

History of Buffalo County and Its People
VOLUME I
by Samuel Clay Bassett

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ODESSA TOWNSHIP--TOWN NO. 9, RANGE NO. 17

Also that portion of town No. 8, range No. 17, embraced within the limits of Buffalo County.

1871--Dan A. Crowell, B. Allen Crowell.

1872--R. D. Gould, J. Zerk, D. Brown, E. Christianson, C. Christianson, J. F. Suplee, S. Tolefsen, R. Vails, S. W. Homer, Flora Thomas, H. Brown, J. B. Vincent, M. Fagley, H. F. Leonard, Wm. C. T. Kurth, Geo. W. Tovey, J. Ratliff, M. Homer, J. E. F. Vails, John D. Seaman.

1873--C. S. Greenman, E. N. Lord, Geo. D. Aspinwall, George Hall, R. F. Watters, Theodore Knox, James Sturrock, A. Ream, J. E. Chidester, J. Homer, Jr.

1874--James Halliwell, D. Harpst, John T. Brown, Edward Keltner, Wm. F. Reeves, J. M. Grant, Thomas Maloney.

1875--George Jones.

1876--H. Ransom, Catherine Edwards.

1878--F. W. Nickols, J. Vails, George A. Bailey, Susan C. Hurlburt, R. D. Gould, D. Hostetler, H. H. Achey, Susan Grant, L. C. Skelley, Ada Grant.

1879--J. Segard, John Davis, W. Broat, Cordelia M. Waite, J. B. Neal, John Work, George T. Broughton, Wm. H. McNutt.

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ODESSA TOWNSHIP

What in 1915 is known as Odessa Township was in 1866-71 known as Stevenson's Siding and later Crowellton.

The first to take homesteads in that locality were Dan A. Crowell and D. Allen Crowell, in 1871; R. D. Gould, J. Zerk, D. Brown, E. and C. Christianson, J. F. Suplee, S. Tolefsen, R. Vails, S. W. Homer, Flora Thomas, H. Brown, J. B. Vincent, H. F. Leonard, William C. T. Kurth, George W. Tovey, J. Ratliff, M. Homer, J. E. F. Vails, John D. Seamen, in 1872; C. S. Greenman, E. N. Lord, George D. Aspinwall, George Hall, R. F. Watters, Theodore Knox, James Sturrock, A. Ream, J. E. Chidester, J. Homer, Jr., in 1873; James Halliwell, D. Harpst, John T. Brown, Edward Keltner, William F. Reeves, J. M. Grant, Thomas Maloney, in 1874; George Jones, H. Ransom, Catherine Edwards, in 1876; F. W. Nichols, J. Vails, George A. Bailey, Susan C. Hurlburt, D. Hostetler, H. H. Achey, Susan Grant, L. C. Skelley and Adah Grant, in 1878.

D. Allen Crowell and Dan A. Crowell were twins, D. Allen being an active, prominent minister in the Methodist Church, serving as pastor of the Methodist Church at Kearney in the early '70s, as recalled at the period when the first church building was erected in

the city. Dan A. Crowell served as county superintendent, county commissioner and taught in the Kearney schools. John D. Seaman served as state senator. George D. Aspinwall was the first to be elected and serve as clerk, of the District Court, and J. E. Chidester served as county commissioner.

It is recalled that Thomas Maloney was one of the first licensed teachers in the county. It is related that Mrs. Theodore Knox selected the name Odessa to take the place of Crowellton as the name of the township, or rather precinct. Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Knox settled at Gibbon in the winter of 1871-72, and kept boarders during the period in which the courthouse was being erected, and the editor moved the family to their homestead claim near Crowellton in March, 1873.

Mrs. Susan Grant, who took a homestead claim in the precinct in 1878, was of pioneer stock. She was widely known and highly respected.

Several members of her family settled in that vicinity in an early day, and many of her descendants still reside there. Three of her daughters are Mrs. J. D. Seaman, Mrs. E. R. Webb and Mrs. D. Harpst. Mrs. C. V. D. Basten of Kearney is a granddaughter.

SUSAN CARR GRANT

Susan Carr was of a family of Virginians who moved by wagon through mountains and forests and settled in the Western Reserve about the year Ohio became a state, that is, in 1808. Benjamin Carr, her father, had sold his slaves. One of the slaves, the nurse, followed on foot in peril of lurking savages, and in greater danger of starvation. The poor creature lived on roots and berries, ravenously breaking eggs in a nest she found only to discover that they contained half-hatched serpents. She brought a silver spoon to the baby of the Carr family. It would be happiness to record that she gained her freedom. Alas, for the cruelty of slavery, she was promptly deported back to her new master. Susan Carr was born in Ohio 100 years ago, March 15, 1816. She always retained traces of Virginia and of the southern life in her speech, her manners and unbounded hospitality.

She married Michael Grant in 1838 and had the usual large family of that period. Fated to the life of a pioneer, they left Ohio and its comforts to clear new land and open up a great new farm. She was indefatigable and efficient, and lived on a large scale in crude abundance. She attended to the huge Dutch oven, watched over the dryhouse, made maple sugar and tallow candles. She raised three orphan children at different times in Ohio. In Indiana she took an Irish family of three orphans into her home at once. Two of these orphans, the Maloneys, came to Nebraska with her. They settled at Crowellton, now Odessa, on the land now owned by E. R. Webb, who is her son-in-law.

Susan Grant lived there, seeing to any changes in her family and neighborhood, for eighteen years. No longer young, she nevertheless, by her broad sympathy, brave cheer, good business ability and generosity, bettered the little frontier community.

She was of helpful service to every life within reach of her beneficent influence. Such lives are not forgotten. She died December 3, 1891, at the age of seventy-five. It falls to the lot of few women to leave a memory more cherished in the hearts of her descendants.

School District No. 12 was organized by C. Putnam, county superintendent, October 17, 1872. The district embraced all of range No. 17 in Buffalo County.

Notification was sent (J.) Marsh Grant, a taxable inhabitant therein, as per form in the law provided.

The records disclose that in July, 1873, this district had eighteen children of school age, and that J. Marsh Grant was serving as director of the district.

REMINISCENCES
Mrs. C. V. D. Basten

It was February 13, 1873, a little girl, traveling westward with her father and mother over the newly completed "B. & M. R. R. in Nebraska," as it was called then, was anxiously peering into the night as the train approached Kearney Junction. A gentleman, noticing her excitement and curiosity, talked to her about the new country--Indians, buffalo, prairie fires and prairie-dog towns, etc. He had been in the country five years as station agent at Elm Creek, Mr. D. C. Bond. He had seen buffalo shot from a cabin doorway as a herd of them stampeded through the little pioneer settlement. He transmitted, by telegraph, the account of the Sioux-Pawnee battle at Brady Island, transmitting and receiving on an old-fashioned paper-ribbon telegraph instrument. He told how glad he was to see settlers come in. It was Mr. Bond's privilege, as the hard years came on, to stand by the settlers. In 1874 he brought out a car load of flour and let them have it to pay for when they could.

The little girl's father took a pre-emption and bought an equal amount of railroad land at Crowellton, which was the first station east of Elm Creek. Mr. Bond thus became a neighbor and a highly esteemed friend through many years. Crowellton was only a place where mail was thrown off.

If the conductor was complaisant he would let passengers off, but sometimes he would compel them to alight at Stevenson, three miles farther east. Stevenson had a section house, Crowellton had a postoffice, in the house of Mrs. Susan Grant, which was also the social center of the neighborhood. Her son, J. Marsh Grant, had a library of 300 volumes--high, serious in character--forcing borrowers to read Doctor Kane's "Arctic Explorations," Hugh Miller's "Red Sandstone" and Dryden's poems when they would have much preferred the current novels of the day. Jules Verne's "Around the World in Eighty Days" came out at that time. We much enjoyed the description of the highly improbable sail-sled ride between Plum Creek and Omaha. Besides the books the Grants had the only sewing machine, in the neighborhood, and they loaned it as freely as the books; it went from one house to another--was rarely at home and lasted two years.

Almost the first thing erected was a schoolhouse, which the wind promptly blew away, leaving the floor. It was as promptly rebuilt, and Thomas Maloney resumed his school. Some of his pupils were Adah Grant, Estelle Grant, Maggie Maloney, Adah Seaman, Harry Seaman, Josephine Halliwell, Jessie Greenman, Lizzie Vail and her brother. The Vails were English, one brother, a bachelor, was a doctor. They had a comfortable sod house and a large family. The Sturrocks were related; James Sturrock, a nephew, by trade a plasterer. The young wife, a good looking young dressmaker, came direct from England to take land--lived in one room with a shed roof, in the bottoms. Mrs. Sturrock gave us a graphic account of how she trod on a skunk when we paid her our first call.

The two families, Vails and Sturrocks, went almost immediately to California, though the Sturrocks lived a while in Kearney.

Mr. Greenman and others started a Sunday school which met at the schoolhouse. It was attended by everybody in the neighborhood.

Mr. Lord, a relative of the Goulds, and a theological student, preached there sometimes, and a homesteader by the name of J. B. Vincent wanted to; he was a religious fanatic, came to the meeting with a 12-pound clasped Bible. Mr. Lord happened to state that the Bible was not originally written in English; this Mr. Vincent indignantly denied. Another religious fanatic, a man by the name of Mitchell, boarded with Mrs. Catherine Edwards, mother of the Reeves boys, William, James and David. This Mitchell used to speak at meetings held during a revival by Reverend Mr. Summers (afterward pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Kearney). He would become greatly excited--a soul under conviction. One day detectives came out from Illinois and arrested him for murder.

Prof. D. B. Worley of Gibbon taught singing school at the schoolhouse in the winter of 1874. He drove through to Overton, where he had some land. A literary society was started the same year in which budding oratory was encouraged. Amateur theatricals, attended by wagon loads of young people from Elm Creek, were the gala occasions. Dancing parties were not infrequent at the homes of the settlers in both communities, Odessa and Elm Creek.

Almost the first to erect shacks and live at Crowellton were the Brown brothers. One of them, D. Brown, left his wife, an intrepid little woman, while he worked on the railroad. Wandering groups of Pawnees were always peering in at her windows and begging persistently. Entirely alone, she was not frightened, which is more than can be said for other women better protected. Mrs. Brown went miles after her cow, which drifted away in the big April storm of '73; herded the cow back and saved her. Henry Brown afterwards moved with his family to Kearney. The Christianson brothers built a house that was afterwards used as a schoolhouse in East Odessa. The Homer and Harpst families were related; came from Pennsylvania and returned there after a short stay, probably two or three years. The Clellands took up railroad land in 1874.

George W. Tovey was an 1872 settler on the land afterwards occupied by Theodore Knox, later known as the John Neal farm. Mr. Tovey was large of frame--brown-eyed and slow of speech. He would never commit himself; would always qualify every statement he made, and was a favorite of the young people. He and his homesteading partner, whose name is forgotten, would have responded more often to social demands, but they were obliged to accept alternately, as they possessed but one white shirt between them.

George D. Aspinwall was the second school teacher. He was a brother-in-law of J. E. Chidester. Other relatives by the name of Ransom came from Wisconsin and were well known citizens of the district and county for many years. Richard Waters lives on the homestead he settled on in 1873--probably the longest continuous residence in that neighborhood.

James Halliwell, an Englishman from Altoona, Pa., attained a great age, in the nineties. His farm is occupied by Roy Knap. His son, Samuel Halliwell, lives in the neighborhood.

J. M. Grant, Silas Grant and Thomas Maloney came to Odessa in 1872. By mistake they broke out R. D. Gould's land and wasted a year of hard work. Their land was a mile farther west. They built the house now occupied by E. R. Webb. J. M. Grant is now in Washington. Silas Grant went to Cabool, Mo., and died there July 17, 1908, one of the richest and best beloved citizens. His wife, Maggie Maloney, preceded him by ten years.

Thomas Maloney left Odessa in the spring of 1877. He has lived in Washington and Arkansas, and is now superintendent of a Government reclamation project in Phoenix,

Ariz.

The Acheys and the Hostetlers were brothers-in-law, afterwards moving to Kearney; have relatives living in Kearney; the Lantz and Feathers' families being descendants. L. C. Skelley occupied two places; the first purchased of Thomas Maloney for \$500, which they sold. They then lived for some years on what is now known as the Rall place; this they traded for a farm in Iowa. They are passing their declining years, having reared a family of six sons, all settled in Kansas City, Mo. Cordelia M. Waite came with her father and several brothers, and sisters, from Michigan. Cordelia, a quiet, refined girl, taught school on Wood River, northeast of Kearney, boarding in a sod house with a lean-to bedroom. This addition separated from the main building one night when she was sleeping. The ridge pole fell across her, killing her.

The noise of the falling structure was not heard by the family. They discovered her in the morning with her cheek lying on her hand, just as she had slept.

George Hall lived but a short time in Odessa, moving to Illinois. Mrs. Hall's brother shot a buffalo in the hills north of Odessa in 1873. A deer was killed about the same place in 1872, weighing 200 pounds dressed. In 1874 Silas Grant, with a companion, hunted 100 miles farther west, and brought home venison and buffalo and a large number of buffalo robes. The buffalo meat was dried and lasted all summer.

John B. Neal settled on the Theadore Knox place in 1877, and lived there until 1903; had a family of eight children, five of whom are living. He was a successful farmer and a good citizen. He and his wife are living in Lents, a suburb of Portland, Ore. Two of his children, Sadie and Roy, live in Portland, Ben in Odessa, Henry in Kearney, Mentie in Wisconsin.

Volume 1, No. 5

Buffalo County Historical Society

May, 1978

RAILROADS IN BUFFALO COUNTY

by Alice Howell

The early stations on the Union Pacific route in Buffalo County were Shelton, Gibbon Switch, Kearney Station (near present day Buda, the least distant for passengers bound for Fort Kearny), Stevenson's Siding, Crowellton (present day Odessa), and Elm Creek

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EARLY POST OFFICES IN BUFFALO COUNTY

by Alice Shaney Howell

When the Union Pacific became the carrier of mail, post offices were established along the railroad; the first was at **Kearney Station**, near present Buda, December 3, 1868. Although a busy railroad station carrying passengers to and from Fort Kearny, it did not develop into a community center and the post office there was short-lived, closing March 17, 1869. Other post offices established along the line were:

Gibbon, Isaac D. LaBarre, P.M., December 4, 1871

Kearney Junction, Asbury Collins, P.M., February 9, 1872

Elm Creek, Lars Jensen, P.M., June 19, 1872

Crowellton, Edward Delahunty, P.M., December 6, 1872

Shelton replaced Wood River Center February 3, 1873, **Kearney** replaced Kearney Junction April 26, 1875, and Crowellton became **Odessa** on February 29, 1876. **Shelby**, established September 19, 1876, became Buda two years later, George Flaherty, P.M.

Volume 2, No. 3

Buffalo County Historical Society

MARCH, 1979

EARLY DAYS AT ODESSA

from *Ten Generations of Grants*

by Myron Scott

INTRODUCTION

Myron Scott, lawyer, military intelligence, genealogist and world traveler, did not forget his roots in Buffalo County, although he left Kearney at the age of eighteen. He was born April 9, 1898, in Kearney, and was a 1915 graduate of Kearney High School. After one year at Kearney State College, he went to New York City, graduated from Columbia University School of Law, and practiced law in New York and Washington until his retirement in 1968. He also served in Military Intelligence during World War II and was a member of the Air Force Reserves from 1944 to 1965.



Myron Scott

When he died in Washington, D.C. on August 4, 1972, he left his estate in trust, in memory of his father and mother, Thomas Jefferson Scott and Mary Estelle Grant Scott, pioneers and early settlers of Buffalo County. The distribution and benefits of the trust funds are designated to the "fostering of the arts and sciences in the community of Kearney and in Buffalo County," particularly scholarships, community drama club, historical and genealogical societies. The Buffalo County Historical Society has been the recipient of several gifts from the trust fund in the last few years.

Genealogy was the avocation of Myron Scott. In compiling his book, *Ten Generations of Grants*, Myron visited relatives in all parts of the nation for their remembrances of pioneer days. The following account of early life in Odessa is from that book, and was narrated by John Marshall Grant to Myron at Marysville, Washington in September of 1925. John Marshall Grant was an uncle, the brother of Myron's mother, Mary Estelle Grant Scott.

EARLY LIFE IN ODESSA

That was glorious country when we first came there. You could get on your horse and ride for miles and miles with no fences to bother you. At night you would just picket your horse, take off your saddle and saddle blanket and lay down to sleep.

I was the first of the family to come West. I came to Nebraska in 1872 on the Union Pacific with my younger brother Silas and Tom Maloney, brother of Maggie Maloney whom Silas married. Tom was later in the Arizona

legislature. When we came west there was no bridge across the Missouri and we came in a ferry from Council Bluffs to Omaha.

We settled at Odessa. We each took out a preemption on land which we could patent as we improved it. The boys and I dug down about four feet and put up some old railroad ties, putting them up log fashion, and then put a roof on it. We slept in that dugout about six months although, as the other two boys were away most of the time, I lived there the most.

Meanwhile we built a sod house - took a plow and just plowed up the sod. We plowed about three inches thick and cut the sod in strips about three feet long. For this we used the sod of the blue stem grass which grew in the swales, not the buffalo grass which grew about four inches high. There was another grass there that grew waist high on the bottom land along the Platte. We built the sod house on the side of the ravine. When finished it measured about 20 by 35 feet. We plastered it on the inside to give it a smooth surface and then put on a shingle roof - not a grass roof like most of them. It would leak a little here and there but it was snug and comfortable in the winter and didn't heat up in the summer.

The only trouble with our sod house was in keeping the vermin out of it. Those sod houses were great places for mice to work in. We lived in that house about two years and then a flood came. Whenever there was rain in the hills above us the water would come down the ravine. One day there was a cloudburst in the hills. We could see it in the hills although there was no rain on the plain where we were. Soon a wall of water came down the ravine and overflowed everything until the water stood two feet deep in the house. It was an unusual storm. It lasted only about half an hour. It was the only time it happened like that. Mother and the girls, Dess, Adah, Helen and Stelle had come only just that spring and were in the sod house at the time. It was enough for them.

So that summer we went to work and built a frame house on the other side of the ravine. We went to Kearney for the lumber. It was the first frame house in that community and was the most conspicuous house around there for several years. Sister Adah who married Richard Webb later lived there and still later Milton Webb's family. We used mud plaster in it but it was a good solid house. We kept the old sod house for several years and for a long while we used it for a barn.



Grant Homestead, first frame house In Odessa Township, 1874.

Stelle brought a candle mold from Indiana with her but we didn't use it. We used kerosene lamps even in the old sod house. The day of candles had passed by that time. We had two spinning wheels, a little one and a big one about six feet in diameter. We didn't use these in Nebraska. All of our spinning was done during the War back in Indiana. We generally hired a couple of German girls to do the spinning. We had our own sheep and carded our own wool. The small spinning wheel was used for spinning flax. We never did any spinning after the Civil War.

The buffalo had been mostly killed off in the Platte valley when we came there. I never saw but one buffalo. He was a stray, a big fellow, who came one fall. There were buffalo up along the Loup River. Sile went over there once hunting buffalo but didn't get any. They would put on a drive of two or three days and would get a few of them. There were deer in the Platte valley, however, right up to the time I left there in 1878.

I left Odessa before I patented my land. I made up my mind that that was not going to be a farming country. Sister Adah took it over and proved up on it. There used to be antelope there too, quite a number the first summer I was there. There were a good many geese. There were not many ducks although there were many in the Platte River two miles away. Sandhill cranes were plentiful. After they got to cultivating broom corn there were a lot of prairie chickens.

I never was a hunter myself - never took any pleasure in it. The gun I had, though, was a good one. It was made by Jack Shrock, a gunsmith about five miles east of where we lived at Goshen, Indiana. All of those old communities had gunsmiths. Jack Shrock had two pretty daughters and he used to have the daughters show the customers how the guns would shoot. He lived to be 95 years old. When I left Nebraska for the State of Washington in 1878 I took the

gun with me. I finally gave the gun to a Siwash to clean up some lots I had. I expect the gun is around the reservation yet. It was a double barreled gun, one barrel a rifle and the other a shot gun. It was an old muzzle loader, made before the breach loaders came into vogue. You could hold it up but usually you rested it against a limb. It shot very accurately, better than a breach loader.

For a while I taught school there in Nebraska and one winter I got snowbound for ten days while teaching a little school up on Wood River. It was impossible to get back to the settlement on the Platte. I had never had much use for Shakespeare but there was a volume of his works there and I started reading it. Before I got through I had acquired quite a liking for him.

There were Indians about there now and then. I was appraising up on the Loup River one summer. I was a State Appraiser for school lands. In those days we had to go over the land section by section, see whether it was level or broken and appraise it. It was lonesome there and there were boys I knew about six miles above me who were trapping. One morning I concluded I would go up and see them. They were living in a dugout, no windows in it. I pushed the door open. One of the boys was lying on the ground face downward, and I thought at first he was asleep and that it was rather late in the morning for him to be asleep. It was about ten o'clock. I turned him over and saw that his head was broken and that he had been shot through the chest. I left the dugout and just over the hill I found another of the boys. He had also been shot and his face slashed with a tomahawk. I didn't stop to look for the other boy. It was 30 miles to the nearest settlement.



Family of Susan Carr Grant (1816-1891), Odessa, Nebraska.

Left to right: Mary Estelle Grant Scott (mother of Myron Scott), Hadassah

*Grant Seaman, Silas Wright Grant,
Susan Carr Grant, Helen Marr Grant
Skelley, John Marshall Grant, Adah
Alfretta Grant Webb (mother of Fred
Webb, deceased, and Milton Webb).*

I knew enough about Indians to know that they would be camped in the bushes along the ravines following the course of the river. So when I would come to one of the ravines I would get down on hands and knees and look up and down to see if they were there and then run across to the next ravine and repeat the process. Finally I came to a farming settlement on the upper part of Wood River, and there I got a horse and rode on into Kearney. The boys' relatives lived there and they got a posse together and started out after the Indians. I was used up and didn't go with them. The posse went about twenty miles and then camped for the night. In the morning they found the boys and also found the Indians about a mile or so away but couldn't catch up with them until they got back to the Red Cloud Agency in Wyoming.*

They had come down a day or two before and had stolen a herd of government horses and the soldiers had pursued them so hard that they had had to drop the horses and they were mad. The soldiers had gotten between them and the Agency and they had had to turn back. They had killed a few others besides my friends. They were the Sioux from the Red Cloud Agency. A few of the uglier Sioux would come out of the reservation on depredations and then skip back into the Agency and we would never know which ones had left the reservation. A few years before we came there they had killed an entire section gang on Plum Creek. The Sioux, though, were the cleanest Indians on the plains.

The Pawnees were there too. The Pawnees would never commit depredations in a bunch like that but you were not safe if one or two of the Pawnees caught you alone. The Pawnees were great fighters. They could whip the Sioux, given equal numbers, every time they had an engagement.

**The site of the massacre probably was about twelve miles north and east of Amherst on the Loup River near the town of Sartoria.*

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PART II EARLY DAYS AT ODESSA

from *Ten Generations of Grants*

Compiled by Alice Howell and Marian Johnson

This is the second article from *Ten Generations of Grants* by Myron Scott and is taken in part from a transcription of a conversation between Myron and his aunt, Adah Seaman Basten in August 1934, about the early days in Indiana and Nebraska of Susan Carr Grant, 1873 pioneer to Odessa, and her husband Michael Grant and their children.



Hadassqh Grant Seaman

Adah Seaman Basten was an aunt of Myron Scott. She was born May 30, 1861 near Goshen, Indiana, and married Cornelius Van Dyck Basten, M.D., on November 24, 1885 at Kearney. Mr. Scott's account of her is as follows:

"At Fort Kearny, in 1876, and at the age of 15, Adah started teaching school in a small school of five pupils. The school was in a civilian settlement near the post called 'Doby Town.' At that time the town of Kearney was linked to Fort Kearny by a mile long wooden bridge across the Platte River. The young teacher's ride to school on the stagecoach was a daily delight, and at the threshold of the school a snake under the doorstep would rattle its derisive welcome. A local newspaper, *The Central Star*, was then urging Washington to locate the seat of the national capitol at Kearney, as it was the center of the country, east to west. " Adah

attended Nebraska State University under Chancellor Canfield when it consisted of one building and 200 students. She then studied art in Munich, Germany, and returned to teach painting at the University. Later she became actively interested in the Fort Kearny Memorial Association. Much of the history of Buffalo County has found expression through the stimulus of her public addresses and papers. Her artistic talent was linked with a strong interest in politics, so that her tastefully furnished home was constantly abuzz with discussions of politics, art and medicine."

Mrs. Basten picks up the story of her parents and grandparents on her mother's side, and continues:

The Carrs sent their sons to school. Their daughters were left without any education to speak of. Grandmother's brother, George Carr, who was married twice, was a surgeon in the Union Army and was known all through Northern Indiana. He had a son who was sent to Notre Dame. He also had a son Oliver.

John Grant and his brother Michael Grant inherited John Grant's farm in Ohio. Michael got only 100 acres and was disappointed at the size of it so he loaded up the family and left Ohio. They had a double carriage and grandmother rode in that with my mother. The others rode in wagons with all their possessions. They moved to Clinton township, Elkhart County, Indiana. Michael had been there before, but the family was dismayed at the sight of the neighborhood. Their neighbors did not believe in education.



Hadassah and John D. Seaman home on Avenue B in Kearney.

The new farm in Indiana had a log house on it and they lived in this while they were building a new house. The new house had a circular stairway made of solid black walnut and we used to slide down the stairway in our linsey woolseys. Your mother, Stell, didn't wear shoes until the wintertime. After the day's work, Grandmother would say, "Come children, come get your feet washed." She didn't like us to go to bed with our feet unwashed. And she wouldn't let us go to bed quarrelling. She was peaceable but invincible. Uncle Walter Carr used to say that Susan Carr, your grandmother, was the best man of the lot of them.

Michael and Susan's daughter Adah Alfretta, we called her Al, was born in the new house. She didn't have very good health, had very small wrists and ankles and could not do heavy work. Yet she married Richard Webb and worked harder than any of us. Stell was born there, too. There were no ornaments in the house, no pictures and very few books, until Marsh came along with his library of 300 volumes which he got in a fire sale. After that we had everything we wanted to read on the homestead and we would read to our heart's content. We had Pope, Byron, Dryden, Milton and Spencer.

One day, during a game, when my mother was sixteen, she hid in the hay upstairs in the old log house which they were then using as a barn. The hay gave way where there was no floor and she fell plump into a barrel of soft soap. Dess was a school teacher. All of grandmother's daughters taught school. Dess went to church one Sunday. It was the day of the extravagantly sized crinolines over hoops, and if it went down in the front it would go up in the back. Some of the women were horror stricken. Stell was born in August 1859, and my mother, Dess, was married in June of that year. My father called when my mother was wearing a green and white spotted dress and she was making broth. He was wearing one of his celebrated waistcoats and he fell in love with her.



Adah Seaman Basten

Life on the homestead at Odessa, Nebraska, was interesting in a way. There used to be terrible prairie fires and incursions of grasshoppers and there would be sudden floods with water rising in the gullies. Rattlesnakes would come into the cellars. Stell and I used to ride through the bottom lands along the Platte River on our ponies. Stell had a handsome side saddle. One day there was a funeral service for Al's first baby and word came of a prairie fire, and all of the mourners ran out to fight the fire.

Grandmother had some money and sent Bunyan off to buy some sheep and he came back with consumption and died in 6 weeks. The Roll boys then came out and worked for grandmother. Michael and Susan's oldest son, Ben Ami ran away to join the army in the Civil War. He was not of age and his father went after him to bring him home. Ben Ami always had an obsession or fear of the measles. He was in barracks in Indianapolis when someone was brought in who had the measles. He promptly took the measles and died there in Indianapolis about 1865. He never got into actual combat. Bunyan, the youngest son of Michael and Susan would have made a great success if he had lived. He could make a crackerjack fourth of July speech. Silas, Bun's next older brother, went off down to the Ozarks and became a ranking citizen. Mother said that her grandmother, Elizabeth Casner, wife of John Grant, was a descendant of a native of Hesse Cassel, Germany.

Myron Scott lists the official information about Hadassah (Dess) Grant in his book, *Ten Generations of Grants*. She was born April 17, 1841 in Sugar Creek Township, Stark County, Ohio, and was the daughter of Michael Grant and Susan Carr. She married John Dillon Seaman at Goshen, Indiana on June 16, 1859.

"From Elkhart Co., Ind., Dess and her husband moved to Kearney, Buffalo Co., Nebr., arriving 2-13-1873, where they homesteaded land at Odessa. The village of Odessa, ten miles west of Kearney, was named for Hadassah according to descendants of Adah Grant Webb, sister of Hadassah, who still live at Odessa.

"John Seaman, husband of Hadassah, was a Republican State Senator from Kearney in 1879. He was instrumental in securing the first water rights for the Kearney Canal, as well as having located at Kearney the State Industrial School. He was active in the construction in the area of the first concrete block houses (then called stone houses) and he built the Stone School House east of Kearney.

"Dess had a talent as a teller of children's stories and in the early days of Kearney her children's stories would have large numbers of children enthralled in her library on Saturday mornings. She was the first librarian of the Kearney Public Library, opened 9-1-1890 in the Kearney City Hall, and she held that position for nine years (S.J. Clark Pub. Co., *Buffalo County and Its People*, Chicago, 1916, 2 vols. vol. 1, p. 221). Even before 1890 she had made available to the public at her home in Kearney her own private library of several hundred volumes. The bulk of this private library had been acquired by a younger brother of Dess, John Marshall Grant, who bought the books at a fire sale in Indiana."

MOSES H. SYDENHAM

First of the Visionaries

by Margaret Stines Nielsen

For many years Moses had conducted church services and organized Sunday Schools in the settlements of Kearney and Buffalo Counties. In 1895, he took on "special Missionary Work" at Cottonville, a cluster of tenant houses near the Cotton Mill. Among the three hundred people in this settlement "some were desecrating the Sabbath by 'tearing around' like a lot of heathen." Mr. Sydenham offered to conduct a mission service and take a Sunday School class. The Sunday School which had averaged twenty-five, when "a Mrs. Hutchason" had tried to run it alone, increased to eighty-three. When

attendance began to dwindle among the younger members, they called in Reverend Gill, a "Revivalist" preacher from Odessa. The evangelist "shouted and sweated to good effect". An evangelical church of sixty members was established and an old building moved from Kearney was to serve as a church.

Volume 9, No. 5

Buffalo County Historical Society

May, 1986

THE LEBANESE IN KEARNEY - Part II

by Minnett Yanney Steinbrink

Yanney - Abraharn

Jacobs

Mike Jacobs came to the United States about 1900 and located in Gothenburg where he joined his brothers in farming, with peddling as a sideline. Later he farmed for himself. He liked his new land and immediately applied for citizenship so that his wife, left in Syria, would automatically become a citizen and would not have to stay at Ellis Island. Becoming a citizen took nearly five years, so that when he sent for his wife Helen and their first child Mary, she was five years old before her father saw her. They moved to Buffalo County, farming near Odessa and Kearney. Mike and Helen had eight children. A son Jake resides in Wood River.

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Buffalo County Historical Society

February, 1987

THE FARMING COMMUNITY OF BUFFALO COUNTY, 1886

Compiled by Alice Shaneyfelt Howell

GRAND WOLF HUNT

March 27, 1886 - The enterprising farmers and stock raisers of Odessa Precinct have made all the necessary arrangements for holding a grand circle hunt on Saturday, April 3. Coyotes, gray wolves, and foxes have become very troublesome in this precinct, and an attempt will be made to round them up and exterminate them.

The boundaries of the drive will be the north and east sides of Odessa Township, the Platte river on the south, and one mile in Elm Creek township on the west. The north line will be driven under the captaincy of Mr. Wilson; the east line under R. E. Barney; south line under M. S. Richards; west line under L. A. Blanchard.

All parties will observe the following rules:

Strict obedience to the order of the Captains.

No one allowed to shoot unless the game is outside the line and there is no prospect of recovering it.

No intoxicating liquors will be allowed on the ground.

The lines for the circle will be formed at 9 o'clock A.M., those engaging in the sport meeting at points designated by the respective Captains, and the distributed forces as equally as possible will move toward the center of the circle, not faster than four miles an hour.

Each person is requested to bring a horn or something with which to terrify the wild animals. Mr. J. H. Richards has been chosen Field Marshall for this occasion and will see that everybody secures fair play and enjoys themselves.



A Wolf Hunt in the Amherst area at a later time.

Volume 13, No. 7 Buffalo County Historical Society July-August, 1990

QUILTS AND QUILTING

by Alice Shaneyfelt Howell

Midway Kensington also made quilt tops and quilted them for new brides in the community, and later did quilting for other people. This club was organized in 1929 for women in the Midway School District north of Odessa. Mrs. Farris Hubbert was its first president.

Volume 15, No. 1 Buffalo County Historical Society January-February, 1992

EPISODES IN THE LIVES OF EARLY BUFFALO COUNTY WOMEN

Compiled by Emma Jane Wilder

Hadassah Grant Seaman (1841-1911)

Hadassah managed the Odessa Post Office after she and her husband arrived in Buffalo County in 1873, and long before the expansion of population and good roads. It has been a family story that Odessa was named for

Hadassah. This is indeed credible since it has been found that the town, Peake, was named for its first postmistress, Jeannie Peake, in 1884.

Hadassah's daughter Adah Seaman taught school in Dobytown at the age of 15. "After arriving at the school by stagecoach, she would be greeted by the rattle of a snake under the doorstep".

From *Ten Generations of Grants* compiled by Myron Scott.

Submitted by Ardella Webb

Volume 24, No. 1 *Buffalo County Historical Society* *January-February, 2001*

The Ludden Family
by Margaret Stines Nielsen

Peter and his wife, Elsie, had nine children. They were living near Halsey when Mrs. Ludden, expecting her third child, decided to go to her parents home. They drove to Halsey where Mrs. Ludden boarded the train to ride with Luther Ludden who was returning to Lincoln. After visiting for a while Dr. Ludden left Elsie in the sleeping car... "only to be hastily summoned by the conductor." Dr. J.H. Penn received a wire to meet the train at Ravenna. A daughter was born somewhere along the way and the doctor left the train at Grand Island. Woman passengers helped care for the baby, bundling her in wraps and furs. Mother and child went by ambulance from the station to the Ludden home in Lincoln. She was named Ruth Elmira. Elmira was the name of the sleeping car where she was born. (6) Ruth Elmira married Earle Webb in 1934. He taught shop in several schools and farmed near Odessa. They adopted three children. The couple was active in the Buffalo County Historical Society for many years.

Volume 25, No. 6 *Buffalo County Historical Society* *November-December,*
2002

"A Day That Will Live In Infamy:"
Buffalo County and the Attack on Pearl Harbor
by Adam Fjell

Citizens of Odessa worried about Roger Bamford, who at the age of seventeen was the youngest soldier on Wake Island, where Marines were fighting tenaciously to fend off repeated Japanese attacks. The doubt of a loved ones' well being in cases such as these were represented by lines like "relatives here have not learned whether or not he departed."

Volume 19, No.3

Buffalo County Historical Society

May - June, 1996

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CHURCHES IN BUFFALO COUNTY

Part I

by Alice Shaneyfelt Howell

There were several Evangelical churches in the early years, Kearney in 1893, Odessa in 1885, Shelton in 1896, and Amherst.

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Buffalo County Historical Society

July - August, 1996

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CHURCHES IN BUFFALO COUNTY

Part II

by Alice Shaneyfelt Howell

S. C. Bassett, in his *History of Buffalo County*, (1916), mentions unorganized religious services. In Crowellton on the Union Pacific between Odessa and Kearney, Sunday School was held in the schoolhouse and "was attended by everybody in the neighborhood." This was in 1874.