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A History of The National Group Settlements In Republic County, Kansas

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A HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL GROUP SETTlements
IN REPUBLIC COUNTY, KANSAS

A Thesis presented to
the Department of Social Science and
the Graduate Council of the Fort Hays Kansas
State College in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Science.

by
Ida Lucretia Smith

Approved for the Department:

Head of the Department.

Approved for the Council:

Chairman of the Council.

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Introduction.

Republic County, like many other counties of Kansas, has been settled by people of many nations. This region was neglected for a long time because it was of no value to its owners. After being used as a pathway for many years it finally came to be of interest to homeseekers. Perhaps the fact that it was the seat of the old Pawnee capital had something to do with its long period of neglect for the Indians still opposed settlement west of the Republican River and made frequent raids east from that point.¹

Captain Zebulon M. Pike made the first important place for Republic County in the history of Kansas, long before either existed as such. When, in 1806, he came to the capital of the Pawnee nation to treat with the tribe, he found the Spanish flag floating on a flag staff before the door of the head chief's tepee. He caused this Spanish flag to be lowered and the American flag to be raised in its stead. That day, September 29, marked the debut of the Stars and Stripes within the borders of what was to become Kansas. This Pawnee village was on the west bluff of the Republican River, about six and one-half miles from the north line of the county, being two and one-half miles southwest of the present site of Republic City. It is still a beautiful place commanding a view of many miles on both sides of the river. The site of the

village itself has been reserved as a state park, containing a monument to commemorate its historical significance.

The county was laid out and its boundaries defined by the state legislature in 1860. It is bounded on the north by the state of Nebraska, on the east by Washington County, on the south by Cloud County and on the west by Jewell County. It is thirty miles from east to west and twenty-four from north to south.²

The land is excellent for agriculture and stock raising. It slopes gently to the south and is well watered. The Republican River runs through the county from north to south, cutting off the western one-fifth. The river has bluffs only on the east with a few exceptions, therefore very little land is wasted. About ten per cent of the total area of the county is valley. There is excellent limestone, a large salt marsh, a vein of carboniferous formation that furnished coal to the settlers for many years, potter's clay and an uncertain amount of gold.

An old military road ran through the county, following the river, and is often spoken of in early letters and accounts of travel through this region. After the southern route west from Fort Riley became crowded and Indian attacks became almost a certainty for any train using it, this road to the north was used by some of the Mormons and by settlers bound for Oregon. There was much less danger of attack on the military road but there was much less protection when an attack did occur. The route up the Republican Valley, which had been faintly marked by a government train

²Savage, I. O. A History of Republic County, Kansas. p. 32.
in 1855, was later opened between Fort Riley and Fort Kearney because of the abundant grass supply. This road began to be popular in 1857, which was only four years before the first permanent settlement in the county.³

In this year the Indians massacred a party of nineteen or twenty Mormons at a point on the Republican just north of the present site of Scandia. The sole survivor carried the news to the soldiers who buried the party in a single grave. This grave, on a high bluff near the river, was later found and identified by the description given by a scout who had been with the party of soldiers. It was covered with triangular stones placed vertically in the ground a few inches apart.⁴ Within the shadows of this bluff and but ten years later, the first national group settlement was made.

With the passage of the Homestead Bill in 1862, settlement in northern Kansas was given a new stimulus and land seekers came, at first slowly and then more and more rapidly until by the early seventies all the free land was gone. People of many nations of the world were once more claiming this region for their own, this time for homes. Faster and faster they came---Swedes, Norwegians, Poles, Bohemians, Scotch, English, German, French, with sprinklings of other nationalities---all seeking land.

Most of these groups were represented by settlements in

³Savage, I. O. A History of Republic County, Kansas. p. 34, 42.
Republic County. Only the Germans and French failed to establish colonies within its boundaries but they settled so near its borders that their settlements have gradually extended themselves into the county.

The first white settlers in the county were Daniel and Conrad Myers. These brothers took claims in January, 1861, in the south central portion of the county. In the summer of '61, Conrad was for four weeks the only white person in the county, the other settlers having left because of threatened Indian attacks. A few more men came and took claims near-by. Daniel's wife was the first white woman to come to the county to make it her home.5

In the spring of '63, Philip Keyser made the first settlement west of the river. His claim was on the White Rock Creek. A prolonged flood of this creek drove him from the county in a short time.6 The following fall a new group came to make homes on the White Rock. There were some fifty men, women and children in the group.7 Records show that there were at least three women. The group included S. M. Fisher, James Reed, Mr. and Mrs. Ashby Clark and son, Reverend William Harshberger and wife, James Van Natta and John Furrows. This group started the town of White Rock which no longer exists. Since it was west of the river, the Indians harrassed it constantly and after the death of several of the residents and the

6ibid.
capture of at least one of the women, the group broke up, in 1864, and moved farther east.¹⁰

Thomas Lovewell, who had been a government scout in Kansas for fifteen years, came to the White Rock in 1865 with his wife and her brother, Dan Davis. They were driven back by the Indians but returned the next spring to stay. Again, in 1869, all the settlers west of the Republican were forced east for a time.¹⁰

Since this group was not entirely within Republic County and was of no individual nationality, it has not been included in the following study.

This was the background for the group settlements of particular nationalities which began in 1868 with the coming of a group of settlers sent out by the Scandinavian Agricultural Society to the little village of New Scandinavia, now Scandia, which had been laid out for the settlers of this company. Although this group was the first to come, it was followed so quickly by the others that the settlements seem almost simultaneous.

In the following study the discussions have been limited to the group settlements of individual nationalities. These cover all the group settlements of any size that were permanent and contained entirely within the county.

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⁸Mrs. Nicholas Ward, a young woman, disappeared during an Indian attack on Apr. 2, 1868. She fell heir to a large estate and an effort was made to find her but it proved fruitless. There were legends about women who might have been she, and who had been seen at a distance, but none were ever verified.


¹⁰Warren, Ellen M. Article in Belleville Telescope. Apr. 6, 1933.
1-12. Land of Scandinavian Agricultural Society
13. Scotch Colony
14. Scotch English Colony
15. Polish Settlement
16. Centers of Bohemian Settlements
The Scandinavian Colony.

The Scandinavian Agricultural Society purchased twelve of the best sections of land in Republic County in 1867. The land was all public land of some sort, being school land, railroad land and state land.¹

It was purchased in trust for the company by Englebreth H. Hanson, and was not in one tract but was scattered up and down the Republican River from the most southern part of the county to the most northern. There were 7,085 and 85,100 acres in the purchase for which $8,854.62 was paid.² (This is slightly less than $1.25 per acre.)

This Scandinavian Agricultural Society had been organized by Scandinavian workmen in Chicago sometime in 1867. Chicago seems to have been the place where many Scandinavians came on coming to America. It was a thriving town and needed these skilled workmen.³

Buffalo hunters had told of the wonders of northern Kansas and it was decided to form a company to colonize there. Agents were sent out to locate land.⁴ The land was purchased and the colony proceeded with its organization. The members paid the money into the

¹Bought under an act of the legislature of the State of Kansas on Feb. 23, 1866, entitled an act providing for the sale of public lands to assist in the construction of certain railroads.”
²Certified Copy Record No. 1, Republic County, p. 11.
³Strom, Peter.
⁴Floodberg, Andrew.
company as they could: a $10. admission fee was charged and $5. per month was paid for three months. A yearly fee was to be paid thereafter. If a man paid in more than this minimum, he was entitled to a larger portion of the land. It seems that these Scandinavians did not know of the Homestead Act and that they might secure a one hundred sixty acre farm by living on it for five years and paying a small fee. ($14.50.)

The agreement of an individual with the organization was oral but the minutes of the company meetings were written. Julius Shaw was the president and Berger J. Giersing, the secretary. The members were to work for the company for five years at $1.50 per day.

The officers of the company did not come out until much later, but in October of 1868 a group of thirty of the members set out from Chicago. They came to Junction City by train. There three hundred farms of one hundred sixty acres each had been laid out from Lake Sibley, in Cloud County, to north of Scandia. These were numbered, the numbers placed in a hat and a girl drew a number for each man. Part of the party remained in Junction City for a time; the rest set out for the land of the colony afoot except for one or two men in charge of a load of provisions belonging to the company and hauled in an oxen-drawn wagon.

This group included M. Johnson, Charles Lesom, P. Walin,

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5 John Hugas.
6 Andrew Floodberg.
7 Peter Strom
8 Certified Copy Record No. 1, Republic County, p. 11.
9 Andrew Floodberg.
10 Ibid.
John Lundin, O. G. Strom, R. Granstadt, A. Bergren, A. Erickson, J. R. Sandell, John Holmstrom, Peter Johnson and Andrew Johnson Floodberg. 11

In early November, they came to a place on the Republican River that they named New Scandinavia (later Scandia). A trail up the river with deep wagon ruts showed that much travel had passed there before. This was known as the California Road and was supposed to have been made by the "Forty Niners." 12

According to Savage's History of Republic County, "At the time the settlement was made at Scandia, the nearest settler on the south was one Dutton, in Cloud County, about sixteen miles down the river. The nearest on the east was the Salt Creek Settlement, about fourteen miles distant, and S. M. Fisher and a few others had made a settlement on White Rock Creek."

The men lived in dugouts while they built the colony house. This house, which was to serve as a temporary home for the men and as a block house in time of Indian danger, was frame, walled up on the inside with stone. The windows were equipped with four-inch oak shutters which were put in place only when rumors of Indian attacks came. Each shutter had four port holes for guns.

Bunks were built about the walls, one over another. Each bunk was given two loop holes for use in surprise night attacks.

The men never went to bed without their carbine or revolvers at hand.

11 This list is taken from Savage's History of Republic County, p. 184. It does not include the name of Mr. Floodberg so it may not be complete in other ways.

12 Andrew Floodberg. This was also known as the military road, since it had first been marked by a military expedition; it was called the Fort Road after it was bridged for use between Forts Riley and Kearney. The best places to cross the Republican at that time were at Clay Center and Scandia.
The Colony House.

The colony house has served many purposes and is now used as part of a residence. A frame addition has been made. Notice the port hole that has been cemented up. This house has been moved from its original site and is located directly south from the post office in Scandia.
A long table ran the length of the room and a cookstove at one end of the room cared for the food wants of the men.

The houses in New Scandinavia were of log and built end to end so that the end of one was also the end of another. Out on the farms, there were sod houses or dugouts.

In the spring and summer of '70 they started going out to the claims in crews, working one claim a day. Later this same summer they moved out to the farms. These men knew very little of farming, they were nearly all tradesmen. Most of them were Swedes although some of them called themselves Norwegians because they had gone to the capital of Norway to be graduated in their trades. The training for a trade was very thorough, requiring four years of work with no salary and perfection of product. It was necessary that they be graduated in their trade.

Of this group, Skaw, the president of the Society, was a tailor. He and Hanson were the two Norwegians of the first group. Erickson was a miller, Moe, a tailor, Harmer, a stone mason, L. Rasmussen, an engineer, O. G. Strom, a sea captain and a tailor, George Rasmussen, an engineer, A. Ellingson, a machine shop worker. Grandstedt was a cabinetmaker, Eastburg, a baker, Rosenquist, a tailor, T. Wolfhardt, a stone mason, C. Nordmark, a goldsmith, Lundin.

When, in the spring of 1870, the families moved out to their homesteads, Strom purchased this stove. It was used for many years and, while it is not in use now and has not been for some time, it is still in good condition.

Peter Strom.
Emma Garber West.
Peter Strom.
John Hugos.
an agriculturalist, and Forstrum, a railroad shop worker.\textsuperscript{18}

In Norway and Sweden at that time, it was possible for these people to make no more than a mere living. The land was rough and there was not enough for everyone so most people lived by fishing or by the trades. America offered them much at the time. Tradesmen and craftsmen were in demand and there was much land to be had.\textsuperscript{19}

In Chicago none of these men lacked for employment but the tales of land in the West were most enchanting.\textsuperscript{20}

In their home country the land owners were the aristocracy. The offer of land here was an opportunity to become the upper class of a new country and so they came, knowing very little of farming but sure that they could learn. Some of them did not know how to hitch the oxen to the plow. One of the number, Nelson, had been outside of Chicago at one time and had watched the harvesting of wheat. He was very proud of his knowledge, and considered that he knew all there was to know about that subject. He also owned a long bladed scythe. Mr. Strom hired him to cut some grain but was dismayed to discover that it was a great deal of work to find the wheat heads in the high stubble left by the reaper.

Mr. Strom constructed his own harrow. It was made of three cottonwood poles formed into a letter A. All three were bored full of holes about one foot apart. Oak pins were driven through these

\textsuperscript{18} Peter Strom, John Hugos.
\textsuperscript{19} John Hugos.
\textsuperscript{20} Peter Strom.
holes so that they projected about eight inches on the lower side. Some of the men hired their wheat planted even though it was sown broadcast, the sower carrying a bag of seed suspended on his back from which he flung handfuls of grain as he walked up and down the field.21

The Scandinavian Agricultural Society, having spent all of the money paid in, went into the hands of the receivers in 1869 almost before their company was settled. Since the money had been spent for the colony, the men lost little if any money but, of course, the work promised them for five years would not be available. The men in charge came out to get what they could out of the wreck.22

The company had purchased a number of things for the colony beside the land. A sawmill was sent to the group in 1868. It was hauled up from Waterville on a six-wheel wagon drawn by five yoke of oxen. In the spring of '70, the Rasmussen brothers and L. Ellingsen rented it from the colony and set it up down the river a way. After a second move it was returned to the village in 1871 and a grist mill attached.23

The company also owned a shingle machine, two lumber wagons and a cow. These, with the saw mill, were used as security for a chattel mortgage along with other personal property belonging to the Society and, being in Republic County.

21 Peter Strom.
22 John Hugos.
At the same time, 1869, the Society borrowed $4,000. from one Ferdinand S. Winslow, giving a mortgage on the twelve sections of land.\textsuperscript{24} This mortgage was never released and has caused much difficulty in the transfer of these lands.\textsuperscript{25}

The colonists had homesteaded about this land to make the colony unbroken by other nationalities. The company land had been divided into seventeen acre plots\textsuperscript{26} so that no one man would have all his land from the best or from the worst. The village had been laid out in lots which were also divided in proportion to the money invested by each man.

In the summer of 1870 there was less danger of Indian attack because of the increased number of settlers and because a company of soldiers was camped on the bluff above the town, so it was decided that it would be a good time to get some kind of a school started.\textsuperscript{27} A subscription school was organized and ran for three months. The colony house again served. The bunks were removed and the long dining table moved to one side. A new table or shelf was made on the other side, held in place by cleats and new slab seats were made. These benches were made from the slabs cut from the sides of logs in squaring them. The smooth side was turned up and pegs driven into the four corners. There was but one bench to a side and the pupils sat with their backs to the room to study. One woman,\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{24}Certified Copy Record No. 1, Republic County. p. 14.
\textsuperscript{25}Louise E. Carstensen.
\textsuperscript{26}John Hugos. Mr. Strom said 20 acre plots.
\textsuperscript{27}Peter Strom.
\textsuperscript{28}Mrs. Emma Garber West.
who was a pupil in that school, still recalls the maneuvering necessary to turn from the table to face the room, hampered by the long skirts of that day. The girls sat on the north and the boys on the south side. There was a blackboard across the east end and the teacher had both a platform and a table. There was also another slab bench near the teacher's desk to be used for recitations. The first teacher was Miss Marie Young who was perhaps seventeen or eighteen years old at the time. The colony house was afterwards purchased by the district and served as a school house for several years.

The following were pupils in this first school. 29

Axel Ellingson
Emma Garber
Berntine Granstedt
Louise Granstedt
Maggie Hubbard
Melvine Hubbard
Charles Larson
Al Mahan
Van Mahan
Hannah Mahan
John Mahan
Lizzie McGuire
Ida Nordmark
Anna Peters
August Rasmussen
Clolf Strom
Peter Strom

The Indians bothered the colonists quite a bit until about 1872. Most of this was petty thievery and the stealing of horses. 30

Mr. Floodberg thinks that much of this stealing may have been com-

29 Peter Strom. (This list may not be complete.)
30 John Hugos.
mitted by white men and the Indians blamed.

Early in the history of the colony a group of men were working on the Strom homestead and a rain came up. They had with them a team belonging to one of the men and a borrowed pony. The team was left tied in the field but the man who had borrowed the pony took it to the shanty. When night came on, he passed a rope from the pony, through the door and tied it about his waist. In the night he was awakened by being dragged out upon the floor. The pony was badly frightened and was thought to have scented Indians. The team was not seen again.

Olof Pehrson, a settler living south of Scandia in Norway Township, was breaking prairie one day. Becoming tired of carrying the gun, he laid it at one end of the field. When he was a distance from it an Indian, who had evidently been watching him, stood up in the grass and shot at him. Mr. Pehrson ran for his gun and the Indian made off with the team. 32

"At one time only did the Scandinavians see a great number of Indians in one place. A party of about sixty had camped on Dry Creek north of Scandia. Two of them came down to the village and invited the settlers to visit their camp. The settlers, being suspicious, sent to Concordia for the militia, 33 who accompanied

31Peter Strom.
33This militia was first organized in September, 1854, by early settlers of what is now Clay, Cloud, Washington and Republic Counties. At the time of organization it was composed of fifty men. Each man furnished his own horse, saddle and bridle. Arms and ammunition were drawn from Fort Riley. The headquarters was then at Elk Creek, now Clyde.
them to the Indian camp. They were met by two of the Indians who took them to their camp. Not desiring a camp that near to Scandia, the settlers requested the Indians to leave. The Indians complied with the request and began moving soon after. Another incident was the killing of an Indian squaw by one of the settlers. Four of the settlers walking north of Scandia, encountered four Indians, and one of them fired at the Indians, killing a squaw, although his companions had warned him against firing at them. 34

Although the Indians did not give up their right to hunt east of the river until in 1870, only one person was killed east of the river 35 after settlements were established in the county. The Indians were in the habit of making trips up and down the river each spring and fall. These were hunting trips but also offered excellent opportunity to take what was wanted of the settlers' be-

34 Taken from an account written by Carl Larsen, the grandson of Andrew Floodberg. It was written just as the grandfather gave it to his grandson.

35 Windbigler, a member of the White Rock group was killed on August 15, 1869, at a point near where Republic County now is located. He, with three other men, were making hay when attacked by about seventy-five Indians. Only one of the men was armed so the group set out for the fort, Windbigler on a horse and the rest in a wagon. The Indians discovered the rider was unarmed and rode up close enough to shoot him with a revolver. He fell to the ground and was then pierced with spears and lances. The man with the rifle walked toward his friend, the Indians drawing back out of range as he advanced. He stayed there until help came out from the fort. The dead man was buried in a coffin made of puncheons taken from a floor of one of the cabins.
longings and crops. In the spring of '69, just following the coming of the families of some of the men in the Scandinavian Colony, a party of Cheyennes and Arrapahoes camped a few miles below Scandia. After a short stay they raised their camp and apparently left the valley.36

The sentry on the bluff above the village left his post but two boys were sent out with the settlers' horses. They were about a half mile south of the colony house when two Indians suddenly rode out from a ravine to the northwest, yelling to stampede the horses. One of the boys escaped to the colony house but an Indian shot at the other boy, Malcolm Grandstedt, by name. He was unharmed by this shot but fell to the ground in his haste and fright. The Indian rode back to his companion and the boy would doubtless have escaped had he not jumped to his feet and begun to scream for his mother to save him. The Indian rode back and shot again, this time killing the lad. By this time the men from the colony house were shooting at the invaders and they rode rapidly away, driving the horses before them. It was found, on examination, that the Indians had crept down a draw through the east part of the village and then turned west. This was the first death in the group. The boy was buried at the foot of the bluff, in the north part of town.37

The settlers called a meeting and it was decided to send to Fort Riley for means of protection. E. B. Peterson was selected

37Peter Strom.
Troops were not promised at the time but shortly afterward Colonel Weir and seventy-five men came and remained for two months. They made their camp in the valley but the cavalry that came that fall, anticipating a raid down the valley after harvest, made their camp on the bluff above the town. Although the families remained in the town until late and the colony house was crowded with women and children most of the time, no Indians came and thereafter the Indians ceased to be a menace east of the river.

The members of this group were not well armed. Their guns were of ancient make and of the cap and ball variety. They did not have many, even of this kind and the Indians were quite well armed with more modern guns.

The food of the time was not varied. Corn meal mush, corn bread, molasses, potatoes and parched wheat coffee formed a large part of the diet. The following incident, given by Peter Strom, shows the terrible monotony of such a diet.

One summer, early in the life of the settlement, there had been little of anything to eat and the Strom boys, Peter and Olof, had become very tired of the unappetizing food. One day one of them discovered, in a low place in the corn field that had perhaps received more moisture than the rest, two ears of corn that were getting quite hard. These were carefully taken home to the mother, who shelled and pounded up the corn. The boys, who were permitted

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39 Mrs. Emma Gerber West.
40 Peter Strom.
to choose the manner in which they would eat this feast, called for corn cakes. One egg was available and it was cooked and divided between the two. Pete could not bear to eat anything that tasted so very good all at once so he carefully wrapped a part of his meal in a clean white cloth and took it with him when he went out to herd the cow and calf, his special charges. As he lay on the ground contemplating his treasure of food, spread out on the ground near by, he went to sleep. Presently he awoke to see the last of his treasured dainty being devoured by the calf. This calf had been his special pet but now he had nothing but murder in his heart and was rather disappointed that he could not carry out this urge.

The story given by Andrew Johnson Floodberg, one of the few remaining members of the original Scandinavian Agricultural Company, gives a good idea of some of the things that happened to the Scandinavian emigrant of that day.

Andrew Johnson, with his parents and one sister, left Christiana (now Oslo) Norway for Hull, England, in May of 1868. He was twenty-three at that time. They sailed for America on the vessel, City of Cook, which ship lost its propeller after three days and had to be towed back to Hull. They again took passage, this time on the City of Paris, bound for Halifax. In the harbor at Halifax, the ship struck an obstruction, keeling it over to one side

41 Written for him by his grandson, Carl Larsen.
and causing the iron in the bottom of the ship to slip at one side. The ship was thus held in this leaning position for the several hundred miles on to New York City, the passengers being compelled to stay on the high side of the deck. On June 18th they arrived at New York harbor, about five weeks after leaving Oslo.

After a few days in New York they went to Chicago on a slow, crowded immigrant train. During their three months' stay in Chicago, Andrew worked at different things, including a month's work in Lincoln Park, cleaning pathways and hauling dirt for the construction of a lake.

While here he had his name changed. His father's name was John Lundin, so, following the Swedish custom, his surname was Johnson. There were many people with the name of Johnson so he had Floodberg annexed to his name.

They had left Sweden intending to go to Minnesota, but on hearing of the Scandinavian Colony to settle in northern Kansas, they decided to join it. In the drawing for homesteads at Junction City, Mr. Floodberg drew number fifty-two. This was one and one-half miles south of the village. His father took the quarter section just north of this. He lived in a dugout in Scandia until Mr. Lundin built a cottonwood house where they all lived until the son moved into his own dugout.

The dugout roof was not securely fastened on and it took several men to hold it down in time of wind. At one time the home-
stead deed was lost in a tornado that blew the roof off the low stone house that replaced the dugout. The deed was recovered by a neighbor.

Land on the farm was broken a little at a time as it was to be used. The first plot was used for potatoes, the second for corn, pumpkins and melons.

At first Mr. Floodberg had but one cow and, to keep it penned, he dug a ditch about the pen to take the place of the unavailable fence. The ditch was at least two hundred yards in all and was straight up and down on the outer side and sloping on the inner. The cow soon changed this by rubbing against the outer side until it too sloped so that she might walk out. It had taken two or three months to construct this trench and Mr. Floodberg still laments the foolishness of the idea.

In the fall of 1870, the Swedish sweetheart of Mr. Floodberg was to come to America and they were to be married in Junction City in November. Mr. Wohlford was engaged to take the groom to the meeting place in a lumber wagon and they were accompanied by a Mr. Nystrom. There had been heavy rains and the streams were swollen. One stream, that did not look particularly deep, deceived them into trying to drive across. The gear of the wagon separated so that the horses and front wheels went safely across but the rear wheels and wagon box floated down stream. Floodberg swam to the other side. Nystrom tried the same thing but had to be pulled out with a branch
when he failed to make the bank. The third man remained in the box and finally managed to get to shore. A satchel of Floodberg's, containing $90.00 was recovered down the stream.

They were over a day late and the minister who was to have married the young couple had gone. The Justice of Peace was used as a substitute and the party set out for home. The groom had to wade the eighty or ninety miles back, for there was no room for him in the wagon.

Mr. Floodberg is still living on his homestead which is now farmed by his son-in-law and grandsons.

For a time the nearest railroad was Junction City, then it was Waterville, and finally Belvidere, Nebraska. It took five days to make the trip to Belvidere and come back with supplies. Concordia was the nearest land office when the last papers were taken out; the first were filed at Junction City.

New Scandinavia became Scandia in 1876. It was incorporated as a city of the third class on March 28, 1879. The growth of the town was slow until it got a railroad. The townspeople became concerned about the distance to a railroad and the fact that their town was growing so slowly, so in 1877 a mass meeting was called where it was decided to try to obtain a railroad. A committee was appointed and was quite successful in its work. The

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42 Combination of sources: Peter Strom, Mrs. Emma Garber West.
43 Peter Strom.
first train came into the town over the Atchison, Republican Valley and Pacific Railroad (later the Missouri Pacific) on December 24, 1878. This was the first road into the county and Scandia boomed for a time. 44

The first post office was opened in the colony house on July 1, 1869, with Englebreit H. Hanson as post master. 45

The first store was built in the fall of '69 by J. A. Sandell. It was eight feet square and the first stock of goods invoiced at $125. The first hotel in the village as well as the first in the county was opened by L. C. Hanson in the spring of 1870 and was known as the Hanson House. 46

The first bank was opened in February, 1879. 47 A bank was necessary when Scandia became the center of trade in the county.

The first church to be organized by the Scandinavians was the Swedish Lutheran in June of '73. Its first minister was C. Shilleen, and it was organized with thirty-eight charter members. A church was built at the cost of $1000. 48

45 Peter Strom.
47 Peter Strom.
48 Savage's History and other sources.

According to Savage's History of Republic County, p. 221, the charter members were "Nels Peterson and wife, A. M. Swanson and wife and Mrs. Lysholm, who already belonged to the church from other places. Among those who joined the church at the organization or soon after, may be mentioned: P. E. Walen, Olof Olson, Andrew Rosene, A. P. Rosene, H. J. Rosene, A. Westine, Henry Anderson, A. F. Granstedt, A. Johnson and their wives."
The Swedish Methodist Church was organized in 1877 with Nels Peterson as a local preacher. Its charter membership was twenty-three. A substantial stone church, 30 by 50 feet was built this same year.

The Scandia Presbyterian Church was organized in June of the same year with a membership of eight.

Other denominations to organize at Scandia have been the Methodist Episcopal in 1883, the United Brethren in 1894, and the Free Will Baptist.

Scandia today is a prosperous town, second in size in the county. It is still the center of the Swedish Settlement. Many of the lots still belong to the families whose fathers or grandfathers got them in the drawing of lots in 1868. The western one-fourth of the county is predominantly Swedish. Although intermarriage with other people is common, the community remains Swedish. Many of the old customs are retained, as having five meals a day. The first is coffee early in the morning. A mid-morning lunch is served even to men working in the field. The noon and evening meals are at the usual time but the meal to which casual guests are invited is the afternoon coffee, which takes the place of the English tea. It is not at all uncommon for one to be invited to "come and see us some

50Mr. Savage says, on page 185 of his history, that the members were James Kelley, Mary Kelley, Joseph T. Cooper, Nancy J. Cooper, Mrs. Louisa Whitney, Mrs. Elizabeth F. Laughlin, Ellen F. Laughlin, and Mr. Charley M. Laughlin.
time and do come for coffee."

They maintain good schools. The system in Scandia is especially fine. They pay the best salaries in the county and keep the best teachers in their schools.

Although most of the business men of Scandia are Swedes, the group as a whole has developed into a class of good farmers. They have made good citizens. The farms have a very prosperous look, with fine buildings. Many of their young people go to colleges and most of them are high school graduates. They have come as near being a landed aristocracy as is possible in America at the present time.
Town 1 south, range 3 west.

Scotch-English Colony.
The Scotch-English Colony.

The First Excelsior Colony\(^1\) reached Republic County early in the year of 1870. Their settlement was made on Rose Creek, in Liberty Township. Wood and water seemed the most important things to be considered by these men so the homesteads they staked out were not square if other shapes were better suited to the securing of the most wood and water possible.

This group was composed of eight men, one woman and a six weeks' old baby. The men were Andrew Glenn, Alex Monroe, Dan McKensie, Thomas Benson, J. J. Wilkes, Fred Thornton, Sidney E. Pearce, and Alfred Burns. Andrew Glenn's wife, Elizabeth and their daughter, Jessie, completed the party.

They set out for Kansas from New York City on the last day of December, 1869. The group was not formed previous to starting, but on the first day on the train. Horace Greeley had been urging that young men go west. "Go west, young man, and grow up with the country" was a common expression in that time.

Two men, both Scotch, had been out to Kansas as spies and were giving lectures in the City Hall on the opportunities afforded

\(^1\)The information in this part has been given by Andrew Glenn, with the few exceptions noted, and has been confirmed by George Wilkes, a son of J. J. Wilkes, and Charles Pearce, a son of Sidney Pearce.
in the Kansas territory. These men, McCliment, a trusmi th, and McKensie, a jeweler, told of the small cost of a homestead ($14.50), the amount of cane that could be grown on a quarter acre of land and the great quantity of molasses that could be made from this cane. The ease of growing the crops and the immensity of the harvests were also emphasized. "If you tickled the soil with a straw, it would laugh with a harvest."

These men were tradesmen of one sort or another and were not busy during the winter season so listened to these lectures in the city hall.

"Well, as the stonecutting was practically closed for the season, the winters were long and the money we had saved up in New York City would be gone before spring and taking into consideration the experiences of those who had served for years in the City and were making no advancement in bettering their condition, we fully decided to

"Go to the West, to the land of the free,
Where the mighty Missouri rolls down to the sea;
Where a man is a man if he's willing to toil,
And the humblest may gather the fruits of the soil."2

Andrew Glenn and Thomas Benson had been friends and had worked together in the Jacques and Mooney Stone Yard in New York City, but the group as a whole met for the first time on that first

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2Quoted directly from Mr. Glenn's account, written for him by his daughter, Miss Agnes Glenn.
day of the year, bound for a new country. An oral agreement was made that they settle as a group.

At this time the railroads were offering great inducements to settlers to go to Kansas. They could make the entire trip on half fare and were permitted to double the usual amount of luggage. The members of this group brought nothing more than could be placed in their trunks. A part of the trunkful was, of course, the tools of each man's trade. Mr. Glenn also included two or three books in his trunk and Mrs. Glenn brought her sewing machine.

The trip out took nearly a week. The party lay over in Cincinnati for Sunday for trains did not run on Sunday, then. The Missouri had no bridge so was crossed at Atchison by boat. Since it was mid-winter the river was partially frozen over. The party walked out to the edge of the ice, jumped down into a waiting boat and was taken to the other edge of the ice where they climbed up again and continued to the other side. They spent the night at Atchison and the next day started on to Waterville which was the terminus of the railroad.

At Waterville the party hired a team to take them to Washington where the next night was spent. This town had only one hotel and it offered very poor accommodations. Most of the men slept in the hay-loft of the hotel barn.

The following day another conveyance took them to Cuba, which at this time had a post office and a blacksmith shop. Mrs. Glenn
and the baby remained at the home of Carl Mapes near Cuba while the men looked up the place for their settlement. They took bearings by compass for Rose Creek where the essential wood and water were found and they decided to remain.

A man who had some experience in that line, laid out the eight claims for them. The farms were numbered and the numbers drawn from a hat. Mr. Glenn drew a claim which had no wood or water but with the aid of one dollar Dan McKensie was persuaded to trade claims.

Junction City was the nearest land office at the time. The first thing to be done was to file for the claims and take out the first naturalization papers, so Tom Riley of Riley Creek, was hired to take them in a wagon to attend to these matters.

On their return a dugout was started so that they might have some place to live for the rest of the winter. This was dug back into the bank and was on the Wilkes claim. Mrs. Glenn came with the baby to keep house for the group as soon as the dugout was finished. There was no door and a blanket served to close the opening. Two beds were fashioned from poles. The men slept on one long bed, reaching from the doorway to the fireplace. This bed really served a double purpose, for it was their calendar as well. Each night the men changed one place, thus giving each man the chance to sleep nearest the fireplace one night a week and be warm. A complete rotation also marked the end of a week and the
day of the week could be determined by the man who was sleeping nearest the fire. They slept with all their clothing on until spring.

Thornton and Burns ran out of money and the rest had to look out for them until spring and an opportunity to earn more came. Finally, in order that the food might last, the party went on rations, weighing out the bread, potatoes, etc. Mrs. Glenn had brought an extra supply of tea, rice, and dried fish that came in very handy when the supplies became so scarce.

Mr. Wilkes, who seemed to have had quite a genius for inventing, built a Dutch oven in the dugout. This was heated by embers from the fireplace which was kept burning, day and night. When the oven was hot the embers were raked out with a prairie chicken wing and the dough placed in to bake.

Before Mrs. Glenn joined the men and the oven was constructed, Sidney Pearce had the job of bread carrier. Mrs. Neville, who lived north and east of them at the brick kiln, baked bread for them. This led to a somewhat interesting experience for Mr. Pearce. One afternoon he went for bread and had to wait for it until it was night. It was dark and cloudy and, of course, there was no road, so he lost his way. He passed the dugout in the dark and finally gave up and sat down by a tree to wait for light. When daybreak came he discovered that he had spent the night on his own claim and but a short distance from the dugout which he reached in time for breakfast.
Mrs. Glenn had brought her sewing machine from New York. Sewing machines were scarce in this country in those days and this one served to make the winter overcoats for the men for several years.

Toward the end of this first year, two more men joined the colony. David Wilkie, a friend of Thomas Benson, came out and "jumped the claim" that Fred Thornton had deserted. He had decided to return to England and had his passage secured when his friend wrote him that the claim was available but was successful in getting his passage money returned. This was lucky for him for the ship on which he was to have sailed from New York was lost in a storm with all on board.

That same fall John Fraser and his wife and son, George, came and purchased the farm adjoining Pearee, on the west.

Burns, McKensie, Monroe and Thornton did not remain long with the group. McKensie and Monroe sold their places, the first year. Thornton did not return from a trip to Chicago for work in 1870, Burns also went for work and did not return. His trunk had been left with the Benson family where it remained for many years, but he was never heard of again. This trunk, with his name on the side in large black letters, was the object of much interest and speculation to the children of the group.

3Wilkie and Benson had worked together in England on the construction of the Parliament Houses.

4Mrs. Jessie Glenn Childs.
These men knew very little of farming. When a group of them purchased a team of oxen, none of them knew how to hitch it up. They were all tradesmen. Mr. Glenn was a stone-cutter and so were Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Benson. Pearce was a painter and had been a sailor for a number of years. McKensie was a jeweler and Fraser a bricklayer.

The group was evenly divided as to nationality. Glenn, McKensie, Burns, Fraser and Monroe were Scotch. Wilkie, Wilkes, Thornton, Pearce and Benson were English.

Andrew Glenn was from Fifeshire, Scotland, and his wife from the north of Scotland. Fraser was from the north of Scotland and his wife from the lowlands. J. J. Wilkes and his wife were from Stowonthewold, Gloucester, England. Wilkie was from Wigan, Lancashire, England, and his wife, Elizabeth, from Airdrie, Scotland.

Sidney Pearce had a very interesting career. He was born in Sydney, Australia, while his parents were visiting there. At an early age he became a sea coast sailor and spent a number of years among the West Indies at this work. He crossed the ocean eleven times during this period, his first trip to the United States being in 1852. He worked on the City Fire Department of Chicago, Illinois, for several years and then on the Mississippi River into Memphis, Tennessee. In 1861, he returned to England with the brother for whom he had been searching and whom he had finally found in New
In 1863 he returned to America, this time to New York City where he was a painter for seven years. 5

These men left England and Scotland on hearing of the marvelous opportunities offered to the tradesmen in the new country. None of them had much education outside of their trades. They came for the most part from poor parents.

John Fraser had made one trip to America and was going to make a second trip there to locate in 1868. He persuaded Andrew Glenn to accompany him, although Glenn had a good place working at his trade in Edinburgh, Scotland, and owned seven shares in a building society. Neither man was able to bring his wife but the two women came together about six months later.

Wilkes and Wilkie both came in 1869 but not together. The men who were married had to send for their wives later when they had secured enough money for their passage. Most of the wives came out in 1872.

The fact that they were Scotch, or perhaps the fact that many construction companies were headed by Scotchmen in that day, was of much value to these men. Fraser and Glenn secured places immediately on landing from an old Scotchman who ran a stoneyard. His only question was as to whether or not they had their tools with them. Later, when they went out from Kansas to work, the Scotch heads of

5 Charles Pearce.
construction gangs on the railroad and elsewhere favored them.

All of these men worked for a time in New York City. Work there was plentiful in the summer and the wages were high, about five dollars a day, but the winters were long and no work was to be had. In the end they found they would have been better off to have remained in the old country. Many of their friends and fellow countrymen did go back and these men probably would have, had they not become interested in Kansas land.

Even in Kansas they continued to make a living by their trades. All of their money was gone by the end of the first winter so they set out to make more. Mrs. Glenn was left, with her baby, in the stone house that the men had constructed on the Glenn claim. All of the men were to have stone houses but Glenn's had been constructed first, since Mrs. Glenn was, as yet, the only woman in the colony. The stones were hauled from down the creek with the ox team and the center beam and rafters were cut from a large tree on the farm. The roof was of turf and did not prove to be waterproof.

Mrs. Glenn's only means of protection for herself and her baby was an Enfield rifle. What she must have endured is almost beyond comprehension for she was unused to any kind of country life and was desperately afraid of Indians. The Indians came several times but were usually accompanied by a white man and were always gotten rid of with gifts of food.

Wilkes and Glenn went together, first to Lincoln, Nebraska,
where they worked on the construction of the Insane Asylum there. The overseer was a Mason and as both men belonged to this lodge they had no trouble in getting good jobs. Here they earned enough money to take them to Chicago where there was plenty of construction work, due to Mrs. O'Leary's cow, according to prevalent stories. The city had been burned in October of 1871. The wages were five dollars a day and they had work all the summer. It was from this trip that some of the men did not return to their homesteads, since work was offered in closed shops for the winter.

Work was also secured on the construction of the state penitentiary at Lincoln, Nebraska, and in various Kansas towns, especially where depots were to be constructed.

After 1872, when the wives of the remaining colonists joined the group, the men no longer left the county to work but they still worked at building stone houses for some of the settlers. The bridge across the Republican also offered them work. One of the group, Pearce, proved up on his homestead and kept it all his life without having owned a team.

All of the men of the group were atheists. Mrs. Glenn was the only one of the entire group that never gave up her faith. She lived for fourteen years without attending a religious meeting of any sort. Some of the group were converted in later years, but the other members used every effort to prevent this, even to trying to keep their friends from religious meetings by force. At
funerals a portion of Thanatopsis and Robert Ingersoll's lecture at his brother's grave were read.

This group has not retained its identity as have the other group settlements, perhaps because it was so small. At one time a post office and store were in the community but were soon discontinued. This small village was known as Craineville.

But four of the nine farms are retained in the families that homesteaded them. These are those of Glenn, Wilkie, Pearce and Wilkes. None of the other families are now represented in the community. Of the original colony, Andrew Glenn and his daughter, Jessie, (now Mrs. H. A. Childs) are still living in the county and Mrs. Fraser is still alive but lives in California. The English community of today is north and west of this old Scotch-English settlement and is composed of people who came much later.

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6 The store and post office were run in connection with each other and were opened by Desmond Craine. They were later managed by David Wilkie.
Town 3 south, ranges 3 and 4 west.

Scandia Township

Belleville Township

Scotch Colony.
The Scotch Colony.

The members of the Excelsior Colony Number Two, or the David Bruce Colony, came a short time after those of the first Excelsior Colony. This group of sixteen Scotch families left New York on March 1, 1870.¹

The second group settled in Belleville and Scandia Townships, some ten miles south and west of the first colony.

These people, too, were interested in the Kansas lands by the glowing accounts given in the town hall in New York City by McCliment and McKensie, as were the members of the first Excelsior colony. They met at the home of William Bainbridge to organize their group which was composed of sixteen men, with the wives and small families of a greater part of them.² Both McCliment and McKensie were members of this group, McKensie having sold the rights to the claim he had taken on Rose Creek, earlier in the year.³

The personnel of the group included:⁴

William Bainbridge,⁵ wife and children—George, Lizzie, James and John.
James Lowden.
Jack McKensie and wife.
James Duncan

¹Mrs. Maggie Bainbridge Brown.
²Alex Maxton, Mrs. Maggie Bainbridge Brown, Will Curry, Andrew Glenn.
³Andrew Glenn.
⁴Combination of sources: Mrs. Maggie B. Brown, Andrew Glenn, Alex Maxton, Will Curry.
⁵Mr. Bainbridge was a second cousin of William McKinley.
Peter Doctor. 
Hugh Scott, wife and son—Robert. 
Alexander "Sandy" Maxton, and wife. 
Robert Curry, and wife. 
John McCliment, and wife. 
James Kelly, and wife. 
Jimmy Kelly (nephew of the elder James Kelly). 
Gilbert Rogers. 
James Kenard. 
George Baird, and wife. 
Andrew Kerr, wife, son and daughter. 
Holt, wife and son.

A Mr. Burant with his wife and daughter, Maggie, came at 
the same time but as they were not Scotch, they were not counted a 
part of the colony. 6

As was usual at that time, the company came to Waterville 
by train and then secured teams for the balance of the trip. They 
had not all known each other before organization but some of this 
group knew members of the first colony. 7

The group was composed entirely of mechanics, there being 
not a single farmer in the lot. William Bainbridge was a carpenter 
and so were James Duncan and Hugh Scott. Alexander Maxton, George 
Curry and Peter Doctor were stone-cutters. Young Jimmy Kelly was a 
stone-cutter and Gilbert Rogers was a jeweler. Andrew Kerr was a 
blacksmith, John McCliment a trusmith, and Jack McKensie a jeweler. 8

Joseph McGowan, who joined the group in April, was a miner.

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6Mrs. Maggie Bainbridge Brown, Alex Maxton, Will Curry. 
7Mrs. Maggie Bainbridge Brown, and others. 
8Combination of sources: Andrew Glenn, Alex Maxton, Will Curry, 
Joseph McGowan.
He came, with his family, from West Virginia where he had been employed in the mines for five years.\(^9\)

Most of the group had been in the United States for that long. Peter Doctor came in 1867 from Forfarshire, Scotland, and worked in Boston, Massachusetts and New York City before coming to Kansas. James Duncan came in the same year from the Isle of Bute-shire, Scotland, and worked in New York City.\(^10\) Maxton had come in January just before coming out to Kansas.\(^11\)

America was then the land of opportunity where money "grew on trees." When the wages in New York, marvelous as they were, proved insufficient for the winter, Kansas offered a new opportunity ---that of land, one hundred sixty acres, for the small cost of $14.\(^{50}\). It also offered a better place for the future of the children of the Scotch immigrant than did the life of the trades in the eastern states.\(^12\)

The claims were filed at Junction City. This was quite a trip to make with the facilities of the day. The final papers were taken at Concordia, making it much easier for the homesteaders. Water-ville was the nearest railroad station for some time.

Gilbert Rogers and the younger Kelly did not stay long, although Kelly was married while in the colony. Their claims were taken over by other Scotch people.\(^13\)

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\(^9\)Joseph McGowan.
\(^11\)Alex Maxton.
\(^12\)Joseph McGowan, Will Curry, Alex Maxton.
\(^13\)Alex Maxton, Mrs. J. McGlashen.
Sod and stone houses were built on the claims for the families to live in. Mrs. Bainbridge and her younger children stayed in a shack on Salt Creek while her husband and the eldest son, George, built a sod house on their claim. At one time this fourteen year old boy stayed on the claim for three days alone and without any sort of shelter to live in or anything to eat while Mr. Bainbridge walked the nine miles to Salt Creek with the sack of flour he had carried from Scandia, to have bread made.\footnote{Mrs. Maggie Bainbridge Brown.}

The Curry, Maxton, Duncan and Scott families settled on the same section. Mrs. Duncan had not come out with the group but came a few weeks later. Maxton and Curry, both stone-cutters, took the south half of the section and the other men, who were both carpenters, the north half. In the middle of the section, at the corners of the four claims, they built a stone house to serve as a fort and to live in until each might make his own home.\footnote{Alex Maxton.}

The Bainbridge home was given the name of Fort Nonsense by these men as a jest.\footnote{Mrs. Lulu Mosher, Mrs. Maggie Bainbridge Brown, Mrs. Will Curry.}

The Indians were a source of terror to these people as to the other early settlers but did not at any time prove a real menace, although a company of soldiers was camped four miles away during most of the first summer (at Scandia).\footnote{Alex Maxton, J. McGlashen, Will Curry, Joseph McGowan.}

Storms, grasshoppers and acci-
dents proved to be far more dangerous to their well being.

Mrs. Duncan had sent to New York City for her small brother, Peter Shields, to come out and keep her company. One day he walked to Belleville accompanied by George Bainbridge. On the way home, Peter was bitten by a snake and died that night despite the efforts made to save his life.\footnote{18} This was the first tragedy that came to the colony.

In September of the first year, a three day rain came and the sod houses did not prove waterproof. Some of the houses even broke apart in places and the families had to seek shelter with their better protected neighbors. This group was fortunate to get off that easily for on Salt Creek two people were drowned.\footnote{19}

The grasshopper invasions of those early years made things very difficult for these people for no vegetation was left for miles around. When the first grasshopper cloud came, one of the women, Mrs. Holt, became badly frightened and started for the home of a neighbor. When she arrived there the shawl about her shoulders and her dress were hanging in ribbons.\footnote{20}

Of course water was a prime necessity in those days and some difficulty was experienced in getting wells. Peter Doctor had the first good well on his claim and the other settlers went there for water until they had wells of their own. Mrs. Maggie Brown, a

\footnote{18}{Mrs. Maggie Bainbridge Brown.}
\footnote{19}{Ibid.}
\footnote{20}{Ibid.}
daughter of the Bainbridges, remembers that her parents got their water from Mr. Doctor, two miles across the prairie. This water was hauled by Mrs. Bainbridge and George with the aid of a wheelbarrow, a boiler and two pails. The boy tied himself to the front of the wheelbarrow and pulled while the mother held it in position.

Two of the group lost their lives in digging a well. Jack McKensie had had some experience as a sailor and was digging his well with the aid of a windless and a rope ladder. He would go down into the well on the ladder, fill a bucket with dirt and then come back to the surface to draw it up with the windless.

When his well was some thirty feet in depth, he had not worked in it for two or three days and this gave gas a chance to form. As he went down into it again he was overcome by this gas. Evidently he made some outcry, for his wife, who was in the midst of mixing her bread, went to his rescue and was also overcome. It was usual for her to go down into the well to help her husband but a neighbor, Peter Doctor, noticed that they did not come up again and went over to see if something were wrong. He could see the couple at the bottom of the well and ran toward the Bainbridge home for help. He waved to Mrs. Bainbridge, who hurried over and they called to Mr. Lowden, who attempted to go down into the well on a rope. He became so violently ill that he had to be hauled up before he reached the bottom.

Mrs. Bainbridge then took two sheets and basted them to-
gather, forming a tube. Hoops were placed in the bottom and top of this contrivance and it was lowered into the well. By raising this to the top a number of times much of the gas was removed. The gas removed was so strong that the rescuers could hardly stay near.

Mr. McGowan, who had been a miner for many years, was called. He sprinkled cold water in the well and finally succeeded in bringing the man and woman to the top, but they were both too far gone to be revived. Their homestead was taken over by Thomas Doctor, brother of Peter Doctor.

The first church of this group was the Scotch Presbyterian which was organized May 11, 1973, at the Bowling Green school house. This was one mile south of the McKensie claim. The Reverend S. G. Clark of the Highland Presbytery was the organizer. The members at the time of organization were James Lowden, Hugh Scott, Mrs. Hugh Scott, Mrs. Alexander Maxton, Elizabeth Donaldson, Mrs. Janett Curry, Mrs. James Kelly, Mrs. Mary Bainbridge, Margaret J. Hamill, R. A. Hamill, Marion Duncan, Ellen Doctor, Margaret McGuire, Janett Doctor, Ann Kerr, E. C. Baker, Helen Chalmers and Catherine Hay. Services were held in this school house until 1878, when they were taken to the school in district thirty-five, one-half mile east of the Duncan farm. A church was built in 1885 on the southwest corner of the Kenard homestead.

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21Mrs. Maggie Bainbridge Brown, Joseph McGowan, Mrs. Lulu Mosher.
The region where these Scotch people settled in their rather compact group soon came to be known as "Scotch Plains." While the members did not at any time have a village of their own they have retained their identity. None of the adult members of the original colony are now alive but several of the children who came with the group still have their residence thereabouts. Many have married members of their own nationality and the farms are for the most part known today by the names of the original owners.

For a time some of the men worked at their trades in various cities, including St. Louis, and one, at least, worked for nearly a year in New York City (James Duncan). They knew very little of farming and had to get along as best they could until they learned from experience and observation the things it is essential for a Kansas farmer to know. 23

Although little progress was made in the first five years, this group of mechanics started a colony that has developed into a community of good farmers and desirable citizens. The area containing their farms is still known as "Scotch Plains."

The Bohemian Colonies.

The Bohemian settlement in Republic County was made in two parts. One group settled in Fairview and Rose Creek Townships, Munden became its center. The other group centered about Cuba, in Jefferson and Richland Townships.

In 1870, John Rechesky with his family and his father-in-law, Mr. Kornele, came in wagons from Muscady, Wisconsin, and took a homestead near the present site of Cuba. There were not many settlers near there at that time but they came in numbers during the next two years.

Mr. Rechesky had farmed in Wisconsin and in the winter he had cut wood. The farms were small and the opportunity to get one hundred and sixty acres of land seemed a great one. Here he farmed in the summer and hauled groceries from Waterville to Belleville, being paid in salt, corn meal and soda. When a piece of bacon was included in the wages, the family felt very fortunate.

The first year the family lived on corn bread, pumpkins and cucumbers.¹

In the year of 1871 a large group came from Iowa. This wagon train contained about twenty families, most of them from

¹Mrs. Mary Barton.
Marshall County. Some of them had come from near Cedar Rapids. In Marshall County they organized, selecting John Kuchera for the leader of the trip.

The group was composed of young couples, most of them with small families. The wagons were drawn by oxen and the children walked, driving the cattle. It took about three weeks for the trip.

The following named families were in this group: Hanel, Brush, Vech, Sphlical, Drashner, Strnad, Barton, Rechesky, Sedlachek and Novak.²

They came for the better opportunities offered on the farms of the new land. Many of them had been employed in the stone quarries near Cedar Rapids, others had been shoemakers, day laborers and craftsmen of various sorts. Friends in Republic County had written of the land available in that county.³

In 1872 another group of ten or eleven families came. These were from Wisconsin. There was quite a large settlement of Bohemians in Wisconsin at that time but it was overcrowded, the farms were small and by selling a forty acre farm there one might buy a much larger farm in Kansas with the money received. The larger farm and more available land made a much better place for large families.⁴

This contingent contained the families of Wesley Kaska,

²James Barton.
³ibid.
⁴Frank Benyshek.
The first house built by the Bohemians who settled near Munden. This house was built by John Houdek in 1870. It did not then have the frame part that it now has and the roof was of grass. It housed the Houdek family of father, mother and eighteen children and was the temporary home of other Bohemian families coming to the community. It still serves as a home.
Shorney, Benyshek, John A. Kalivoda, Bart Shulda, Havel, Frank and Joe Kopsa, John Sedlachek, Hadechek, and Lethauchek. Lethauchek and John Shriva had come to the county the year before and Lethauchek went back for his family and guided the rest out. There were few homesteads available by this time.

These people did not drive through but came by train to Waterville.  

In the fall of 1869, a young man by the name of John Stransky came out from Chicago where he had been engaged in the tailoring trade. This did not pay so he came west, to Marysville first, and then on to Republic County afoot. He picked out a homestead and went back to Marshall County, Kansas. The next spring he came back, this time with a group.

These people were from near Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and had been farming there for some time. The group was made up of Frank Janosek, his wife and three children, John Houdek, his wife and sixteen children, Mr. and Mrs. Stransky and possibly others. They settled on Mill Creek, in Rose Creek Township. Houdek had four wagons, eight head of horses, twenty head of cattle, hogs, chickens and geese. He immediately built a rock house that became the home of the Bohemians that came to the community until they might con-

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5 John Kalovida, Mrs. Mary Houdek.  
6 Joe Stransky.
struct homes of their own. This family was increased by two more children and a family of eighteen was quite a large one to care for in that day. A hundred pound sack of flour lasted them four days. Bread was baked three times daily. Corn was expensive, there were no potatoes until a crop could be raised and all the flour had to be hauled from Waterville. Sunflower seed was raised to feed the chickens.

In the fall of 1871 John Vich came out from Iowa and took a homestead. A month later his brother-in-law, George Severa, came. In May, Vich went back to Iowa for the families and came back with wagons drawn by oxen and accompanied by his own family, Severa's wife and two children, his father and the families of George Hanel, Joseph Splichal. Each family had a cow tied on behind their wagon. A month was required for the trip.

Meanwhile the families of John and Wesley Rundus and Waltman had arrived. They, too, came from Cedar Rapids.

In the fall of 1870, Joe Saip, a young man from Washington County, Kansas, had come to the community and taken a homestead. He was not quite twenty-one but the land agent, for the sum of five dollars, held the claim he wanted the few months until he would be old enough to file on it.

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7 Mrs. Rosa Houdek Shimels.
8 George Severa.
9 Amos Rundus and others.
Being single he had to live on his claim but six months of the year, so he went back to his people for a part of the time. In 1872 his father, with the family, Henry Pacta and family, Frant Broctel and family, Barta and family, and John Kuchera came on to Republic County for homesteads.

The Saip family had lived in Iowa in a Communist Dutch Colony. The entire Saip family had been employed and lived with the colony. They had started for a homestead two years before but Mrs. Saip had refused to go farther than Washington County when she heard of the Indian dangers farther west. ¹⁰

An available homestead in the community was watched eagerly by two young people who would soon be of age. Rosa Houdek was the one first to reach the required age and she filed for it but she married a man who had a claim so the rights to one claim had to be given up, since a man and his wife could not both take homesteads. The one belonging to the girl was retained because it had wood and water, and the rights to the other were sold for ninety dollars to the young man who had hoped to homestead it. ¹¹

Most of the Bohemian settlers in Republic County came from near Prague in Czechoslovakia. Living was a difficult matter in that country then. Farms were very small and the young people could

¹⁰George Says.
¹¹ibid.
not hope to stay on the farm but must learn a trade of some sort or become day laborers. Children would be sent to different communities and apprenticed to learn the trades of that community or of a particular family. Mrs. Saip had been sent to a German family to learn the German language. She received the equivalent of twenty dollars a year for the work she did in this family. ¹²

Other reasons for leaving Czechoslovakia to come to America were the conscription and military training to which young men were subject and the accounts that came to them from friends in the United States of the size of the farms available here. ¹³

The group settling in Republic County came here either from Wisconsin or Iowa. Kansas offered larger farms at a lower price than either of these states and also offered free land for a time. Not many of them could afford to buy land at the prices in either of those states and had to work in quarries and as laborers. Those that had farms could sell them and buy much larger ones—large enough that their sons might have land—for the price they received. ¹⁴

The Bohemian people love their farms. They seldom sell land; more often they buy it, regardless of the sacrifices neces-

¹²George Saip.
¹³Combination of sources: George Saip, George Severa, Frank Janosek.
¹⁴Combination of sources: George Saip, Frank Benychek, John Kalivoda, Mrs. Mary Houdek.
sary. They like for their sons to settle on farms next their own and will pay a large price to make this possible.\textsuperscript{15}

Life for them was rather difficult for their first years in Kansas, although they probably knew more of farming than did any of the other groups that came and more of them came equipped to farm.

Food was rather difficult to get until a crop had been raised. They lived on corn bread, rye, shorts bread, melons, parched corn coffee, coffee essence and they used molasses for sugar. Flour was \$3.50 for a hundred pounds.\textsuperscript{16}

The first crop usually consisted of corn, melons and potatoes. The second year rye, wheat and other crops were added. Oxen were used to break the sod on most claims. They were driven without lines, the familiar "gee, haw and whoa" being used to guide them. In hot weather they were rather difficult to manage if a water hole was near for they liked to lie in the water.\textsuperscript{17}

Texas cattle were driven through in the early years, headed a little west of north. The Bohemians did not know where these cattle came from or where they were going. The herds were large, taking a long time to pass and leaving a trail an inch or so deep in passing.\textsuperscript{18} Stragglers from the herds were gathered up by the

\textsuperscript{15}George Severa.
\textsuperscript{16}George Severa, Mrs. Mary Barton, George Saip.
\textsuperscript{17}James Barton.
\textsuperscript{18}Frank Janasek.
farmers and broken to work.\textsuperscript{19}

Grain was cut with a scythe, picked up and tied into bundles. It was threshed on the hard ground with the aid of poles, then fanned in the wind. It could be ground at the mill in Scandia. Hay for the horses and cattle was also cut with the cythe, raked up with garden rakes and stacked by hand.\textsuperscript{20}

There were no good roads. Mail and supplies came from Waterville, Kansas, and Fairbury, Nebraska. A stage line came through from Waterville every other day.\textsuperscript{21}

The first settlers to come filed their homestead papers at the land office at Waterville but by 1872 there was a land office at Concordia. Mr. Drakek, a land agent who spoke many languages, walked to Concordia with some of these people to assist them in filling their claims.\textsuperscript{22}

Two Indian scares in the early seventies proved to be false alarms. These people had no forts or block houses and few guns but the only Indians they ever saw were those begging for food. Even begging Indians frightened the women and children very much, and had no difficulty in getting anything for which they asked.\textsuperscript{23}

No buffalo were seen this side of the river, but buffalo bones were everywhere. These animals could still be killed west of

\textsuperscript{19} Mrs. Mary Barton.
\textsuperscript{20} George Severa.
\textsuperscript{21} James Barton.
\textsuperscript{22} George Severa, George Saip.
\textsuperscript{23} Mrs. Mary Barton, James Barton, Mrs. Mary Houdek, Mrs. Rosa Shimek.
the Republican River and in the sloughs the buffalo bones might be seen in large piles. 24

Storms, prairie fires and grasshoppers all took their toll. When the grasshoppers came, an effort was made to save the gardens and cabbage by wrapping and covering with sacks, but the hoppers age sacks and all. 25

The amount of money a family had on coming to the settlement might easily be determined by the sort of place in which it lived. If it were at all possible, a sod or stone house was made. The dugouts were apt to be flea ridden and snakes were often found in the beds and on the floors. A bull dog belonging to one family dug holes in the dugout roof and put his feet through when they became cold during the night.

Clothes were difficult to secure. Children went bare-foot until freezing weather and the men often had to wrap their feet in sacks to protect them. It was impossible to buy dry goods. Clothes had to be made over for the children. 26 No overcoats were owned by the children and, after schools were organized, many of the children could not go if the weather were very cold because they had not enough clothing. One man told of never having owned a heavy coat until he was twenty years of age. 27

24 George Severa, Mrs. Mary Barton.
25 Mrs. Mary Barton.
26 George Severa.
27 George Saip.
The men sometimes went to St. Joe, Missouri, to work in
the winter and it was quite common for the young people to go there
to work, even the young girls.28

In the fall of 1873 a group of men including Hanel, Vich,
Houdek, Jehlik, Klabzuba and Severa walked all the way to St. Joe
for work. Even there they did not get full time work. 29

Wood was rather difficult to get. Often it had to be hauled
for ten to fifteen miles.30

The story of George Severa, one of the few early homestead-
ers remaining, gives a vivid picture of the life of the emigrant from
Czechoeslovakia who came to Republic County.

George Severa was born in the village of Chatovice, Litomysl
County, Czechoslovakia. Following the death of his parents he worked
for his older brothers and sisters for five years and, at the age of
twenty, went to the military training camp. This training was re-
quired of all young men. During his year and one-half in training he
fought in a battle against Prussia.

Following this he farmed his little plot of land, about one
acre, and took up stone masonry in his spare time. After his marriage
his wife's brothers and sisters in America urged them to come to the
States. His own sisters were warning him of the dangers of such a

28 Mrs. Wenzie Jehlik.
29 George Severa.
30 Ibid.
trip but, in hopes of bettering their conditions, he started with his wife, Rosalie, their little daughter, his wife's father and another Czeck family from Bremen, Germany. They reached New York on May 17, 1871. After coming on to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, by train, he heard of the homestead law. Taking out his first naturalization papers and leaving his family with his wife's relatives near Cedar Rapids, he set out alone for Kansas.

He had been given a map by a friend with which to guide his journey. At Waterville he found many friendly people who were glad to see settlers coming. A Czech family there gave him lodging for the night and the next day he went on, afoot now, for the railroad went no farther. He found and staked out a homestead near that of his brother-in-law, north and east of Belleville, in Fairview Township.

Only four families were living in the neighborhood. He lived with the Janasek family during the mild winter, helping the different settlers with the construction of their sod and log cabins and working up a small strip of his own land for potatoes.

In the spring the brother-in-law, John Vich, went to Iowa for the families, several other families coming out at the same time. The two families lived in the Vich cabin until Severa completed his sod house. It was small, had one door, one window and a dirt floor.

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31 The families of Houdek, Janasek, Stransky, and one other.
One good bed had been brought from Iowa and the father made another rude one from boards. Rocks were piled together to make a rude oven for baking.

In the fall Severa and Hanel, one of his neighbors, went to Waterville for supplies. The trip took ten days and the families ran out of food and had to borrow corn meal to live on until their return. On this trip the two men bought a pig in partnership. The second fall, Mr. Severa went with a group of men to St. Joe, Missouri, to work. Here he earned enough money to buy a second-hand cook stove.

It was four or five years before he was able to get a team of horses. Then he secured one by trading seven or eight head of cattle for it. During all this time the old father-in-law was the source of much encouragement.

Most of these Bohemians had been brought up as Roman Catholics and did not lose their faith in the hardships of the frontier. St. Isadore's Catholic Church was organized at Cuba in 1878.32 In the group near Munden, prayer meetings were held at the various homes and a French Father from St. Joe, Missouri, came once a month to say mass at these homes. In 1888 seven of these families built a church, St. George's. It cost $600, a large sum for that time, but was paid for immediately by the families and by donations they had solicited.33

The Bohemian church at Cuba was organized in 1876 but meet-

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33 George Severa.
ings had been held previously in the Tabor neighborhood. In 1888 this church was divided, part staying at Cuba under the Presbytery and the other part going to Munden as the Independent Bohemian Re-form church. 34

Cuba was laid out in the spring of 1884 and Munden in September of 1887 35 but the Bohemians had a store before that at Tabor, a small village no longer existent. 36

As the western part of Republic County is Scandinavian, so the eastern part is Bohemian. The Bohemians have spread over the county probably more than any of the other groups, but the eastern part of the county still remains distinctly Bohemian.

They are still for the most part farmers although many of the younger generation have taken up other occupations and some are business men in their towns. Many of the young women are school teachers. Most of the young people go to high school, many of them go to college and quite a number have developed into musicians of exceptional ability.

36 George Saip.
Town 2 south, Range 3 west.

Freedom Township

Scholes

Church

John Rost Shymanski

Cecil Rost Kerstine

Wenceslau Frank Jehlik

Jehlik

Levandowski

The Polish Colony.
The Polish Colony.

The last of the early group settlements to be made in Republic County was that of the Polish, late in the year of 1870. These Poles, with the exception of one of their number, bought their land, for homesteads were no longer available.

The first group to come included:

Frank Uschler, wife and at least one son, Frank.
John Rost and family including two or three sons.
Micheal Levondofski and family.
John Shymanski and family.
John Kerstine and family,- five sons.
Lawrence Levondofski (son of Michael).
Wenzel Jehilik.
Casper Jehilik.
Frank Jehilik.

The three Jehiliks, who were brothers, were not Polish but Bohemian. They came with the group and settled with them, however.

These people, who came from St. Joe, Missouri, settled in the northwest part of Freedom Township. Some of the older men drove out with teams but the younger ones came on the train.

The Rost, Shymanski and Uschler families came from the same part of Poland but the other families came from different places. They had met and formed their group in St. Joe where they

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1Frank Uschler homesteaded his place.
2Frank Konovolski.
worked in the rolling mills and packing houses. They had read of
the land in Kansas in the papers.  

The group was joined by other Poles in the course of a few
years until it numbered twenty-five families. Albert Konavolski, Joe
Dunback, Lawrence Tarcowski and other families came to Republic
County from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1872. The men had worked
in the rolling mills there for six or seven years. Work was plenti-
ful and the wages were quite good but a strike was on and they could
not work so they came out to buy farms.  

Other families to come were Mrs. Anna Swierchenski with
two daughters and two sons—Edward and Frank, and the families of
Peter, Peter, Jr., Joseph, and John Wendy.

Some new members came directly from the old country. If
a man here was in need of a farm hand he would write back to some
of his family or friends, at his old home. These men who came
would work as hands until they could pay or start to pay for a farm
and so the settlement grew.  

The part of Poland from which these people came was at that
time under the government of Germany. The Poles were not well treat-
ed and many of them came to the United States. Here they worked for
a time in the mills and factories of the eastern cities and then
went to farms farther west.  

Those who came to Republic County had,

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3 op. cit.
4 ibid.
5 Frank Heyka.
6 ibid.
with a few exceptions, worked for a time in St. Joe, Missouri, where
they had read in the papers of the land to be had in Kansas.\textsuperscript{7}

These people were not well educated for the Germans had not
permitted that. Most of them had been farm laborers in Poland or had
hired out at other work. Casper Jehilik had been trained as a cabinet
maker.

The group lived close together, in dugouts for a time. The
men farmed in the summer but continued to go to St. Joe, Missouri,
in the winter to work in the factories, leaving their families to
tend the farms.\textsuperscript{8}

These people were Catholic and in 1874 they organized the
St. Josaphat Catholic Church. Services were held once a month at
the home of John Shymanski. In 1883, a church was built on the
Frank Uschler farm and services were held there for many years.\textsuperscript{9}
Now this church has been abandoned for the larger one in Belleville.

Although but two of the early group are now living, the
identity of the community is retained. It is still Polish. The
first and second generations were farmers and quite prosperous ones.
They owned their farms, with few exceptions. The third and fourth
generations are changing somewhat. Some are farmers but many of
them have taken up other occupations. Most of this younger group
have high school educations and many of them go to college.

\textsuperscript{7}Frank Konovalski.
\textsuperscript{8}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{9}Savage, History of Republic County, Kansas. p. 218.
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Books


The only early printed material available, but contains accounts of only those settlers who paid the author a stated amount of money ($10.).


Of questionable value because some of the information was found to be inaccurate.

Newspaper Articles


Warren, Ellen Morlan. Tom Lovewell, Government Scout. (In the Belleville Telescope, April 6, 1933.)

Of value in drawing the background for the group settlements.

Articles.

Written for him by his daughter, Miss Agnes Glenn. (Not published.)

Of great value.

Larsen, Carl. Article recounting the life of his grandfather, Andrew Johnson Floodberg, and incidents of the early Scandinavian Settlement. Written from the grandfather's own account.

(Not published.) 1933.

Valuable.

Strom, Peter. New Scandinavia. (Not published.)

Of much value on the early Swedish settlement.

Letters.

Brown, Mrs. Maggie Bainbridge. Omaha, Nebraska. January, 1933.

Valuable. Mrs. Brown was the daughter of John Bainbridge, one of the members of the Second Excelsior Colony.


An account of the life of his father, Sidney Pearce, and affirmation of the account of Andrew Glenn. Certain documents and papers used by Mr. Pearce made it of increased value and accuracy.


Valuable. An account of the life of her grandfather, George
Severa, and incidents of the early Bohemian settlement near Munden, written with the aid of a number of questions. Mr. Severa does not speak English, and is too old to talk a great deal at one time so this material was secured over a period of several days.

Interviews.

Barton, James. Cuba, Kansas, April, 1933.

Mr. Barton was one of an early group of Bohemians coming from near Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and settling near Cuba. Valuable.

Barton, Mrs. Mary. Cuba, Kansas, April, 1933.

Mrs. Barton was the daughter of one of the first settlers near Cuba. Valuable.

Benyshek, Frank. Cuba, Kansas, November, 1932.

One of the early Bohemian settlers near Cuba, from Wisconsin.

Carstenson, Louise. Belleville, Kansas, April, 1933.

Abstractor. Valuable source of information concerning the placing of early homesteads in the maps. Also of sources of documentary evidence available.

Childs, Mrs. Jessie. Belleville, Kansas, October, 1932 and January, 1933.

Mrs. Childs was the only child coming with the First Excelsior Colony.

Curry, Will. Rydal, Kansas, April, 1933.

Son of one of the members of the Second Excelsior Colony. Ver-
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Mrs. Childs was the only child coming with the First Excelsior Colony.

Curry, Will. Rydal, Kansas, April, 1933.

Son of one of the members of the Second Excelsior Colony. Ver-
ified and cleared much of the information from other sources.

Curry, Mrs. Will. Rydal, Kansas, April, 1933.

Daughter of James Lowden.


Valuable. Mr. Floodberg is one of the few remaining members of the Scandinavian Society and the only one it was possible to interview. He does not speak English so the interview was carried on through the aid of his grandson, Carl Larsen.


Miss Glenn was a great help in giving information and in getting information from her father, Andrew Glenn. She was also an aid in getting sources of other information.


Valuable. The one man remaining who was a member of the First Excelsior Colony.

Heyka, Frank. Belleville, Kansas. April, 1933.

Valuable. Information concerning the conditions in Poland causing the Poles to leave and the early conditions and reactions of the Polish settlement in Republic County.


Mrs. Houdek came to the Cuba settlement as a young girl in 1871.

Valuable source of information concerning the Scandinavian settlement. He came there as a boy in 1870.


Son of one of the earliest settlers of the settlement near Munden. Valuable.

Jehilik, Mrs. Wengel. Belleville, Kansas. April, 1933.

The daughter of John Houdek and the wife of Wengel Jehilik, one of the first group of Polish settlers.


An early settler near Cuba.

Kanovalski, Frank. Belleville, Kansas. April, 1933.

Valuable source of information concerning the Polish settlement.


 Came to Scotch Plains as a small child in 1869.

McClaschen, Mr. and Mrs. J. Rydal, Kansas. January, 1933.

 Cleared up and verified other information.

Mosher, Mrs. Lulu D. Belleville, Kansas. December, 1932 and January, 1933.
Valuable for suggestions as to sources of information concerning the colony on Scotch Plains. Mrs. Mosher lived there as a child.

Son of one of the early settlers near Munden.

Valuable information.

Shimek, Mrs. Rose. Munden, Kansas. April, 1933.
Of value. Mrs. Shimek was the eldest daughter of John Houdek.

The son of one of the earliest groups to settle near Munden.

The daughter of Bart Shulda, one of the early settlers near Cuba.

A most valuable source of information. Mr. Strom was the son of one of the members of the Scandinavian Agricultural Society and was himself one of the first group of children to join the colony. He has made the preservation of early articles of all sorts and of early history his hobby.

Came to the Scandinavian colony as a small child in the spring of 1869. Valuable for the side of early history omitted by the men. A child in the first school at Scandia.