifetime of the writer exhibits one of the most extraordinary and fascinating panoramas of human progress. At one end is the ox-team and the buffalo-Indian; at the other end is the automobile, self-binder and farm tractor. The annual production of wealth in Nebraska, measured in dollars, has increased during that period about 400 fold. The chapter of our history which deals with this revolution alone is one whose facts dare the imagination. The social changes growing out of this production furnish another chapter of our agricultural history. During all those years there has been a series of agitations and organizations of farmers in Nebraska looking toward economic and political reconstruction. Any student of Nebraska history perceives at once that the results of these farmers' movements, wise or foolish, good or bad, form the central body of our history and must be the foundation for most of what shall follow in Nebraska during the next half century.

The subject at the annual meeting of the Historical Society was "Partners Movements in Nebraska 1857-1917." The meeting brought together upon one platform men whose recollections covered the entire period and representatives of the different organizations which have existed in that time.

time is here for a broad and thorough examination of Nebraska, for the making of an aboriginal map of the state which shall allow all the sites discovered, and for the publication of a report which shall bring together all that we now know concerning this most fascinating and difficult part of Nebraska history.

Some of the addresses were of very rare interest, revealing facts never before disclosed to the public. These addresses, together with some scores of letters received, are the core of a forthcoming historical volume upon the subject. It is not too late to receive contributions from others familiar with the inner history of farmers movements in Nebraska.

NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY HISTORICAL SKETCH

Upon the 26th day of August, 1867, twenty-eight days after the city of Lincoln was located, a plat of the proposed capital of Nebraska was filed by Commissioners Butler, Kennard and Gillespie and Surveyors Smith and Harvey. Upon this plat block 29, lying at the southwest corner of the State University campus was designated "State Historical and Library Association Block." On this same day articles of incorporation of the State Historical and Library Association were filed in the office of the county clerk of Lancaster county. It was the idea of the founders of the new capital city, as sworn to by them in court at a later date, to establish an institution, in connection with the State University, for permanent preservation of the state's history throughout all future time.

On the 15th of February, 1869, the Nebraska legislature approved the report locating Lincoln and therewith the plat and donation of the block to the State Historical Society and Library Association.

In the first years which followed nothing was done by the State Historical and Library Association. The struggle for existence absorbed the energies of the pioneers. On Feb. 24, 1875, the state legislature donated block 29 to the city of Lincoln as a market square, the original "Market Square" having been given by the city to the United States as a post office site. Later efforts to recover Historical

so far as relates to Nebraska, may seem too much dignified by their assignment to a place in this list. But each one in the list involved the marching of military across Nebraska soil and some of them fierce conflicts within our borders. A series of historical sketches on Nebraska's part in these wars will appear in this journal.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD - NEW MEMBERS

Seventeen members constitute the board of the Nebraska State Historical Society. Like the British constitution this board is the growth of years and of different ideas. Three distinct groups appear in its composition, first, ex officio members holding state offices; second, officers of the Society elected annually; third, trustees elected for three- year terms. Three vacancies among these trustees were filled at the annual election, January 16. The retiring members were Bishop Tihen, who had been transferred to Denver, Mr. Gurden W. Wattles of Omaha, food administrator of Nebraska, who asked to be relieved because of his heavy duties in that position, and Mr. George .W. Hanson of Fairbury, absent in California. For these places there were chosen Rev. Michael A. Shine of Plattsmouth, one of the most active and scholarly writers in the field of Nebraska history; John F. Cordeal of McCook, senator in the legislatures of 1911 and 1913, an able lawyer and special investigator and writer upon the history of southwestern

Block for its original purposes failed in the courts.

Robert W. Furnas was the father of the present State Historical Society. In a letter dated Brownville, Nebraska, August 1, 1878, addressed to a number of leading citizens at that time, he asked them to join with him in a call for a meeting to organize a State Historical Society. This meeting was held the evening of Sept. 25, 1878, at the Commercial Club in Lincoln. Twenty-four persons were present. A constitution and by-laws were adopted. Robert W. Furnas was chosen president and Prof. Samuel Aughey was chosen secretary. Since that date, with only two exceptions, each January has witnessed a regular annual meeting of the organization.

At the first annual meeting, January 23, 1879, the offer of the State University to house the office and collections of the Society free of charge, was accepted. Since that date the Society has remained upon the University campus. In 1893, upon the completion of the University library building, the Historical Society moved into the basement rooms set aside by the regents for its use. From 1879 until 1907 the secretaries of the Society were successively, Professor Samuel Aughey, Dr. George E. Howard and Professor Howard W. Caldwell, all members of the State University faculty. In 1907 Mr. C. S. Paine was made secretary: and continued in office until his death June 14, 1916. Mrs. Minnie P. Knotts was secretary pro tempore until January 10, 1917, when Addison E. Sheldon was chosen secretary and superintendent.

Plans for a historical building began to take definite form about 1900. Dr. Charles E. Bessey, acting chancellor of the University, sent a letter to the annual meeting of the Historical Society in that year suggesting that the Society request the regents to set aside a site for the new building upon the University campus. The Society voted to make the request. Bills for appropriation of money to erect a historical building were introduced at subsequent sessions of the legislature. In 1907 the board of directors of the Historical Society placed the matter of securing a building in the hands of Addison E. Sheldon, then a member of the Society staff. Acting upon

Nebraska; and N. P. Dodge Jr., of Omaha, senator in the legislatures of 1913 and 1915, champion of Nebraska's child labor law and other important progressive legislation and member of a family whose name has been associated with the history of Nebraska and Iowa from the earliest days. It is the desire of those directing the work of the Historical Society to bring upon its board men and women with a deep personal interest in the history of the state. The three new members belong to this Class and each has contributed toward the making and recording of its great events. The officers and board of directors for the year 1918 are as follows:

Ex Officio

Keith Neville, governor,
Samuel Avery, chancellor of the state university.
Clark Perkins, president of the Nebraska Press Association.
Howard W. Caldwell, professor of American history, state university.
Andrew M. Morrissey, chief justice of the supreme court.
Willis E. Reed, attorney-general.

Elective

Novia Z. Snell, Lincoln.
William E. Hardy, Lincoln
Rev. Michael A. Shine, Plattsmouth.
Hamilton B. Lowry, Lincoln.
Nathan P. Dodge, Jr., Omaha.
John F. Cordeal, McCook.

Officers

President, Samuel C. Bassett, Gibbon.
First vice president, Don L. Love, Lincoln.
Second vice president, Robert Harvey, St. Paul.
Secretary, Addison B. Sheldon, Lincoln.
Treasurer, Philip L. Hall, Lincoln.

THE NEBRASKA PRESS AND THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In Kansas the State Historical Society was founded by the State Press Association. In Nebraska the founding of the Society was

plans presented by him, the legislature that year appropriated, \$25,000 for the basement of a historical building upon the condition that the city of Lincoln would restore the original historical block to the Society or an equally acceptable site. It was stated to the legislature that a site adjacent to the University campus was desired, and the appropriation was made with that understanding. In 1908 a half block was secured at Sixteenth and H streets. opposite the State Capitol, and the \$25,000 was expended in the erection of a basement with temporary roof on that site. Since that date no further appropriations for a historical building have been secured from the legislature. In July, 1917, a joint committee was appointed from the Historical Society, the state library and the State University to consider the subject of a library building. This committee made unanimous report in favor of erecting a historical building at the University campus for the joint use of the Historical Society, the University library, the Legislative Reference Library, the Library Commission, and such other departments as might be agreed to by these.

The Historical Society was made a state institution and given its first state appropriation of \$1,000 by act of the legislature, February 22, 1883. The legislature of 1917 appropriated \$22,200 for the work of the Society. It now has six members upon its office staff. In its museum are about 40,000 historical objects. It receives and binds for reference 550 Nebraska newspapers and has 10,000 bound volumes of newspapers reaching from 1854 to the present time. It has it library of 52,000 books and pamphlets. The present membership of the Society is 1,158.

NEBRASKA IN WAR TIME.

The annals of Nebraska since the first white settlement show that her people have had part in the following military conflicts:

- 1823 - The Arikara Indian war.
- 1846-48 - The Mexican war.
- 1854-55 - The first Sioux war.
- 1859 - The Pawnee war.
- 1861-65 - The Civil war.

initiated by the editor of the Brownville Advertiser and conspicuous among its early officers are the names of such noted editors as J. Sterling Morton, of the Nebraska City News. George L. Miller of the Omaha Herald, and Charles H. Gere of the Nebraska State Journal. Editors are the natural historians of their times. The best general view of any decade in Nebraska history is found by reading the columns of the newspapers then published. One of the best services the Historical Society can render to the people of Nebraska is the careful preservation of newspaper files. Upon the exchange list of the Society at present are 553 Nebraska newspapers, including nearly all the dailies and weeklies published in the state. In our library are over 10,000 bound volumes of the Nebraska press. Among these are such priceless files as those of the Nebraska Palladium, Brownville Advertiser, Nebraska City News, Omaha Arrow, Omaha Nebraskan, Omaha Herald, Falls City Broadaxe and Dakota City Herald covering the period from 1854 to 1870. For the period following 1870 we have such notable files as The Grand Island Independent, Columbus Journal, Wilber Opposition, Milford Blue Valley Record, Omaha Republican, Omaha Bee, and others. The systematic collection of Nebraska newspapers for the Historical Society was begun by Professor Howard W. Caldwell in 1891. Since that time we have fairly complete files of some hundreds of Nebraska newspapers. The files previous to that time have been gathered by individual effort and most of them during the past fifteen years. Every year emphasizes the importance of this work. Many of the most valuable Nebraska newspaper files have been destroyed by fire. We have continual inquiries now for copies of legal notices and important public events found in tire Historical Society files and nowhere else. The present secretary served fourteen years as compositor, reporter and editor in Nebraska newspaper offices; Mr. Albert Watkins, historian, was for many years editor of the Mineral Point (Wis.) Democrat, the Sioux City Tribune and later of the Daily State Democrat of Lincoln. Every editor in Nebraska is placed upon the

1865-68 - The Sioux and Cheyenne war.
 1875-79 - The third Sioux war.
 1890-91 - The final Sioux war.
 1898 - The Spanish- American war.
 1917 - The World War.

Some of these, like the Pawnee war of 1859 or the Mexican war

exchange list of "Nebraska History." He is asked in exchange for the publications of this society to send duplicate copies of his own paper, one copy for the permanent bound files of the Society and the other for historical clippings, which will be mounted and arranged under convenient topics. Every editor is cordially invited to clip from the Historical Society publications and to make himself a special agent for his locality in securing for preservation important historical records and relics.

General John H. Pershing

Commander of the American Armies in Europe



General Pershing was commandant of the cadet battalion at the University of Nebraska in the years 1891-95. He graduated from the University of Nebraska, college of law, in 1893. A high degree of enthusiasm and efficiency marked the military department of the University during the years he was at its head. The "Pershing Rifles," an honorary organization open to students having the best records in military training, was instituted in his honor

with the Japanese army in Manchuria 1905; commander department of Mindanao in the Philippines from 1906 to 1913 and of U. S. troops in Mexico, 1916. General Pershing married the daughter of Senator Warren of Wyoming, January 26, 1905. His wife and three daughters perished in the burning of Presidio barracks, August 27, 1915. His sisters, Mrs. David M. Butler and Miss May Pershing, live at 1748 B street, Lincoln. His

and has continued since he was commandant. General Pershing was born in Linn county, Missouri, September 13, 1860, and graduated from West Point in 1886. His military career includes service against the Apache Indians in Arizona, 1886, and in the Sioux War. 1890-1; in the Santiago campaign, Cuba. 1898; in the Philippines 1899-1903; as military observer

only son. Warren, seven years old, lives with them.

The name Pershing was originally spelled Pfirsching. The family came from Alsace-Lorraine to America about a century ago. General Pershing is therefore fighting on the borders of his ancestral fatherland for America and the world in the present war.

Nebraska History Publications

In response to many inquiries regarding books on Nebraska history the following has been prepared.

The Nebraska State Historical Society publications began in 1885. The first series includes five volumes, closing with the volume published in 1893. The second series began in 1894 with a change in title and numbering of the volumes. In 1911 the distinction between the first and second series was abolished, and the volumes are now numbered consecutively from the first one issued in 1885. The list of volumes with table of contents follows.

The Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau began a series of publications on Nebraska history and politics in 1912. In some of these publications the Nebraska Academy of Sciences and Nebraska History Seminar of the State University joined. Nearly all of these publications present some phase of the history of Nebraska.

In addition to these publications there have been a number of

state histories published by private enterprise and a much larger number of county and municipal histories from the same sources: also some historical pamphlets of value. Most of these may be found in the Society library.

Publications of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

Transactions and Reports of the Nebraska State Historical Society Vol. 1, 1885, 8 vo. clo., 233 pp., \$1.25; paper in 4 pts., \$0.75. Editor Robert W. Furnas.

Proceedings of the Society from January. 1879, to January, 1883; list of histories of counties; Historical Recollections in and about Otoe County; Historical Letters Front Father De Sm(xx); First White Child Born in Nebraska; origin of the name Omaha; Some Historical Data About Washington County; Relics in possession of the Society; First Female Suffragist Movement in Nebraska; Autobiography of Rev. William Hamilton; Indian names and their meaning; History of the

[\(Continued on page 6\)](#)

The First War on the Nebraska Frontier

Sixteen miles north of Omaha, at the present village of Fort Calhoun, on the site of the Council Bluff where Lewis and Clark

sible to march at a moment's warning. . . The actg post Qr. Mr. will immediately engage the Keel Boat and her patron and as many of the efficient men with her as practicable.

first held council with the Indians in 1804, once stood Fort Atkinson, located in the year 1819, the first United States fort in Nebraska.

To this fort in the summer of 1823 came the news that a party of the Arikara had attacked General William H. Ashley's party of trappers, killing fourteen and wounding nine of them. Colonel Leavenworth, in command of the fort, started at once for the Arikara villages where he arrived August 8.

The following story of this war is taken from the original records of Fort Atkinson, as kept during the years 1819-1827, and now in bound volume & in the library of the State Historical Society.

The Indian Attack

On board the Keel Boat. rocky Mountains 25 miles below the Rickara towns, June 4th, 1823.

Dear sir:

On the morning of the 2d Inst. I was attacked by the Rickard indians, which terminated with great loss on my part - On my arrival there the 31 of May I was met verry friendly by some of the Chiefs, who expressed a great wish that I would stop and trade with them - Wishing to purchase horses to take a party of men to the Yellow Stone river, I agreed to Comply with their request ... - The next morning, we commenced trading which continued until the Evening of the 1st Inst when preparations were made for my departure early the next morning - My party consisted of 90 men, 40 of whom were selected to take charge of the horses and cross the country by land to the Yellow Stone. They were encamped on the beach within 40 yards of the Boats - About 1/2 past 3 aclock in the morning I was informed that One of my men had been Killed and in all probability the Boats would be immediately attacked - The men were all under Arms, and so Continued until sunrise, when the Indians Commenced a heavy and well directed fire from a line extending along the Picketing of their Towns, and some broken ground adjoining about 600 yards, in length, their shot were principally directed at the men on the beach, who were making use of the Horses as a breast work - We returned the fire, but from the advantageous situation of

June 19, 1823

Officers Commanding Companies ordered to be ready to march will have their Companies completely equipped and ready for inspection at four o'clock this afternoon when they will be paraded for that purpose.

June 20, 1823

It is indispensably necessary that every possible exertion should, be made to keep the men clean and to preserve their Soldierly appearance. . . .

Same date.

The boats going up the river will be designated as No. 1, No. 2. and No. 3. . . . The companies will take as many of their spades & axes as are fit for use...

H. Leavenworth, Col. Comdg.

The Battle

The command, comprising about 220 men, arrived before the Arikara villages on the 9th of August, having made the distance from Council Bluffs. 640 miles, in forty- eight days. It had been joined by Major Joshua Pitcher of the Missouri Fur Company with forty men, General William H. Ashley's force of about the same number, and some 500 Sioux, making it total force of about eight hundred men. Opposed to them there were about six hundred warriors in the two Arikara villages, and between three and four thousand individuals all told, - men, women and children.

The Sioux Indians were the first to meet the Arikara in combat and although they were reinforced by the whites. little was accomplished that day. The following morning the attack was opened by Lieutenant Morris with the artillery. His first shot killed the chief, Gray Eyes. After further shooting the first peace negotiations were entered upon. The Indians appeared penitent and made "fair promises," Colonel Leavenworth adds:

Considering my small force, the strange and unaccountable conduct of the Sioux,

the Indians done but little execution. . . . Two skiffs which would carry 30 men were taken ashore, but in consequence of a predetermination on the part of the men on land not to give way to the Indians as long as they could possibly do otherwise they (with the exception of 7 or 8 would not make use of the skiffs when they had an opportunity of doing so; in about fifteen minutes from the time the firing commenced, the surviving part of the men were embarked; nearly all of the horses killed or wounded one of the Anchors had been weighed the Cable of the other Cut and the Boats dropping down the Stream. . . my loss in Killed and Wounded is as follows: [Here follows a list of twelve dead and eleven wounded.]

I do not conceive but two of the wounded in danger - How many of the Indians were Killed I am at a loss to say, I think not more than 7 or 8 four or five were seen to fall on the Beach - I have thout proper to communicate this affair as Early as an opportunity offered, believing that you would feel disposed to make those people account to the Government for the Outrage Committed - Should that be the case and a force sent for that purpose in a short time, You will oblige me much if you will send me an express at my expense if one call be procured, that I may meet and Co- operate with you - From the situation of the Indian Towns it will be difficult for a small force to dust (oust) them without a Six pounder the Towns are newly picketed in with timber from 6 to 8 inches thick 12 or 16 feet high, dirt in the inside thrown up about 18 inches high. They front the river, and immediately in front of them is a large Sand Bar forming nearly two thirds of a Sircle. at the head of which (when the river is very low) they have a Breast Work made of dry wood; the ground on the opposite side of the river is high and Commanding - They have about Six hundred Warriors, I suppose that 3/4 of them Armed with London Fuzils, others with Bows and Arrows, War Axes &C.

I expect to hear from Major Henry (to whom I sent an express) in 12 or 15 days during that time I shall remain between this place and the Auricara Towns not remaining any length of time in One place, as my force is small, not more than 23 effective men.

and even the great probability of their joining the Aricaras against us - And also considering the importance it of saving our Country the expense and trouble of a long Indian warfare; and the importance of securing thee safety of the Indian trade, I thought proper to accept the terms.

Before the Indians could be compelled to fulfill the conditions, they escaped from their villages, and the whites embarked for their return Journey at 10 A. M., August 15. Colonel Leavenworth reported that, "Before we were out of eight of the towns, we had the mortification to discover them to be on fire. There is no doubt that they have been consumed." The Colonel asserted that they were set on fire, through jealousy or spite by agents of the Missouri Fur Company. The true reason, probably, was chagrin because Colonel Leavenworth failed to do the very thing for which the expedition had been undertaken - severely punish the Arikara for their continuous assaults on white traders.

In the operations before the Arikara villages the whites lost none in killed and but two slightly wounded. The Sioux lost two killed and seven wounded. Colonel Leavenworth thought the Arikara loss amounted to fifty. The cost of the expedition was about \$2,000 and the time consumed about seventy-five days. The experience of the troops on the long march and the knowledge it gave them of the country were among its most valuable results.

Return of Troops to Fort Atkinson

Aug. 29, 1823.

The Colo. Comdg. is happy to announce to his Command that the objects of the late expedition against the Aricara Indians have been effected. The blood of our Countrymen has been honorably avenged

The Colo. Comdg. cannot dismiss this subject without again mentioning his very great satisfaction with the gallant and honorable conduct of General Ashley and his Brave and hardy little Corps of mountaineers. Although for several days entirely destitute of subsistence they persevered in "noble daring" without a

Your friend and Obt servt murmur....The Colo. Comdg. only regrets
W. H. Ashley. that he can offer them nothing more
substantial than his thanks.

Preparations To Move on Arikara Indians

H. Leavenworth,
Colo. Comdg.

Following are parts of four orders issued by
Colonel Leavenworth at "Head Quarters 6th
Infantry Fort Atkinson" June 18, 1823

Companies A, B, D, E, F, & G will be
prepared as soon as pos-

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