1928

Homesteading in Western Kansas

Henry W. Horst

HOMESTEADING IN WESTERN KANSAS

June 1928.

Sincerely
Nancy W. Hoss

HOMESTEADING IN WESTERN KANSAS

1885—1892

Fair elbow-room for men to thrive in!
Wide elbow-room for work or play!
If cities follow, tracing our footsteps,
Ever to Westward shall point our way!
Rude though our life, it suits our spirit,
And new-born States in future years
Shall own us founders of a nation—
And bless the hardy pioneers.

—Charles Mackay

HENRY W. HORST, 1864-1949
Rock Island, Illinois

To the memory of my beloved wife

Mollie Empke Horst

the mother of my children and never wearying companion
of my struggles during those early pioneer days in
Western Kansas, I dedicate this little volume

Foreword

A PERSONAL narrative, as a rule, is of little value, but it has given me great pleasure to relate some of the early experiences of the hardy pioneers who trecked to Western Kansas, and if I have contributed a word or two of historical value my tale will have interest for my children and the good friends of forty years ago.

If apology is necessary, I will quote the Oakley, Kansas, Graphic of December 31, 1926: "We wish the old timers would chronicle their tales of thirty-five to forty years ago. They would make the best possible reading. The real history of Western Kansas has never been written, and it is up to men like John Vawter, Noah Zeigler, Chas. Smith and others to write it, and we will print it into permanent history of Logan County. Let's have your stories from 1885 up to now."

To round out my story, I have added a chapter or two of later years which may be of interest to old friends and neighbors, and possibly be a help to the younger generation.

HENRY W. HORST,
Pioneer.

Out Where the West Begins

Out where the handclasp's a little stronger,
Out where the smile dwells a little longer—
That's where the West begins.
Out where the sun is a little brighter,
Where the snows that fall are a trifle whiter,
Where the bonds of home are a wee bit tighter—
That's where the West begins.

Out where the skies are a trifle bluer,
Out where friendship's a little truer
That's where the West begins.
Out where a fresher breeze is blowing,
Where there's laughter in every streamlet flowing,
Where there's more of reaping and less of sowing—
That's where the West begins.

Out where the world is in the making,
Where fewer hearts with despair are aching—
That's where the West begins.
Where there's more of singing and less of sighing,
Where there's more of giving and less of buying,
And a man makes friends without half trying—
That's where the West begins.

—ARTHUR CHAPMAN.

MOLLIE EMPKE HORST

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I.

Our Journey Westward

A LARGE discarded dry goods box filled with provisions of all kinds, especially pork and beans, and labeled "Henry W. Horst, Cleaveland, St. John's County, Kansas," left St. Louis in September, 1885.

Pen pictures of the wonderful opportunities in Western Kansas, of homesteading on Government land, raising bountiful crops, becoming a millionaire in the shortest possible time, were the inducements presented to me by my uncle, who was a successful farmer in Nebraska, and who urged me to take my young wife and baby to the golden west and become independent.

Having decided to take his advice, we packed the above box and began preparations to follow it within a few days, meeting my uncle, William Kock now deceased, at Wahoo, Nebraska, and after a cross country trip with team and wagon we finally landed in what was then

known as Cleaveland, Kansas, later Oakley. I have a faint recollection that my uncle plowed or helped plow the furrows which indicated the thoroughfares of the proposed town of Oakley, Logan County, Kansas. I always call those streets Fifth Avenue, Broadway, and other arterial names when talking about our western metropolis.

On our journey from St. Louis there were many incidents that claimed comparison with former journeys. Having previously crossed the Atlantic, and traversed across the States from New York to Illinois and as far south as Memphis, Tennessee, as well as portions of Canada, I want to say that the Union Station in Kansas City was about the most cosmopolitan place that I had ever seen, in spite of its dilapidated condition. People from all parts of the United States, of all colors and races, mingled in the waiting room and on the concourses. To an observer of mankind, it was a wonderful spot, and I enjoyed the opportunity of studying my fellow-man. This station, of course, has long since disappeared and has been replaced by one of the most magnificent railroad stations in the West.

After a short delay we boarded a train on the Union Pacific and entered Kansas, wondering all the time what kind of a spot ours would be. Passing through the eastern portion of the State, we found well built homes, orchards and cultivated fields, and the expression was passed quite often, "Well, if our portion of Kansas is as beautiful as this, we surely have struck it lucky." The day had been filled with pleasurable delight, the scenery was wonderfully varied. As evening approached, we traversed miles and miles of real prairie country, treeless, riverless, and barren. When we finally landed on the station platform at Cleaveland, about eleven o'clock at night, we were joyfully greeted by my uncle, Mr. William Kock, and an elder brother, Mr. Anton Horst, who had preceded us, and who had in a measure prepared a shelter for my family. Bright stars in the clear sky and the ever present wind of Western Kansas were our companions as we wended our way from the station platform to a barn which had been erected for man and beast on a part of the land which is now the town site of Oakley.

After a restful night, bright sunshine greets us and we enter into the spirit of pioneer life in Western Kansas with the greatest enthusiasm and entire trust in the triune God.

Our Home in Oakley, 1885

II.

Muscle and Brawn vs. Wind

TO CHANGE the primitive conditions of dividing man and beast by a wooden partition, and then have one room serve as parlor, sitting room, bedroom, kitchen and dining room, as well as create some privacy for the female portion of our family, the construction of a home became our immediate object.

A two-room structure, with cellar and loft, was planned and excavation started at once. No foundation walls were needed, because of the firmness of the soil, and, again, there was no money to be wasted on anything that might be eliminated. Lumber was bought, and by working from daylight until way after dark, the structure grew rapidly; the rafters looked so inviting my brother and I felt we could still place the roof sheathing in place, because the wind was quiet and we would be that much farther along in the morning. This was done, although I knew it was contrary to customary procedure, but it was the desire to take ad-

vantage of another hour of fading daylight and to complete as early as possible which led to this piece of folly—creating a sort of umbrella.

My Brother, Anton Horst

We went to sleep, tired with our day's work. While eating our breakfast in the morning the wind began to rise and was soon blowing a gale. We spoke of the possibility of the wind blowing over our newly-erected structure, but I, as a well trained carpenter, made light of this and said that a building as well put up as that would never blow over. The words had hardly

left my mouth when we heard a terrible crash. Jumping up and looking out of the barn door, what should we see but our entire structure moved off its location and thrown into a heap by one puff of those playful Western Kansas winds. Our umbrella had made it easy for the wind.

This meant quite a loss of time and money to us. To me it meant much more. I was taken off of my "high horse" regarding my ability to put up a structure. I learned a lasting lesson in safeguarding against winds in Western Kansas, and it created a humbleness of mind as we picked up the crumpled mass which has stood me well in hand ever since. Many a time after this happening, when erecting houses in and about Oakley, I saw to it that a lot of props were shored in and around buildings that Henry W. Horst erected, and they always weathered the wind storms, where many others suffered greatly.

Let it suffice to say that eventually the house was completed and remained one of the landmarks in Oakley for many years, and, I think, is still in existence, having been moved to a farm in the immediate vicinity of Oakley.

There were several features which distinguished this little two-room house from most of the structures erected in Oakley at that time. This was due to the fact that I put a little "ginger bread" on the window and door frames, also on the cornice, and instead of a stove-pipe the house had a small chimney. However, to my mind the most outstanding feature that marked this little home of ours as different from others was the fact that it had gutters on the roof and down spouts. At that time tin could not be purchased in Oakley, but my brother Anton, who had learned the tinner's trade in the old country, knew how to help himself, and quite often in the evenings he and I, with a sled, might be seen pulling home a big box of tin cans gathered up around the Oakley House and which were later melted apart. The tin so gathered he made into gutters and down spouts. This enabled us to catch and store rain water, which helped not a little during the dry summer months.

III.

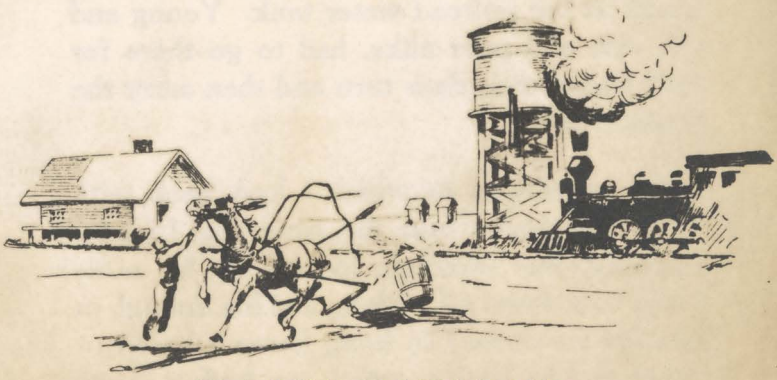
A Scarcity of Water

AKLEY may well be proud of her water-works of today. Those who go to their kitchen or bathroom and turn on the faucet and have water in abundance would have a greater appreciation of such a convenience if they knew of the primitive conditions that existed in Oakley in 1885.

Where to get water was a question. The only place we knew of for a long time was the faucet at the railroad water tank. Young and old, rich and poor alike, had to go there for their water, wait their turn and then carry the treasure home.

An experience to which I look back with much merriment was the time our friendly neighbor, Mr. Moulten, loaned me his mule (with ears about a foot long and life enough in him for six mules) to bring home a barrel of water on the sledge, which on buffalo grass slides just as easy as on snow or ice. The only

caution that Mr. Moulten vouchsafed was: "Henry, be sure that you watch Jack if a train should go by. He does not like them." That caution was enough to make me hesitate, because, having been raised in a city, I was not very familiar with the ways of horses, much less mules, and had heard that they were pretty active with their feet. However, the water was needed and I was glad to accept the loan of the mule. Off to the tank I went, praying that no train or engine would come in sight. My prayer, however, was not answered. My barrel



Why I Built the First Well in Oakley

was about half full when a shrill whistle sounded from the west and on comes a locomotive at real speed. Dropping my bucket and

grabbing for the bridle reins of the mule—the action of a moment—I hoped to be in time, but not I only had heard the whistle, our friend Jack heard it as well. His ears standing on end, and giving a snort that you could hear for a mile, he was in action, and my little weight of 160 pounds hanging on to his bridle reins did not bother him a bit. I can still see the people on the streets laughing at my predicament—the sledge with a barrel of water on it, a young man hanging on to the bridle reins, his feet dangling partly on the ground and partly off, going at full speed toward the mule's stable. By the time we reached the stable, of course, there was no sledge, no barrel of water, and I think very little harness left. Aside from the injury to my feelings, the only hurt that I carried away from this episode was a good, big scare, and with thankfulness that I received no greater injury, I then and there resolved to secure water in some less hazardous way.

IV.

We Decide to Have a Well

THERE is a story of two parties meeting on the prairie. The one asked the other: "Where are you going?" He answered, "After water." "Where do you get it?" "Three miles from here." "Well, isn't that a long way to go after water?" "Yes, it is." "Why don't you dig a well?" "Because in this part of Kansas it is just as far, if not farther, to get down to water." There was a lot of truth in that statement, even though not literally true.

We found that the underground level in Oakley was one hundred and twenty feet. Labor still being cheaper than machinery, it meant that the only way to get to that water would be to dig with pick and shovel to a depth of one hundred and twenty feet. There was no drilling machinery available at that time, and if there had been, the lack of funds would have prevented its use.

However, we decided we would have a well, so one morning a well about three feet six inches in diameter was started on our corner lot. A proper windlass was rigged up, good ropes secured, a couple of half barrels properly roped, and with this equipment my brother and I, with occasional help from my uncle, and, if I am not mistaken, our friend Gilbert Bronson, started to dig for water. In Illinois, where I had lived for some time, I knew of wells twenty, thirty and forty feet deep, and after they were dug the earth banks were secured with brick. This was out of the question in a well to be one hundred and twenty feet deep, for more reasons than one. The soil, however, was very firm and the banks carried themselves very nicely if surface water could be kept away from the hole on top. Occasionally a seam of sand was struck, and when this took place wooden curbing in sections was provided, generally in six to eight-foot lengths. If the seam of sand was wider, then a second section would be used and the first section lowered as the digging proceeded. The providing of this curbing, being in the woodworker's line, was very interesting to me, and while the digging of this well was the hardest kind of work,

it was valuable experience for me and my brother. As I recall it, we struck two or three streaks of sand, not necessarily quicksand, and finally at the depth of one hundred and twenty feet reached water. We went down four to six feet below the water line and secured a fine supply of the finest water, good to drink, good to wash in, and good to give to our neighbor.

A word of praise must be given to Mrs. Horst in this connection. Many a time it happened that man power was short and then she and I turned the windlass, bringing the earth from the depths below. She bravely stood her share of this manual labor, and only took exception when I happened to be at the bottom. You may realize that water out of this well tasted especially sweet to her.

This well was a great factor in building up the northeast portion of Oakley faster than any other section, because it eliminated the possibility of experiences like I encountered with the mule and it provided better and fresher water. I am glad to say our well served its purpose for many, many years.

Before closing this chapter, I wish to relate a sensation I had when, years after, this well

needed cleaning and it was a question how and who was to do it. On leaving my wife with the intention of looking after the cleaning one morning, she said: "Henry, by all means don't you go down into the well." No one knew how the curbing was, and, naturally, there is always danger connected in letting a person down to such a depth and bringing him up again. I promised my wife, with some reservation, but upon finding that it would cost me $5.00 to have this work done by some one else I determined to earn that myself. Rigging up three two by four poles with a little wheel at the top, a rope and bucket secured, a good, heavy, trusty man taking hold of one end of the rope, I got into the bucket fastened to the other end and slowly, hand over hand, he dropped me down to the one hundred and twenty foot level. The cleanout process took place, and I prepared to come up out of the well. If any of you have ever stood at the bottom of a shaft one hundred and twenty feet deep you know that the little bit of blue sky that comes in at the top, seemingly through a hole not larger than the size of a half dollar, is a mighty welcome beacon to you, and as my bucket slowly drew nearer to the top and when I finally put

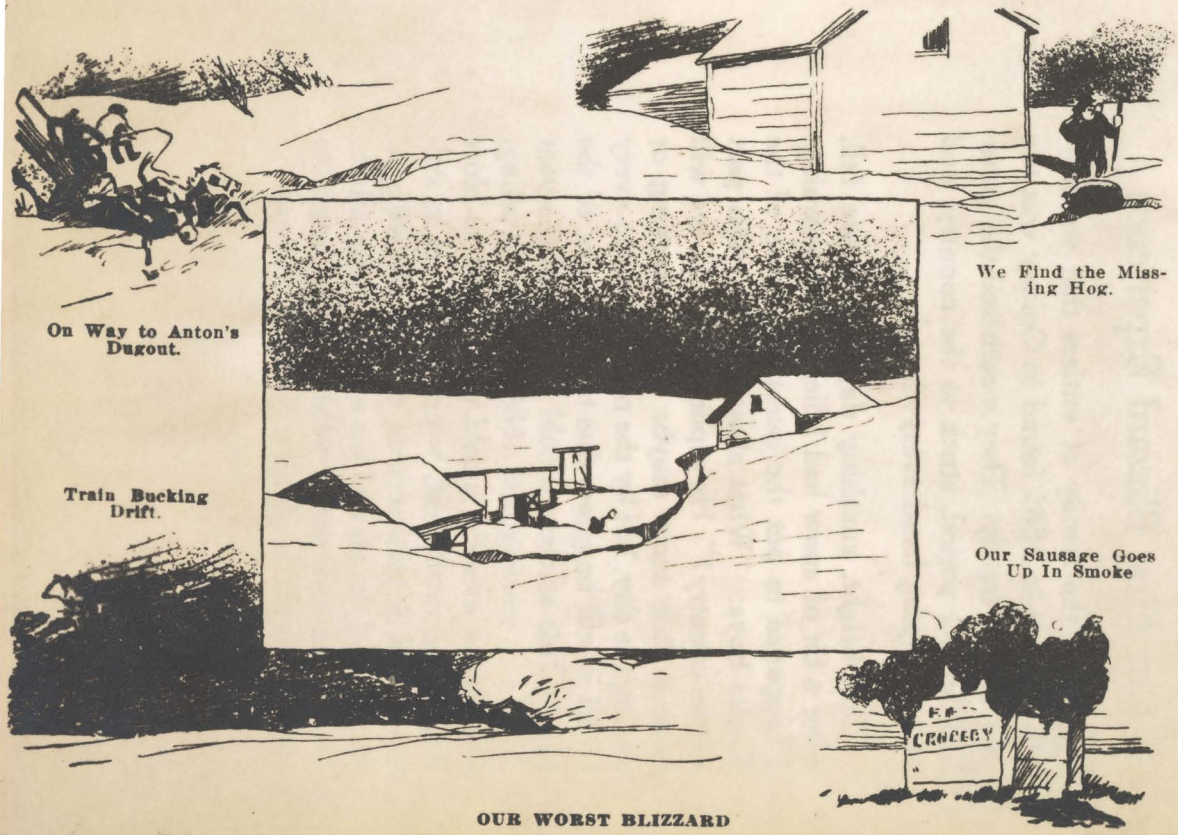
one leg over the enclosure and again saw the beautiful sky in its entirety I said to myself, that man must be without heart or sentiment who does not give praise and thanksgiving to his Creator, who has protected him during such an undertaking.

V.

Our First Blizzard Experience

ONE of the family of settlers that we newcomers in 1885 found in Oakley was the Kaeler family. They weathered the grasshopper period, stuck to the country, and lent a helping hand everywhere.

One bright, sunshiny day in the late fall, after a bit of snow had fallen in the morning, I happened to put the question to one of the Kaeler boys: "What about snow in this part of the country?" He replied, "Henry, we will have a little snow maybe in the morning or during the day, but by the next day noon every bit of it will be gone, due to the power of the sun." This statement held good until the year 1885 was waning and 1886 was in the offing. During the evening a cold wind began to blow out of the northwest, which increased in volume, and a tremendous cold came with it. Snow filled the air and the earth became numb. Words fail to describe what we soon began to realize was the beginning of a real blizzard.



On Way to Anton's Dugout.

We Find the Missing Hog.

Train Bucking Drift.

Our Sausage Goes Up In Smoke

OUR WORST BLIZZARD

Having an errand to do on the main street of our town, I left my little home, made the few blocks in spite of the increasing storm, but on attempting to wend my steps homeward I found myself crossing the railroad track, which was in an entirely opposite direction, and I began to realize that I was lost, even in those few blocks in town. Carefully retracing my steps to the station and again getting my bearings, I finally reached our fireside after a winding detour. This experience made us more cautious, and stood us well in hand during the three remaining days of the storm. We resorted to the old-fashioned method of tying a line to a person's body when leaving the house to get water or go to the barn to care for the animals. This precaution was absolutely necessary, because one's vision could not penetrate the snow, wind and cold beyond a distance of eight to ten feet. Long into the night we remained awake listening to the threatening elements, feeling the house quake and asking the Lord for protection, realizing how small and inconsequent human life is in the wrath of the elements. For three days and nights that blizzard raged over the western country.

When again the sun came out everything was covered with a dazzling white mantle. In places only a foot or two deep and in others eight to ten feet and deeper. Gradually human beings left their abodes and began to shovel walks to the places absolutely necessary to be reached, and slowly began to take stock of the situation. The resulting damage was disastrous. Thousands and thousands of cattle had perished on the plains, and to the best of my recollection eighteen human lives were lost in Logan and surrounding counties. Some of the settlers were found dead within a few feet of their home, and the body of one victim was recovered in a deep draw sometime in June of 1886. Those were sad days for the pioneers in Western Kansas. The railroads were busy during the summer shipping the only solvent part of the cattle, and that was their hides.

What a wonderful thing it would have been at that time if the radio had been in existence. Telegraph lines were down and it was impossible to reconstruct them for some time. It was three weeks before communication with the outer world was again established. One morning we saw great forces of men shoveling out

the Union Pacific railroad track through the deepest snow drifts, being followed by a powerful snow plow to which several engines were coupled, and in this manner they gradually gained some distance every day until Denver was reached and contact was again established between East and West.

The total damage by that blizzard will never be known. It was a long time before we were able to get out to the homestead of my brother, three and one-half miles north of Oakley, on the Saline. We made the attempt as soon as we thought we could get through, but when trying to find the road crossing the Saline one-half mile north of Oakley, we found the snow was still even with the banks of the river, and instead of finding the proper crossing place we got off some distance, and without warning our horses suddenly lost their footing, leaving the solid bank and stepping onto the treacherous snow. In floundering about they almost entirely disappeared in the mass of snow, drawing the wagon with them, and it was only through good luck and the strenuous efforts of my uncle that no harm came to us. However, we finally reached the opposite bank.

We then, in a still more careful manner, drove north and tried to locate the dugout which had been partly built on my brother's claim, and also to see what had happened to the well, which had been dug about thirty feet. With great difficulty we finally located the top of the dugout by running shovels and sticks down through the snow, and when the roof was located we dug a way into the entrance and found the interior in pretty good shape. It was impossible to do any work or try to find the well. We were forced to wait until the sun did its powerful work, and after a good many days went out again, found the snow fairly well gone, dugout all right, but the well entirely caved in.

Around our own place in town the snow naturally disappeared much faster, because we helped it along, but while the snow was still about two feet high on the level we found a most unexpected sight close to our barn. One of our neighbors, Mr. Moulten, had a few hogs and the snow had drifted over his hog house and kept the hogs nice and warm during the storm, but one hog was missing, and for a long time could not be located. One day while

shoveling the snow from around the barn our shovels struck what appeared to be a rock, but what was our surprise to find it was the missing hog of Mr. Moulten's, frozen solid, standing with all four feet on the ground, looking as natural as though alive. We being poor, and Mr. Moulten being well-to-do, liberal and kind-hearted, he said: "Henry, I believe that the meat of this hog should be all right. If you and yours can make use of it you are welcome to it." We thanked him for his kind offer and were surely delighted with the prospect of getting so much meat. We immediately started to split the hog in two with an axe, being a little doubtful about using the meat for table purposes. However, we finally did get some portions of the hog which we could utilize in making sausages, and the balance we used to make soap. We dug a little trench in the ground, put a dry goods box over it and hung these sausages on sticks across the top of this improvised smoke house, built our fire and, as we thought, watched it carefully, looking forward to the time when we could enjoy these wonderful smoked sausages. Just a day or two before we thought they would be ready for consumption we discovered that the fire had

been too brisk or the strings had become too weak for the load, and, much to our sorrow, we found all our sausages in the coals. Just another experience that helps to keep the scenes of that blizzard ever before us.

In later years we experienced many a snow storm and blizzard, but never such a storm as this one early in the year 1886. Many were the settlers who felt the cold hand of death reach forth and take one of their loved ones, probably the main supporter. The ways of the Lord are unfathomable.

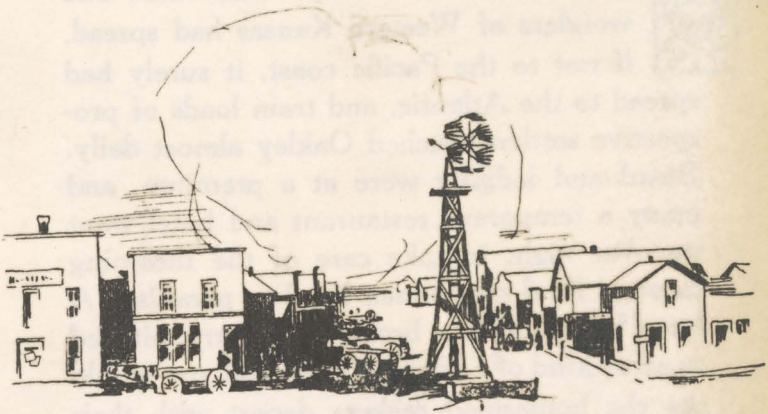
Joe Bowie Herding Cattle in Kansas

VI.

Oakley Has Its Boom Period

THE year 1886, I think, was the banner boom year for Oakley. The fame and wonders of Western Kansas had spread, if not to the Pacific coast, it surely had spread to the Atlantic, and train loads of prospective settlers reached Oakley almost daily. Board and lodging were at a premium, and many a temporary restaurant and hotel went up over night to take care of the incoming throng. Real estate men lived in paradise. A lot of bronchos were broken in a hurry, hitched to some kind of a running gear, and you would see the homestead seekers depart with their chosen real estate man, who was able to locate some stone or marker on the prairies and point out attractive quarters that were sold subject to the homestead laws of our government. In other words, where they could secure 160 acres of wonderful land for the cost of making out a homestead claim and filing their papers at the land office in Wakeeney. A very small sum

indeed. Those who were familiar with the laws and conditions of our country at that time did not cease when they had secured their homestead rights; they also cashed in on timber



Main Street, Oakley, in 1886-87

claims, preemption, and if they had some funds, secured certain school land.

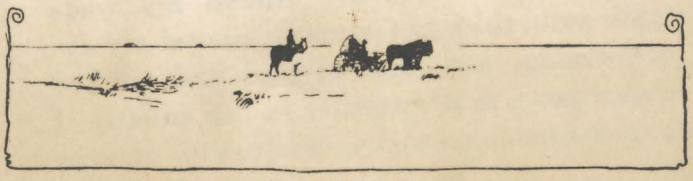
For the benefit of those who are not acquainted with that far-off country, let me state that the Union Pacific Railroad in agreeing to put an iron trail across the barren West were given, among other things, the title to every odd section, twenty miles each side of their road bed. Some people at this late date openly state that was entirely too much. Those early

settlers, who went through the hardships of settling the country, will tell you, however, that had it not been for the railroad that country would still be unsettled and nothing but range country.

Many of these prospective buyers and settlers did buy and make settlement for land. Others bought lots in town at $500 and $600 for fifty-foot fronts; some for less and some for even more, and erected stores of every description to take care of the needs of the settlers. Lumber yards were started in the most primitive manner, and building material arrived in quantities to take care of the ever increasing demand. It was not long until some of the streets were lined with attractive buildings, and the Town of Oakley became firmly established.

Needless to say, everybody who could swing a hammer and handle a saw was a carpenter. The few who had really learned the trade were the leaders, and many willing hands helped erect structures. Having learned my trade under guild rules in Germany, served my apprenticeship, and also traveled and worked several years as a carpenter in this country, I soon realized this was my opportunity. Having

had some experience in contracting in St. Louis, I was ambitious enough to try to do a little here, and with the good will of the people of Oakley I soon became busy. My brother, Anton, when not engaged at his own trade, was my right hand man, and between us, with the help of such men as Gilbert Bronson and a few others, we erected many of the buildings in Oakley. Our method of contracting at that time was for the owner, in most instances, to buy the material under my direction and I contracting the labor. Such places as were known in the early days as Stream's hall, the David Doering grocery, the C. C. Condon store, the Louie A. Fisher department store and many residences and other buildings that I do not at this time recall were erected by me under contract. Also homes in the country—the Compton residence and many others.



Our Boys on Way to Visit Homestead, 1905

VII.

Work On the Farm

OUR uncle stuck to the farm and made his home on my brother's claim, north of Oakley, plowing and cultivating the field, keeping the horses in a sod barn and coming into town only occasionally. The sowing of flax and some oats and, I believe, some wheat, as well as planting some corn, was all done by hand, as was also the harvesting. What grain he raised was cut single handed with a scythe, bound and shocked. As I recall, in the fall of 1886 the first threshing machine came to Oakley, and to the best of my knowledge it was my uncle, William Kock, who brought the first load of grain raised in and about Oakley to market. Whether this was flax, wheat or oats, I do not now recall, and I am willing to be corrected by some of those who may remember more of the incidents of this early settlement.

VIII.

A Day's Work in the Town

WHILE slow progress was being made in the country, perhaps a day's doings in the town may be of interest. Having very little or no money upon our arrival in Western Kansas, but having a lot of courage and ambition to secure a home and build up a business of our own, my brother and I knew no hours, knew nothing but labor in our endeavor to secure those things, as well as make life as pleasant as possible for my wife and child. The actual day's work on the job started at 7:00 o'clock in the morning and ended at 6:00 o'clock in the evening. Daylight lasts much longer in Western Kansas, and, as a usual thing, my brother and I were busy in our shop at four o'clock in the morning. At six o'clock Mrs. Horst called breakfast, and having fortified ourselves, we were off for work on our daily building operations. By seven o'clock in the evening supper was over, and we retired to our workshop, working by lamp light, con-

structing window and door frames for the buildings, turning out cornice stuff and any other carpenter work that could be made ready in the shop.

My brother had by this time engaged with Snyder Bros. Hardware Co. (Andy and Till) and was occupied almost daily in their tin shop. He had also secured the trade of the well drillers, who had by this time arrived and were needing casings for their drilled wells. This six and seven-inch casing was built up out of galvanized iron sheets riveted and hooked together in a manner a good deal like stove-pipe joints, only much stronger and more durable. Up to ten and eleven o'clock at night you could hear the sound of the plane, hammer and saw, as well as the metallic sound of the riveting of these well casings, or any other work that he might be able to undertake in order to cash in on his knowledge as a sheet metal man, plumber and gas fitter—the three trades in which he was a master mechanic. This was the routine of our day, and many a day from four in the morning until eleven at night.

Just as the men kept busy from early morning until late at night, Mrs. Horst kept busy.

Every bit of clothes for the baby was made by her own hands. The meals were taken care of without help, and besides preparing meals, the bake oven was kept busy supplying bread to many a batchelor who had found out that Mrs. Horst was a real cook and that she also could bake real home-made bread.

As I look back now, most of the settlers who came out in 1886 had ready money and could pay for everything that was purchased, which made times flourish in Oakley, and the boom continued throughout 1886 and the early portion of 1887.

Present M. E. Church—Replaces Oakley's First Church

IX.

A Pioneer Religious Movement

KANSAS was a temperance State. But with the influx of such a tremendous population as came into Oakley in 1886 there were some who liked something just a little bit stronger than water, and it is well known that those who want that particular stimulant always find ways and means to get it, and generally have not much use for religion and churches. To the credit of the majority of the early settlers of Oakley, let it be said that they respected the Sabbath day.

Soon the lack of church services became very apparent, and some of the good people got together to devise ways and means to raise money for a church building—a community church—in which all creeds could have their services. These people, much more conversant with such matters than I, circulated petitions and collected subscriptions, assuring those who subscribed that if a certain amount was secured a Church Extension Fund some-

where in the East would furnish the balance of the money to complete the church building.

When sufficient subscriptions seemingly had been secured, they began to look for someone to build their church. The young German, Henry Horst, who had received, through the foresight of his parents, a real education in Germany, not only in trade schools, learning drawing, creating of plans, etc., but had also had three years of French and four years of English before leaving Germany, having demonstrated his ability to erect houses in the shortest time possible and still render honest service for the least money—this Henry Horst looked good to the committee.

Having completed their plans and secured a location, they met with him, and a contract to erect the church in its entirety was awarded to him. Full of zeal, the two brothers started on this undertaking, the greatest of its kind. Feeling that they were rendering a real service to mankind, as well as serving the Master, they put their best efforts into this building, that it might be an honor and credit not only to the builders, but to God and mankind.

Soon the building was under roof and lathed and the first payment was long past due. Finally the lumber man wanted his money, and the contractor began to press the committee. The greater part of the subscriptions had been I.O.U.'s, and in trying to cash in on these the committee found that a number of the subscribers had left the country and the paper was worthless. With this staring us in the face, good advice was mighty dear. After long deliberation and all other resources had been unsuccessfully tried, it was decided that the committee should write to the Church Extension Fund. I think it was a Methodist Church Extension Fund, and because of its offer to partly finance this building they were to have the title to the property. Request was made for one-half of the amount involved, which I think was $500.00. Much to our discomfort, word came back that it was out of the question to send this amount until the local people had fully paid their share and a properly executed receipt from the builder was sent to them, upon receipt of which they would forward the agreed amount. With this information we had to start all over again; and to show how the money situation during the fall and

winter of 1886 had changed since spring, it was found impossible to raise $500.00 among the people of Oakley. Then it was that three or four churchmen on the committee consulted together and devised a way out of the difficulty. They persuaded the contractor and builder to give them a properly executed receipt to forward to the Church Extension Committee in the East. The contractor, in turn, having their promise that when the money was received he would be paid the amount he had receipted for, and they felt sure that when the building was finally completed they could secure a preacher who would raise sufficient money at the dedication to liquidate the debts.

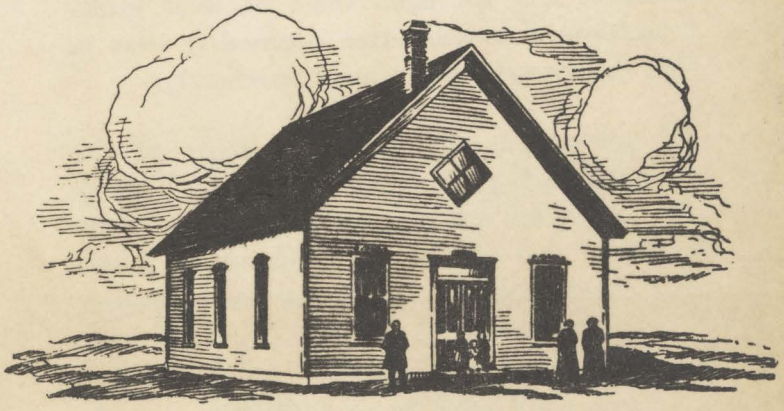
Yes, I can hear you say, that was fine crooked work on the part of these church committeemen and contractor. It was. I knew and felt the pangs of wrong doing at the time, but I did not know what was still in store for the contractor. In due time the money arrived, and, of course, the contractor expected to have it in his hands within twenty-four hours so that he could liquidate his obligations. No such luck. The committee who had persuaded him to act in conjunction with their wrong activity felt

disinclined to turn this money over to him, and were going to use it for other purposes in connection with the church. It was then that Mr. Contractor fully sensed the situation, and he addressed the committee somewhat as follows: "Gentlemen, I know, and you know, that both you and I have committed an act which is contrary to law and to God, and unless I have this money by noon I will take steps to have myself put in jail, but, believe me, you will follow before the door closes." With this blunt assertion and the knowledge of their guilty conscience the committee deemed it wise to turn the money over to me immediately.

I proceeded with the completion of the church building, and in the spring of 1887 it was dedicated. Having some doubt that they would be able to clear the indebtedness, I told Mrs. Horst I was going over to the dedication, and if this Methodist minister could raise the necessary amount to liquidate the debts (which I believe were $400.00 to $500.00), I surely wanted to see it. Their faith was rewarded. After a beautiful service, subscriptions were taken up in a manner which I had never before witnessed, cash was given, and within two

hours the debt was paid and all honor and glory given to God and those committeemen, for whom I bear no ill will and who meant well for Oakley and its future.

The church building served Oakley for thirty-odd years, and was only recently replaced by a new edifice. I hope that some of the men who



Oakley's First House of Worship, 1886

participated in the creation of this church are still alive and may enjoy reading this episode.

In connection with the construction of the building I recall this incident: On account of economy, the chimney was not started at the ground, but was hung and supported from the

rafters, starting at the ceiling line. This required some iron stirrups, and as there was only one blacksmith in town, to him one of the elders, my friend, Mr. Clark, and I repaired. Sure, the blacksmith would make the desired stirrups, but being feeble at times he needed a stimulant, and since he had exhausted his ability to secure such stimulant it was up to Henry Horst to try and secure it. Believing that the urgency of the case sanctioned the action, I repaired to the drug store on the corner, where my good friend, C. A. Smith, has held forth these many years, and, after explaining the circumstances, secured a small amount of pure alcohol, which was the weakest prescription that our friend blacksmith would tolerate. I again repaired to the blacksmith shop and showed him that I had secured the necessary requirement. He exclaimed: "Alright, let me have it." I said, "Nothing doing. Let us have the work done first." After an hour's arguing by Mr. Clark and myself we could not get anywhere, so we gave in and turned the alcohol over to the blacksmith. He returned to the shop after a little while, started his fire, put in the iron and when the proper heat was secured he endeavored to weld two pieces of iron to-

gether. About this time the alcohol got in its work, and instead of striking the blows of the hammer in the proper place the iron shot back and forth, the hammer striking the anvil instead of the iron and nothing being accomplished. This went on until we became discouraged, and Mr. Clark felt he could do better himself. The blacksmith, however, was not willing to turn over his tools, and it became necessary to use some force to compel him to stand aside and let us finish the job.

We Set Off for Our New Home

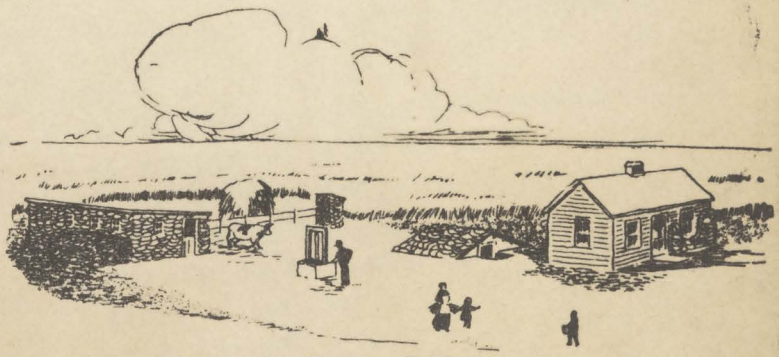
X.

We Move to Our Homestead

THE year 1887 began with a joyful occasion for the Horst family. March 1st our daughter Anna was born. She has grown to womanhood and has a fine family of two boys and two girls. "Doctors present at the time," you ask. I say, "There were none." "Trusty neighbor women?" "Sure," and it afforded Mrs. Kaeler a great pleasure to reciprocate at this critical period for services that Mrs. Horst had rendered their family in time of need. That was the spirit of the West and of the pioneers. We never forget those kindnesses.

The building boom in Oakley having begun to slacken up, in the middle of the summer we prepared to leave for the homestead on which we had located about five miles southwest, three miles from Monument and one and one-half miles south of the Union Pacific railroad. I have a vivid recollection of the picture we presented as we set out on our journey. The

household goods all on a lumber wagon stacked high, cow tied behind, calf following; Mrs. Horst, children and myself on the spring seat. It was slow going, and towards evening the cow tried to test her strength against the team, because her calf was getting tired and would lay down every once in a while. At this juncture the reins were turned over to Mrs. Horst, who, with the baby in her arms and Anton alongside her, guided the team, and I persuaded the cow to take the strain off of the rope. Thus we landed on the Southeast Quarter of Section 14, Township 11, Range 33 West of the 6th



Our Home on the Prairie

Principal Meridian. A little frame, two-room shanty, banked with sod, was our dwelling place. Happy and content, the next morning

we began our day's work after calling upon the Lord for strength.

The digging of a cave for the protection of human life and to keep food from spoiling was our first activity. Here, also, Mrs. Horst rendered faithful service, taking a turn with the shovel, as she had done when digging the well in town. Our water supply had been taken care of previous to our coming. A well drilled to a depth of 120 feet, with a rigging above it —wheel, small windlass and a long galvanized iron bucket with a valve in the bottom. The erection of an ample sod barn for horses, cows, a pig or two, as well as the building of a chicken house, was the next undertaking, and all were successfully completed in due time. Some plowing was done and, I believe, a little corn was raised the first season.

Perhaps I cannot do better than close this chapter with the following historical data, taken from the Oakley Graphic:

"On September 17th, 1887, Governor John A. Martin by proclamation declared the organization of Logan County, Kansas, and appointed the following officers to hold until elec-

tion and qualification of legally elected officers took place:

"J. W. Kerns, N. C. Phinney and R. P. McKnight were appointed Commissioners.

"Joseph W. Jones, County Clerk.

"N. G. Perryman, Sheriff.

"R. S. Tumpany, County Superintendent.

"Population of the County at time of organization was 3,112. Valuation, not including railroad and exemptions, was $447,534.00, of which sum real estate amounted to $123,505.00.

"Valuation of County at first assessment in 1888 was $1,298,168.00.

"First Tax Rolls were as follows: State taxes, $5,345.48; County taxes, $12,981.57; Township taxes, $2,214.53; City taxes, $468.88; Special taxes, $521.80; School taxes, $15,988.57; total $37,524.83.

"There were ten townships in Logan County in 1887—Oakley, Monument, Winona, McAllaster, Western, Russell Springs, Logansport, Elkader, Lee and Augustine, and only one city—Oakley.

"The first election was held on December 22, 1887, and the following officers were declared elected:

"Representative, J. J. Sears; Clerk, J. W. Kerns; Treasurer, C. A. Black; Recorder of Deeds, R. P. McKnight; Sheriff, N. G. Perryman; Probate Judge, John E. Dodge; Clerk of District Court, Geo. C. Fleming; Superintendent, J. W. D. Foote; Attorney, K. E. Wilcockson; Coroner, F. M. Burdick; Surveyor, A. J. Meier; Commissioners, J. H. Morgan, A. C. Sims, and James Dermott.

"Oakley was incorporated on October 15, 1887.

"Russell Springs was incorporated on April 28, 1888.

"Winona was incorporated on July 5, 1920.

"In 1888 there were thirty-seven school districts in the county.

"Later on an election was held for the purpose of re-locating the county seat, at which there were 1,022 votes cast.

"Russell Springs received eighteen majority over all other cities and was declared the county seat."

XI.

Christmas Observance

HE first in our pioneer home. It was celebrated in a primitive but truly happy manner. The living room had been divided by stretching a blanket across it, and a Christmas tree improvised of 2 by 2's, with light strips for branches and all covered with green cane leaves, in the absence of the traditional spruce, answered the purpose. Some little trinkets and ornaments were placed upon it and a number of small presents underneath it, candles were placed and lighted, and the word was passed to the children on the other side of the curtain. After having said their Christmas prayer the blanket was dropped and the glistening eyes of the happy children, father and mother, told of real Christmas cheer in this little two-room cabin away off on the prairies.

XII.

Hot Winds and Prairie Fires

AKLEY and Logan County had by this time lost still more of its boom spirit, and the homesteaders began settling down to make a livelihood and endeavor to turn a range country into a fertile agricultural state. Not being a trained farmer, I can only repeat what I have heard said and what I have actually experienced regarding the soil of Kansas. It is a wonderful soil and will produce, if given the least opportunity, bountiful crops of everything that is placed in the ground. I have raised thirty-five bushels of wheat to an acre and have seen volunteer wheat follow the same bountiful crop the next year to the extent of ten to twelve bushels to the acre without any labor bestowed upon it. I have raised wheat and oats, corn, cane, flax and all kinds of vegetables, peanuts, mulberries, etc., and my neighbors have raised a greater variety of fruits and vegetables. This productiveness, with the wonderful climate (almost 365 days of sunshine in

the year), made Kansas an ideal country in which to live. During my several years of homesteading I never knew of a sick day and had very little sickness in the family.

The only trouble with Western Kansas and its crops is the uncertainty. They do not need much rain in Western Kansas to produce a crop, but they do need it at the right time, and if these rains do not come at that time it means drought and failure. Hot winds were responsible for many a lost crop. I have seen a promising corn crop of many acres change from the finest prospect, standing five or six feet high, rich deep green, in tassel and ears, change in less than three days so that you could hear the stalks rattle, and a few nubbins, not worth picking, was our crop. During the past forty years the crops in Western Kansas have been failures four out of seven years, or maybe oftener than that. They have not always been entire failures. Some little return for the labor was secured by the sturdy settlers, but their greatest asset has always been HOPE. Hope for a better year next year. "Never say Die" is the motto of a real Kansas settler.

Another visitation beside the hot wind and drought was the prairie fire. Due, however, to careful protection, fire guards and otherwise, our neighborhood never had a very serious prairie fire. True, there were prairie fires and it required a lot of hard work to subdue them; but no farm buildings or fields of grain, as far as I can remember, were destroyed in what was known as "Cook's neighborhood."

Prairie Fires Were Destructive

XIII.

Presidential Campaign of 1888

HE Presidential campaign of 1888 was a memorable one for me, as it was my first opportunity to cast a ballot for President. The political situation was tense and exciting in our community, as there were many State and local offices to be filled and partisan sentiment was strong. Benjamin Harrison was elected President, but I cannot recall the result locally.

The only instance that I remember, and one which has given me a good deal of amusement, was that somebody had a lot of money to buy votes; and besides money there were other commodities to influence the voter. I am sure many of the voters took advantage of either one or both opportunities and cast their ballot for the candidate in whose interest he had been solicited—especially so if he was the person for whom he would have voted anyway.

I believe I am right in saying that a fifty-cent piece was the money value placed upon a

vote, and the principal other commodity was to be obtained at a certain drug store. There was a back room to which we were shown, and in looking around I saw fastened to the ceiling an iron well wheel with a rope attached. I could not conceive the purpose of this until I noticed some one close the various doors leading to the room; all curtains were drawn and a piece of the floor directly under this contraption was removed, the rope with a hook was let down into the darkness below and when this rope came up again there was hooked on to it a case of fine cold beer. Certain bottles were carefully wrapped, placed in your overcoat pocket, doors were unlocked, window shades raised, and you took yourself off to some convenient place and enjoyed as best you could the political spoils. If the election turned out favorably to the parties who had these commodities to dispense I do not recall, but to me, a young fellow, this incident left a lasting impression. I am glad to say that with more understanding I have never needed persuasion in exercising the right of a voter in the United States—the greatest privilege accorded a citizen.

The incidents here related bear no ill will towards anyone, and are told that the younger generation may realize some of the pitfalls of pioneer life in Western Kansas, and perhaps they will join with a smile as the old settlers relate similar experiences—humorous or otherwise.

XIV.

A Rather Malicious Pastime

WE WERE not all God-fearing men in those early days. I recall a certain druggist who enjoyed sitting on the end of his counter and firing random shots through the front door. If passers-by were not hit, well and good, but if someone was injured it seemed to him also to be well and good, until one night a real accident happened and the population of Oakley turned out to get this particular druggist. After chasing him all over town and hunting him in the lumber yard, where we thought he had taken refuge, we finally learned that he had somehow managed to get back to the drug store and that he was hiding between the ceiling joists of the second floor. The self-appointed vigilantes returned to the store and, not caring to take any chances, opened fire on his supposed hiding place; in fact a good portion of the house was riddled by the bullets of the angry mob.

In the meantime word had been passed to the sheriff, whose home was some ten to fifteen miles east, and who was rushing toward Oakley that the law proper might take its course. He finally arrived, and with proper assistance managed to quiet the mob and secured his prisoner. Trial was held later, conviction had, but what sentence was imposed I am unable to recall. This incident reminds us that it was not all smooth sailing in those days, though, generally speaking, we were a peace-loving community.

The First Header in Logan County

XV.

A Bountiful Harvest

THE year 1889 was a banner year. Wheat was the principal product, and conditions had been favorable, producing a large crop. Happiness reigned throughout the land and everybody was getting busy to harvest this bountiful crop. Farm machinery was very scarce in Logan County. Only one or two farmers, to my knowledge, possessed a binder or similar equipment. Wheat was rather short and it was determined that headers were the proper equipment to gather all the grain. Where to get a header, was the next question. As I recall, Mr. Vinall, Mr. D. Gilmore and myself agreed to pool our interests, put what little money we had together and send some one overland to secure a header. Mr. Vinall was chosen, and in due time set off on his tedious journey. Anxiously we awaited his return. We can still see him coming over the hill in the dust of that hot summer day, man and team weary with the overland trip and the long hours which had been put in by both.

Immediately an attempt was made to erect this piece of machinery. Neither Mr. Vinall nor Mr. Gilmore being familiar with it, it was up to Henry, who, as a mechanic, must know how this thing should be put together. No illustration or description accompanied the machine, hence we had to do some head work. Finally, however, after several days the task of putting it together was accomplished, and then it was a matter of how to drive it and who should steer it. I was very much interested in the steering apparatus, because the lever and rudder brought me back to my boyhood days, when on the river I enjoyed many a boat ride and was a good hand at oars and steering. I was elected to straddle this lever and do the best I could with the machine, Mr. Vinall and Mr. Gilmore taking the reins, driving three horses each.

We decided to make the tryout on my own place. I had plowed a fire guard around the quarter about five rods wide and sown it to wheat. That gave a very good opportunity to try the header on a long straight stretch, but when it came to turn the corner we were all wrong. I turned the rudder as I would on a boat

—left to make a right hand turn. Mr. Vinall and Mr. Gilmore pulled the horses gee to make a right hand turn, and our difficulty began; the rudder plowing broadside and trying to bury itself in the ground or threatening to break, the horses more or less stumbling over the tongue, and the header getting nowhere. Due to our inexperience, we became somewhat discouraged and were about ready to return the header and call the whole deal off and try to harvest our crop in some other way. However, we decided we would give it another trial, and whether by accident or through information received, we pulled our horses haw and made a pretty respectable turn, and while it took several acres in the beginning to turn the corners, after three or four days cutting we were able to make as square a corner with the machine as any expert harvester.

In a short time I enjoyed holding the reins of the horses and running the header single-handed, filling header box after header box satisfactorily to all, thereby relieving Mr. Vinall and Mr. Gilmore for other important work. Mr. Gilmore and the three sons of Mr. Vinall—Frank, Orville and Harry—could look

after the header boxes, and Mr. Vinall did the most important work, which was stacking the grain. We worked long hours, going from one field to the other until all the grain belonging to the owners of the header was cut.

After taking care of our own grain we went throughout the entire county contracting with the farmers, who were only too glad to turn their cutting over to us at, I believe, $5.00 per day, with keep for ourselves and horses. Sometimes when I happened to come home for a night or two with my family my wife would tell me half the hours which I spent in bed I would be driving the header in my dreams. When finally the grain was all cut, the header boxes had delivered the grain to certain spots, the stacks were built, the stubble fields gleaned and we were all through, there was a feeling of happiness and thankfulness to the Giver of all good gifts because we had bread.

Threshing, though hard work, was greatly enjoyed—not forgetting the bounteous chicken dinners. Then the trip to the mill with a load of wheat—the mill was located at Ellis, fifty miles east. And the happy return trip with a load of flour, which was carefully stored away in the home. A great Kansas!

XVI.

A Hunter's Paradise

EARLY settlers in Western Kansas were charmed with the wonderful climate and beauty of the prairies, and took great pleasure in watching the wild life. The rabbit, coyote and the wolf were plentiful, and many a time the settlers banded together to rout some of these foes of the barnyard fowl.

The most beautiful animal on the prairies at that time was the antelope. They were very timid, but occasionally we had the pleasure of seeing an antelope with its young within a stone's throw of our cabin door, usually during the early hours of the morning. Remembering the story of Zack Wilson, that a person might ride down and capture one of these young antelope, I started out one morning to try my luck. I am sorry to say that the bunch of antelope I fell in with led me a merry chase, seemingly playing hide and seek. I was mounted on a fleet horse, and they permitted me to come within a certain distance of them, when

they would look up and dash away with a speed that soon left me far behind. Soon the original bunch mixed with other antelope and I was at a loss to tell whether I was chasing the animals I had been trying to tire out or a fresh lot that were going to tire us, and after following them for several miles I gave up the chase as a forlorn hope and slowly wended my way homeward, glad, in a sense, that these beautiful creatures retained their freedom and we could enjoy their visits to our home. Soon, however, with the influx of settlers, the antelope were killed off or driven farther west, disappearing entirely from Logan County.

There were some small game — grouse, prairie chicken, pheasant, quail, etc., and those who were so inclined found great sport in hunting them.

Whether at that time there were wild horses roaming about Logan County I cannot say, but I do know that farther west wild horses were still enjoying the range.

The spasmodic crops raised in Logan County were not always sufficient to keep "the wolf from the door," and I frequently took advan-

tage of my trade and picked up odd jobs here and there to add a few dollars to the family funds. As this opportunity presented itself mostly in Oakley, I was endeavoring to secure a horse which would carry me to town faster than the big work horses that we used on the farm, and I thought I would secure one of those wild horses.

A short distance from Oakley there was a family whom I believe had lived there for years previous to 1885. I am speaking of the highly respected Sears family. They made a business of securing wild horses, training them and selling them to the settlers. I went to the Sears boys and asked them if they could fit me out. "Sure, Henry, come along with us to the corral and we will let you pick out a pony that will suit your requirements." Looks, as much as anything, determined my choice of the animal which I thought would serve me well, and as the Sears boys agreed I had picked a nice, gentle, two or three-year old animal which had never been ridden, we soon fixed upon the price. The bargain, of course, provided that the Sears boys would put the halter on the animal and see that it was broken to ride.

We Purchase a Gentle Pony

They asked me if I would wait an hour or two and they would have him as tame as a kitten. This was put in such a manner that refusal was out of the question, and that was where I got in bad. The corral was emptied of all the animals except this little black pony—to my eyes a beautiful creature, splendid limbs and full of life. An effort to catch the horse by ordinary methods was to no avail, so the lasso was used and he was brought up to the snubbing post and put on the ground, and I, a greenhorn, was asked to help told him down so that one of the Sears boys could put on the halter. This was much easier said than done, and it was not long until the sweat was rolling off of me, trying to dodge the ferocious kicks of the critter, which was beating a tattoo in the air and trying to strike whatever was in the way of those four quickly acting limbs. I thought I was fortunate when Sears finally got the halter on the pony and I could again stand on my two legs, having retained my body whole.

This performance, however, changed my mind about the gentleness of the pony, and it was with more or less apprehension that I

waited for what was to follow. From the corral the pony was led across the road into a vacant lot near the main street of Oakley. Here some of the cowboys gathered to see the fun. Sears brought a saddle, a contraption weighing about sixty-five pounds, and got ready to introduce the pony to the ways of man. The first operation was to let him run around in a circle on a forty-foot lariat rope. After the pony had become somewhat tired they endeavored to put the bridle and saddle on him.

In spite of the fact that he was a very small pony, they had to blindfold him before they could get the bridle and saddle in place. When the handkerchief was removed the fun began. The stirrups were striking the body of the fast galloping pony as he circled on the end of the rope, adding to his fright, and instead of a black shiny coat predominating, the little creature was covered with white foam. The pony, worn and tired out, was stopped, again blindfolded, the cinches on the side tightened and a cowboy got into the saddle. The handkerchief was removed and the lariat rope released, and it was only a moment until the cowboy and pony disappeared in the distance. We were not able to tell whether the front or hind legs,

or either of them, were on the ground. Miles and miles were covered before the cowboy returned, and it was a question which was the more tired—the pony or the cowboy. This is what they called in ordinary parlance breaking of a pony. For a week or so similar performances took place, then I was assured that the pony was now fit to ride by anyone, and just as gentle as a lamb. While it took some courage for me to get into the saddle, I felt I must do so in order to save my reputation, and I did. I rode him almost daily for a year or more. He was a wonderful animal, so full of life that you had to be on guard all the time. Many a time Mrs. Horst had to stand inside the lumber wagon and hold the pony until I was able to get one foot in the stirrup, when I was off like the wind, making the trip to town in a little better than twenty minutes. This for five miles may not be a great performance, but it was fast enough for me, and I got a much greater thrill out of it than when I sit in an automobile today going sixty miles an hour.

We retained the pony until work in and about Oakley ceased, when our friend, Chas. Cook, purchased him to herd cattle. We al-

ways refer with a great deal of pride to our having at one time owned one of these wild, high spirited ponies.

Among the smaller animals of the prairie was the prairie dog. They seemed to live in groups which we called dog towns, and while later they became a nuisance, at the time of which I write they possessed a fascination for many of us—he and his companion, the hoot owl. To watch a bunch of prairie dogs in a dog town at play in the sunshine was a real sight. It is with pleasure I recall a visit Mrs. Horst's brother Henry made us at one time. While he did not enjoy a thirty-mile drive to Russell Springs, our county seat, because of the sameness of the country, he did get a kick out of the prairie dog towns. He found great sport in shooting at them with his revolver. Of course he seldom hit one, because of the agility of the prairie dog. On a recent automobile trip to California I promised my son Lester a new gun if he succeeded in shooting a prairie dog. While passing through Kansas he tried his hand at every dog town we passed, but without success. He finally did succeed in killing one while we were passing through Colorado. I mailed the tail home to my daugh-

ter Ruth and asked her if she could guess what animal it belonged to. Of course she could not, but Mrs. Horst came to the rescue.

The gopher, a small animal, was a pest and caused a good deal of trouble. Many has been the kernel of corn that was poisoned and scattered by the farmer to prevent this little pest from doing a lot of harm.

The buffalo had disappeared from the prairies not many years before our arrival, and all that was left of them was the numberless large buffalo wallows, buffalo horns and skeletons. Logan County and our homestead was in the center of what was at one time the real buffalo country. Bill Cody, or "Buffalo Bill," the well-known scout, who was supplying game to the thousands of laborers who were constructing the cross country Pacific railroad, had his headquarters just a few miles west of Oakley at one time.

A more deadly inhabitant of the prairies was the rattlesnake. Many harmless snakes were in the country and these were not dreaded. However, when we were plowing and turned up a rattlesnake, we jumped out from behind

the plow mighty quick and endeavored to secure a stick, and did not rest until the rattlesnake was killed. Mrs. Horst likes to tell of an instance when she was down in the cave. Endeavoring to leave it she saw a big rattlesnake under the steps leading from the cave to the yard. I happened to be near and answered her call, and between us we managed to get rid of the rattlesnake and she returned safely to the yard. We still take pride in showing to our friends a couple of rattles that we secured from snakes, which we have in a little cabinet at home. One has thirteen rattles and a button and the other six rattles and a button.

There were no Indians remaining in Western Kansas at the time of which I write. They probably moved farther west during the troublous days preceding the Civil War, when Quantril and his band had little mercy for either the white settler or Indian.

XVII.

Some Pioneer Touring

AS BEFORE stated, crops were doubtful, and one season when we had a total failure and finances were at an ebb and carpenter work in and around Oakley had ceased altogether, I set out to endeavor to earn an honest dollar.

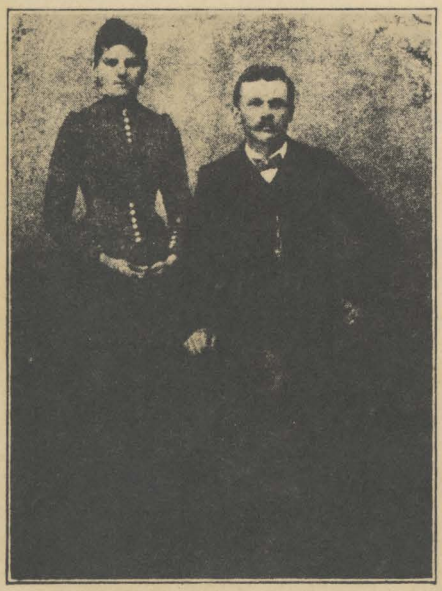
Denver seemingly presented the best opportunities, and as the government allowed six months absence from the homestead without losing our right, I left in August for Denver. I was fortunate in securing employment and worked six months at my trade. Altogether, I put in three winters in Denver, earning money to keep my family from starvation, depending upon my neighbors and the Lord's help to keep them free from harm. If you were today to ask a young married woman with one or two children to stay on a lonely prairie for days and weeks and months by herself—the nearest neighbor a mile away—I am sure her answer would be "Not for me." All honor to Mrs.

Horst and other hardy pioneer women who helped settle this country and make it habitable for others to come to.

On two occasions I made this trip to Denver by train. Having become acquainted a little, and wishing to afford Mrs. Horst and the children an opportunity to visit Denver and enjoy the wonderful Rocky Mountain scenery, we decided that on my next trip I would go overland by team and they would follow later by train, meeting me in Denver as soon as I could make arrangements for their accommodation.

Will Bowie, who was anxious to go to Denver, joined in the undertaking. Together we rigged up our prairie schooner, loaded it with some household goods and an ample supply of provisions—Mrs. Bowie had supplied us bountifully with some real home-made raisin bread—and with feed for the team, we were all set. With aching hearts we bade our families "Good-bye," turning for a last longing look and waving a final farewell on the brow of the hill, as we could still discern our loved ones far off in the distance waving their handkerchiefs.

Our trecking across the plains was somewhat monotonous, as we met with no unusual happenings. We averaged about thirty miles per day, and in ten days time we arrived in Denver. We were both fortunate in securing work without delay. Having no use for the horses while working at my trade, I placed them with an express company at a compensation of $20.00 per month, they to feed and keep them. They took splendid care of the team and the arrangement proved very satisfactory.



Mr. and Mrs. Horst, 1889

After a snug little cottage had been secured and partly furnished with the household goods brought along, with a few additional items purchased on the installment plan, Mrs. Horst and the children were sent for and a happy reunion took place. The allotted six months passed entirely too soon, because it was a real relaxation from the life we lived on the homestead. We revelled in the wonderfully beautiful scenery in and about Denver, and took pleasure in the many attractions the city afforded.

Denver at that early date was a progressive, up-to-date city, with fine schools, libraries, churches, amusement places and many recreation centers. Of special interest to us was Capitol Hill, with its wonderful Colorado State building, the vast mining and smelting industries, and the city's wonderful park system. The Tabernacle deserves more than passing attention. It was located in what I would call the slums of the City of Denver, and was presided over by an evangelist (Frizzell), who did wonderful missionary work, and many a sermon we enjoyed there, as well as being able to participate in some real active service in connection with its leaders.

Mrs. Horst and the children returned home by rail when the allotted time had expired, and I remained, working at my trade until time for plowing and seeding made it necessary for me to again take up my duties on the homestead. Again the household goods, provisions and feed for the horses were loaded into the wagon. Two men, whose names I have now forgotten, but with whom I had become acquainted while in Denver, and who, no doubt, lived near Oakley, became my companions. We left Denver

Our Children, 1889

one dreary morning in a drizzling rain. It rained all day, but we covered between twenty-five and twenty-eight miles, arriving in the evening on the west bank of a stream, ordinarily a dry river, but the day's rain had turned it into a turbulent stream more than a mile wide.

A settler living in the neighborhood was generous enough to offer man and beast shelter for the night. It rained all night, and when daylight arrived we found that, due to cloudbursts in the mountains, this dry river had changed from a turbulent stream into a raging torrent. The corduroy road on which we had crossed when going West had been entirely washed out. Our new found friend informed us that this was one of the most treacherous river beds in the State of Colorado. The Union Pacific Railroad bridge was just a little bit south of the wagon road, and he told us that some years previous in a similar downpour this bridge, with a freight train upon it, was carried away by the torrent, and it is said that not a trace of bridge, train or engine has ever been located—the quicksand swallowing the wreck entirely.

I believe this story to be true, because when returning recently from a trip to Edmonton,

Alberta and Vancouver, British Columbia, I traveled via Portland, San Francisco and Denver, and as we neared the locality I went to the rear platform of the train, wishing to see if I could recognize the very spot. As we drew closer to the river I discerned in the distance the settler's home, and there was a new concrete structure bridging the widest part of the channel of this treacherous river. Previously I had asked the railway conductor how long he

Bridge and Train Swallowed by Quicksand

had been serving on the Union Pacific, and he told me, as I recall, thirty-eight or forty years. I asked him if he knew of a broad dry river some twenty-five or twenty-eight miles east of Denver which was known as a treacherous quicksand stream, and he answered, "Yes, I believe I can tell you. You probably want to know of the stream that years ago swallowed an entire Union Pacific train." I told him that he was correct, and, if I am not mistaken, he said the name of this river is "Kiowa."

With this story of our host wringing in our ears, and seeing the waters roaring by containing all kinds of debris, the question of crossing the stream became a very important matter indeed. Finances low, the call of the farm, the anxiety to again be with our loved ones, were all urging us forward. The risk of loss of life to man and beast was the retarding element. After long and careful study and questioning, the only hope held out by our settler friend was this alternative, either to stay a week, or maybe two, until the waters would recede, or, he said, there might be a possibility that if we had a real team we could cross at a certain ford used long before the corduroy road had been built. I

knew that I had a very dependable team on dry land, but what they would do in water I did not know. But the longing for home finally overcame all hesitancy, and after carefully inspecting every piece of equipment, wagon and harness, reinforcing where we thought it might need reinforcing, and then imploring a final plea to our Creator, the dangerous crossing was undertaken. I had hold of the reins; the horses entered the river, carefully testing the bottom and slowly adapting themselves to the current. The further we got into the river, the harder it was on the team, and when about in the center I determined to give them a breathing spell and called "Whoa." I can hear many of my readers exclaim, "What a foolish driver." True; but, fortunately, one of the men with me knew more about such a predicament than I did, and he took the whip out of my hand, lashed the horses and told them to "Giddap." True to their training, they again laid forward in their collars, saved the wagon from overturning and us from a watery grave.

We finally reached the opposite shore, but the bank was steep and soggy, and it was difficult for the horses to keep their feet; one of

them did lose his footing, but the hook-up to the tongue and neckyoke kept him from sliding back into the river, and with all haste we unhooked the tugs and succeeded in getting both horses up the bank and decided to give them a rest. By this time the wagon was fast being embedded in the quicksand, and we had to think and work fast. We stripped, and with pick and shovel sloped the bank for the wheels, hooked the evener on the end of the tongue, hitched the horses to it, and after many trials and much hard labor on the part of the men, we succeeded in getting the wagon up on the bank.

Those of you who have seen the film production of the "Covered Wagon" have witnessed an exact reproduction of our situation in this river bed, and others who know the condition of western dry rivers at times of heavy rains and cloudbursts can well picture the situation. We were mighty thankful to have crossed this river safely, and the grace spoken by me at our noon meal was surely sincere, in spite of the fact that my companions ridiculed the idea of giving thanks. It proved to me that when you are true to your color in

have to see the boss, who was down in the sheds with the sheep. I finally located the man, lantern in hand, two or three men with him, laboring with his thousands of sheep. He was angry at being disturbed and refused me shelter point blank. Going back to my fellow travelers, we held a "council of war," looked around, and were prone to leave the premises, because of constant rain and the awful condition of the roads ahead.

While skirmishing around I noticed a bunch of boards which would form a temporary shelter for my team. I again went back to the owner and asked permission to use these boards by ending them up against one of his sheds and thereby create some shelter for my team during the night. Exclaiming that I surely must have a "hell-of-a-good team," he finally granted permission to use the boards. Having cared for the horses as best we could, we again crawled into the wagon, but by this time the canvas was so water soaked that it was difficult to find a dry spot whereon to lay.

Again the day dawned dreary, cold and still raining, and I soon learned why this Western settler was in such an angry mood and so in-

hospitable at this particular time. It was the lambing season, and due to the continued cold and rainy weather the little lambs were dying by hundreds, yea, maybe by thousands, because this was one of the largest sheep ranches in the State, and it meant a tremendous loss to this man and his partners. All during the night they labored among their sheep, endeavoring to save what could be saved. I fully understood the situation and expressed my wish to help if I could. He thanked me and assured me that after he had seen our condition he was glad that he could have been of a little assistance and wished he could have done more. With this we parted, and again we slowly wended our way eastward. For another thirty miles we drove on roads that were beyond description.

Having had very little water for the horses, we finally pulled in at night at Limon, where some conveniences were to be had for man and beast. The ninety miles traveled under these conditions and the experiences we passed through are never to be forgotten. Men and team took a day off in Limon. We cleaned and washed up and took a new lease on life. The

remaining part of the journey was uneventful, and in due time we were privileged to greet our loved ones, who had been on the lookout for several days when finally their faithfulness was rewarded and they sighted us long before we came within hailing distance.

Recently our youngest daughter, Ruth, a student at the Lutheran Teachers' Seminary in Nebraska, while home on vacation, was exploring an old bookcase, when she discovered a combination diary and account book in which I had kept a record of a few of our varied experiences during those early years of homesteading on the prairie. Besides the daily happenings, there was an accurate account of receipts and expenditures, and it was with some of the expenditure items those first years in Denver that Ruth took me to task.

Among such items as tools bought, groceries, shoes—with the notation "should have been purchased three months ago, but made the old ones do"—was the faithful record of a five-cent contribution at a church service, and frequent entries of five, ten and fifteen cents for beer.

4085

Apparently I had been too truthful in my accounts, for Ruth exclaimed in well feigned horror: "Why, Dad, how could you! Just think of it! Five cents for church and fifteen cents for beer!"

I had a plausible answer for the smallness of my church contribution, but how to explain my extravagance for beer to my inquisitor was a poser. With much contrition I reminded her that, with three other men, we were keeping "batch," carrying our noon lunch, and having to prepare the evening meal ourselves after a hard day's work, found it more convenient to drink beer with our meal.

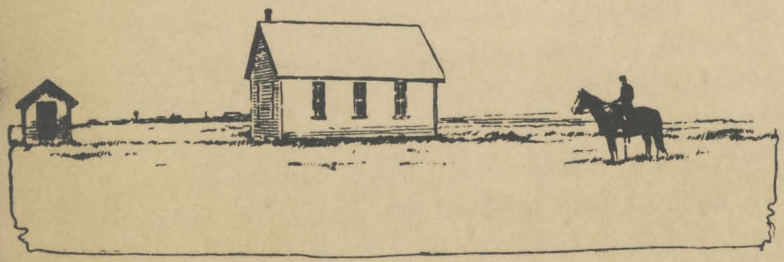
I am not sure that Ruth was able to reconcile conditions, but the truth must prevail.

Those batchelor days in Denver would have been almost impossible had it not been for the sunny disposition of my good friend, George Goble, a fellow craftsman and homesteader from Logan County. He had a plentiful store of humorous anecdotes, and on more than one occasion when I was unusually discouraged with the outlook back home he would tell us how much we had to be thankful for, as he

recited conditions in and around Hoop Hollow, Pennsylvania, a mountainous country where soil was so scarce there was hardly sufficient earth in a township to raise a few vegetables or serve other purposes (which purposes George may remember as he reads this). He would tell of how they used to plant oats with a pegging awl, and of the mountainside farms, where it was so steep the farmers had to strap stilts on the horses' legs on the off side to keep them from rolling down the mountainside, and thus he would continue until indeed we were thankful and glad to carry on with our struggles.

Of course, the greater part of our earnings was sent back home, we keeping as little as we could possibly do with, and often we were put to it to make ends meet. George, however, had an idea he was a good speculator, and he was also possessed of a desire to return to Oakley with a whole cow or its equivalent in cash. Occasionally on Saturday nights he would go out to speculate a little, and without difficulty I could always tell in the morning whether George's cow had lost or added a leg. Sad to say, George returned to Oakley without his cow, but he never lost his sunny disposition.

Little did I think when listening to George Goble's stories that some forty years later I would be contracting for and building concrete highways through the identical territory he so vividly described. Not looking at the land from George's viewpoint, I got a great deal of pleasure out of the beautiful mountain scenery of Pennsylvania while carrying on my contracts with the State.



School House, at Cook's Corners

XVIII.

Patriotic and Social Gatherings

WE DO not wish to leave the impression that only hard times existed in Western Kansas and that we had no time for recreation. The little white school house dotted the prairies in every direction, and these were the gathering places for young and old. Many a happy hour have we spent in these places of education, where community entertainments, Fourth of July celebrations, Christmas doings, and many other happy events were held and enjoyed by all.

Besides these affairs in the country, the Town of Oakley provided much recreation in the shape of races, fairs and other entertainments which drew large crowds from time to time.

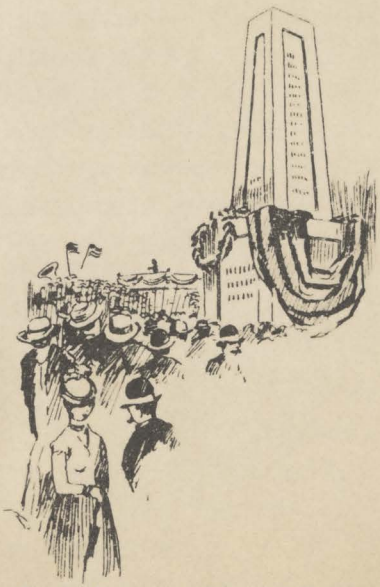
An event of importance for Oakley was the completion of the railroad connecting Oakley with Colby. Through it the fondest dreams of the early settlers became a fact. It helped to

further develop the country and created more firm and solid values for real estate.

Aside from local pleasures, the settler also retained the highest respect for national holidays and patriotic occasions. It is with a great deal of pleasure that I recall a patriotic gathering which took place in our sister Town of Monument. It was twenty years since the Civil War had ceased, and the survivors were organizing to do honor to the departed heroes in various parts of the country. Not to be outdone, a group of G.A.R. men and loyal citizens residing in Western Kansas got together and agreed on the erection of a monumental shaft to the honor of the heroes who had died for their country on the battlefields of the South. Funds were secured somehow, the place selected and the shaft erected. The day was set for the dedication; a great multitude gathered, bands were playing, speeches were made, flags were waving, national anthems were sung, and young and old departed from that celebration with a firmer resolve to ever guard the flag of the free and the land of the brave. Words that have remained with me since that memorable occasion were those of the speaker when he

closed by saying: "We render tears for the dead and cheers for the living."

A few years ago I was requested to help procure an appropriation from the State Legislature to aid in the upbuilding of the University



To the Memory of Departed Heroes

of Illinois at Champaign, and it was my privilege to stand in the Senate Chamber at Springfield and make a plea for $11,000,000.00 for the above purpose. I could think of no more

forceful way of presenting my appeal than by referring to the loyalty of this small group of people out on the Western prairies, who from their meager resources created a fund to erect a shaft commemorative of the sacrifices of our immortal heroes who gave their lives in the Civil War.

Needless to say, the great State of Illinois has always been to the forefront in support of this great seat of learning. Our appeal was granted, and today the University of Illinois is the pride of every loyal citizen.

XIX

A Lesson On Pork

AS I look back and realize how little we knew of the business of farming, I get many a good laugh. I think this first attempt at pig raising will illustrate how ignorant we were.

We decided we would raise a pig to help out during the winter months. I secured a small pig and we coddled and fed him up to a point beyond which he could not go, and one day he laid down and died. Thinking we had gained some experience, we thought we would have another try. This time I procured a sow pig, and in due time we were presented with a family of six or eight little pigs. Having heard that some sows frequently devour their young, Mrs. Horst and I decided to prevent canabalism and save our little pigs, so when night came we gathered them up and put them in a wash tub and took them into the house and carefully wrapped them in blankets.

In the morning, after trying to feed them as best we could, we finally concluded the mother could do it better and we turned them over to her. Much to our surprise, the old sow appeared to have lost all interest in her family and it was some time before she was willing to give them their rations. However, in due time they grew up to be real hogs, and one day we decided we would replenish the larder with some fresh pork.

We had gathered some information about killing hogs from a neighbor, who kindly offered to help, but we thought we could do the trick ourselves. Everything was made ready, and just before starting the operation some friends from a few miles south of Oakley happened to come over to pay us a visit. As was customary, they offered to lend a helping hand. The husband, who was a mechanic, knew even less than we did about farming, having come from New York City; but the wife had been raised on a farm in the old country and knew all about it.

The first thing that I had been told to do by our neighbor was to stun the hog that was to be butchered, and this was to be done by shoot-

ing the pig at an intersecting point which would be established by drawing an imaginary cross line between eyes and ears, and after the pig was stunned then to proceed along the usual lines, sticking it, bleeding it, etc. I loaded my old shotgun with a pretty big dose of shot, tendered the pig a real inviting meal in his trough, and when he was good and busy I poked the muzzle of my gun between the fence boards, pulled the trigger and fired. The pig just gave a big snort, shook his head and kept on feeding, as though only a mosquito had bothered him. The pig had to be brought low in some manner, and while studying the problem our lady friend stepped up with an axe in her hand and said: "Henry, I will get in there and show you how."

Between us we managed, after somewhat of a tussle, to lay the hog low and get the knife into his throat, then the matter was easy. If a film could have been taken of the hog, our visitor and myself cavorting around in that pig pen, it surely would create some merriment for a present-day movie audience. When later taken to task, my neighbor who had told me to shoot the hog in that particular spot said,

"Well, Henry, do you not know that it should be a gun that would deliver a bullet and not a little bit of shot?" I had to acknowledge my ignorance, but I assure you that the barrel of pork which stood outside our little cabin door that winter harbored a lot of valuable nourishment for the Horst family.

XX.

The Children of the Prairie

PERHAPS you may question the advisability of rearing children out on the prairies. I believe it was one of the best places to rear a family. In my opinion, the child who has spent his infancy and youth in a pioneer country has not only had his fair share of wholesome joy and proper schooling, but the habits and character formed will stand him well in hand in later years.

Although bare feet and cacti do not make the best combination, the thorn, with inverted point, is quickly removed and the injury passed over lightly.

When the cow he was leading homeward espied a green field of wheat and got the best of him, dragging him on the ground until he had to let go of the rope, he cried a while, but soon got up determined to conquer the beast and become master of the situation. Then the responsibility of his part of the chores in and

about the house—these and many other duties which the city-bred child would look upon as hardships—all tended to equip him for contests to be met in later years. I am confident that children reared on the prairies would never be willing to exchange their childhood days with those reared in the city, with high buildings surrounding them and streets and alleys for playgrounds. The children of the prairies view God's handiwork at its best—where all is natural.

One of the beautiful sights Nature provides on the open prairies is the mirage, an optical illusion due to light reflection and differently heated stratas of air. Quite often we have seen the towns of Monument, Grinnell and Grainfield, miles away, and not visible to the naked eye, reflected and perfectly reproduced in an inverted position in the clear sky. Again, we would see a beautiful lake surrounded by trees, where in reality all was open prairie as far as the eye could see. These mirages inspire young and old, and create a desire to study and learn more of the wonderful beauties of Nature.

XXI.

A Memorable Date

JANUARY 21st, 1890. There had been considerable cold weather, and ice had formed on a small body of water some ten miles east of Oakley. The butcher in town was the principal consumer of ice, and he was paying a fair price per delivered load. As finances were low, it was decided that I should take advantage of this opportunity to earn a few dollars.

It was three o'clock in the morning when I awoke and prepared to start for the ice field. Mrs. Horst had not been feeling well for some time, and I was loath to leave her, but she assured me she would be all right, and with this understanding I took my departure. Reaching the ice field about ten o'clock, I loaded my wagon and started for Oakley. Upon my arrival in Oakley, near four o'clock in the afternoon, I found Mr. Cook and Mr. Whitaker waiting for me. They took charge of my load, saying, "Henry, you take Mr. Whitaker's team

and light buggy and get home as quickly as you can. There is something happening at your house. Drive as fast as you can, but be sure and blanket the horses when you get there."

You may be sure I lost no time, and on reaching home I was met at the door by Mrs. Cook, who led me to the bed, on which Mrs. Horst was laying with a sweet little baby girl in her arms—our Minnie.

With the help of Mrs. Cook, we soon put the house in order, and as evening fell there was great rejoicing, with thanks to the Lord for his merciful kindness.

This chapter would be incomplete if I did not include some of the happenings during my absence. As noon approached, Mrs. Horst began to feel bad, and seeing a neighbor, Chas. Cook, herding his cattle a short distance away, she sent one of the children to ask him to send Mrs. Cook over at once. This he did, and calling Mr. Whitaker, set out to notify me that I was wanted.

Thus were we early pioneers dependent one on the other. Too much credit cannot be given

to the women folks of a pioneer country. Men are needed for the development of such a country, but without a loving wife at home willing to share their battles, success would never crown their efforts.

I am sure I will be pardoned if I name a few of our near and dear neighbors, who, I hope, will take pleasure in reading these lines. Besides Mrs. Chas. Cook, who welcomed our daughter, Minnie, there is Mrs. Bowie, who rendered a like service a few years previously, when our son Henry was born, Mrs. Geo. W. Vinall, Mrs. Whitaker, Mrs. Wm. Kleist, Mrs. C. Thomas, Mrs. D. Gilmore, and many others who are enshrined in our hearts.

XXII.

Fuel and An Engineering Problem

WHEN you realize there were no coal mines in Kansas and no forests in which to gather wood, you naturally ask, "What did you do for fuel?"

When Mrs. Horst and I paid our first visit to our neighbors-to-be, preparatory to moving out on the farm, we noticed a number of sacks very closely packed near the kitchen stove, filled with something that looked from the outside a great deal like potatoes. In the yard we also saw some stacks of a dark material piled up nicely, and naturally inquired what this was, and we were told: "When you move out on the homestead you will find out." We did.

To the routine on the farm was added the duty of gathering fuel once a week or once a month and storing it for future use. This fuel consisted of the sun-dried droppings of cattle and horses, which supplied the homesteader with all the fuel he had over which to prepare

his daily meals. Everyone used it. The little coal to be had at that time was so expensive that the amount purchased was very small, and only used in the extreme cold weather for heating purposes. The gathering of this fuel was generally done on Saturday morning, and the rest of the day was given over to a trip to town to purchase necessities. Sometimes all the family would go, but more often I made the trip alone.

On returning from one of these trips to town I unhitched the horses, took them to the watering trough and dropped the long galvanized iron bucket into the well, but could not feel it hit the water. After partly raising and lowering the bucket several times, I wound it up and found it empty. My efforts to locate anything that might have fallen into the well and bring it to the surface were unsuccessful. This meant a trip to our good neighbor, Chas. Cook, with several barrels, and in this manner I supplied the immediate needs of human being, beast and fowl.

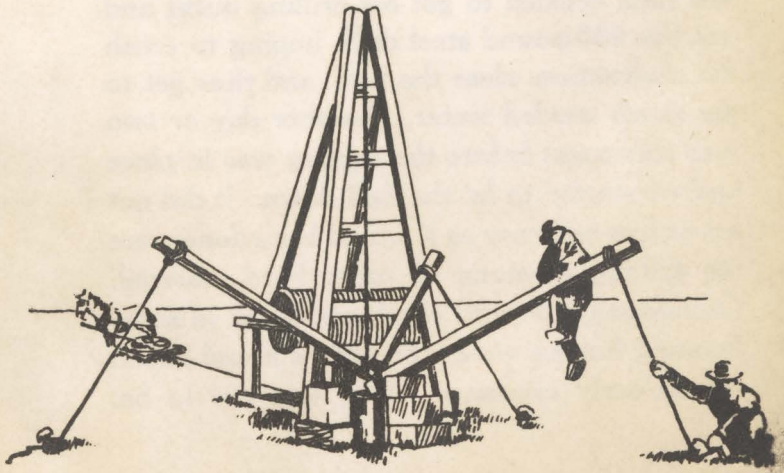
In the morning I renewed my efforts to discover what had got into the well. By means of a mirror the sunlight was reflected into the well, but no sign of water was visible. Ropes

with various contraptions attached were lowered, and I could raise pieces of wood forty or fifty feet and then lose them. I was at a loss to imagine how the wood could have gotten into the well, when I noticed a small pile of kindling and remembered that the children had been playing in the yard during the afternoon, and the mystery was solved. They little knew what mischief their innocent play had done.

There was nothing more that I could do, so the next day I called the well driller and told him my troubles. He made light of it, saying: "Henry, we will soon have them out." However, he worked with his paraphernalia, I think, a day and one-half, but accomplished nothing. We then decided to get his drilling outfit and use the 400-pound steel drill, hoping to crush the obstruction, clear the well, and thus get to the much needed water. Another day or two was consumed before the rigging was in place and we started to let the drill down. It did not act as free and easy as it would have done were we drilling in stone or other hard material. Occasionally the drill would get stuck in some manner, but we were able to free it and hoped for an early clearance. That was not to be,

however, and after working some time under difficulties this 400-pound drill became lodged so tight it was impossible to budge it.

I became discouraged. We had hauled water for almost three weeks, had spent a lot of money and had accomplished nothing. I knew that Mrs. Horst was worrying about not being able to give sufficient eats to the well digger, who, of course, boarded and lodged with us while this work was going on. I quieted her as best I could, saying that he would gladly share a pioneer's lot.



The situation was desperate. I was at a loss what to do, when happily I recalled a story which had either been related to me or which I had read in some scientific publication. It was, as near as I can recall, as follows: A renowned king or emperor somewhere in Europe had modeled a large shaft which was to be erected in honor of some notable person. He invited his people to be present at the raising and unveiling of this wonderful shaft or monument. Thousands of spectators were present on the occasion, and his engineers had all the paraphernalia rigged up to raise this monstrous shaft. The machinery was set in motion, and when the shaft was almost plumb it was found that the ropes were too short—block and tackle became useless. The shaft, a tremendous weight, was at a standstill, ready to fall back unless some means could be found to bring it to an exact upright and self-supporting position. You may well imagine the anxiety of the engineers. They were at a loss what to do, and everybody was under a great strain. The emperor became impatient and the crowd wondered why things did not proceed. At this point, due to the tremendous heat prevailing and the mental attitude, a woman in the audi-

ence fainted and a loud voice called out "Aqua," meaning water. Aroused by the cry for "Aqua," one of the engineers got busy. He ordered water brought in great quantities and men poured this water continuously on the dry rope, which absorbed it quickly and began to grow shorter and shorter. The shrinkage of the rope created a tension and the shaft moved, and in a very little while it stood perfectly plumb. The strain was relieved and the ceremony proceeded.

I reasoned with myself, and concluded a similar process would solve our problem. Explaining the scientific principle to my fellow workers, we secured three strong levers of good length, laid each one over a raised blocking and tied them firmly to the rope which held the 400-pound steel drill. After putting on all the tension we dared, we fastened the ends of the levers, which were perhaps six feet in the air, to stakes driven in the ground. We then began pouring water slowly down the rope leading to the drill. When we thought the rope had been thoroughly saturated and would not absorb any more water, we went to dinner with a silent prayer for success. Dinner over, we returned to the well and applied all the

weight possible to each of the three levers, and were thrilled to feel just the faintest relaxing of the drill. Proceeding with care, we were rewarded in a short time by the freeing of the drill, and an exclamation of joy went up from all of us. The pulling up of the drill to the surface of this one hundred and twenty-foot well was soon accomplished. Where men had failed, Nature's forces succeeded.

By this time I fully realized that no matter whether the drill was recovered or not, it would mean drilling a new well. A spot was selected, the rigging set up, and within two hours we were pounding away. In due time the new well was finished, and you may be sure the casing was not left unprotected above the ground.

To haul water in the heat of summer for man and beast, to face such a situation with no money in hand, and to keep good cheer in the family and retain your faith in the Lord, was a real test. However, water was secured, debts paid, lessons learned and thankfulness increased for the blessing of water.

XXIII.

Another Prosperous Year

LOGAN County was again blessed with a wonderful crop in the year of 1891. This gave everybody an opportunity to not only square his debts, but to lay by just a few dollars for a rainy day. It is with a great deal of satisfaction, even after thirty-five years, that I recall the glad moment when I could step into the store of Lou A. Fisher and pay an old bill. The amount was $65.00, and I was one of the proudest men on God's green earth when I held the receipt for this long-standing debt in my hand. A similar feeling of relief was experienced a year or so later when I returned to Oakley to gather a wheat crop. Having disposed of my crop, I called upon H. F. Giesler, the banker, and paid a note for $200.00 which I owed, and upon which I had been paying three per cent interest. No, not annually, but three per cent monthly. This was the customary rate of interest in Western Kansas at that time. Also, interest was deducted from the

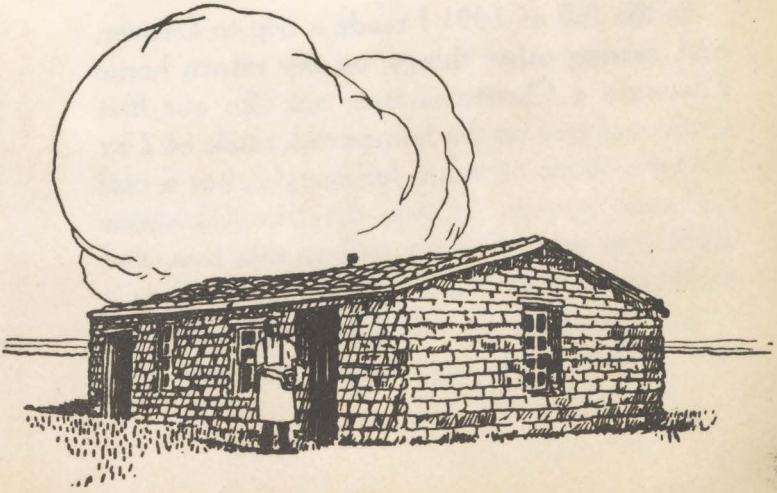
principal when loan was made, and you considered yourself fortunate in securing money even on those terms.

Strange to relate, H. F. Giesler is now in the banking business at Muscatine, Iowa, only twenty miles from my present home. The Horst & Strieter Company, of Rock Island, Illinois (Henry W. Horst, president; H. T. Horst, vice-president, and M. E. Strieter, secretary-treasurer), have a branch in Muscatine, and we have found it convenient to do business with H. F. Giesler. The only difference between those early days and now is that we are not worried about the payment of any loans made at his bank. Our relations are as friendly today as they were then.

In the fall of 1891 I made a trip to Denver, and, among other things, on my return home I brought a Christmas tree, not like our first Christmas tree on the homestead, made of 2 by 2's with strips of wood for boughs, but a real Colorado spruce. It was the true Christmas spirit that prompted me to buy this tree, and the baggage man was kind enough to allow it to go in the baggage car. On arriving at Oakley I could have disposed of my tree at a

profitable advance, but it was not for sale. It was for Mrs. Horst and the youngsters at home. However, we were not selfish, and quite a number of our friends and neighbors gathered around this Christmas tree with us and made our last Christmas on the homestead a very happy and long to be remembered one.

My brother Anton also profited by the healthy crop condition in Western Kansas in 1891. Faithfully he had tilled his claim, spending on it the money earned by working at his trade, and in his lonesome hours, no doubt,



My Brother Anton's Prairie Home

thought many a time of hardships endured, friends left behind, and longed to again go out into the world and return to his trade. His five years residence on the homestead having expired, he secured his final papers, or deed, from the Government, bade his friends and Western Kansas good-bye, and removed to Denver. Eventually he sold his homestead to one of his neighbors, possibly John Vawters.

After a short sojourn in Denver, Anton decided to go East, and in due time he arrived in Chicago, where he was happily married. He was successful in his business ventures and built himself a fine home. My first visit, some years later, was a memorable occasion, and the forerunner of many visits back and forth between our families thereafter.

Death claimed my brother in 1907. Besides his beloved wife, he left six children to mourn his untimely passing. Those children have now grown to manhood and womanhood, and each in his or her chosen line has made a success of life.

XXIV.

We Own Our Homestead

FIVE years after entry on a homestead is made, the Government issues final papers if requirements have been met. This time, commonly called "Proving Up," arrived in my case in January, 1892. The law required two witnesses to make proof of residence, and I asked Chas. Cook and Geo. Vinall to accompany me to Wakeeney, where the United States Land Office was located. We made the journey and in due time the oath was administered and duly witnessed, and the papers issued. It is needless to say that this incident was a happy occasion for me, a fitting climax to the previous five years. All the hardships endured seemed to be compensated for when I became the holder of this document, the proud possessor of one hundred and sixty acres of land in one of the greatest States of the greatest country on earth, where government of the people, by the people, for the people is supreme.

After this serious business was transacted we enjoyed a little relaxation in Wakeeney. We did some shopping for ourselves and neighbors, purchasing certain articles not obtainable in Oakley. One item which I especially recall was a bonnet for our good friend, Mrs. Bowie. The only bonnet I had any recollection of was one worn by my mother in Germany. I asked her if that was about the kind she wanted, and she said, "Henry, if you can get me something like that I shall be the proudest woman in Logan County," or words to that effect. You may be sure I tried every millinery store in Wakeeney and finally made my selection, which turned out to be entirely pleasing to Mrs. Bowie. I think it was this early experience that prompted a Miami, Florida, milliner, in whose shop I was helping Mrs. Horst select a hat, to exclaim, "You would make a very good salesman in a millinery store." I told her I would not mind having the job, but was probably too much of a grandpa by this time.

After securing the final papers to our homestead, it was decided to make a long-contemplated trip to Illinois. There were more reasons than one for this trip, but the principal one was that we had enough money at that time to pay

the railroad fare. While we were looking forward with joy to again seeing our loved ones in the East, it was with heavy hearts that we bade good-bye to those good friends and neighbors, with whom we had shared adversity and prosperity for the past seven years—pioneers of Western Kansas and founders of Oakley, the town which we helped to build, and where I made my first contract.

The day of departure arrived, and the same railroad that carried us westward seven years previously brought us back to Illinois. Arriving with our four children in Rock Island about 3:00 o'clock in the morning, we found the parents, brother and sisters of Mrs. Horst at the station. A hearty welcome was ours, and has been with us ever since.

Thus we concluded seven years of homesteading in Western Kansas, an experience which, notwithstanding its hardships, has never been regretted. Those years made a man of a boy and a woman of a young girl. Our children, who spent their infancy on the lovely prairies, had an advantage over many a boy and girl in a crowded city surrounded by all modern conveniences. It is with thankfulness

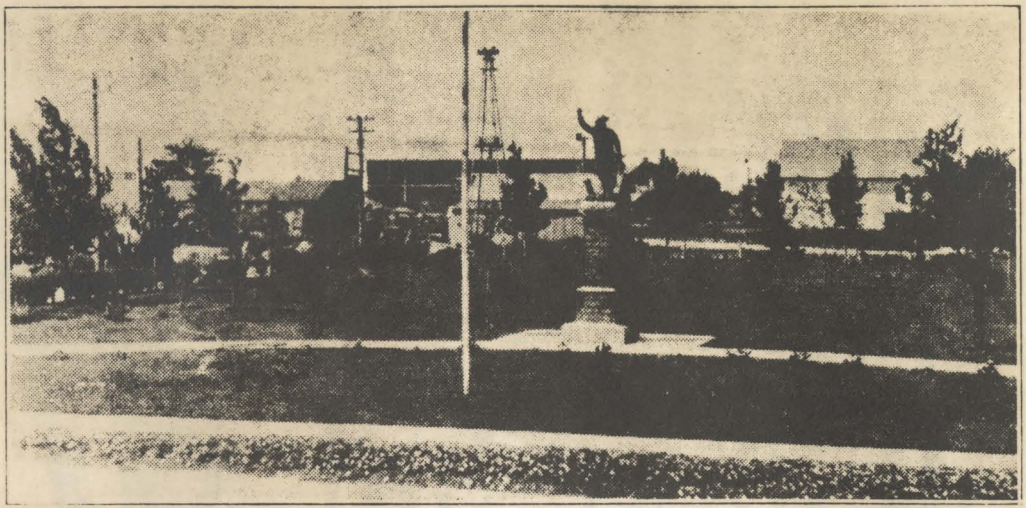
to God and man that we think of our life on the prairies of Western Kansas, in Logan County.

Swimming Pool in Oakley of Today

XXV.

Oakley's Real Builders

MY STORY would be incomplete if I failed to express appreciation and esteem for the merchants of Oakley, who carried on through the trying days of early settlement in Western Kansas. People who came with money expecting to get rich quick were soon disillusioned. Others who came with little or no money, but full of determination to locate and make a home, soon became dependent upon the good-will of those who could extend them credit and see them through. I was one of the latter, in spite of the fact that I had a trade and worked from eight to eighteen hours a day. Others there were who, depending entirely upon the soil for a living, found it much harder to make ends meet, and had it not been for the foresight and liberal spirit of men like Louie A. Fisher, Wm. Wysecarver, David Doering, Snyder Brothers, Wilson, Kaufmann, C. A. Smith and many others, the settlement of Western Kansas would have been long delayed.



Oakley City Park—The Beauty Spot of Western Kansas

These men, by their actions and the faith which they placed in their fellow man and the country, surely deserve commendation. They were the real builders of Oakley. It was through their influence that capital was interested which led to the installation of city waterworks, electric light and power plants, telephone and mail service, safe and resourceful banks, a splendid community and high school system, and various churches, of which Oakley can well be proud.

But the greatest aid in the upbuilding of Oakley and Western Kansas was the local newspaper. The first newspaper issued in Oakley, known in 1885 as Cleveland, was edited by Ed. Kleist, a son of our never to be forgotten friends, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Kleist.

The Kleist Homestead

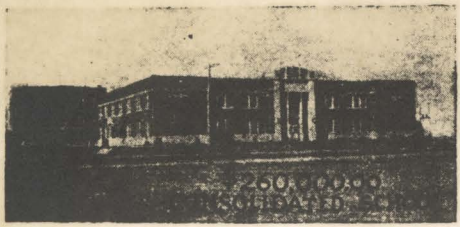
I have known the successive editors of the paper, including Raleigh Young, and know that at all times the local newspaper has been the greatest single factor in the settlement of Western Kansas, and Logan County especially. No matter how dreary the times, the editor has always seen the silver lining.

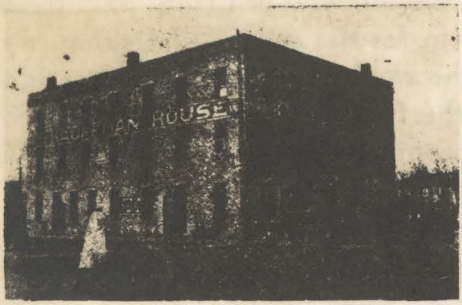
It has always been the principal aim of the Oakley Graphic to show to the world at large the possibilities of Oakley and its faith in a bright future for Western Kansas.

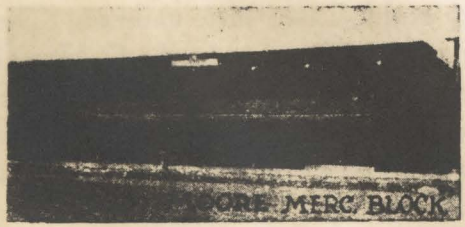
I pause to pay a last tribute to the late departed Raleigh Young. It was my pleasure to know Mr. Young as few others knew him. We kept up an intimate correspondence and exchanged not a few real courtesies. In 1912 it was Mr. and Mrs. Raleigh Young who insisted upon Mrs. Horst and I spending a happy hour or two in their home, enjoying a meal with them. While amusing the baby, I pulled out of my pocket a bunch of keys, tossed them on the floor, as I have done many a time with my own children. When supper was served we were treated to a glass of splendid wine, which added to the enjoyment of the meal. When friend Young was asked how he knew

that we would not refuse wine, he said: "There was just one tool that I noticed on your key ring which made me think you would enjoy a little bit of the pure grape." It was a bottle opener that had betrayed me.

Again, at the time when highways were being agitated throughout the West a great deal of publicity was given to this improvement. The Oakley Graphic, promoter of all good things, saw to it that Oakley eventually received one of these cross country highways. Then I noticed a reference to the obnoxious dust flying through the main streets and people rushing to the town pump. Upon reading this item the thought occurred to me that a fountain such as are usual in city squares or parks, where man, woman and child may enjoy a cool drink, would be a real serviceable fixture at one of the street corners in Oakley. I corresponded with Mr. Young, asking if the city officials would accept and place such a gift. He felt sure they would. Thereupon I placed an order with a manufacturer of drinking fountains, and in due time Mr. Young was notified that goods described as a "Barrel of Crockery" were at the station. While Mr. Young in his home occasionally treated a friend to a glass







We builded better than we knew —
The conscious stone to beauty grew.

of wine, he was a law abiding citizen, and, consequently, wondered who from Milwaukee could send him a barrel of crockery. My name appeared on the shipment, and he wired me for instructions. I assured him that the barrel contained no Pabst or Lemp; only the drinking fountain for the people of Oakley. I can picture the smile on his countenance, but in due time the fountain was unpacked and erected on a prominent street corner in Oakley.

Another incident of a much more serious nature, and one which touched the human soul, happened when during a severe storm a lone settler lost his life on the prairies of Logan County and left two little children. The scene was so vividly depicted in the Oakley Graphic by Mr. Young that it touched a tender chord in Mrs. Horst. Correspondence between Mr. Young and myself on the subject cemented our friendship. If the present editor is interested and will refer to his files, he will find the reason why the Oakley Graphic will not accept money from Henry W. Horst for subscription. Nevertheless, he receives the paper regularly, a testimonial of the lasting friendship of Raleigh Young, long time editor. For the present

editor, Paul L. Jones, and owner, Mrs. Raleigh Young, I bespeak the greatest success.

My loyalty to Oakley and Western Kansas needs no better proof than the fact that I am still the owner of the Southeast ¼ of Section 14, Township 11, Range 33 West of the 6th Principal Meridian, in Logan County, Kansas. I am in possession of many valuable documents, but treasure none more highly than the deed to my quarter section, with the signature of President Benjamin Harrison thereon. I am as proud today of the ownership of this piece of our great continent as I was when tilling the soil, and sometimes stood on one of the corners of my 160 acres with hat in hand and joyously exclaimed: "This is mine!"

My country 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing.
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrim's pride,
From every mountain side
Let freedom ring.

Our father's God to Thee,
Author of liberty,
To Thee I sing.
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King.

Illinois

By thy rivers gently flowing,
Illinois, Illinois,
O'er thy prairies verdant growing,
Illinois, Illinois,
Comes an echo on the breeze,
Rustling thru the leafy trees,
And its mellow tones are these,
Illinois, Illinois,
And its mellow tones are these,
Illinois.

From a wilderness of prairies,
Illinois, Illinois,
Straight thy way and never varies,
Illinois, Illinois,
Till upon the inland sea,
Stands thy great commercial tree,
Turning all the world to thee,
Illinois, Illinois,
Turning all the world to thee,
Illinois.

When you heard your country calling,
Illinois, Illinois,
Where the shot and sell were falling,
Illinois, Illinois,
When the "Southern Host" withdrew,
Pitting Gray against the Blue,
There were none more brave than you,
Illinois, Illinois,
There were none more brave than you,
Illinois.

Not without thy wondrous story,
Illinois, Illinois,
Can be writ the nation's glory,
Illinois, Illinois,
On the records of thy years,
Abraham Lincoln's name appears,
Grant and Logan, and our tears,
Illinois, Illinois,
Grant and Logan, and our tears,
Illinois.

XXVI.

We Return to Illinois

NATURALLY, I look upon the State of Illinois as my home State. It was here in Rock Island I did my first day's work for pay; it was the second day of July, 1881—the day on which President Garfield was shot. It was in Rock Island I applied for my first citizenship papers, and it was in Rock Island I met Miss Mollie Empke, who was born in Moline, Illinois, and who shared with me so uncomplainingly the trying days of homesteading in Western Kansas. We were married at St. Louis, Missouri, in 1885.

I am proud to call myself a citizen of Illinois. Proud of the heroic deeds of such of her heroes as Lincoln, Grant and Logan, in honor of whom, I think, Logan County, Kansas, received its name.

The first year after our return to Illinois was very discouraging. January introduced us to clouded skies, rain, mud, snow and ice, and

our first outlay of cash was for rubbers and umbrellas. For seven years we had lived in the beautiful sunshine, 365 days in the year. We were home-sick for the wonderful climate of Western Kansas. We made our home in a few rooms in an apartment house of that period, with neighbors so near that every sound was audible. The question of returning to Kansas became uppermost in our minds and caused us many a turbulent argument. However, we listened to the persuasive arguments of a real estate agent and invested the greater part of our meagre savings in a building lot some distance from the then center of the city. That sealed our fate and tied us to Illinois.

To replenish our funds I secured employment as a carpenter by the day, and with the strictest economy we were able early in the year 1893 to lay the foundation and finally complete "our home," and which is still my home.

Here we have, at different times, had the pleasure of entertaining many of our cherished friends from Kansas. It is the spot to which I retire to peruse and answer the valued correspondence from our Kansas friends and neigh-

bors and their children, who are scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but where 'ere they be, they are close at hand as I hold communion with them through the mails. It was in this "home," also, where Mrs. Horst would gather her grandchildren and tell them of her share in the labors of corn planting, sowing oats, shelling corn, and in the wheat fields—closing with how she chased the coyotes with a fire brand.

Our Home in Rock Island

It was also in 1893 that I decided to be my own "boss." With Emil Petersen as partner, the contracting firm of Horst & Petersen was launched and I did my first real contracting. We were fairly successful, and continued the partnership for seven years. In 1900 we dis-

solved our partnership, Mr. Petersen leaving soon thereafter for the West.

I continued the business of contracting, changing the sign over the door to read, "Henry W. Horst, Contractor." My business increased from year to year until it got beyond where I could give it personal supervision, and I was greatly relieved when, in 1911, my son, Anton E. Horst, joined me in the business and relieved me of much of the responsibility, and the firm name was again changed to "Henry W. Horst Company, General Contractors." Our business continued to increase, and, I am proud to say, we completed many large contracts in different parts of the country.

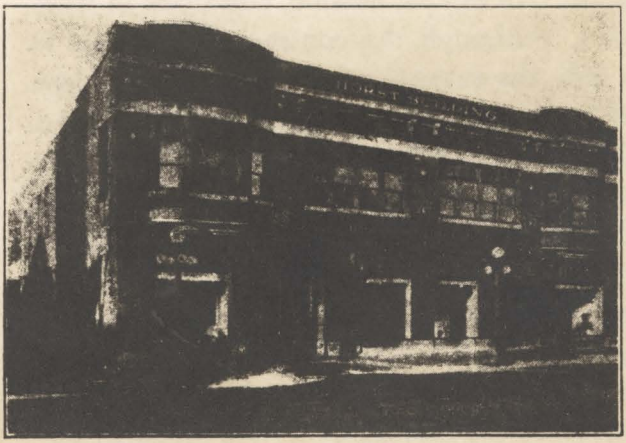
We did not confine our contracting to the erection of buildings, large and small, but with the advent of the automobile and hard roads we branched out, and have built our share of the highways that span the different States.

It is with pardonable pride I review what I feel justified in calling a successful career of almost thirty-five years of contracting, culminating in the organization we have today. The beginning was made with a few journey-

men, apprentices and laborers. I personally supervised and performed a great portion of the work, and drew plans and specifications in many instances. Under the guidance of God, and with the efficient help of my son Anton, our business increased until at one time we employed 2,267 men, with a weekly payroll amounting to $53,000.00. This was a war-time Government contract to build 460 homes for Government employees at the United States Arsenal on Rock Island. Time, of course, was the important element. The houses were in six groups in three localities—one in Moline, two in East Moline, and three in Rock Island. Although the contract was signed in the fall, the seventh of October, this project, said to be the second largest of some thirty-eight such Government Housing Projects in the country, was the first one finished. The 460 permanent, well appointed homes were completed, including decorating, in 117 days —an unparalleled record. This work was performed during 1918 at a guaranteed price, with virtually no profit to the builders. In this manner my son and I proved, in a measure, our patriotism and love for our country.

We have several booklets telling of operations in various States throughout the country and of the reputation the company has established.

The present Henry W. Horst Company was incorporated in 1914, and is officered as follows: Henry W. Horst, President; Robert Petersen, Vice-President; F. J. Colosey, Vice-President, and A. E. Horst, Secretary-Treasurer.



Office Building of Henry W. Horst Company

XXVII.

We Take a Vacation

HAVE we ever been back to Oakley? Yes. For many years we had cherished a desire to visit California. This desire was gratified in 1912, and for three months Mrs. Horst and I enjoyed the sunny climate of California, the wonderful scenery from San Diego to San Francisco, and the friendly spirit of the Californians. Our greatest pleasure, however, was the meeting with some of our old friends and neighbors from whom we parted twenty years before. Among those we met were Mr. and Mrs. Geo. W. Vinall and Orville, in Pasadena; Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Cook, in Vera Cruz; Mrs. Kleist and family, the Turners, and many other friends, in Los Angeles. Could you have witnessed these meetings, I feel sure you would agree that no more hearty expressions of love and joy at meeting ever took place between friends. All too swiftly the happy hours passed.

We decided to return East via Denver and Oakley. Snow was falling when we left Denver. Colby, Kansas, was reached about five o'clock in the morning, and we found the prairies covered with a mantle of snow. Arriving at the hotel, we learned it had been snowing for a week or more all over Logan and Thomas Counties, blocking every railroad, and especially the stub between Colby and Oakley. The hotel was crowded with travelers and salesmen, who were snowed in. Mrs. Horst and I enjoyed our breakfast, and I set about inquiring how we could reach Oakley. I was told that it would be impossible to drive, because of the tremendous drifts, and trains would not be running for several days. This was a great disappointment.

Recalling our snow experiences of years ago, I was doubtful if I could find anyone who would be willing to drive us those twenty miles. I located a livery man whom I finally persuaded to undertake the trip. His best team was hitched to a light buggy, plenty of covering provided, and he agreed to be at the hotel in half an hour. (Perhaps I should explain that the snows in Kansas did not withstand the

sun's rays for long, and sleighs were unheard of.) Full of enthusiasm I returned to the hotel, told Mrs. Horst to put on her heaviest clothing and be ready to leave in thirty minutes.

When the travelers, who had spent three or four days playing cards and telling yarns, heard me say this to Mrs. Horst, they sneeringly remarked, "Where do you expect to go, Stranger?" When I told them to Oakley, they exclaimed: "You and a woman are attempting a trip which we have decided impossible! You are tempting Providence." Then I told them a little of our experiences in Western Kansas some twenty-five years before, and that we were willing to make the attempt.

The snow had ceased, the sun shining brightly, and we were soon on our way. The traveling men, who no doubt felt ashamed to be outdone by a woman, took courage, loaded up another outfit and soon passed us on a gallop with a loud "Hello," prompted, undoubtedly, by some wet goods stored in their conveyance. Although we were stalled in the drifts two or three times and had to dig ourselves out, with snow up to our armpits, we arrived safely in Oakley about three o'clock in the afternoon.

We drove up to the Kaufmann House, intending to stay there for a few days, but when word spread through Oakley that Henry Horst and his wife were in town we were besieged by our friends, and finally yielded to the hearty welcome of Mrs. Bowie, and were soon enjoying the comforts of her friendly home. Our friends, the Smiths, the Snyders, the Cooks, the Gilmores, and many others, joined Mrs. Bowie in making our stay a pleasant one, and all too soon we had to bid our friends goodbye, and were on our way by train for Kansas City.

Much to our astonishment, we found that Oakley, during our twenty years absence, had grown from a little prairie town to an up-to-date modern city. This was the only visit Mrs. Horst made to Oakley. Our sons, Anton and Henry T., made a later trip to Oakley and looked over our homestead. They enjoyed meeting our old neighbors, and retain a kindly feeling for Western Kansas. They continued their trip to Denver and Colorado Springs, climbed Pike's Peak, and after having a real vacation they arrived home "broke"—a characteristic of their pioneer parents.

An auto trip to the coast, in 1915, with my son Lester and two friends took us within one hundred miles of Oakley, but time would not permit us to make a visit. It was during this trip we encountered a terrific hail storm while motoring over the shale hills near Las Animas,

After Passing Through Hail Storm

Eastern Colorado. Some of the stones measured nine and one-half inches in circumference. On our arrival in Los Angeles we were met by Mrs. Horst and our daughter Ruth, and we enjoyed a wonderful vacation, visiting the fair at San Diego and the World's Fair at San Francisco.

My last visit to Oakley was in 1926, when returning from Edmonton, Canada, via the Pacific Coast and Denver. I did not have time

to spare to stop over, but had asked Mrs. Cook and Ernest Cook to meet me at the Oakley station in the evening. Due to a misunderstanding in train time, I regret to say I did not see my friends, but through the kindness of the station agent, I did have a little visit with them over the telephone.

XXVIII.

An Unsought Honor

EVERY well balanced individual ought to render some service to his God and mankind. My opportunity came when the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States elected me a member of their Board of Directors in 1917. This was an honor and responsibility which I prize most highly, and I have endeavored to discharge my duty to the best of my ability. This Synod is a body of Lutherans consisting of 3,642 congregations, and 803 additional preaching places, served by 2,793 pastors. There are 1,390 parochial schools and 1,270 teachers, ministering to 1,086,953 souls. The object of this Synod is to educate young men for the ministry, and young men and women to become teachers in their parochial schools. The institutions at which this work is being carried on number fifteen, located in the United States, Canada and South America. The main Theological Seminary, from which all ministerial students

graduate, is located in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1839 the first Lutheran log cabin college was established in Perry County, Missouri. Later this institution was moved to St. Louis and located at the corner of Miami and Jefferson avenues, where it remained until it was necessary to increase its capacity, and in 1920 it was decided to re-locate. A seventy-two-acre tract of land on the outskirts of the city was purchased and a two and one-half million dollar project has arisen thereon.

At present there are four hundred ministerial students in attendance, under a faculty of twelve professors and Doctors of Theology.

It was a pleasure to me to participate with the Board in the selection of the architect, Chas. C. Klauder, of Philadelphia, whose plans were chosen in competition with fifty others. Also, I am proud to have given service in overseeing construction work. With President F. Photenhauer turning the first shovel of dirt, I was given the honor of turning the second shovel. I was present at the laying of the cornerstone of the administration building, and with Mrs. Horst participated in the dedication services in June, 1926.

One of these Lutheran colleges is located at Winfield, Kansas, and it was my privilege to help plan and supervise the construction thereof, and be present at the dedication of the Administration building in 1925. Two members of our Synod who serve in the close proximity of Oakley are Rev. Paul Ludwig, of Hoxie, who holds occasional services in Oakley, as well as in the Champion School, south of Oakley, and Rev. Fr. Wegener, who has a fine congregation and parochial school at Oberlin, Kansas.

XXIX.

We Have Enjoyed Travel

MANY blessings have been vouchsafed Mrs. Horst and I in our later years. Our children have kept themselves close to us, though not all located in Rock Island. Anton and Henry live in Moline, Illinois; Carl, in Rock Island, and Lester at home. Anna, now Mrs. Henry Witt, of Davenport, Iowa; Minnie, now Mrs. L. F. Wendt, of Chicago, Illinois, and Ruth, in Seward, Nebraska, preparing to fit herself to become a Lutheran school teacher. There are also eleven grandchildren, who enjoy visiting with their grandparents.

We have taken much pleasure in visiting different parts of the country, and if I were asked to name the most pleasing journey, I would say our honeymoon trip on the Great Lakes, delayed twenty-five years. Thus we observed our Silver Wedding Anniversary. Leaving Chicago on a palatial steamship, we visited

at Mackinac Island, Niagara Falls, Georgian Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, and many other stops.

Among other places we have visited, we recall with pleasure short stays in Florida and in Havana, Cuba.

When I left my parents in Germany in 1881, I assured them I would return within three years. This, however, was not to be. The three years had grown to twenty-two before I was free to make the journey home. In the meantime my father had passed to his reward, which was a lasting sorrow to me, as we were good pals and I had much to thank him for. Many a time it was his early training and advice that guided me midst difficulties that seemed unsurmountable.

It was in 1903 I returned to Germany for a visit with my mother and sister Kate, with whom she had been living since my father's death. My son Anton accompanied me, and we prolonged our journey, visiting England, Scotland, France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, as well as Germany, studying industrial plants and commercial and educational institutions.

Later, in speaking of his trip, Anton said that the knowledge and experience he had

gained at that time meant more to him than the four years of university training he had since received.

In 1921 I again visited Germany, this time taking my youngest son, Lester, and he, too, gathered much lasting information and profit from his experiences in a foreign land.

The principal purpose of this trip was to comply with my mother's last wish, that at her death she be buried by the side of her husband in the cemetery at Rendsburg, Germany. My mother died in 1916, and because of war regulations, which did not permit the transportation of a body from one place to another, interment was made in Cassel, where my sister resided. I had the body disinterred, and now my mother and father rest side by side in the beautiful cemetery at Rendsburg.

I persuaded my sister Kate, who at that time was a widow, to return with us to America. Kate remained here three years, and then returned to her home in Cassel, Germany, where she now resides.

It was on April 6, 1917, that Congress voted a state of war existed between the United

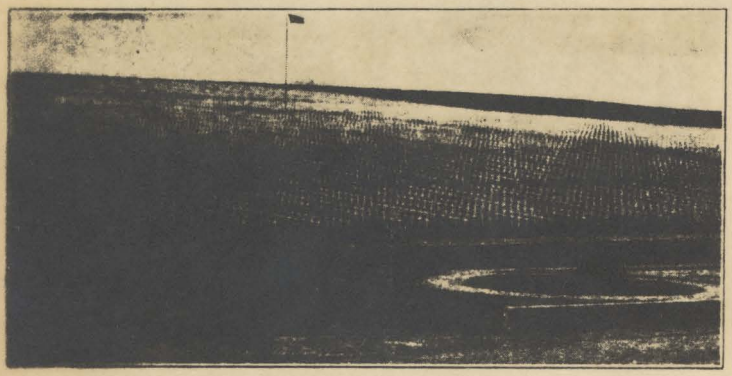
Our Boys in Their Country's Service

States and Germany. When President Wilson's call for volunteers was issued it was responded to by two of our sons, Carl and Lester. Carl trained at Camp Grant, at Rockford, Illinois, and at Sparta, Wisconsin, and saw service in France. Lester was in the Students' Army Training Corps at Champaign, Illinois. We thank a merciful Providence for their preservation and safe return home.

As an American citizen, I wished to be in a positive position when discussing the war issue with relatives who fought in the German army. For this reason Lester and I made our first stop in France. From Paris we journeyed by automobile over the battle fields of France and Flanders, spending some eight days there. Reims, Verdun, Ypres and many other cities which were shell torn, and many places where only ruins told the story, were visited. Belleau Wood, Chateau Thierry, where our American boys fought so valiantly and gloriously, Fort de Vaux, Fort de Douaumont were tramped over, and their deep underground fortifications, were visited. The Argonne, with the destroyed headquarters of the Crown Prince of Bavaria; Montfaucon, where only the ruins of

the headquarters of the Crown Prince of Germany remained—all told a most distressing story and presented awe inspiring sights.

Our hearts were sorely touched when we visited the American National Cemetery at Romagne. More than 25,000 little white crosses told of the sacrifices that the American soldier boys made at the call of their country. With bowed head and silent prayer we paid tribute to the fallen heroes.



United States Cemetery at Romagne

A Haven of Rest—Our Summer Home

XXX.

A Mother In Israel

ON THE early morning of September 27, 1927, I was called upon to take up my cross and henceforth fight life's battles without the sustaining influence of my beloved wife, who answered the Master's call and entered into eternal rest at 2:20 o'clock.

Her life was an exemplification of Christian faith and love. She had long been an active member of the Immanuel Lutheran Church, of Rock Island, and her good works were many; but it was in the home with her children and on the lonely prairies of Kansas that her Christian influence was most helpful.

For those of her old friends of the early days in Logan County, whom she so dearly loved, it is fitting to close this little volume with a brief obituary and a few expressions of the love and esteem in which she was held, quoting from the Rock Island Argus:

"The daughter of Henry and Lena Empke, Mollie Empke was born in Moline October 1,

1864. She was reared and educated in Moline, and lived in that community until her marriage in St. Louis to Henry W. Horst in 1885.

"Besides the widower, seven of nine sons and daughters survive. They are Carl W. Horst, of Rock Island; A. E. Horst and Henry T. Horst, of Moline; Lester Horst and Miss Ruth Horst, at home; Mrs. Henry Witt, of Davenport, and Mrs. Louis F. Wendt, of Chicago.

"Also surviving are a sister, Mrs. Alex. Henke, of Osborn, Illinois; a brother, Henry Empke, of Rock Island, and eleven grandchildren.

"The Reverend Ph. Wilhelm, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, of Rock Island, officiated at the funeral services, which were attended by hundreds of sorrowing friends.

"The pastor took for his text, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith,' and in his eulogy on Mrs. Horst's life he showed the applicability of the words.

"She was a devout and faithful wife and a tender, loving mother, a woman of fine and

beautiful character, and above all, a Christian, a faithful servant of the Lord.

He spoke briefly of Mrs. Horst's generosity to the church and to the Missouri Synod of Lutheran Churches, of which Mr. Horst is a member of the Board of Directors. He cited Mr. and Mrs. Horst's liberality in furnishing the hospital rooms at the Lutheran Teachers' Seminary at River Forest, Illinois, which was done in memory of their daughter, Helen, who died when she was six years old. He also mentioned the beautiful Long View Park wading pool, which was dedicated to the children of Rock Island, and presented by Mr. and Mrs. Horst.

A brief sermon in German was preached by Dr. Frederick Pfotenhauer, of Chicago, President of the Missouri Synod, during the church services. He is a close friend of the Horst family.

"Rev. Richard Kretzschmar, of St. Louis, President of the Western District of the Missouri Synod, spoke in behalf of the building committee of the Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, an institution in which Mrs. Horst, with her husband, showed keen interest. He de-

clared Mrs. Horst's death was an inestimable loss to the Seminary, the Synod, and the Church.

"Rev. Herman Harms, pastor of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Davenport, read many messages of condolence at the close of the church services. These messages included a cablegram from Mrs. Kate Knorr, of Cassel, Germany, a sister of Mr. Horst.

"Flowers sent by scores of friends, from near and far, were many and beautiful.

"Reverend Harms officiated with services at the grave. The church services were preceded by brief ceremones at the family home.

"Children of the Immanuel Lutheran parochial school sang 'Asleep In Jesus' during the church rites. Mrs. George Scherer and Mrs. Otto A. Klockau sang 'Refuge.' Fred H. Harms, baritone, sang a variation of 'Rock of Ages.'

"Dignitaries of the Lutheran Church were among the many from out of town who attended the services. Besides Dr. Pfotenhauer and Reverend Kretszchmar, the Synod Board of Directors present were William Hagen, of

Detroit; A. H. Ahlbrand, of Seymour, Indiana, and W. H. Schleuter, of St. Louis; the Lutheran Laymen's League, of which Mr. Horst was one of the founders, was represented by Edwin E. Faster, of Decatur, president; George Harms, of Peoria, vice-president, and F. C. Pritzlaff, of Milwaukee, treasurer, and L. F. Volkman, of St. Louis."

These sketches of our early experiences in Kansas were written and published in the Oakley Graphic as a serial previous to Mrs. Horst's death, and together we spent many a happy hour in their preparation, and it was our hope that these memoirs would possess value and interest to our children and grandchildren, and our many friends.