



ALLIANCE IN 1904. Bird's-Eye View—Looking South.

Alliance is situated 360 miles northwest of Lincoln and 238 miles northeast of Denver, and is the headquarters of one of the longest, if not the longest, railroad divisions in the United States. It is on the Billings line of the Burlington, and is the junction of the Denver and Guernsey lines.

Nowhere in the West is there a more important town for its size than Alliance. While yet in its infancy, a mere child, so to speak, for its birth was but sixteen years ago, it is the marvel of all who have witnessed it spring up from an 8x12 depot station in 1888 to a city of its present size.

The appellation "Queen City of the Plains" is no misnomer, as the panoramic views of this "Celestial City of the West" will go to prove.

The first intimation that a town was to be built on the present site of Alliance was in June, 1887, when the Lincoln Land company, who are closely associated with the B. & M. railroad company, purchased all of section 36, township 25, range 47, and platted a townsite. The reason for the selection of this particular locality was because of the proximity of the large ranching and farming industries and also to establish a division point for the Burlington road, where a round house, machine and repair shops could be established.

The advent of the new mecca was widely promulgated by the land company, and on February 28, 1888, a public sale of lots took place, which netted the company in the neighborhood of \$50,000. The future metropolis of Northwestern Nebraska was

then launched, buildings sprang up in rapid succession, settlers swarmed in, and in eight weeks Alliance was a flourishing village of over seven hundred inhabitants. It was a wonderful transformation scene. Buildings were moved from other localities and the spirit of enterprise was remarkable to a degree beyond conception.

On March 28, 1888, the board of county commissioners met and incorporated the village of Alliance, naming Nelson Fletcher, Aquilla Triplett, F. M. Sands, Otto Ketelsen and W. G. Simonson as trustees; F. M. Devore, attorney and clerk; and Jacob Stutsman marshal.

In 1893 the population of Alliance had reached a point when it could be advanced to a city of the second class, and this was consummated April 8 of that year. F. W. Smith was elected mayor; R. C. Noleman, clerk; R. M. Hampton, treasurer; E. Cotton, city engineer; James H. H. Hewett, attorney; John Saner, marshal and street commissioner; Thomas Beck, J. R. Sexton, George L. Milliken, R. B. Hamilton, councilmen.

In 1890 the population of the village of Alliance numbered nearly 900 people,

and six years later had increased numerically to 2,200. It was a rapid stride for this fair young city, but the incoming tide of home-seekers had by no means abated. Onward it marched until to-day Alliance can boast of 4,500 population, and a city in structural appearance second to none in the state.

The city is supplied with all modern conveniences, prominent among which are its electric light plant and telephone system, both of which are of ample capacity and managed on economical basis, both for the owners and the patrons.

Its importance as a stock feeding point is known everywhere, having stock yards of 125 car loads capacity—the largest between Lincoln and Billings.

A thoroughly equipped fire department—second to none in the state—attends to the protection of all property from destruction.

The Alliance Land District, which comprises the counties of Sheridan, Dawes, Sioux, Box Butte, Deuel, Cheyenne and Scotts Bluff, has its seat, or United States Land Office, in Alliance, and is still transacting a large amount of business.

The city erected, in 1890, a beautifully appointed brick school building at a cost of \$25,000, and to which a substantial addition was added two years later. In 1903, another large, two-story, brick school building, to cost about \$10,000, was commenced, and is now nearing completion. Both of these buildings are two-stories and basement, commodious, well-lighted and modern in every respect.

A splendid and adequate water system is one of the proud features of our city's institutions. It was installed in 1894 at a cost of \$18,000, but since that time many improvements have taken place by extending the water mains nearly two miles, erecting a large power house, constructing three immense wells and equipping same with two of the most modern pumps that could be purchased, so that at this time the water system is worth fully \$50,000. The water is elevated into a stand-pipe to a height of 110 feet, which gives it sufficient force to throw a stream a great distance, thus furnishing ample fire protection.

A year and two years previous, however, to the construction of our water system, two devastating fires visited

our growing young city. The first occurred on August 7, 1892, which completely laid bare the south side of Wyoming avenue, destroying an entire business block, and entailing a loss of \$25,000. The second fire occurred January 11, 1893, when a greater loss was sustained, the best business blocks in the city then going up in flames. The loss from this fire was estimated at \$50,000, and at least 25 business houses and dwellings were consumed in this conflagration.

All this, however, is now buried with the past and lingers only in the memory of those with retentive minds. Phoenix like, Alliance rose again fairer and grander than ever.

The future of the city at the present time is far more promising than at any other period of its career. If the "writing on the wall" signifies anything, it means a progressive and substantial advancement.

Among the possibilities could be mentioned several factories, which, if sufficient inducement could be brought to bear to persuade them to locate here, would undoubtedly prove profitable investments. Among which we might mention a starch factory to utilize the immense potato crop, so suc-

cessfully grown here, and thus furnish a home market for this product. Other industries of a like character could thrive and prosper here, the unlimited field to draw upon being one of the inducements for the location of factories at this point.

The location of Alliance as a distributing point for the great northwest is not surpassed by any other city in Western Nebraska. This fact was recently recognized by the International Harvesting company, who have recently established headquarters here for Western Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming and a part of Colorado, and at this time there are wholesale grocery firms looking over the field with a view of establishing branch houses here. Its railroad facilities give quick service to the western portion of South Dakota, and Montana, Wyoming and the whole northwestern country.

Alliance is a division point on the Burlington & Missouri River railroad which maintains a large round house and machine shops, and which gives employment to a great number of workmen. The pay roll for these shops and the trainmen and office forces exceeds \$40,000 a month, which is a very important factor to the city's welfare. The total valuation of the railroad property in Alliance is said to be about \$400,000.

There are seven churches in the city, the denominations of which are as follows: Episcopal, First Presbyterian, Catholic, Baptist, Methodist Lutheran and United Presbyterian, all of which have large congregations and commodious houses of worship.

BOX BUTTE COUNTY

Mecca of the Potato Industry—Cattle Growing Haven of Nebraska.

The first settlement in Box Butte county was made by John S. Hughes in 1879, on the Niobrara river, in section 6, township 28, range 57. Prior to that time, however, there had been a number of cattle ranches located along Snake creek, the first one being established by the Ogallala Cattle company, and by Paxton & Bosler. None of the land embraced in these ranches was ever patented to any one connected with either of the ranches and upon the advent of the settlers into what is now Box Butte county, the herds and the movable personal property belonging to the cattle companies were transferred farther west. Between the years 1879 and 1884 this county was just one large cattle range, and in 1885 and 1886 settlers poured in and nearly every quarter section of available land was taken.

In November, 1886, a petition was presented to the county commissioners of Dawes county praying that townships 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28, in ranges 47, 48, 49, 50, 51 and 52, be separated from Dawes county and organized into another county, to be called Box Butte county. The prayer of the petition was granted, and A. S. Reed, James Barry and L. C. DeCoudress were appointed commissioners. At the first election held the above named men were elected county commissioners; George W. Clark, county clerk; Fred Shonquist, sheriff; Ell Gerber, treasurer; C. A. Barney, surveyor; Nathan F. Simpson, county superintendent; James H. Danskin, county attorney; A. L. Field, county judge; and Dr. John Blood, coroner. The first meeting of the county commissioners was held March 23, 1887. At the date of the organization of the county the population of the county was approximately 5,000. The bound-

aries of the county have never been changed since the date of its organization.

In 1880 what is known as the Panhandle of Nebraska, being that portion of the state which extends west on the north of Colorado, was embraced in two counties, Sioux and Cheyenne. Sioux county, in the early '80s, was subdivided into three counties, one of which retained the original name, the balance of the territory being divided into Dawes and Sheridan counties, Box Butte being subsequently carved out of Dawes, as heretofore stated. The county derives its name from a large grass-covered butte located in the northeast part of the county and which towers about 150 feet above the surrounding territory, and which, on account of its peculiar shape, has always been called "Box Butte." Who first gave it this name is not known, as it has been called that ever since Buffalo Bill hunted the buffalo on the plains surrounding the butte.

The county is destitute of lakes of any size or importance, except Broncho lake, which covers nearly a section of land and lies about two miles west of Alliance. The Niobrara river just touches the northwest corner of the county. Snake creek, winds a serpentine course through the southern part of the county. A good deal of water flows down this stream in the spring. It dries up in the summer months, but when autumn approaches, from some mysterious source, it is again filled with water, and that, too, in the absence of any rainfall.

The county is one vast plateau, in area 30 x 26 miles, with its surface gently undulating. About 95 per cent of the land in this county is per-

fectly level, and water is obtained only from wells that furnish an abundance of water at an average depth of 50 feet.

Good brick is manufactured in the vicinity of Alliance in considerable quantities.

The soil is principally a black, sandy loam, rich in phosphates, and where irrigation is possible immense crops of cereals and roots can be raised. The rainfall is very uncertain. The average altitude being over 4,000 feet, the nights are always cool. Taking one year with another there are at least 300 days of sunshine in each year.

In no county in the state is there a greater per cent of its total area adapted to agriculture than in this county, and when there is sufficient rainfall most abundant crops of grain and vegetables are raised. There has never been a year since the arrival of the first settlers in which the farmers have failed to raise a fair crop of potatoes without irrigation, and in favorable years the yield has been enormous. Box Butte county potatoes have established a reputation for excellence that extends over several states.

While at the present time more reliance is placed in the business of stock raising than in farming, it is certain that as more and more of the country is put into cultivation the rainfall will increase and in time it is believed that sufficient annual rainfall will be had to insure abundant crops. Where any attention has been paid to raising small fruits, plums and cherries, the effort expended has been abundantly rewarded.

While no great portion of the county is susceptible of irrigation, because of the lack of sufficient running

streams for a water supply, yet some ditches have been taken out along Snake creek and the Niobrara river, and the results produced are sufficient to enable us to safely say that were the surface of the county so situated that it could be irrigated no country on earth could excel it in the production of crops adapted to this latitude.

In the early settlement of this part of the state, and in the organization of most of the counties, it was thought best to at once issue the bonds of the county and erect expensive public buildings. However this county has never assumed a bonded indebtedness for such purpose. We have a court house sufficient for the needs of the county for years yet to come. A new jail is nearly completed, and when done we have the money with which to pay for it. Our county warrants are a cash item in the hands of the holder and are paid dollar for dollar upon presentation to the county treasurer.

A good, commodious brick house, for the accommodation of the poor, is located about six miles northwest of Alliance on a farm of 320 acres belonging to the county. It has only two inmates.

The assessed valuation, based on one-fourth actual value, of all classes of property in the county in the year of 1903 was \$644,006. In addition to this amount the distributive share of the railroad valuation apportioned to this county was \$176,256. Inasmuch as there are 1,080 square miles of territory in the county it can be readily seen that the taxes imposed on the people are very light. The rate of taxation for county and state purposes is only 21 mills on each dollar of assessed valuation. The county

has no floating indebtedness and but two or three school districts owe any bonded indebtedness. The school district of Alliance has property worth, at a conservative estimate, \$40,000, and only owe \$12,000 of bonded indebtedness. The bonded indebtedness outstanding of all other school districts in the county will not exceed \$1,000.

NORTHWEST NEBRASKA.

What is now known as Northwest Nebraska is that portion of the state lying north of Colorado, or, in other words, the Panhandle of Nebraska. This vast expanse of country, of which Alliance is the metropolis, is composed of the counties of Sheridan, Dawes, Sioux, Box Butte, Deuel, Cheyenne, Scotts Bluff, Banner and Kimball, comprising an area of about 13,500 square miles.

Several important streams traverse this exceedingly fertile region, namely: The North Platte, the Niobrara and the White rivers, besides numerous creeks, each of which makes it possible to irrigate thousands of acres along its course, thus assuring the production of abundant crops of all kinds of cereals and vegetables.

Not near all the Panhandle is susceptible to irrigation, but the non-irrigable portions are not the least valuable by any means. All over the high tables and the sand hills may be seen thousands and hundreds of thousands of cattle, sheep and horses—the sleekest in the land, except those that are fed corn, or beets, or other choice feed. Indeed, connoisseurs pronounce this section the best cattle country in the West, and to convince the reader of this fact it is only necessary to state that stock graze

the wild prairies the year round and keep fat winter and summer on the native grass, which cures on foot, except when the ground is covered with several inches of snow.

The climate is all that can be desired, for either health or comfort. Taking one season with another, the sun shines fully 80 per cent of the time, which is surpassed by very few sections of the United States.

Each county in the Panhandle of Nebraska supports one or more good, live towns, most of these situated on one of the three great lines of railroad traversing it—the Burlington, the Elkhorn and the Union Pacific. Sheridan county has the towns of Rushville, Gordon, Hay Springs and Lakeside; Dawes—Chadron, Crawford, Marsland, Whitney and Dunlap; Sioux—Harrison; Box Butte—Alliance and Hemingford; Deuel—Lodge Pole and Big Springs; Cheyenne—Sidney, Bridgeport and Bayard; Scotts Bluff—Gering, Scotts Bluff and Mitchell; Banner—Harrisburg; Kimball—Kimball. All these are prosperous and growing towns, situated either in fertile valleys or in great cattle centers, and afford good markets for whatever the surrounding country produces.

The soil, on the tables or divides, is very much the same as in Box Butte county, which is described in another article. The valleys that are irrigated produce anything and everything adapted to this latitude, while the sand hills, which are everywhere dotted with fertile meadows of various sizes, produce an abundance of hay, of which thousands of tons are shipped away every season.

Northwest Nebraska holds out many inducements to men of energy and capital, with promises of large returns.