

THE *State His Society* WESTERN KANSAS WORLD

30th Year. Subscription \$1. Wa-Keeney, Kans., Mar. 21, 1908. H. S. Givler, Prop. Number 3

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EARLY OGALLAH.

By C. C. Yetter, Manager Ellis and Trego County Telephone Company.

From Club Member, Topeka, Kansas.

DEAR EDITOR OF THE CLUB MEMBER:—If apology is wanting for my effort to break into the columns of THE CLUB MEMBER with a few reminiscent incidents of the early settlements of Western Kansas, it will be up to you to make that apology.

Kansas Day, generally noted in our schools, gives rise to the occasion for many an old settler to take a retrospective view of things as they were here twenty-eight and thirty years ago, and what they are now. We instinctively heave a sigh of relief while we announce, "We guess there's quite a change."

Twenty-nine years ago on a cold, dismal day in the early part of February, the writer with his effects, which consisted principally of faith, hope, and courage, was landed at a blind siding then known as Ogallah, near where he had filed on a piece of Government land. It was late in the evening, a stiff breeze was driving the sleet and snow spitefully into our face no matter what way we turned.

A longing look in every direction for some place of refuge for the night was met only (to our mind's eye) by the most blank and supreme desolation we had ever beheld. The threatening clouds above, the bare earth below, and two streaks of rust called the Kansas Pacific Railroad, was all we could look up to or down to to build our future hopes upon. Separated by 600 miles from our family and with such a prospect in sight we reflected, had a man not as well be caught in an ocean without compass, rudder, or sail? In fact, had he not as well be drowned?

But that hope which nerves us all in our crucial trials backed by faith in ourselves, both of which we must have if we would surmount great difficulties, these are the elements that have made the early homeseeker stay by his claim after taking it. The stayers are here now as independent and comfortably situated as can be found anywhere in our whole country.

You told us to tell this without any attempt at oratory but just as we would talk it. It was indeed kind of you to give us this much latitude, so you will pardon us for going back after those reminiscent incidents.

In our ambitious haste to tell you what a great people we of the short-grass country are now I nearly forgot to tell you what we used to be. I am going to whisper it softly to you but do not tell any one lest we might be called the woolly west. We did not camp on the prairie at the time before mentioned else the reader of this humble effort would never have heard of us.

The coyotes were too numerous in those times to allow us to indulge in outdoor slumber at night. Forty brass bands at high-tide parade could not equal in noise a few hundred of those coyotes. We have ever advocated retreat when retreat was the easiest thing to do, so we returned to Ellis and started out the next day under more favorable circumstances.

In going over the country to look up our claim we had heard of a goodly number of settlers on our route. Come to investigate, the most of them had burrowed into the ground for the winter. I will describe one of these dwellings as briefly as I can. One of these burrowed shacks, as we called them (a plain 10 by 12 foot cellar), was dug into a bank, called by some a side-hill, to the depth of seven or eight feet. Across this joists were placed, then brush, straw and clay which constituted the roof. A hole was dug down on the outside for a chimney, which after being sodded up a way, completed the structure. After the steps were put down a half window was placed somewhere around the wall to afford a little light. There was not much whitewash used

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about this bungalow. Indeed, water was scarce and washing kind of went out of fashion, or at least so it appeared when one looked in upon the surroundings. The dust that sifted in and the dirt that seemed to find its way into everything made life a thing to be dreaded. In hunting up the settlers, and to better acquaint ourselves with conditions, we came upon a family, noted in later years in Kansas politics, in a little boarded-up-and-down cabin whose first year's experience is worthy of some notice.

A few weeks after erecting their first domicile there swooped down on them one day a small cyclone which lifted the house up into the air, taking the wife and one child with it to the height of fifteen or twenty feet, then going 'sto pieces, the man being out somewhere near. As the fragments of the house scattered around the man soon discovered the wife holding to the child in the torrents of rain then coming down. After gathering them up and providing the best shelter that he could for them he ventured to inquire of the wife if she wanted to go back where they came from. Her answer was not if she had to take the same route she had been over just a while before—meaning the straight-up route.

We could fill chapters of heroic reckoning of this Western county. It is, however, but little more than the repetition of the history of the advance guard of civilization in the development of this as well as other great commonwealths.

Sunday School Convention.

Ogallah township Sunday school convention at Swedish Lutheran church at 2 p. m. Sunday, March 29, 1908.

Opening song—Lutheran school.

Bible reading—P. A. Nelson. Invocation—John Saleen. Song—School.

What constitutes good order in Sunday school?—T. C. Roberts. Song—Misses Nelson and Ella Olson.

Geography of this quarter's lesson—Herman E. Saleen. Song—Mrs. C. D. Yetter and Mrs. David Artz.

What are best things that result from home department work?—Mrs. R. C. Wilson. Song—Misses Jessie Harvey and Nellie Humphries.

Who should belong to the teachers' training class?—Mrs. John Allman.

What ideas have I gained and made use of in primary work during the past year?—By primary teachers led by Mrs. W. A. Tawney.

Song—School. Recitation—Amanda Nelson.

Address—J. H. Niesley. Business meeting.

Teachers' Meeting.

Trego County Teacher's Association will be held at Wa-Keeney, instead of Collyer, March 28, 1908.

Song—America. Invocation. Roll call—Quotations from chapter 7 and 8.

Address—J. H. Deatrich.

Music. Recitation—Irene Acre.

Morals and habits—J. H. Niesley.

Music—Miss Eaton.

School government—H. B. Graves.

Music. Business.

Library Notes.

Mrs. A. L. Gleason has given the library two volumes—"With Fire and Sword" by Zienkiewicz, one of a trilogy of historical novels of Poland; also a juvenile, one of Henty's of the Civil war time.

Mrs. Kelly has given most of the numbers of Lippincott's magazine for 1907.

Mrs. Pierson has presented

St. Nicholas for January, February and March. The Tourist club has subscribed for that magazine for the coming year for the young folks.

We learn that the Hill City ladies club is planning for a Carnegie library, one of their citizens having offered them a lot whereon to build.

Notice to Teachers and School Pupils.

As the Kansas Book Company wishes to close up their exchange account by April 1, 1908, those who wish to exchange old books will please bring them in before that time.

MRS. IDA PIERSON,
Agent for Kansas Book Co.

Tuesday, March 24th, the Presbyterian Aid society will receive 10 per cent of all cash sales at Moore's store. Our new spring and summer goods have arrived. We also have in stock the Ladies' Home Journal patterns. A complete line of men's and boys' suits, hats, caps and oxfords. These are all new and up-to-date styles.

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Pure made home lard at Baker's.

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