

## FREIGHTING IN BUFFALO COUNTY- Part III Other Wagon Routes

by Mardi Anderson

The railroad had entered Buffalo County near St. Michael. It followed the South Loup River to Nantasket and then after crossing the river, entered Ravenna. From here it followed Beaver Creek to Sweetwater and on into Sherman and Custer Counties following Beaver and then Muddy Creek to Broken Bow and on northwest.

## ***RAILROADS IN BUFFALO COUNTY***

by Alice Howell

In 1886 the Burlington's Grand Island & Wyoming Central branch was built across the northeast corner of the county, and Ravenna was founded and became a railroad and commercial center. Although a post office had been established there as early as 1878 with the name of Beaver Creek, it was not until the railroad came that a townsite was laid out. The new town was named Ravenna, which was incorporated on October 12, 1886. It has been a division point of the Burlington and railroading has been a principal industry of the city. Other stations on this branch line in Buffalo County are St. Michael and Sweetwater.

## **EARLY POST OFFICES IN BUFFALO COUNTY**

by Alice Shaney Howell

Erastus Smith was the first settler and first postmaster of **Beaver Creek**, appointed December 11, 1878. When the Burlington built across northeastern Buffalo County, Beaver Creek became **Ravenna**, the name change effective July 23, 1886. Other early post offices in the area were **Cherry Creek**, February 14, 1879; **Baker**, March 2, 1885; **Tracnov**, February 1, 1886; **St. Michael**, February 18, 1887, and **Nantasket**, November 9, 1887. Cherry Creek

served **Sodtown**, which never had a post office even though it was a busy village in the 1880's and larger than Ravenna in 1885.

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## **SODTOWN, THE COMMUNITY THAT WOULD NOT DIE**

**by Irvin Urwiller and Alice Howell**

William Fieldgrove was chief engineer and lineman. In March of 1905 the Sodtown neighbors organized the Farmers Mutual Telephone Company, and plans were made to build a line from Sodtown to Ravenna, Luce and St. Michael. By fall the company had spread like wildfire in every direction and had a total of thirty-four phones. Several miles of line were built, and it was now evident that the company must put in a switchboard and hire an operator.

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## **THE TOWN THAT WAS NANTASKET**

**by Rochelle A. Hunt**

"Early day promoters believed a town would flourish at the crossing of the Union Pacific and Burlington railroads at that point. But the Burlington established Ravenna a little further west and when St. Michael was started to the east, the town of Nantasket was squeezed out."<sup>(4)</sup>

4. *Ravenna News*. "Nantasket, Once Thriving Village, Is Wiped Off the Deed Records." September 10, 1959.

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## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CHURCHES IN BUFFALO COUNTY**

### **Part II**

**by Alice Shaneyfelt Howell**

Soon after Immanuel was founded, another rural Missouri Synod congregation, Zion Lutheran, was organized in 1885 on the eastern edge of the county, north of Shelton in Gardner Township. It was known also as the St. Michael church or the Luce church, but for many years has been identified as the North Shelton

church. A parochial school operated until 1946. Mrs. Floyd Pope, who prepared a history of the church, recalled the custom in the early years of the girls sitting on the west side with the ladies behind them, and the boys on the east side with the men in back of them.

# NEBRASKA PLACE-NAMES

BY

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LINCOLN  
1925

T Michael

- **Saint Michael.** Established by the Lincoln Land Company in 1886. An Irishman named Mike Kyne owned the land on which the town is located and he told the company he would sell it to them cheap if they would name the town Saint Michael. Mr. Kyne was a homestead settler in the vicinity in 1879 and now resides in Ravenna, Nebraska.