

H. S. M. SPIELMAN'S FIFTY FRUITFUL YEARS IN NEBRASKA

Five Thousand Dollars a Year Net the Reward Nebraska Has Brought to a Couple Who Were Not Afraid to Work Hard and Who Were Thrifty Enough to Save in the Beginning

A REMARKABLE jubilee was celebrated October 26 at Tekamah, Neb., when Mr. and Mrs. H. S. M. Spielman, surrounded by their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, their friends and fellow pioneers, commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of their arrival in Burt county. October 26, 1857, was a dismal, rainy day, typical of the fortunes of the young couple who had just arrived from Pennsylvania and did not possess a thing in the world except the clothes on their backs. October 26, 1907, was sunny and warm, typical of the present fortunes of this same couple who now own 2,450 acres of the best land in Burt county and 800 acres in South Dakota, to say nothing of flocks and herds and buildings and other wealth.

It is said the days of miracles are past, yet here was a miracle performed in the prosaic, matter-of-fact twentieth century. In the short space of fifty years Mr. Spielman was transformed from a common laborer struggling against poverty in Pennsylvania and earning \$25 a month working on the railroad to a Nebraska farmer worth more than \$250,000.

How was it done? Men may become wealthy legitimately in either of two ways—by discovering a mine of wealth in the bowels of the earth or by possessing an extraordinary genius for something which will enable them to turn to their personal advantage the resources of the world. The young couple who came out from Pennsylvania possessed neither of these requisites and yet in a way they possessed both of them. They discovered a mine of wealth in the rich, fertile, prolific soil of Nebraska and they possessed an extraordinary genius for hard, unremitting work, which enabled them to turn to advantage the resources of this mine of wealth. They also possessed a genius for hope which carried them safely through the darkest times.

Posthumous Son of Poverty

It was the combination of these qualities with the far-famed soil of Nebraska which worked the miracle of changing a poor man into a rich one. Here is the story of H. S. M. Spielman and his wife:

Mr. Spielman was born on a farm near Williamsburg, Blair county, Pennsylvania, March 11, 1836. His father gave up a long struggle against poverty and unkind fate and died three months before the birth of the son. From his mother, apparently, Mr. Spielman inherited those sturdy traits which were to stand him in such good stead in hewing out a fortune from the wilderness. She was a brave woman and alone struggling against that poverty which had proved too much for her husband. They were very, very poor—so poor that often the widow gleaned the wheat from the carefully raked fields of the farmers of the surrounding country. Many a day Mr. Spielman recalls trudging barefooted with his mother and the other children through the stubble picking up the heads of wheat which had escaped the harvesters. When, with infinite labor, enough had been gathered and separated, the wheat from the chaff by hand, it was carried to the mill and the precious flour brought home.

They lived at this time in Huntington county, whither the widow had moved soon after the birth of her youngest son. There they remained for twelve years on a tiny plot of ground and existed from hand to mouth, often, indeed, going hungry because there was not a crust to eat. At the age of 15 years Mr. Spielman, or Martin, as everyone calls him, secured work on a canal which was then being built near his home. Later he worked as a laborer on the Pennsylvania railroad, where he earned \$25 a month.

With an income of \$25 a month young Martin thought he was doing very well. He knew a girl who lived near his home and they decided to get married, which they did June 22, 1854. The girl was Miss Corbell Boring, who was born February 14, 1832, in Milford county, and moved with her parents to Huntington county as Martin had done. She has been his helpmeet in every sense of the word, and today he ascribes to her at least half of the credit for their remarkable success in Nebraska.

Nebraska Calls Them West

Misfortune buffeted them about after their marriage. The husband was afflicted with typhoid fever and brain fever. But in spite of this they saved money. Mrs. Spielman did washing and scrubbing, picking up what little money she could to help out the family finances. And the young man never lost an hour from work except through sickness. Still it was evident to their far-seeing eyes that they would never gain a competence by working for \$25 a month though they slaved all their lives. About this time Amos Corbin, who had gone to school with Martin when they were boys, wrote to his uncle from Burt county, Nebraska, whither he had ventured in search of his fortune. He sent back glowing accounts of fertile soil and salubrious climate. To make a long story short, Martin Spielman, his wife, child and his mother decided to emigrate to Nebraska. They sold all their goods and set out for the far west. The railroad carried them to St. Louis, where they were just too late to catch the last northwardbound boat of the season. They took the train to Jefferson City, where a vessel was reported bound for Omaha. This boat ran only to Weston, Mo., and from that point they had to go by stage to St. Joseph, where they again failed to catch a boat and had to take a stage to Omaha. From Omaha they hired a team to take them to Blair, where they arrived on that memorable rainy day in the fall of 1857.

"I had just \$5 left and I owed \$5.35 on my goods in Omaha," says Mr. Spielman in summing up his financial status at the time of his arrival upon the spot that was to make him wealthy. "Those were the days of the panic, too. There was no money in the country and no work. I would have been glad to hire out for 25 cents a day if I could have gotten work. You can judge how scarce money was from the fact that I handled just \$2 during the whole year 1858. I earned more, but that is all the actual cash I saw."

"My brother Jesse and I built a log shanty in the timber on the bottom and lived in it that first winter. On March 25, 1858, we moved into our new log house on the prairie. To pay for the boards in the roof and floor of that little house I chopped thirty cords of wood. We lived in that house four years and then built a new one on another part of that quarter section, where we lived forty-four years, that is, we moved to Tekamah two years ago."

First Crop in 1858

"We had no shoes to wear in those days and went barefooted most of the time. We worked from earliest dawn till after dark. I raised my first crop of corn in 1858. I plowed the ground with a fourteen-inch plow and a yoke of oxen which I borrowed. I harrowed it with a wooden-toothed harrow which I made myself. I marked the rows with a wooden sled and planted the whole ten acres by hand with a box. I got 500 bushels of corn off the piece and had watermelons and pumpkins to throw at the birds. That's the way Nebraska soil intruded itself to me. And it wasn't a bluff. I never had any reason to lower my opinion of that land which presented itself to me in such a generous manner and on such magnificent terms. I have raised fifty crops in Nebraska and every one paid me well and some of them paid me twice what I expected even from Nebraska soil."

"No, sir, we never got the 'blues.' We just kept doing our part and we knew Nebraska would do hers. In 1881, when everyone lost money on cattle, I fed 141 steers. I never worked so hard in all my life. We couldn't afford a hired man, because everything looked so bad. A neighbor of mine lost more than \$1,000 and I thought I would lose money. But when I sold the cattle I came out about \$1,000 ahead. In 1892 and 1894, which were the worst two years in our life here, I raised more than 3,000 bushels of wheat and had lots of oats. So this made up for the poor corn crop."

"The first year we were here I had to work two days for my neighbors to get one day's work from them with a team, because I didn't have a team. Those days I kept two pocketbooks, and



MR. AND MRS. H. S. M. SPIELMAN.

whenever I got an extra 5 cents or 10 cents I put it in my saving pocketbook. Finally after three years we had saved up \$12 and then I bought four calves with the money from a widow who lived across the creek. This was the start of the thousands of cattle I raised and fed for the market. I bought my first yoke of steers for \$36 and then I began to get a good start with the farming."

"All through these years my wife was doing her full share. I have as good a working wife as the world ever saw; I don't except any. She did the milking and made the butter and raised the chickens besides doing the housework. Back in Pennsylvania, you know, the women do all the milking. If people there see a man milking they say 'He has a lazy wife.' If it hadn't been for my wife we wouldn't have what we have today."

Thrift and Industry Prosper

Thus did these two busy people practice those cardinal virtues of industry, frugality and temperance in all things. They didn't hide away their money in the ground or put it in banks. They put it where they believed it was much better invested—in Nebraska

land. It was a long fifteen years before they were able to buy any beside the quarter section on which they lived. But then their holdings increased and multiplied rapidly. The lowest-priced land they purchased on the broad fertile Missouri bottom east of the present town of Tekamah, cost \$3 an acre. It is worth \$60 an acre now. The highest price paid was for some bought just recently which cost \$75 and is already worth more. Today they own 2,450 acres in Burt county worth from \$50 to \$110 an acre. You can figure up for yourself how much it is worth. Also they own 800 acres in South Dakota. They refer to this a "little patch."

Two years ago when Mr. Spielman was 69 and his wife 72 years old, they decided to give up active farm labor and move to town. They did so and built, regardless of expense, a handsome brick house containing eleven rooms. It is modern throughout with polished hardwood floors, oak finished walls and everything desirable that money can buy. There the pioneers propose to spend the remaining years of their life enjoying the comforts which their good judgment and hard work have won for them.

This house was the scene of the big jubilee celebrated on October 26. At 11 o'clock in the morning of that day, when it was

half a century to the hour, since Mr. and Mrs. Spielman had come into Tekamah, a short program of speaking was given commemorative of that event. Mr. and Mrs. Spielman were not the only ones in that gathering who had reaped wealth from Nebraska. There was Jonathan Lidick, for instance, from whom Mr. Spielman bought one of the oxen in his first yoke of cattle. Mr. Lidick stuck to Nebraska, and now it takes six figures to express his wealth. The same is true of a number of other pioneers who were at the jubilee and who were pointed out to a visitor. Indeed, it seemed the man who had less than \$100,000 was spoken of a little deprecatingly. "Oh, he's not worth more than \$60,000 or \$75,000," the guide would explain to the visitor.

Relics of the Past

In one of the rooms of the house on the jubilee day were exhibited some of the furniture with which the Spielmans began their housekeeping in the pioneer days. There was the old-fashioned trundle bed, from one of the posts of which hung a pistol. There were quaint old bronze candlesticks and there was a big gun and a sharp-pointed knife in a leather case. The latter two articles came into requisition sometimes in the early days, though most of the Indians around Burt county were peaceable.

One of the tragedies of Burt county was the killing of Oscar Munson, a hired man in the employ of Mr. Spielman, by the Winnebago Indians. In the spring of 1869 Munson left Mr. Spielman's farm with a yoke of oxen and a wagon for his claim in Wayne county, just west of the Omaha reservation. He had just drawn his first furrow there when a band of five Winnebagoes stole up behind him and shot him. They cut off his head, carried it a mile away and took three scalps from it. The Indians were apprehended eventually and were tried and sentenced to life imprisonment in the penitentiary, where all of them died. Judge Crouse was the presiding judge at this trial and A. J. Poppleton was the attorney for the Indians. Mr. Spielman was one of the principal witnesses. The only reason the Indians were not condemned to death was that one of the jurors, Myron Lee, was opposed to capital punishment.

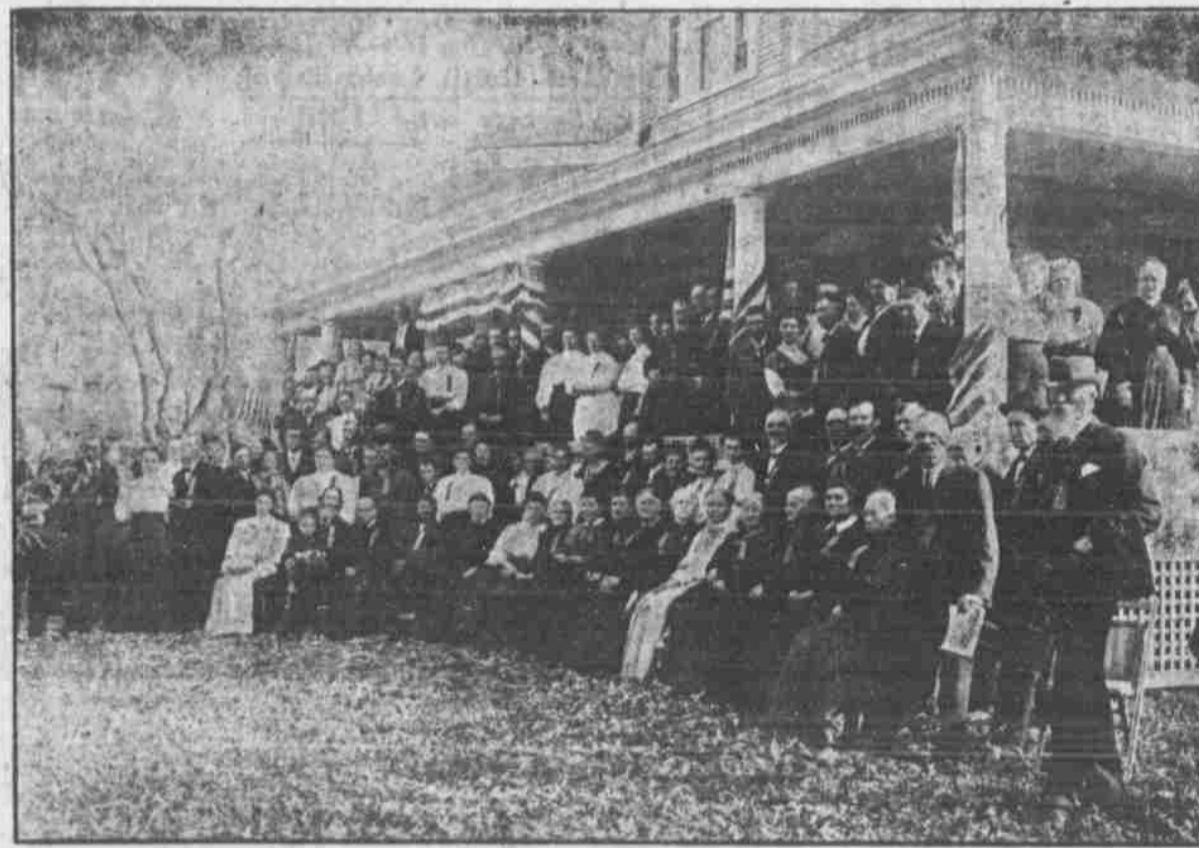
Family Large and Lusty

Though the fifty years of the Spielman's life in Nebraska have been very active, with every minute filled with useful work, they were not too busy to raise a large family. Nine children were born to them, of whom the following five are still living: Mrs. Mary, Elizabeth Smith, Washington; Stephen A. Douglas Spielman, Tekamah; James Winfield Spielman, South Dakota; Jesse Thomas Spielman, Tekamah, and Mrs. Priscilla Corbin, Tekamah. All the boys are farming. They have nine grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

It would be hard to find two more happy people than Mr. and Mrs. Spielman. Both are in hearty good health and in spite of their three score years are very active. They are not attempting to "rest" by folding their hands. They would be miserable doing nothing. They still rise at 5 o'clock. "We've got up with the crow all our lives and we can't get out of the habit," they say. "The lazy bird doesn't catch any worm."

As one of the luxuries which they can afford, they have a corn-crib at a respectful distance from the fine house. They wouldn't be happy entirely out of sight of the golden grain which has brought them wealth. This year Mr. Spielman farmed forty acres of corn. "I just did it to make it an even fifty crops I raised in Nebraska," he says. "But maybe I'll make it fifty-one next year. Don't see how I could pass a year without raising a patch of corn."

And those who know Mr. and Mrs. Spielman believe they will go right on working in the joy of well repaid effort in Nebraska as long as they live.



SOME OF THE BURT COUNTY PIONEERS AT THE SPIELMAN JUBILEE.



MR. AND MRS. SPIELMAN AND THEIR FAMILY.

Tempting Menus That Are Cheap and Healthful

THE high prices of eggs and butter, beef and poultry give special interest to the experiment of the president of Aurora college, at Aurora, Ill., who proposes to subsist for sixty days on a diet of ground peanuts mixed with wheat. Not that a diet of peanuts is likely to become generally popular in New York outside of Central park. The point is this: The fact that a college president expects to get along on such a diet suggests that maybe everyday people can eliminate from their diet the various articles which cost so much now.

A few years ago when addressing a body of students a New York physician said that a careful analysis of food values proved that 10 cents' worth of peanuts would furnish as much nutriment as a five dollar dinner at the Waldorf. A reporter of the Sun hinted up this physician the other day and asked for some points on how to get ahead of dairymen and butchers without jeopardy to the health of the individual.

This physician and his wife, who shares her husband's views on dietary, keep house in a modern uptown dwelling. The doctor at the start explained that he would not talk for publication on the food question if his name were printed. He had too much consideration, he said, for the letter carriers on his street and for his own time. He was aware that New Yorkers by an overwhelming majority were meat eaters and he had discovered that hundreds of them feel it their duty to hurl protesting letters at any one who decried

meat-eating or preached a simple diet with little variety and less meat.

Many years ago the doctor banished meat and poultry from his own table, not because he thought eating them injured his health, but simply because he did not approve of killing animals and birds to eat. Along with the fowls he banished eggs.

Butter he never did like and never ate. He never uses milk except in the condensed or cooked form for the reason that he believes that there are other foods better suited to the adult stomach.

When asked to suggest a few simple, inexpensive menus the doctor replied:

"I don't care to prescribe a daily bill of fare for anyone. So long as the everlasting clamor for variety continues and the old-time superstition that to eat meat means not to have any good blood worth speaking of remains, so long as so large a part of the population live to eat instead of eating to live, it's waste of time, it seems to me, to talk simple menus which include the same dishes over and over again."

"Why, we'd get tired of eating that every day," I've had friends tell me.

"The initial step in any crusade to make popular, simple, low-priced menus is to teach the people that the habit of not getting tired of eating the same things can be cultivated. Eating is purely an animal function, and there is no good reason why it should not be regulated like any other animal function."

"Naturally a diet of peanuts three times a day would be the extreme of simple menus, and despite its nutritive qualities it isn't likely ever to be popular. Peanuts, to give the best results, must be masticated to a pulp. Otherwise they give the stomach too much work to do."

"Yes, my own diet includes peanuts, many of them in the form of peanut butter. We buy it in five-pound cans and eat it with bread."

"No, I haven't the least objection to telling what my meals consist of. Here is my favorite bill of fare for perhaps four or five days of the week, the menus for the other two or three days varying a little without, however, including meats, poultry, eggs or butter."

"Mind you, I do not recommend these as model menus. They suit my wife and me and agree with us—we are never ill; but they will not, perhaps, answer for everybody."

"For breakfast I have coffee—real coffee—two cups if I feel like it, with sugar and condensed milk—not canned condensed, but the fresh sort which is unsweetened and is delivered in glass bottles. I do not find that coffee disagrees with me. If I ever do I shall substitute for it some other beverage."

"But my principal breakfast dish is oatmeal cooked to a jelly almost. I take a generous bowlful of this, stir into it two teaspoonfuls of condensed milk, two teaspoonfuls of olive oil and about the same quantity of sugar, and I have a dish fit for the gods."

The reporter shuddered.

"But the oil?"

"The oil takes the place of butter, and if the best quality is used there will be no perceptible oil flavor to the oatmeal. A good deal of olive oil is used on my table. We buy it by the gallon at a cost of \$2.80, which is a great saving over purchasing by the small bottle."

"Whole wheat or white bread, with or without peanut butter, and fruit, are the only other dishes served at breakfast. Just now when grapes are plentiful we eat a lot of grapes, but the year around almost we have on the table bananas, of which I think very highly from a nutritive standpoint, and these are varied with dates, oranges and raisins."

"We buy the Arabian dates by the twelve-pound box. In Arabia the natives live practically on dates, work hard sometimes on a diet of little else, and they don't know what indigestion is. Before eating the dates, though, I have them thoroughly cleansed by soaking in cold water, which frees them from all extraneous matter, after which they go into a colander for a quick douche of scalding water."

"I have had men and women tell me they couldn't eat bananas at all without suffering from indigestion, and to them I always pass on the recipe told me by a great lover of the fruit who said that invariably he scraped off the little fuzz remaining on the banana after the skin is peeled

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