

Stage Coach Lines in and through Buffalo County

Bassett, HISTORY OF BUFFALO COUNTY, Vol. I

p. 24-25

Quote from Morton's *History of Nebraska*, who in turn is quoting from the *Huntsman's Echo*.

September 13, 1860: "The people of the Pike's Peak mining district, together with all concerned, will be pleased to learn that after being swindled, gouged, imposed upon, and literally robbed in the matter of mail facilities and service, by that arch-monopoly, Jones, Russell & Co., for nearly two years they are now provided by the department, at American rates, a mail from Omaha, by this place and Fort Kearney, once a week and back. The Western Stage Company, the most punctual, accommodating and reliable in mail service, has the contract and have already sent out one mail." This is believed to have been the first mail route established by the general Government, passing through Buffalo County. On August 11th it is related this stage company made a record trip from Fort Kearney to Omaha in thirty-three hours carrying six passengers.

p. 363

Promoters induced Treasurer Van Sickle to invest of county funds in schemes which seemed to promise profitable returns, but which proved a financial loss. As an instance, take the promoter's scheme to establish a stage line from Kearney to the Black Hills in which was invested county money to build bridges and furnish stage-line equipment. Stage lines had been established from North Platte and Sidney, and it was hoped to reap a profit by making Kearney an out-fitting point for such a stage line, but as a financial venture it was a failure.

“Gilbert C. Fosdick II, Stagecoach Driver” by Mardi Anderson, *Buffalo Tales*, Buffalo County Historical Society, Vol. 25, No. 3, May - June, 2002

C. W. Dake, president of a bank in Kearney, formed the Kearney and Black Hills stage line in late winter and early spring of 1877. He was joined in this venture by R. S. Downing who had moved to Kearney from Lowell in Kearney County. They applied for and were granted the contract to carry mail from Kearney to Deadwood. The route had been laid out the previous summer and road ranches had been established along the way to provide supplies to the travelers.

ˆ The Kearney and Black Hills Route went northwest out of Kearney...Once the route reached the Wood River it followed the river to Armada, a mile north of present-day Miller. From Armada the route went into Custer County, continuing in a northwesterly direction to the Middle Loup River. At this junction a road ranche had been established called Dakesberg. The Kearney and Black Hills Route followed the Middle Loup River almost to its source in the sandhills, then turned in a more north, northwest direction toward the Black Hills and Deadwood.

“Towns of the Wood River Valley: Successes and Failures to 1890” by Alice Howell, *Buffalo Tales*, Buffalo County Historical Society, Vol. 1, No. 10, October 1978

The route of the Kearney & Black Hills Trail in 1876 followed the Wood River valley, and Armada was the first relay station out of Kearney where horses for the stagecoach and freighting wagons were changed. Stage and freight lines continued after the excitement of the Black Hills gold rush had died down. [Presume discontinued in 1890 when the Kearney & Black Hills Railroad was built.]

“Early Days at Odessa, Part II” from *Ten Generations of Grants*, Compiled by Alice Howell and Marian Johnson, *Buffalo Tales*, Buffalo County Historical Society, Vol. 2, No. 4, April 1978

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....

“Sweetwater, Nebraska” by Mardi Anderson, *Buffalo Tales*, Buffalo County Historical Society, Vol. 28, No. 1, January-February, 2005

When John McGee brought his family to settle in Buffalo County in 1873, he selected a spot on the bank of Beaver Creek in what is now Beaver Township near the Sherman County line. A trail that was used to bring supplies from Kearney to Loup City crossed the Beaver at this point. It was also on the route used by travelers going west from Grand Island. McGee established a ranch here, probably a sheep ranch, and kept a general store for the convenience of travelers. When the stagecoach route between Kearney and Loup City was established, his ranch became one of the stops. It cost \$2 to ride the stage from Kearney to the McGee Ranch.

[source: *A History of Sweetwater, Nebraska* by Linda Wilke, 1982]

“Freighting in Buffalo County, Part I – ‘A Flash in the Pan’ - Freighting from Kearney to the Black Hills in 1877” by Mardi Anderson, *Buffalo Tales*, Buffalo County Historical Society, Vol. 8, No. 2, February 1985

By early spring, 1877, Kearney was four years old and had a population of about 1,000 people. The Union Pacific Railroad passed through it east-west and the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad came in from Hastings and points southeast. There was a mail route and stagecoach line north to Loup City. The Pioneer stage company ran stages daily, except Sundays, south to towns in the Republican River Valley where connections could be made to towns in northern Kansas.

<showcase.netins.net/web/marjned/hamco.html> Hamilton County, Iowa, Stagecoach Lines

The coaches for the Western Stage Company were made in Concord, New Hampshire by the Downing and Abbott Company. Each weighed about 2,700 pounds and cost between \$775 and \$1,250. [photo]

News from Pike's Peak. FORT KEARNEY, Saturday, Nov. 3.

(New York Times, November 5, 1860)

The Western Stage Company's coach which left Denver City on Monday, with the mail, passed here for Omaha on Thursday morning, with a full load of passengers.

The Overland Stage to California, F. A. Root and Wm. Connelley, 1901

<http://www.memoriallibrary.com/NE/History/>

On account of the steadily increasing commerce of the plains in the early '60's, and the fact that there were several companies of troops stationed at Fort Kearney, made this the most important office on the eastern division of the great stage line. At this point the telegraph line crossed from the north to the south bank of the Platte, and here was the intersection of the great overland mail route from Atchison, and it also was the western terminus of the Western Stage Company's route, which operated lines to Fort Kearney from Omaha and Nebraska City. There was no telegraph line on the overland stage route along the Little Blue river between Atchison and this prominent military post, and all dispatches from Atchison sent to Fort Kearney and beyond were transmitted up the Missouri river via Omaha.

p. 64-65

The distance by the overland stage line from Atchison through to Placerville was 1913 miles, and, since it had supplanted the southern or Butterfield route, which previously had gone from St. Louis and Memphis southwest in the form of a semicircle, it was the longest, and by all odds the most important, stage line in America, if not on the face of the globe.

Including Atchison and Placerville, there were 153 stations, averaging about twelve and one-half miles apart. The fare through was \$225--a fraction less than twelve cents a mile,....

There was a remarkable similarity in many of the stations built along the Platte on the stage route for a distance of at least 250 miles when the line was put in operation. Most of the

buildings were erected by the stage company, and usually they were nearly square, one-story, hewn, cedar-log structures, of one to three rooms. When constructed with only one room, often partitions of muslin were used to separate the kitchen from the dining-room and sleeping apartments.

The roof was supported by a log placed across from gable to gable, by which poles were supported for rafters placed as close as they could be put together, side by side. On these were placed some willows, then a layer of hay was spread, and this was covered with earth or sod; and, lastly, a sprinkling of coarse gravel covered all, to keep the earth from being blown off. The logs of which most of the first stations were constructed were procured in the cañons south of the Platte, in the vicinity of Cottonwood Springs, in the southern part of western Nebraska.

Nearly all the "swing" stations along the Platte--in fact, over the entire line--were similar in construction and closely resembled one another. A number of the "home" stations, however, differed somewhat in several respects, being two or three times larger, and provided with sheds, outbuildings, and a number of other conveniences.

The station, stable and outbuildings at old Julesburg were built when that was the point where the through coaches forded the South Platte for Salt Lake and California, going up the Rocky Ridge road along Lodge Pole creek. Besides being the point where the stages on the main line crossed the Platte, it also became an important junction for upwards of four years. Here the branch line, the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express, started by Jones, Russell & Co. and subsequently absorbed by the Central Company, and known as the "Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company," ran their stages up the South Fork of the Platte for 200 miles beyond to Denver.

At Julesburg--in early staging days one of the most important points along the Platte--were erected the largest buildings of the kind between Fort Kearney and Denver. They were built of cedar logs, hauled from near Cottonwood Springs by oxen, a distance of 105 miles.

Most of the stations east of Denver for about a hundred miles were constructed of rough lumber hauled from the mountains down the Platte valley. The buildings were decidedly plain, the the (sic) boards being of native Colorado pine, nailed on the frame perpendicularly. Only a few of the stations west of the Big Blue river at Marysville were weather-boarded. With this exception, all were plain log structures between the latter point and Fort Kearney. A station on the line where there was no family living--only a stock tender--was called a "swing" station.

The first sod buildings seen on the line were at Fort Kearney, a few having been erected in pioneer overland freighting, pony express and staging days. The post-office, built of sod--also "used as the first telegraph office at the fort--although small, was in the early '60's one of the most prominent of the few buildings of that character between the Missouri river and the Rockies.

p. 70

In the latter part of 1861, the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company, having become greatly embarrassed financially, lost all control of their enterprise, and soon it fell into the hands of Ben. Holladay, the New York millionaire. Holladay, from time to time, it appears, had advanced the company large sums of money, and thus came into possession of the line. After reorganizing, the name was changed to the "Overland Stage Line." On taking possession, Holladay spent a large amount of money in making the "Overland" the best-equipped stage line in the country, as it was by far the longest and most important one. He bought a large number of the celebrated Concord stage-coaches, and spared no expense in picking up, all over

the country, the best horses and mules to be found suitable for the work that was to be done. The most capable and experienced stage men to be found were employed; many new stations were built, to shorten the "drives"; and everything that could be devised was done to facilitate the transportation of the mail, and to make the trip more pleasant for passengers.

p. 94-97

There were about twenty-five regular eating stations on the line between Atchison and Denver. The most of them were so provided with conveniences that they could get up a good meal on the shortest notice--better than might have been expected so far out on the plains, hundreds of miles away from a market and from many of the advantages found in an agricultural region. The station keepers went more on furnishing passengers the substantial than they did the light, dainty delicacies. Being jostled from one side of the coach to the other while going over a rough road was sufficient exercise to give almost any person an appetite for a solid, "square" meal, "just like the ones your mother used to get up."

Fried bacon and ham were a regular standby at most of the stations on the upper Little Blue and Platte; still there were furnished an ample supply of buffalo, elk and antelope steaks in their season, for a distance of at least 300 miles. Along the lower Little Blue, down through southern Nebraska and northern Kansas--the finest agricultural section on the entire line--eggs and chickens, nice cream for the coffee, with fresh butter and plenty of vegetables, were a prominent feature of the every-day diet. Way up toward the head waters of the Little Blue, at Liberty Farm, we frequently had the pleasure of dining on wild turkey, and it was always roasted in the finest style....

No meal was furnished passengers on the east end of the line for less than fifty cents; between Fort Kearney and Julesburg they were seventy-five cents; and from the latter station to Denver one dollar was the uniform price in 1863. As a usual thing, the messengers were not charged for their meals, they having to do often a dozen or more errands each trip for the station keepers or their wives at Atchison and Denver.

There were a few stations, however, that came under another class, and they were more than even a driver who had spent the greater part of his life on the box could stand. Some of them were indescribably filthy, for even an overland station far out on the frontier. No one ever dreamed that all the necessaries and comforts of life could be obtained at an overland eating place. At one station over 500 miles out on the plains things were perhaps not quite as neat as they might have been, or as they were at some other places. One passenger, who evidently had not "roughed it" much on the plains, sat down at the table with a half-dozen others, and at once commenced making some discreditable remarks about the food, complaining that there was a good deal of dirt, etc. The landlord, who at the time happened to be standing behind him, at once spoke up:

"Well, Sir, I was taught long ago that we must all eat a 'peck of dirt.'"

"I am aware of that fact, my dear Sir," hastily responded the passenger, "but I don't like to eat mine all at once."

At another station it was observed that one of the drivers frequently played sick; he could n't eat, he said, because of his weak stomach. He had for a long time been hanging about the house, and had watched the landlady fondling the dogs and cats, and shortly afterwards, without washing, thrusting her hands into the flour and mixing up the pan of biscuit. This driver with a delicate, weak stomach would go hungry and wait until he reached the next station rather than attempt to eat after he had watched the process of cooking. Those who knew nothing about the

dogs and cats declared that "Mrs. ----- could beat any woman on the overland line making nice biscuit."

Along the Platte west of Fort Kearney, for a considerable distance, we for weeks had nothing in the pastry line except dried-apple pie. This article of diet for dessert became so plentiful that not only the drivers and stock tenders rebelled, but the passengers also joined in, some of them "kicking" like Government mules. As a few of the drivers expressed it, it was "dried apple pie from Genesis to Revelations." Finally the following gem, which very soon had the desired effect, was copied and sent on its way east and west up and down the Platte:

DRIED-APPLE PIES.

I loathe! abhor! detest! despise!
Abominate dried-apple pies;
I like good bread; I like good meat,
Or anything that's good to eat;
But of all poor grub beneath the skies
The poorest is dried-apple pies.
Give me a toothache or sore eyes
In preference to such kind of pies.

The farmer takes his gnarliest fruit,
'Tis wormy, bitter, and hard, to boot;
They leave the hulls to make us cough,
And don't take half the peelings off;
Then on a dirty cord they're strung,
And from some chamber window hung;
And there they serve a roost for flies
Until they're ready to make pies.
Tread on my corns, or tell me lies,
But *don't* pass to *me* dried-apple pies.

[Photo of Stage driven by Buffalo Bill out of Ft. Kearney]

[From the Stagecoach file in the BCHS Archives]

"Tips for Stagecoach Travelers"

The stagecoach was usually a "Concord Coach," the vehicle was well-built and sturdy it could if necessary, carry eighteen persons, nine clinging to the top and nine packed inside. The

driver was known as “Whip, Charlie, or Jehu.” The guard, if there was one, was “Shotgun.” The following “tips for Stagecoach Travelers” were worth observing.

The best seat inside the stage is the one next to the driver. Even if you have a tendency to seasickness when riding backwards – you’ll get over it and get less jolts and jostling.

Don’t let a ‘sly elph’ trade you his mid-seat.

In cold weather don’t ride with tight-fitting boots, shoes or gloves

When the driver asks you to get off and walk, do so without grumbling. He won’t request it unless absolutely necessary.

If the team runs away – sit still and take your chances. If you jump nine out of ten times you will get hurt.

In very cold weather abstain entirely from liquor when on the road, because you will freeze twice as quickly under its influence.

Don’t growl at the food received at the station; stage companies generally provide the best they can get.

Don’t keep the stage waiting.

Don’t smoke a strong pipe inside the coach.

Spit on the leeward side.

If you have anything to drink in a bottle pass it around. Procure your stimulants before starting, as ‘ranch’ whiskey is not “nectar.”

Don’t swear or lop over neighbors when sleeping.

Take small change to pay expenses.

Never shoot on the road as the noise might frighten the horses.

Don’t point out where murders have been committed, especially if there are women passengers.

Don’t lag at the wash basin.

Don’t grease your hair because travel is dusty.

Don’t imagine for a moment that you are going on a picnic. Expect annoyance, discomfort and some hardship.

*From the History of Holt County Nebraska “Before Today” Centennial Edition, 1976.

[Notes taken when the author (unknown, possibly Alice Howell) spoke with Gene Hunt, superintendent at Ft. Kearney]

Stage line out of Des Moines 1865-7.

Western Stage Co. owned by E. S. Hoaker

Used a Concord stage

Stopped at Ft. Kearny.

Another line went to Denver. Ben Halloway Stageline??

The History of Fort Kearney, Lyle E. Mantor, (Bound, typewritten manuscript, no date)

Page 150 – “At this point the stages of the Western Stage Company connected with the Holladay lines. The ‘Western’ operated stages in Iowa and from Nebraska City and Omaha to Fort Kearney by way of the road on the north bank of the Platte....”

Page 217 – “By 1865 the Western Stage Line had been absorbed by the Overland Stage Line....”

Book of Facts Concerning the Early Settlement of Sherman County, 1873-1897, George E. Benschoter, (Loup City, Nebraska: Loup City Northwestern Print).

(quote from p. 7-8) The Old Kearney Stage Line

The first mail wagon driver between Loup City and Kearney was by Dryden & Andrews in the year 1875, they having secured the contract from the Star Route contractor who was in Kearney at that time.

In February, 1874, however, Nick Harris of Grand Island started a private stage line for the convenience of travelers and was paid a bonus by Loup City and Kearney of \$70 per month.

Harris ran the line but about six weeks, when he was bought out by F. E. Rosseter, who conducted it until the bridges on the Sweetwater and other streams were washed away, when it was abandoned.

In 1877, Andrews & Dryden sold out to C. H. Finch, who continued the stage service from August 20, 1877, to June 30, 1886 – nine years nearly – and until shortly after the advent of the Union Pacific railroad.

The old Kearney stage line did a very large business by way of carrying passengers and express, especially under the management of C. H. Finch. It was necessary at times to put on extra teams in order to accommodate the traffic.

A History of Sherman County, Nebraska, Meroe J. Owenes, printed by The Norfolk Daily News, 1952, Chap. 2, “Transportation and Communication (978.292/ow26 NSHS)

John Dryden & H. B. Andrews

Partners to carry mail from Kearney Junction to New Helena in Custer Co. They also carried passengers, express and freight. Dec. 17, 1885 Headquartered in Loup City. Sold to C. H. French 1887, who continued until August 20, 1877, until U. P. line to Loup City was completed.

Route of Loup City and Kearney Stage April 16, 1874 published in *Central Nebraska Press*.

(p. 35) Old stage line from Kearney to Loupe City in 1874 made stops at McGee’s & More’s Ranches. Much the same road today (1952) past Wiggle Creek Schoolhouse, past Ravenna to Kearney

(p. 39) Route published in paper.

Kearney to Morse's Ranch to McGee's Ranch to Loup City. Same stops on return to Kearney.

Western New Era, 1883

Stage route went from Kearney to Hunterville, Armada, Helena on Mondays and Thursdays.

Custer County Republican, March 15, 1883

Stage had trouble crossing South Loup because of high water and ice.

Kearney New Era, September 6, 1884, p. 4

Stage Schedule

South – All points in the Republican Valley – Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
Arrive – Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

For Watson, Williamsburg, Fort Hays and all points in Northwestern Kansas, Tuesdays, Thursdays.

North-Loup City and all points in the Upper Loup Valley, daily

For Huntsville, Armada, Helena and all intermediate points Mondays and Thursdays.

For Minden and return – daily except Sundays

Kearney New Era, March 7, 1885, p. 2

Stages for Custer and Sherman counties are crowded with passengers every day.

Kearney New Era, July 4, 1885, p. 4 (the stage line schedule)

Stage Lines

For Loup City daily except Sundays, 7 a.m.

For Broken Bow and Northwest, daily, except Sundays, 6 a.m.

For Phelps and Southwest, daily, except Sundays, 8 a.m.

For Minden and Southwest, daily, except Sundays, 8:45 a.m.

For Bloomington and South 7 a.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

For Alma and Southwest Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays

All mails close before the given time.

Kearney New Era, April 24, 1886, p. 2

“Mr. Jones' stage line between Gibbon and Kearney proves to be a great accommodation to those live in Gibbon.”

Kearney New Era, May 8, 1886, p. 4 and several months after

STAGE LINES

Broken Bow – By way of Riverdale, Stanley, Greendale, Armada, Guernsey and Georgetown, leaves at 6 o'clock A. M. Arrives in Kearney 7 o'clock P.M.

Loup City – By way of Prairie Center, Majors, Beaver Creek, Sweetwater, Paris, and Vendurette. Leaves Kearney 7 o'clock A.M. Arrives at 6 o'clock P.M.

Stage from Georgetown by way of Endell, Pilot, Beechwide, Round Grove, Elling and Cedarville to Loup City on Wednesdays and Saturdays, returning on Mondays and Thursdays.

Stage leaves Broken Bow by way of Janesville, Algernon, Huxley, and Cleoria to Loup City on Wednesdays and Saturdays, returning on Mondays and Thursdays.

Stage for Holdrege by way of Frank, Fraser, Williamsburg, and Phelps leaves Kearney on Tuesdays and Saturdays at 7 o'clock A.M. returning Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 6 o'clock P. M.

Stage for Holdrege by way of Blainville and Oscar leaves Kearney at 7:30 A.M. Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays, returning on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays at 4 o'clock P.M.

Stage leaves Cedarville, by way of Paradise, Bentora, Mahile and Riverview to Prairie Center and returns to Cedarville on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

**Known Post Offices in
Phelps County Nebraska from 1874 to Present**

Published by the

Holdrege Area Genealogy Club

in their Fall 1995 Vol. 4-3, Phelps Helps Newsletter

FRANK Established 3 Apr 1883, name changed to Romeyn 7 Oct 1889. Named after W. F. Frank. a. Location was n.e. 1/4 of 23 Cottonwood Township.

FRASER Established 11 Sep 1883, closed 29 Oct 1892, Mail to Williamsburg. Named after William Frazer. a. Location was s.w. sec. 14, Williamsburg Township.

OSCAR Established 15 Aug 1878, closed 15 Jan 1888. Mail to Funk. Named by Jonas Peterson.

PHELPS Established 30 Oct 1877, closed 30 Mar 1895. Name first changed from Phelps Center to Phelps and later changed to Denman. a. Located on the s.e. 1/4 of sec. 14 in Westmark Township (1889 map).

WILLIAMSBURG Established 7 Aug 1874, closed 15 Dec 1904, Mail to Elm Creek. Named in honor of William Dilworth, son of C. J. Dilworth, Nebraska Attorney General. a. Located on the n.e. 1/4 of sec. 22 of Westmark Township (1884 map). b. Located on the n.w. 1/4 of sec. 23 Williamsburg (1889 map).

[The Hub online]

March 13, 1893

---W. D. Williams is refitting the Twenty-third street livery barn near the old City hotel, and putting in a fine stock of livery rigs, hacks, carriages and surreys. The barn will be known hereafter as the "Belle Union" livery stable.

Kearney Hub, April 5, 1894

[this letter is a quote]

Dear Editor: -- On the Connor lot, corner of Central ave and Twenty-fourth street, is an old stagecoach which in Kearney's early history was run between here and the Black Hills to carry passengers. It is now weather beaten and worn enough to be a relic, and as such should be preserved.

Out it under cover and keep it. Every day it will be more and more interesting, and will be prized more and more by those who come after us, our children and grand children.

When our young city reaches the one hundred thousand population so confidently predicted by that distinguished gentleman, Dr. Miller, of Omaha, the old coach will be brought out on public occasions and will be a relic worth seeing. Save it now when it can be done.

KEARNEY

[From the Stagecoach file in the BCHS Archives]

Kearney Semi-Weekly Hub, June 11, 1894, p. 4, col. 1

"Jim Nichols, the stage driver between here and Ravenna says that a great deal of hail fell last night about five miles north of this city doing considerable damage."

Kearney Semi-Weekly Hub, July 16, 1894, p. 5, col. 2

W. D. Williams, proprietor of the Belle Union stage line running between here and Ravenna, announces that for the accommodation of teachers who are attending institute, he will make an extra trip to Ravenna a week from next Saturday. Anyone desiring passage on the stage on that date should leave orders as soon as possible at the Belle Union barn.

"The Hotels of Kearney, Part I" by Margaret Stines Nielsen, *Buffalo Tales, Volume 10, No.8, September, 1987*

Also, in 1872 James and Antoinette Riley began construction of the Grand Central Hotel on Railroad and Nebraska [Ave A] streets. By 1877 it was operated by J. H. Irvin, a broom maker who later studied law with Worthen and Ellsworth. The Pioneer Stage Lines was quartered at the hotel; stages left every day but Sunday for "the Republican Valley and all intermediate points." It also carried the mail.

Samuel Bassett, History of Buffalo County, Vol. II, p. 18-19

JOHN N. DRYDEN.

John N. Dryden was born on a farm in Dane county, Wisconsin, June 1, 1856. His father, Nathaniel H. Dryden, and his mother, Emily Balch Dryden, were of southern stock, the former from Tennessee and the latter from Alabama. At an early date they removed to Illinois where they were married September 10, 1840. They subsequently became pioneers, successively, in Wisconsin, in Iowa, and lastly in Nebraska, where they settled in Custer county in 1875. There were nine children, five of whom are now living. Nathaniel H. Dryden held local offices, such as school director, county supervisor, etc. He was a Christian citizen and exercised a strong constructive influence in building the foundations of the new social order in the localities where he lived. In 1884, the family moved to Kearney where they continued to reside until Mr. Dryden's death, which occurred April 13, 1907, at the ripe age of eighty-eight years, the wife having passed away at the age of eighty-three years, September 26, 1901.

John N. Dryden was educated in the common schools of the neighborhood, attended the Gibbon Academy for three years, from 1876 to 1879 and the following three years, the Nebraska State University. He was admitted to the bar at Kearney, in 1886, since which time he has been engaged in the active practice of his profession at the same place. He has sought no official preferment, having occupied no political office except that of member of the board of education and of the public library, in his home city. He is a member of the American Bar Association, and at present, president of the Nebraska State Bar Association. Mr. Dryden is a republican in politics—a progressive republican and an active, lifelong opponent of the open saloon. For more than thirty-five years he has been an active member of the Methodist Episcopal church, twice has been elected

delegate to the general conference of that organization and for twenty years has been a trustee of the Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Mr. Dryden is familiar with many aspects of pioneer life in Nebraska. During his boyhood days while a resident of Custer county, he drove the Star Mail Route from Kearney to Loup City, and thence to New Helena, a distance of one hundred ten miles, making weekly trips at a time when the houses in some instances, were thirty miles apart, and many of the streams unbridged. On such trips he has seen as many as seventy-five elk in a single drove, and is acquainted with and had a practical experience in almost every phase of pioneer life in central Nebraska. He has been an interested witness of the changes which have occurred and has helped to bring about the present conditions of civilization and development, happiness and prosperity to our people.

Andreas' History of the State of Nebraska

SHERMAN COUNTY

Produced by LeRoy Eaton.

**Part 1: Sherman County: Early History | Hardships
First Murder Trial | Progress and Prosperity
County Matters**

**Part 2: Loup City: Early History | Biographical Sketches
Wilhelmshohe | Cedarville**

CEDARVILLE.

R. C. HARDIN, County, Superintendent of Public Instruction for Sherman County, located in St. Paul, Howard Co., in 1873, and taught school five years. Then located on a homestead near Cedarville, in southwest part of Sherman County, and since farmed. Elected County Superintendent Sherman County November, 1881. Owns 240 acres of land, with eighty acres under cultivation, Section 34, Town 14, Range 16. Born in Mercer County, Ill., April 16, 1841; lived in native State until he came to Nebraska. Enlisted in August, 1861, in Company A, Third Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry. Participated in battles of Belmont, Mo., Port Gibson, Raymond, Jackson, Champion Hills, siege of Vicksburg, Atlanta. Jonesboro, Nashville, Kenston and Goldsboro. Mustered out in Springfield, Ill., July 13, 1865. Married, in Illinois, 1864, to Miss Mary L. Furry, of Ohio. Had six children--George E., Ada L., Charles W., Mary J. (Horace C., deceased) and Celia E. He is a member of Mercer, Ill., Lodge, No. 210, A., F. & A. M. Also member of M. E. Church and local pastor of same of his place.

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nesherma/towns.html#cedarville>

Bentora: The post office was established here on October 2, 1882. It is assumed that the name came from the Bent family, as the first postmistress was Mary Bent. The name was later changed to Hazard.

Paradise: This post office was in service for a five month period, from September, 1883 to February, 1884.

Cedarville: This post office was established 14 January 1884 and was later changed to Litchfield. It is probable that the town was named after the many cedar trees in the area.

First United Methodist Church of Kearney, Nebraska, 1872-1972, compiled by the Centennial Committee, (Shenandoah, Iowa:World Publishing Co.), p. 72 [picture of John Dryden]

“John N. Dryden, Pioneer Lawyer,” *Where the Buffalo Roamed: Stories of Early Days in Buffalo County, Nebraska*, compiled by Kearney Business and Professional Women’s Club, 1967, p. 129-31

p. 130 – In the fall of 1875, having nothing else to do, I came to Kearney Junction (as everybody called it then) to seek work. For a time I found lucrative employment in fall plowing for James O’Kane and Nathan Campbell at one dollar and fifty cents per acre. I paid all of the expenses. George Hulbert was then proprietor of a stage line plying between Kearney and Republican City. I greatly admired the stage coach and soon had a Star Route of my own extending from Kearney north to Loup City and west for sixty miles to New Helena, our home post office. I had to ford the Loup River, a considerable stream, at Douglas Grove near the present town of Comstock. I could not afford a stage coach but a democratic wagon purchased from John D. Seaman propelled by a couple of wild broncos made a respectable outfit, and enabled me to make the round trip in six days.