

Phelps Helps



Volume 14, Issue 3

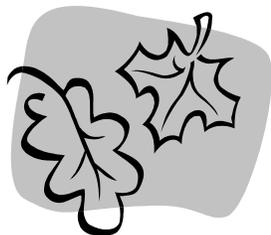
Fall 2006

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

The public is
welcome!

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2007 Swedish Days Porch Festival



HOLDREGE AREA GENEALOGY CLUB TAKES PART IN PORCH FESTIVAL

Our club set up a table at the Porch Festival on Swedish Days in Holdrege in June. Members visited with several people about their family history. Two door prizes were given out in a drawing. The winners were Richard Miller of Bertrand - 2006 membership to Holdrege Area

Genealogy Club and Hulda Peterson of Holdrege - the Phelps County marriage book.

Elizabeth Schlatz and Margaret Stutheit were chairman of the event. We wish to thank them for all their time and effort. Others that assisted were Lourie Johnson, Virginia Lindstrom and

Funeral of Civil War Veteran Held Saturday 15 April 1926

The body of Francis M. Clay arrived here for burial Thursday evening on No. 5. Funeral services were conducted Saturday morning at 10:30 o'clock from Baker's Chapel, by Rev. James M. Douglas.

Mr. Clay came to Nebraska in 1878 and moved to Holdrege 20 years ago. For some time he was interested in the roller mill with A. A. Johnson.

During the Civil War he served his country as a member of Co. E. 3rd Ohio Calvary and for several years he has spent winter in the soldiers' home.

Francis M. Clay was born September 11, 1848 in Ohio, at the time of his death he had attained the age of 77 years, 6 months and 26 days.

He leaves to mourn his departure three sisters, Mrs. Hattie Edison of Cygnet, Ohio, Mrs. Lucy Gym and Mrs. Caroline McGuire of Toledo, a brother, John M. Clay of Adly, Washington, twenty-one nieces and nephews and a host of friends.

New Books On Our Shelf

Given by Mary Payton

- 1946 Purple and Gold Holdrege, Nebraska year book

Given by Sandra Slater

- Warps Christmas Messengers, Minden, NE - 1950, 1958, 1959, 1968, 1970
- Upland United Methodist Church 1887-1987
- Upland United Methodist Service of Dedication, December 1, 1974

Given by the Holdrege Public Library

- Index Guide to the Contents of the Publications 1885-1956 and the magazine 1918-1958 of the Nebraska State Historical Society.
- Guide to the manuscript Division of the State Archives.

Given by Rod Pearson

- Family Records of Pearson, Tillman, /Tilgman, Newhouser, Creighton, Holt, Krueger, Martin, Vermillion, Long

Donated by Dorothy Richmand

- 1971 Haymaker Cozad School Yearbook

Donated by Dick Dyas

- Death Valley Days in 1849

Given by Lourie Johnson

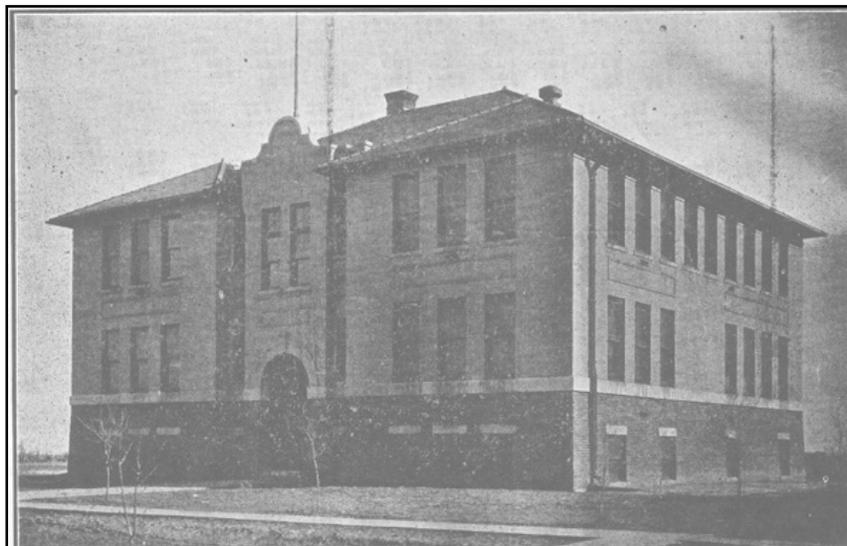
- Sears, Roebuck & Co., Consumers Guide, fall 1900

Given by Brian Ridgley

- Family histories of the Ridgley, Young, Lundbury and William Families.
- "The Amazing Story of the Ridgley's in America"

Other Donations

- Holdrege High School, Class of 1952, 50 year reunion
- 1973 Centennial Issue of Phelps County Citizen
- B. R. Lakin "A Country Preacher"



High School Building, Bertrand, Nebraska

Harlan County, Nebraska

STAMFORD, NEBRASKA

Material for this article was compiled by Jack Vaughn in the 1950s. He interviewed Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Wearer, owners of the Stamford Star newspaper.

The Wearer's come to Stamford as the minister of the Christian Church in 1916. For a time he was a dealer for International Harvester. In 1923, they purchased the Star Newspaper and have faithfully published the weekly ever since and have never missed a weekly issue.

In 1887 the Lincoln Land Company laid out the town which is located about six miles west of Orleans and which has named Stamford by Mr. John Goudie, one of the first settlers.

Mr. Goudie built a hotel and livery barn in the fall of that year. Next a general store was opened by a Mr. Henry and the first hardware store built and ran by a Mr. Wilson.

The following year a lumberyard was moved to Stamford from Orleans and operated by a man by the name of Houlahan. Shortly thereafter the post office was operated and mastered by Mr. Crawford and a Mr. Green opened a drug store. Soon after the Clark and Edwards dry goods store opened and in 1890 the bank started in business to be followed by a blacksmith shop and the next year by Adam's hardware store. 1892 saw the building of the town hall and Austin's elevator. Then another hardware store and drug store and a general merchandise store. The citizens of 1900 read the first Stamford newspaper.

Tragedy struck in 1901 in the form of fire. The entire east side of main street was leveled. It was a serious blow to the little village mostly because nothing was rebuilt but the lumber yard. The successive years saw much growth in business enterprises, for the most part along the west side of the street. Then in 1913 fire came again

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.

this time burning the entire west side of the street. It was not long however until most of the business places were rebuilt and the village prospered as never before.

Today Stamford is a busy community with a population of 260. Unlike most other small towns it is not losing

out either of its population or its business to the larger towns. Stamford today boasts a membership in its Chamber of Commerce of 170 which is an unusually high percentage. Carl Lans, a retired farmer, was recently elected President of the Chamber.

A history of the Stamford school system is an interesting story. It was organized about one mile southwest of the present town. There is no record of the first school year except that Mr. A. M. Lyon was the teacher. A report dated April 10, 1876 gives an interesting picture of the school at that time. Miss Alice Thomkins was the teacher and received a salary of \$20 per month. The record of books used in the school of twelve pupils shows that there were six spelling books (three different kinds), six arithmetic books (four different kinds), six readers (four different kinds), one geography and one grammar. All this time a private home was used for the classes but in the summer of 1876 a school building was moved into the town. As the years went by a school building was constructed at a cost of \$380 and was named Pioneer School House. Then in 1888 after the founding of Stamford the school building was moved into town. As the years went by and the enrollment grew the building grew too. By 1910 the building included four rooms and taught 10 grades. The eleventh and twelfth graded were added in 1916 and 1917.

In the spring of 1918 plans were laid and in the fall work begun on the present school building. The three floor brick structure was completed in 1919 at a total cost of \$23,000. The school

(Harlan County Continued on page 4)

(Harlan County Continued from page 3)

presently houses 101 students, thirty-five of which are in high school. Seven teachers are employed including Supt. Raymond M. Schroeder who has served the community since 1940 with the exception of three and a half years during which he served Uncle Sam in the E. T. O as an Army Air Force Sergeant.

The Stamford Presbyterian church had its beginning in the organization of the Harmony Presbyterian Church on March 30, 1880 by Rev. G. L. Little in the little frame school house which stood on the bank of the Sappa Creek southwest of town. The name Harmony was chosen because it was dear to the hearts of most of the charter members, it being the name of their church home in Pennsylvania. When the first church building was erected in Stamford it was changed to the Stamford Presbyterian Church. The building was dedicated December 18th, 1887. The manse was built during the ministry of Rev. A. B. Jamison in about 1900. The present pastor, Rev. Samuel Waring, lives at Beaver City and serves Stamford part-time.

The Disciples of Christ of Stamford first formed a church organization August 16th, 1888, with Rev. J. L. Mckay of Alma in charge. The congregation met at the district 4 school house until 1892 where services were held in the Lutheran church and the school house. In 1896 their church building was completed. The church was incorporated April 24, 1924 under the name of Stamford Christian Church. The congregation hasn't had a resident pastor for many years but they have their worship service and Sunday school every Sunday. Sometimes they have a student or visiting pastor but when they don't have a speaker the superintendent takes charge. The choir sings every Sunday and the attendance runs from 60 to 70.

The Trinity Lutheran church was organized March 11, 1888, in the same old school house south west of town. From August of that year to 1890 the group held their meetings at the Presbyterian church in Stamford. They completed their own building and it was dedicated on May 15th, 1890. In 1906 the church was

enlarged and the parsonage built. The present structure was built in 1929. Rev. J. C. Suter has been their pastor about two years.

There are at the present time 20 business establishments in Stamford.

The oldest business is that of Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Naden. Mr. Naden came about 1915 and has been in the general merchandise business ever since. The past few years due to his poor health, Mrs. Naden has run the store.

H. M. Perkins has been in the lumber business since 1925. The Oscar Westberg Exchange is managed by Orville Coady. Mr. Westberg is one of the few pioneers left having come to these parts before the town was founded.

Ray Martin is manager of the Stamford Elevator. A general store is run by Lyman Hammond. Mr. Hammond has been a resident of Stamford for many years. The Stamford Market, grocery and meats, is owned by E. H. Tegtman. The postmaster is Mrs. Ray Martin.

Besides these there are two garages, two restaurant, and two cream stations and a service station.

The Stamford Bank was organized in 1890 with a capitol of \$5,000. The bank as changed hands but the same bank services the community today.

Stamford also has a plumber, Ore King; a barber, a real estate office, two beauty operators, and electrician and a locker plant.

New Members & Their Queries



1. Richard Miller
803 Medina Ave.
Bertrand, NE 68927

Prairie Life Story Reads Like a Book

Flames of Grass Fire Sweep over Sod House Shelter for Family and Cow

From the Holdrege (Nebraska) Citizen
October 9, 1933

Andrew Lindgren came to Nebraska in 1891, arriving May 2, at Plum Creek, which is now Lexington, Nebraska.

He settled in Phelps County, taking a homestead, which were already scarce and he considered himself lucky to secure a quarter section in Anderson Township, which had been Alfred Bard's homestead, but had not been proved up on.

A Mr. Stedberg at Kearney, who took care of the real estate, sold it to Mr. Lindgren for \$225. Six months later he proved up on the place, Steadberg building a sod house in January of 1882.

Moving his family into the house, he walked to Kearney, took a train to Omaha and got work in the smelters. It was hard labor and he suffered hardships, but each month he sent money home to keep the family and pay for the building of the sod house.

Later he returned home to his family and

they lived in the soddy for eleven years, breaking the sod and driving oxen in their farm work. Often they drove the oxen to Kearney, angling across the prairie to town.

In 1893 they built a new home, Mr. Falk of Holdrege Constructing it for \$1,000.

A thrilling chapter in their life occurred during the time Mr. Lindgren was working in Omaha when his wife and sons were threatened by a prairie fire.

The pet cat awoke the family by her howls. She had jumped to the window sill, seeing the red glow of the approaching fire, which had stated as far away and Old Fort Kearny, sweeping through the sand hills to the southwest, flames spreading over what is now Anderson, Center and adjoining Townships.

The family was terrified but managed to get the old cow, which was all the livestock they had, into the Soddy. There they huddled while the fire swept over their house, leaving the sod bricks bare and blackened and the pioneer family unharmed.

Harlan County
Stamford Lumber Company

Harold Perkins & Sons
About 1949



John Hanson Died Monday Was Prominent Pioneer of County and Well Known Retired Farmer - June 22, 1925

John Hanson, well known and respected Phelps County Pioneer died at his home Monday Morning after an illness of several months. During the past few weeks his condition has been such that death was momentarily expected and his family had resigned themselves to the visit of the grim reaper.

During his life Mr. Hanson was prominent in public, business and the religious life of the community and his advice and counsel was sought by a great number of the county's well known citizens who sincerely grieve with the bereaved family of the live long friend.

Mr. Hanson was a native of Sweden and came to America in his youth, locating in Chicago where he remained a short time before settling in Phelps County. He came in the spring of 1878, and the following spring built a sod house and opened a general store which was among the first in this section. The post office near old Phelps Center as also run in connection.

In 1879 Mr. Hanson, in partnership with a brother, built a frame store building on the site now occupied by the Orphans Home, an institution which Mr. Hanson assisted in organizing and of which he served as president

for several years.

The Company dealt in general merchandise and implements and through honesty and integrity built up a flourishing business. This he disposed of in 1881 and bought a timber claim in Westmark Township. Like other pioneers he erected a sod house which was soon replaced by a pretentious frame dwelling. Success attended his ventures and he acquired considerable property and substantial building and improvements.

In 1889 Mr. Hanson opened a general store on the corner of Fourth and East Avenue which business he carried on until 1896 in which he was assisted by his sons.

Mr. Hanson dealt considerable in real estate and much of his operations were carried on in several western counties.

In addition to managing his large business and general farm operations he was also a successful hog and cattle raise and found time to take an active interest in the affairs of the community. He was an earnest worker of the Swedish Mission church and during his residence in Westmark township was one of the organizers of Holcomb church of which he served as trustee for six years.

Mr. Hanson came to Holdrege to remain permanently in 1908 where he has since resided, beloved by his family and a large circle of friends and neighbors.

In the death of J. A. Hanson, which occurred at the home, 503 Hancock Street, Monday, June 22, 1925, Phelps County lost one of its early and most influential settlers and this community a highly respected citizen.

John August Hanson was born in Myrlanda, Socken, Jonkopings Lan, Smaland, Sweden, January 5, 1858. Emigrated to this country at the age of 13 years coming directly to Illinois where he lived for six years. Later he removed to Phelps County where he has since continually resided.

He was one of the first merchants at old Phelps Center and has at times taken keep interest in the development of this community. He served the county several years in the capacity of County Commissioner, being a member of the Board at the time of the erection of the present Court House building.

He was united in marriage to Augusta S. Carlson, February 6, 1881 and this union was blessed with six

(Hanson Continued on page 7)

(Hanson Continued from page 6)

children all of whom survive the father. Converted to Christ in 1887, he has since continually been affiliated with the Church of Christ, first in Phelps Center, later in Holcomb and since 1899, with the Evangelical Mission of Holdrege, serving as its chairman for many years and which position he filled up to the time of his death.

In the affairs of the Christian Orphans Home he has been vitally interested since the beginning, serving as chairman for 23 years. He manifested a keen interest in this institution to the very last and especially in the new building soon to be erected.

Stricken with an incurable malady the symptoms of which were first noticed about Christmas last year, our brother has calmly awaited the inevitable and has borne his sufferings with great fortitude and patience. The end came very peacefully Monday about noon, when his weary spirit vacated the mortal body racked and emaciated by pain and went to be with his Savior, whom he so dearly loved and longed to behold. He had at the time of his death attained the age of 67 years, 5 months and 17 days.

There is now left to mourn and greatly miss him, the beloved wife, and four sons, Walter,

Bert, Hilmer and Charles; two daughters Mrs. Oscar Bjorklund and Mrs. Carl P. A Erickson; 10 grandchildren; one brother Gust A. Hanson of Loomis; four sisters Mrs. Minnie Rosen of Holdrege, Mrs. Carrie Johnson of Loomis; Mrs. Ida Johnson of Genoa, Nebraska; Mrs. Augusta Peterson of St. Edwards, Nebraska, besides numerous relatives and a very large circle of friends. There has left us an affectionate husband, a faithful father, a true brother and friend, a loyal and respected citizen. He will be greatly missed and the loss keenly felt in the home, in the church and in the community. Peace be unto his pleasant memory.

Funeral services were held Wednesday afternoon from the family home on Hancock Street and from the Evangelical Mission Church in charge of the pastor, Rev. Irvin A. D. Johnson. The church was filled to its full capacity and sympathizing friends who had come to pay the last tribute

of respect to the memory of the departed. Rev. August H. Modig, a former pastor, was present and spoke in behalf of the General Board of the Swedish Evangelical Church.

Appropriate music was affectively rendered by Mrs. Roy B. Johnson and Mrs. E. E. Nelson and a male quartet. There was a profusion of most beautiful flowers bearing a silent testimony to the esteem of which the departed was held.

A most impressive touch was given the funeral obsequies in the sons and son-in-law acting as pallbearers. The members of the Christian Orphans Home Board acted as honorary escort.

Following the services at the church the procession proceeded to Prairie Home Cemetery where the remains were laid to rest in the family lot, there to await the call of the Savior on the glorious Resurrection morning.



Christian Children's Home 1898

The Reflector - 1913 Bertrand Year Book

SCHOOL HISTORY

The first school ever started in Bertrand was a private school in 1885. It was held about three months, and a young man by the name of Earl Smith taught. The year following, another school was organized and Mrs. Amelia Shoemaker taught. This lasted five months.

In 1886 or 1887 a skating rink was started, and finding that it did not pay, seats were placed in it and school commenced. Fred Kiplinger was the first teacher.

Then a large frame building was built and served for many years. One by one each room was finished and equipped as needed. By 1907 the school had grown to be fairly large.

In 1908-1909 the new brick building was built, which has continued to be used up to the present time.

Alumni Notes From the 1913 Bertrand High School Reflector

Previous to 1899

Nels Bernston, Edison, farmer
Dora (Bernston) Wolcott, Sumner, Nebr.
Mabel (Hamilton) Horton, Bertrand, Nebr.
Walter S. Westfall, Merna, merchant
Alta (Greenman) Gaddis, Oakland, Calif.
Frank A. Johnson, Bertrand, Nebr., farmer
Ida (Erickson) Davis, Ramer, Ala.

Class of 1899

Daisy (Johnson) Reynolds, Elwood, Nebr.
Carl Peterson, Bertrand, clerk

Class of 1900 and 1901

Were graduated from the 10th grade in 1900 and 11 grade in 1901
Motto: "Bees, not Butterflies."
Colors Green and white
Flower: White Rose
Class Roll
Garda Johnson, Bertrand, Nebr. Teacher
Della (Dobner) Bird, Arapahoe, Nebr.
Emma (Johnson) White, address unknown
Grace (Cook) Davis, address unknown
Huldah Peterson, Lincoln, organizer of Boys' and Girls' Clubs in Nebraska

Bernice (Kellogg) Peterson, Bertrand, Nebr.
Myrtle Washburn, Bertrand, Nebr., at home
Lester Little, Blue Springs, Nebr., Supt. Of Schools.
Nels Swenson, Langangilang, Ilocos, Philippine Islands, teacher

Class of 1902

Motto: "Climb Through the Rocks be Rugged."
Colors: Red and White
Flower: Deep Pink and White Carnation
Class Roll
Lydia Sandstrom, Bertrand, Nebr.
Florence Johnson, Kearney, Nebr., Norman student.
Aaron Johnson, Lindsborg, Kan., college student.
Edith (Lindquist) Rapp, Turlock, Calif.
Goldie Washburn, Bertrand, Nebr., teacher.
Frank B. Johnson, Delta, Utah, farmer
Jennie (Morrison) Weisenflugh, Loomis, Nebr.

Class of 1903

Motto: "Choose Your Course and Pursue It Grandly."
Colors: Cream and Azure Blue
Flower: Rose
Class Roll
Mildred Best, Howells, Nebr. Teacher
Jessie (Livingston) Gainsforth, Ogallala, Nebr.
Raymond Wickwire, Atlanta, Nebr.
Katie (Westfall) Peterson, Bertrand, Nebr.
Carrie (Matson) Peterson, Bertrand, Nebr.
Martin Swenson, Pocatello, Idaho, Ass't. Supt. Oregon Short Line R. R.

*To be continued in December 2006 issue
of Phelps Helps*

First Holdrege Business Men Remember Town as Rail Camp

*From the Holdrege (Nebraska Citizen)
October 9, 1933*

Today, fifty years after the founding of the city of Holdrege, four citizens remain who witnessed the growth from a railroad camp to the city it is in 1933.

Among the four are G. O. Lindevall, now residing at 619 Hancock street, S. A. Dravo whose home is located on Tilden Street; Frank Parsons of 616 McMillian street and the late W. P. Norris. To find one of these men for the real story of the pioneers is fortunate, to find two of them is unsurpassable luck.

We found Lindevall and parsons having a quiet friendly visit at the home of Parsons the other evening reminiscing over the days of fifty years ago, when the settlers battled the blizzards and prairie fires and met the Indians and the privations with the same staunch spirit.

They recalled the early struggle that brought the town through that crucial period when railroad camps depart removing activities and valuable support of patronage. Many are the frontier towns that spring into existence over night, gaining the fame and wealth only to wither with the passing of the railroad work camp and sink back to the soil from which it sprung.

Yet Holdrege boasting as phenomenal a growth as any survived. In three short months it sprang from the prairie sod to a thriving metropolis of the plains—a city of one hundred buildings.

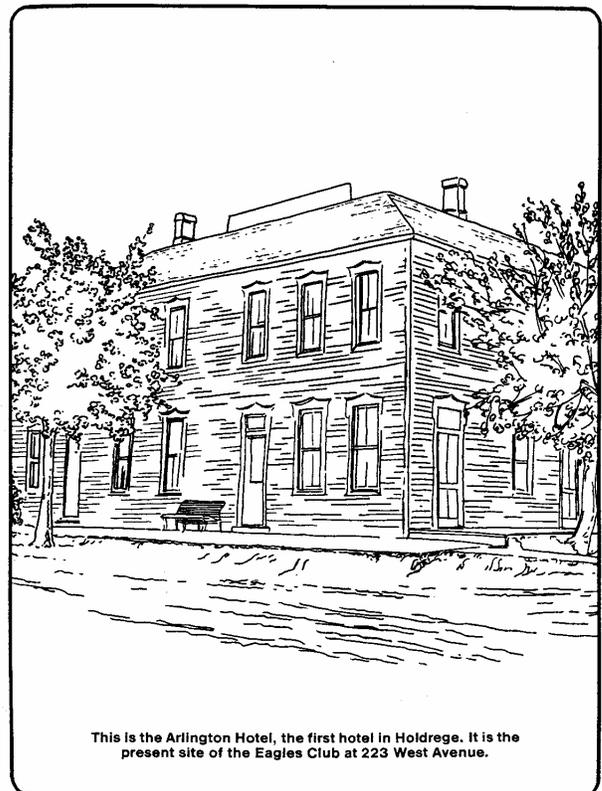
However, the same spirit which met and conquered the hardships and privations of the new life for homes kept Holdrege moving forward and also inspired the audacity that in '84 sent on a spring afternoon a wagonload of citizens across the prairie to Phelps Center, the county seat, on as daring and bold a raiding

expedition as ever was organized.

They came away that day with the county records and from that day on the future of Holdrege was assured and of a roseate hue. O. Hedlund, the county clerk in 1884, who is a resident of Hugo, Colorado, at the present time, and numbered among the older living veterans of the pioneer days, found it compulsory to remove to Holdrege with the records, as did the other county officials. "Those were the days," Mr. Lindevall and Mr. Parsons agree.

In 1883 the mainline of the Burlington was moving westward at top speed, they recalled and Mr. Parsons was among the early passengers who came to western Nebraska by way of the new railroad.

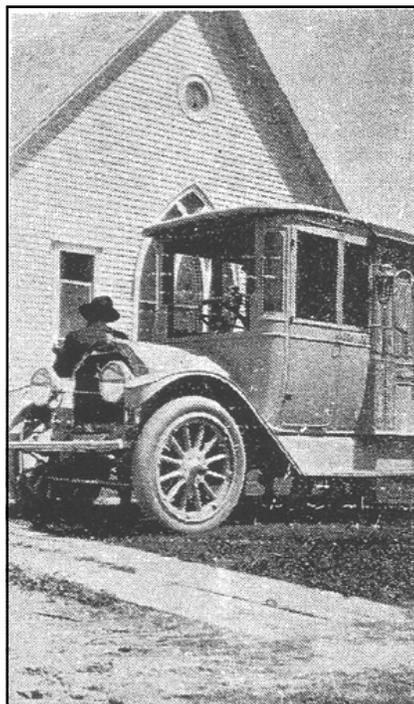
*To be continued in the December 2006
issue of Phelps Helps*



This is the Arlington Hotel, the first hotel in Holdrege. It is the present site of the Eagles Club at 223 West Avenue.

FIRST MOTOR HEARSE USED IN COUNTY AFTER TRAIN ACCIDENT

(An article from a 1976 Holdrege Citizen Newspaper)



This auto hearse was reportedly the first one ever used in Phelps County. This is a picture of the vehicle which was brought from Kearney, Nebraska. It carried the coffin of Lawrence Ambrose, who died in a train accident. (This is the son of True and Estella Ambrose who died in May of 1916.)

A tragic Accident happened 60 years ago today on May 17, 1916.

Lawrence Ambrose, 17, of Atlanta was killed when a train ran over him near Atlanta, Nebraska. He was driving a horse-drawn buggy to a neighbor's farm to shell corn and was killed.

A motor hearse was used at his burial in the Prairie Home Cemetery in Holdrege, Nebraska. That was the first time an auto-hearse was used here, as a replacement for the dependable horses.

Mrs. Russell Fix of Holdrege, sister of the victim, recalled that the Auto-hearse was brought from Kearney for the interment 60 years ago on May 20th. Pallbearers at the funeral were Rex Chester Hedlund, Leon Henline, Dothan Fulk, Glen Court and Charley Polhemus and Glen Henline who is still living.

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Holdrege Area Genealogy Club
PO Box 164
Holdrege, NE 68949