

Phelps Helps



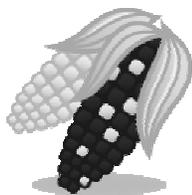
Volume 16, Issue 3

Fall 2008

Meetings held at the
Nebraska Prairie
Museum
on the first Monday of the
month at 2:00 PM.

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Inside this issue:

Library News	2
Harlan County	3
Immigrants	4
Homesteaders	5
More Soddies	6
Holcomb Part I	7

Superior Quality of Sod Made Building Possible The Bertrand Herald ~ 1985

Article from the Bertrand Herald ~ Written about 1985

Most of the early houses in this section of the country were constructed of sod. The frame dwelling house was a very rare thing. Sod building material was plentiful on every site and the best of its kind in the world. The method of procuring it was to turn sod over with a breaking plow set deeper than for ordinary breaking, so length could be handled and laid in a wall without breaking in pieces. The sod in those early times was exceedingly and if a good job of turning it over was done, it worked up well for building purposes.

A sod house when properly built was a very comfortable domicile. The thick walls resisted the cold of winter and the heat of summer equally well. Of course lumber had to be procured for floor and windows frames and for at least part of the roof, and the earliest settlers had to go to Kearney or even as far as Grand Island for such supplies. These trips for the lumber wagons and sometimes the ox teams took anywhere from three to five or even six days.

The later sod houses were well plastered and supplied with wooden floors. Occasionally one was built with a low second story where beds could be made on the floor and that was about all. One of this sort was built by an English family who lived southwest of Hastings. The man was a broom corn king and had quite a gang of men employed harvesting the crop. One night Mr. Brown, the former publisher of the Herald, and who was working there then, lay down on the floor bed at the head of the narrow stair. He felt something wriggling around the back of his neck. It proved to be a garter snake some ten inches in length. However, this was a good sod house inside and out and the reptile must have been carried in from the field in the work jacket of one of the men sleeping on the same floor. It was difficult, of course to keep the mice out of even the best sod house and wholly impossible to bar the fleas, especially from the earlier houses with dirt floors.

(Sod Continued on page 2)

Acme Prairie Breaking Plows.

RIGHT HAND ONLY.

Our Prairie Breaker combines many desirable qualities. Its construction is light and strong; the beam is adjustable; the shape is as near perfection as can be made; it turns a flat furrow with great ease and without breaking the sod; it is made with solid bar share, which is far superior to those formerly used on breakers. Shares are made to duplicate on all breakers. The many desirable qualities of this plow cannot help but bring it into great favor. Shipped direct from factory in Northern Illinois.

No. 32R249	Size, 12 inches; weight, 100 pounds; complete with rolling coulter, gauge wheel and extra share. Price.....	\$9.85
No. 32R250	Size, 14 inches; weight, 125 pounds; complete with rolling coulter, gauge wheel and extra share. Price.....	\$10.75
No. 32R251	Size, 16 inches; weight, 140 pounds; complete with rolling coulter, gauge wheel and extra share. Price.....	\$12.00
No. 32R252	Extra 12-inch share. Price.....	1.63
No. 32R253	Extra 14-inch share. Price.....	1.95
No. 32R254	Extra 16-inch share. Price.....	2.28

(Sod Continued from page 1)

Our present day housekeepers ---Mesdames and misses--- many of whom came to town dressed like the King's relatives wouldn't get along very well with sod houses. But it is safe to say this great region would never have been settled if early comers could not have built their houses with sod. The great majority had little or no money by the time they had located their claims after shipping their limited equipment several hundred miles or making a long slow journey by covered wagon to get here. Had lumber been the only building material, the government would have had to furnish it besides giving away the land, or had very few settlers. The prairie sod solved that problem.

It might here be added that to the mind of the present publisher there is only one sod house left here that is livable, and that is located on the farm straight north of Bertrand, last lived in by Mr. and Mrs. Leonard High and family. This house however, has been covered with tin and plastered and has nice floors, making it very livable.

New Books In The Library

Holdrege Public library Donation

- American Genealogy Library Microfiche Guide
- Kansas Newspapers, a directory of Newspaper holdings in Kansas
- The United States Census Compendium

In Memory of Lorena Smith

- Phelps County Post office information
- Sources of Evangelical Covenant History by G. D. Hall
- Reports of Mission Meetings 1895-1911, translated by George F. Hall
- Lorena Margaret Daeschner Hall, Sept. 1936- June 9, 1995, A Love Story by George F. Hall
- George Hall: Letters to his cousin Lorena Smith

Donated by Sandra Slater

- Nebraska Ancestree Winter and Spring

Donated by Sandi Erickson

- A Piece of the Anderson Family

Donated by Mary Worthington

- Olson-Bollends Family History from Phelps and Franklin County,

Nebraska

Donated by James Brown

- Little Jimmy Brown, My story in the Christian Children's Home

Helen Anderson, Evelyn Murphy, Donna Bergman and Jean Meyer

- Scrapbooks of the Christian Children's Home

Donated by Dave and Belle Meyers

- Johnson & Manley Saga by Isabelle Dyas Charleston

Donated by Warner Carlson

- Blue and Gold 1957 Annual, Nebraska State College, Kearney, NE
- Under the Red Sky, by Joel Sartore

Donated by the Nebraska Council of Home Extension

- Clubs History from Phelps County Home Extension Council

Donated by the Achterberg Family

- Photographs as Primary Sources for Historical Research and Teaching in Education: The Albert W. Achterberg Photographic

Collection

Donated by Greg Kelso

- C D of Holdrege High School Alumni from 1890 to 2008

Donated by Ken Mosman

- Genealogical Handbook for New England Research
- Gravestone Chronicles by Theodore Chase and Laurel K. Gobel
- Tracing your Ancestors in the Public Records Office by Jane Cox & Timothy Padfield
- Records Office by Jane Cox and Timothy Padfield
- Digging for Genealogical Treasure in New England
- Early Ohioan's Residences from the Land Grant Record by Mayburt Stephenson Riegel
- Vital Records Handbook for Births, Marriages and Deaths by Thomas J. Kemp
- Genealogical Dictionary of Maine and New Hampshire by Royes, Libby, Davis
- The Sod- House Frontier 1854-1890 by Everett Dick

Harlan County, Nebraska

Freewater Where I Grew Up

By Lester Goulter

The names of many other early settlers of Freewater Community are listed herewith. Although the date of registering with or receiving their patents for land purchased or home-

steaded from the United States Land Office does not tell us the year in which they arrived but does give us an indication that they were among the first.

May 15, 1879 - James Watson
 December 10, 1880- Daniel Patch
 January 21, 1881- Martin Wilcox
 June 1, 1881 – John Elliott
 June 30, 1881 – Allan Elliott
 June 24, 1881 – Charlie Mc Dermott
 September 9, 1881 – James Leach
 December 10, 1881 – Henry Elliott
 December 10, 1881 – James C. Robertson
 December 10, 1881 – Ross T. Walker
 December 10, 1881 –Joshua Brown
 December 20, 1881 – James Kelly
 February 9, 1882 – Patrick McMulken
 April 10, 1882 – Hannah Holmes
 April 20, 1882 – John Hawksby
 April 29, 1882 –John Plantz
 April 29, 1882 – Patrick McDermott
 November 10, 1882 – Fred Dailey
 November 18, 1882 – Robert Hendricks
 December 1, 1882 – Henry Wilcox
 February 5, 1883 – George Roush
 March 1, 1883 – Catherine Elliot
 March 10, 1883- Hannah Holmes
 April 5, 1883 – John Heath
 May 25, 1883 – William Gee
 May 25, 1883 –William Brown
 October 1, 1883 –John Willsey
 December 10, 1883 – Aidon Sisson
 December 10, 1883 – George Garrison
 December 10, 1883 – John R. Ray
 January 20 1884 – Henry Dunbar

NOTE: The Phelps Helps Newsletter highlights Harlan County in this section. With many of our subscribers interested in and from Harlan County, and since Harlan County is a connecting county to Phelps County, the Phelps Helps will publish history information on Harlan County.

June 3, 1884 - Allen Elliott
 June 16, 1884 – Peter McDermott
 January 12, 1885 – Levi Dunbar
 January 13, 1885 – Hugh Allen
 January 20, 1885 – Thomas Lanier
 January 20, 1885 – Isaac Gifford
 February 5, 1885 – John Holcomb
 February 5. 1885 – Henry Elliott

February 5. 1885 - Abraham Kittle
 May 20, 1885 – Owen Gifford
 May 20, 1885 – Erastus Glaze
 May 10, 1885 –George Brown
 September 10, 1885 – John Freeman
 November 22. 1885 – Peter Dunbar
 March 30, 1886 – Charles R. Potter
 September 23, 1887 – John Gifford
 November 1, 1887 – Elias Behren
 January 20, 1888 – John Freeman
 June 26, 1888 –Henry Mohr
 October 19, 1888 – John Freeman
 February 24, 1890 – Wesley Powell
 March 18, 1890 – Harlowe Holdrege
 May 23, 1890 – Abram Strong
 November 28, 1890 - George A. Stark
 December 8, 1890 –Joseph Herndon
 1891 – No entry
 March 7, 1892 – John T. Petty
 March 7, 1892 – Willard Pettys
 April 16, 1892 – Abram Strong
 1893 – No entry
 January 20, 1894 – E. C. Blakelee
 March 30, 1895 – James Turner
 June 19, 1895 – Elijah Fletcher

Most of the government lands available in Freewater community was taken up in the early 1880's and it is certain by 1895 no more government lands were available. By the 1890s some of these lands were sold as indicated by Warranty Deeds recorded at the Harlan County Clerks office. Some plots of land have numerous entries of transfer of ownership; others have as few as only four of five entries. Land was no doubt considered a good investment in those early times.

Search For Man Ends Happily

1967 Centennial Issue of Holdrege Daily Citizen

There were no hospitals available in the 1890s and seriously ill people had to be looked after by the relatives and friends.

It could sometimes lead to problems. Take the case of Paul Lindstrom, a brickyard worker who was stricken by typhoid fever in October of 1893. He was being treated in the upper room in Anderson boardinghouse. It was around 4 a.m. and the man watching him had gone downstairs to get a lamp. As he was getting the lamp, he

heard a noise on the porch. He rushed outside. Then he realized that Lindstrom had gone. The man had raised the window, broken through the screen, crawled out on the porch and jumped about 10 feet to the ground.

Lindstrom was described as "barefoot and undressed," by the Citizen. Friends began to search of the area, but couldn't find him. About two in the afternoon, they notified other people in the town and larger parties set out. Most, however, felt that they would find Lindstrom exhausted or possibly

dead.

"To the joy of all about 4 o'clock the man was found near the Farmers' elevator," the Citizen said, "where he came walking up the railroad track. He had been sleeping under an old corn crib in the vicinity."

Lindstrom was taken back to his room and put to bed. He woke up later and begged Anderson to let him have a hat and coat as he was going up town. "A brother of a sick man from Sacramento is here and he will be carefully attended," the Citizen said.

Immigrants to County Brought Many Things

By John Erickson
Holdrege Daily Citizen
28 March 1977

It is interesting to know what the immigrants that shipped out here by railroad brought with them. The usual invoice of their immigrant car was at least a team of horses, one or two cows, two pigs, and one dozen chickens. This was the extent of the livestock they brought.

The farming implements consisted of a good wagon, a mold board stubble plow, a wooden harrow, a corn cultivator and a corn planter, a four foot-cut mower and rake and necessary hand tools for carpenter work, spades, forks, water buckets and barrels, and a limited amount of feed for the livestock.

The household goods consisted of a table, a few chairs, cook stove, perhaps a small heating stove, one or two small cupboards and one or two trunks with their extra clothing, the most essential cooking utensils, and one bed. They knew they would be cramped for space in their sod house and that there would be no place to store anything.

The railroad went all out to help the immigrants that shipped out by putting one or two passenger coaches at the rear end of the freight train where the whole family traveled free. The immigrant was responsible for caring for his own livestock in transit.

The passenger coaches in which they road where nothing fancy, as steam heat was not even thought of

at that time. They were heated by a coal-burning flat top stove with a railing around the top to keep things from falling off. It also had a small oven in it. It was bolted to the floor about at the middle of the car on the side of the aisle, and the families could heat their food and do a limited amount of cooking as they traveled to their future home.

It is doubtful that the plows which the immigrants brought with them were suitable for breaking the tough native sod that had never been plowed before. There were two types of breaking plows, one was a mold board type, the other one was what the commonly know as the grasshopper plow. It consisted of a flat lathe instead of a mold board it

(Immigrants Continued on page 9)

First Homesteaders Faced Many Troubles

This Is part Nine of a series of Historic Articles in the Hol-drege Daily Citizen written by John El Erickson

20 May 1977

By this time the homesteaders had lived on the land five years and had improved it so that they could file for and get a registered deed to the land. Then they could get a bank loan and increase their working capital which they really needed. More land had been brought into cultivation and there was a need for new machinery to work with. More work horses were needed, but up until then many had farmed with oxen. Horses were scarce and very high priced.

When the first homesteaders arrived it was possible to buy well broke teams of oxen for less than a team of horses would cost. They would do the same work as horses on much less grain feed. There were ox traders at Kearney that would buy steers from cattle trail riders that brought cattle to be shipped out from Lowell, Nebraska. They would cut the long horns off about

six inches from the heads on the steers. They would match them up in pairs and train them to work with a yoke and sell them to settlers for work animals. These steers were three and four years old and almost as tall as horses, walked almost as fast as horses and weighed thirteen to fifteen hundred pounds.

The settlers that shipped in from older communities brought their horses with them as they were not used to working with oxen. Those who came without any equipment of any kind and if they were used to working with oxen, welcomed the chance to buy cheaper work animals with their meager supply of cash.

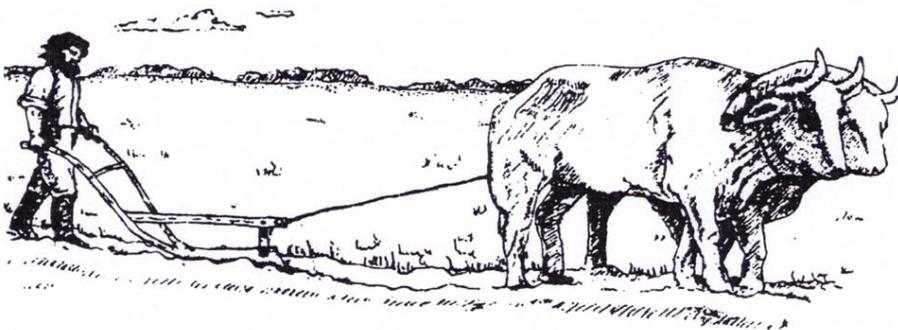
New machinery was badly needed to handle the expanding acres that were being brought under cultivation. At first sowing grain was done by hand. Then to relieve the situation, end gate seeders became popular. They fit into the back end of the farm wagon box and were driven by a chain and sprocket fastened to the right rear wheel of the wagon. It would cover a swath almost thirteen to fifteen corn rows wide. It was possible to sow twenty five acres in a short half day. As a rule several

farmers would own one together taking turns using it. They all used the same wagon until all the grain was sown. After the grain was sown it had to be worked into the ground. On corn ground this was done with cultivators and harrows and on plowed ground harrows were used.

Harvesting grain was more complicated on account of the cost of the harvesting machinery. The header was the cheapest way to harvest wheat. It was built along the same pattern as the modern headers only it was built entirely of wood. The drive wheel was of wood with a bevel gear bolted to one side of the spoke in the wheel. The main axle was also of wood. It had a twelve foot cut and was pulled with four horses. On account of its light weight it was easy running. Three or four farmers would own this together and do their harvesting together.

Grain binders for harvesting oats and barley were almost unheard of. Whoever was fortunate to own one would go from farm to farm and cut the grain for the farmers. The earliest binder was a wood frame binder called a Walter A. Wood. Other makes came in that had steel frames such as Champion, Plano, Deering and McCormick. They all had a six foot cut. None of them were equipped with tongue trucks. The horses had to carry half of the weight on their necks which

(Homesteaders Continued on page 6)



(Homesteaders Continued from page 5)

caused them to have sore necks in harvest time.

After the grain was harvested getting it threshed was another problem. Threshing rigs were few and were horse power driven. Steam tractor engines had not been invented by that time. A horse power was a rather clumsy affair. Consisting of a large circular gear that had five to seven sweeps mounted on it. Horses were hitched to these sweeps and with a system of chain equalizers, each team pulled the same load. They would walk in a circle creating the power that would drive the threshing machine with a tumbling rod connected to the cylinder shaft of the threshing machine.

This horse power would have to be staked down and braced every time a new set was made. The threshing machine was fed by hand and the straw was carried away on a straw carrier. These same types of machines were used even after steam traction engines came into use until about 1901 when self feeders and blowers were invented. These also went through a series of improvements as time went on.

Farm Machinery went through many changes, because as the farmer finances grew, so did their demand for newer, better machines. The first grain drill was a hoe type machine with a box on top and a seeding attachment that metered out the grain to each hoe, sowing the grain in rows instead of broadcasting it. These shoes were about seven inches apart and the drill had

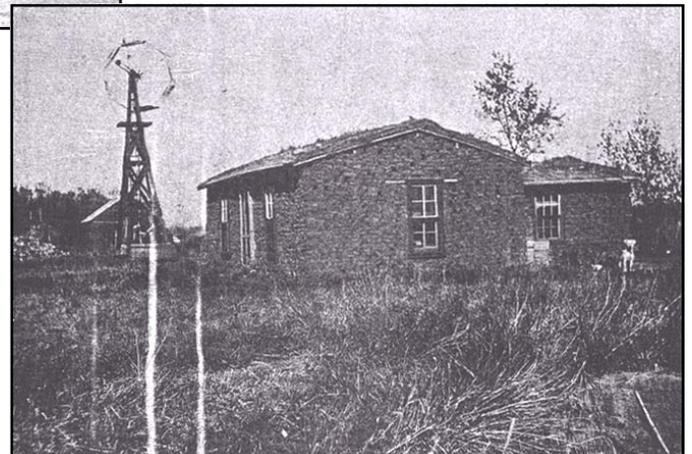
eight shoes and was drawn by two horses. The next was the runner type which never became very popular. Next was the disk drill and it came into popular use about 1900. Many improvements of that have been made.

The first stalk drill for sowing wheat in the corn fields came out in about 1900. It was a hoe drill and was later improved by putting the discs. Spring wheat was the only kind known when the first settlers started farming and continued that way until fall wheat was introduced in 1895. Some Mennonite farmers from Turkey smuggled it into this country. The wheat was called Turkey Red. By 1900 most of the farmers in Phelps County were sowing it and have been ever since.



(Left) 1912 SODDIE - This sod house was the birthplace of Ono Fulcher and when the picture was taken in 1912, he was a baby inside the house. The 10 persons pictured are other members of the family with some of their relatives. The Fulcher family have lived north of Holdrege for the past 20 years. Mr. Fulcher said that at the time of his birth there were no country telephones and a neighbor rode 13 miles to call a doctor from a neighboring town. (Date of write up unknown)

(Right) ANOTHER SODDIE - This sod house was the F.E. Wingerd home, according to the writing on the back of the photograph. Built in 1889, it was located seven miles south and 1 1/2 miles west of Holdrege. The back-of-the-picture writer also noted that the land on which the house was built in 1889 cost \$10 per acre and in 1923 was valued at \$120 per acre. The only living thing in sight when the photographer snapped the picture was the white dog on guard at the rear of the structure. The grass appears to be growing luxuriantly on the sod roof. A 1909 Phelps County directory lists F.E. Wingerd as an iceman whose address at that time as 203 South Logan. The photo is the property of Mrs. Ture Carlson of Fund. (Date of write up unknown)



Historical Sketch of Holcomb by Hazel Edgren (1967)

Settling of Holcomb Community

In this historical sketch I will leave out many things you would have wanted included, and will include events you will think it is better omitted. The history of the State will be brief. That is readily available to all readers and interested persons this centennial year. My main purpose will be to present what our forefathers did. Naturally it will center on my family, for that I know best. As time and results of my brief research permits, I will include the names of other families. I can find no published accounts of the settlement, and there are few now living who have clear recollections of happenings 80 and 90 years ago.

PART I

We have my grandmother's trunk. It is a handmade box, rather weathered now, but with the original pink paint and the black lettering across the front still legible. It reads: "Miss C. (for Christina) Person, Phelps Center, Phelps county, Nebraska, Nort Amerika." This trunk served as the hope chest were grandma packed her linens and other treasures that she took with her to start her new life in the New World.

Christine Person and Andrew G. Larson were married in Varmland, Sweden, in Feb. 1876. They set out for their new home in the new land of America. An agent of the union Pacific Railroad, Leander Hallgren,

had gone to Sweden to recruit people to settle Phelps County. He told of the advantages here and painted a beautiful picture. As a result, his brother Frank came from Sweden that year to join his brother in the promotion. Frank settled on NE ¼ of Section one, township 6, range 19 where they had a dug out as a station for the immigrants. Mrs. Hallgren never knew how many she would have for breakfast as the newly arrived people gathered from strawstacks, wagons, or any shelter they had found during the night. This was also the year that A. G. Larson's left Sweden. On their arrival in New York the Larson's received the surveyed 152.69 acres or \$2.25 per acre. It was signed by the vice president of the U. P. railroad, which later they found was invalid, so it was reissued. This is the land where Winston Larson now lives.

There are four ways that the settlers could get land. One way was to homestead. Another way was by timber claim, where one could plant and tend ten acres of trees and so get title to a quarter of land. Every 16th and 36th section of land was reserved as school land to provide income for schools. This land was acquired for farming on a leasing basis. Then there was the out right buying as Grandpa did. He bought from the railroad. The government gave alternate sections to them to build the road and help bring in settlers. Frank Gustafson's on the quarter north of the Larson's got their land by Timber Claim, while Streets across the road got theirs by

Homestead.

I have no proof, but a hunch, that it was my adventurous grandmother who exerted her influence to get to this country. I don't believe that my grandfather was so quick to try new things, but he was rather slow and deliberate in making decisions. I have heard him described as "deliberate and determined", and his opinions were sought and trusted. But as they set out by train to Chicago even Grandma's enthusiasm waned. When they arrived in Chicago, Grandpa had misgivings about continuing their journey. He was a carpenter by trade, and now he was going to a new unknown land but to be a farmer. They probably heard rumors of hardships of the pioneers in the west and of the Indians as they got this close. So Grandpa got work as a carpenter in Chicago and there they established their first home. This was just five years after the big Chicago fire, so carpenters were in good demand.

Let us pause here and look at what this country was really like then. Nebraska applied to enter the United States as a territory in 1753, but complications over the slavery question, whether the territory should be slave or free, detained the acceptance until 1864, after the Civil War, when efforts to build up this country could be made. In 1860 a daily Overland State and Mail Route was established and telegraph lines ran on the north side

(Holcomb Continued on page 8)

(Holcomb Continued from page 7)

of the river from East to Kearney where they crossed the river to Fort Kearney about four miles southeast of Kearney, then extended west through what is now Phelps county. The Union Pacific Railroad had reached Salt Lake City in 1869. Nebraska was the 37th state to receive Statehood status in 1867. Eastern Nebraska was settled first and the settlements pushed westward. In 1873, the Nebraska legislature defined the boundaries of Phelps County and it was formally organized that year. In the first County election there weren't enough electors in the county to fill all the required offices, so some held two offices. Most of the first settlers stayed along the Platte River, and the election of the site for County Seat resulted in it being established in Williamsburg, north of the river road, just north of the present R. 3 schoolhouse, section 14, township 8, range 19. A traveler of the day described Williamsburg as "a rural Post Office in Phelps County. Here we found the Post Office, General Store, hotel, private residence, and general lounging place all under one roof; in fact the whole town was under one roof; and not that large either."

In 1879, a new election was held to again vote for the county seat. Through the efforts of the Hallgren's there were 404 voters, and Phelps Center became the new County Seat, a prize for the town. Phelps Center was located on the same section as the Hallgren's, just to the west of their dugout. Leander

Hallgren must have been quite a salesman. The story is told that when a group of Swedes arrived in New York City they were so very impressed, and they had hardly heard that place mentioned. One was credited with saying, "Think, if this is New York, what must Phelps Center in Phelps County Be!

J. M. and C. J. Dahlstrom were here in the early 1870s. C. J. Dahlstrom wrote about that time, "I was one of the first settlers on the divide. Kearney, the closest town to get supplies, was 26 miles across unbroken, treeless prairies. I went there with my wagon, guided on my travels only by the wind. P Charlie Lundvall tells me that his father would rise early so they could leave home by 4 a.m. at the latest when they went to Kearney for supplies. They would then stay in Kearney all night, again leaving early to get ahead of the traffic over the river bridge.

It is about this time that two boys, about 8-10 years old went to Kearney for their father. He brought a cow and told the boys to lead the cow home, telling them to go along the south side of the river stopping at a dugout south of Odessa for the night, then to cross two trails and take a third across the sand hills and prairies. They found the dugout all right and spent the night but evidently a new track had had been made, and they were lost. One hill they climbed and the next hill looked the same as the other. Tired and hungry and discouraged, they finally decided to milk the cow in one of the hats and drank the milk.

That refreshed them. At dusk they were happy to see a horseback rider appear over a hill. Someone had been sent to find them and they were safe. These boys were Joe and Gust Johnson.

But let us go back to the Larson's in Chicago. In April, 1877, a girl, Erika was born. The next spring a family stopped to see the Larson's on their way from Sweden to Phelps Center. It as Aaron Bloomquist and his bride, close friend of the Larson's and neighbors in Sweden. They tried to persuade Larson's to go with them west. However, Grandpa gave the Bloomquist the legal description of his land and asked him to look it up and report on where and how it was. Very soon the answer came, "Your land is next to mine. Come at once." As soon as the expected baby was born, a boy who they named Carl Edward and called Eddie (my dad), they continued west, making their home with the Bloomquist's in their dugout until their homes were ready. This land was ½ miles east and 2 ½ miles north of Phelps Center. In these days there was much cooperation. If a neighbor needed a hand one was never too busy to help, so homes were quickly readied.

Holcomb Part II will continue in the next issue of Phelps Helps.

(Immigrants Continued from page 4)

had three steel rods set in such a way that it did a good job of turning the native sod over. The mold board type plow could be used in plowing the ground in the spring after it had been broken out the previous spring.

The next question was what to plant and where to get the necessary seed. The Phelps County settlers heard about the early settlers in Harlan County and went there to get the necessary seed and also some advice as to what to plant and also how to plant it, as they had already been there four or five years. Some of them also had some surplus feed that they could buy. All of this was a great help for the Phelps County settlers.

Another problem was to find fuel for their homes. The main source was to gather as many buffalo chips as they could and pile along the south wall of their sod house. They were slow burning and helped to keep the homes warm.

The nearest supply of wood was at Spring Creek in Rock Falls Township. There was heavy virgin timber there that could be bought at a reasonable price. Other emergency fuel was corn stalks or twisted hay or what ever else could be found.

The main trading centers for the early settlers were Williamsburg, Phelps Center, Rock Falls and Sacramento. There may have been others that were not on the main trails through the county.

For the early settlers it was important that some kind of communication system was established. It was the policy of the United States Postal Department to establish some form of mail service whenever there became a need for it. These Post-offices were established at some home located near the main tracks.

The place was given a name and it was registered with the U. S. Postal Department and was furnished with a stamp bearing that Post Office name, to use in stamping all outgoing mail. Mail regular delivers two or three times a week.

Following is a list of the earliest Post Offices and when they were established according to the official records received from the U. S. Postal Department:

Hodson, August 11 1874
 Rock Falls, September 10, 1874
 Williamsburg, August 11 1874
 Sherwood, June 9, 1875
 Phelps Center, October 3, 1877
 Industry, July 24, 1878
 Oscar, August 15, 1878
 Sacramento, February 4, 1879

Lake, May 27, 1879
 Westmark, July 23, 1879
 Highland, July 24, 1879
 Whitewater, November 14, 1879
 Clarence, November 14, 1879
 Integrity, December 8, 1879

Axelson, February 27 1880
 Oakne, January 32, 1883
 Frank, April 3, 1883
 Fraser, September 11, 1883

Hayden, June 4, 1884
 Romeyn, October 7, 1889
 Urbana, February 9, 1885
 Denman, March 30, 1885
 Holcomb, May 11, 1896

Atlanta, September 12. 1884
 Bertrand, May 10, 1885
 Holdrege, November 9, 1883
 Loomis, January 21, 1886
 Funk, January 28, 1888

The United States Department of records shows that during the first one hundred years of Phelps County's history, it has been served by no less than twenty eight registered U. S. Post Offices.



**Did you know
 that the
 Nebraska
 Prairie Museum
 is also the home
 of the
 Sod House
 Society?**



An "Old Soddy" on the farm of
Albert S. Hanson
Bertrand, Nebraska
Westside Township (note windmill)

Holdrege Area Genealogy Club
PO Box 164
Holdrege, NE 68949
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED