

Scenes of Alliance and Box Butte County

"The Box Butte Plains," Written by Leonard S. Herron and Published in The Nebraska Farmer of June 30, '09.

Almost in the northwestern corner of Nebraska at an altitude of 4,000 feet is a level stretch of country known as the Box Butte plains. These plains are practically identical with Box Butte county since the level land forming the plains is about equal in area to the county and does not extend much if any beyond the county line in any direction. On the east and south the plain is bordered with sand hills. As one stands on the level lands and looks toward these hills he might well imagine that he is in the center of some great pie and that the rim of sand hills is the flaring crust whose border has been

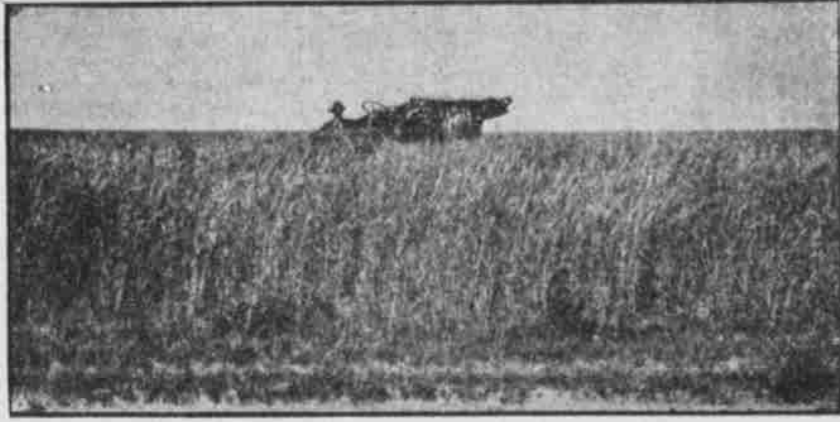
plain and is plainly visible for many miles in every direction. The levelness of the country together with the clearness of the atmosphere, due to the altitude, makes long vision possible and one must not be too sure about distance until he has conferred with some one who is used to the country. The main attraction which took us to northwestern Nebraska was the meeting of the Northwest Nebraska Live Stock Growers' Association, but it was with a great deal of pleasure that we accepted the invitation of Lloyd Thomas, secretary of the Alliance Commercial Club to take an auto-

last year's breaking was especially good.

The soil around Alliance is a brown sandy loam, containing just enough sand to make it work easily. It cannot be called a sandy soil, however, and when wet it adheres quite tenaciously to anything that comes in contact with it. The surface soil varies somewhat in depth. There are places where it is not more than six inches deep, although these are comparatively rare. In other places it is six feet or more in depth. The underlying material is a sort of magnesia clay, which is porous and does not apparently interfere with the growth of alfalfa. We were informed that the soil conditions in the county are quite uniform.

After traveling some eight miles from Alliance we turned about and returned to the town by a different road. About five miles from Alliance on the return trip we came to the farm of Mr. Joseph Barkhurst who has been farming in Box Butte county for over twenty years. It is said that his farming has been done along such sane lines that he has never suffered a crop failure. Here we saw trees and shrubbery, showing the possibilities for improvement and development on the plains. In fact Mr. Barkhurst's home would compare favorably with many in the eastern part of Nebraska in the matter of adornment with trees and shrubs. There was a fine little orchard, too, and we were informed that it produced fruit last year beyond the needs of the family. This home was not in an especially favored location, hence it can be considered typical of the things that may be accomplished anywhere on the Box Butte plains by men who follow sound culture methods with persistence. When Box Butte county becomes filled with this kind of homes it will have a real "back east" appearance and will send out products that will attract even more attention than Box Butte potatoes now do in the market centers.

Returning to Alliance we passed through the town and out into the country lying to the east. This was

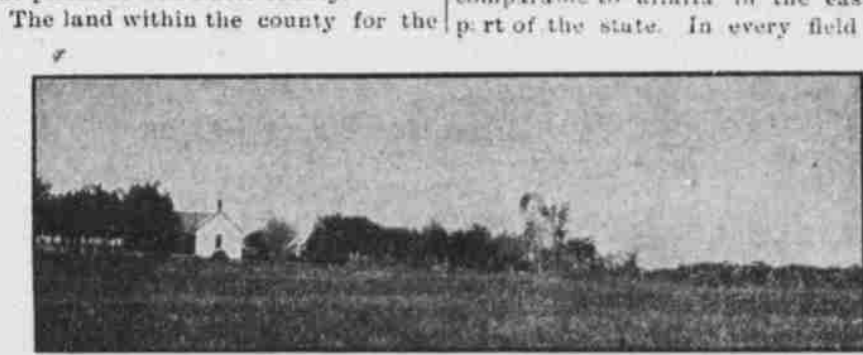


"COMIN' THROUGH THE RYE."

crimped into waves by the fingers of the good housewife. On the north of the Box Butte plains is the Niobrara River with all its breaks and rugged bluffs, while away to the westward we were told the plain ends in low hills.

Alliance is the principal town in this region. It is a thriving little city situated in the south east corner of Box Butte county only about seven or eight miles from the sand hills on the east and a similar distance from those to the southward. It is a division point on the Burlington railroad from Kansas City to Billings. Here also is where the line to Denver branches off and runs southward. At Bridgeport on the Denver line the road branches again and one stem runs up the North Platte valley to Gering, Wyo. This line also has its headquarters at Alliance, hence the latter is a thriving railroad center. The main line of the Burlington comes into Alliance from the east but within the town it turns toward the northwest and follows a diagonal course across the county.

Traveling from the east on the main line of the Burlington one has to pass through nearly 200 miles of the heart of the Nebraska sand hills before coming out onto the Box Butte plains. It is certainly a pleasant relief from this monotony to suddenly leave all the sand dunes behind and roll along over a level prairie covered with a carpet of beautiful green. Likewise in approaching Alliance from the south on the Denver line a ridge of chalk hills along the North Platte river, and a belt of sand hills north of this must be passed over before the passenger is rewarded with a view of the broad expanse of level country. From the northwest the main line of the railroad from the Black Hills and Billings after much winding and climbing ascends from the valley of the White river, crosses the headwaters of the Niobrara and ascending slightly come out onto the plains of Box Butte county.



HOME OF JOSEPH BARKHURST.

most part is very level. Here and there is a draw, but there are no steep hills of any magnitude. Last week we had the privilege of visiting northwest Nebraska and we made our entrance to the Box Butte plains from the northwest corner as we journeyed from Crawford to Alliance. As soon as the train was up out of the valley of the Niobrara we began to see numerous homes on the prairie. Everywhere stretched away the grass-covered plain. The abundant rains of this season have made the grass grow very thickly, and we do not remember ever having seen such a wide expanse of unbroken green. Everywhere the settlers are coming onto these plains, building their homes and breaking up the sod to raise crops. A thin trail of smoke on the horizon marked a field where a traction engine with its retinue of plows was turning over the native sod in the first step of making a farm out of the prairie.

The same level topography prevails along the railroad from the northwest corner of the county to the place where it enters the sandhills at the southeast corner. Alliance stands out on a slightly elevated portion of the

mobile ride through the country surrounding the city. Early in the morning we set out from town in a direction bearing to the northwest. The country is becoming well settled near town and the price of land situated close in is rapidly increasing. We were told that only recently one farm near Alliance had sold for \$45 per acre.

All along the way there were fields of potatoes and small grain. The crops were at various stages of advancement in the different fields. In some cases the potatoes were up several inches and were being cultivated while in other fields they had only recently been planted. The same was true of the small grain. Fields in which the grain was waving in the breeze there was grain just getting nicely started. The difference was one of farmers and not of soil or other



THEY RAISE POTATOES OUT THERE,

conditions affecting plant growth. In every instance the early crops were the best. This illustrated the remark made to us by Mr. Thomas that the thing most needed in Box Butte county is good farmers. The older stockmen of the country do not take to farming with a very noticeable avidity, and it seems that improvement in farm practices must come largely through the introduction of new blood from eastern sections and through the education of the rising generation.

There were a number of good alfalfa fields in the neighborhood of Alliance. Some of these were even more than comparable to alfalfa in the eastern part of the state. In every field the

alfalfa has made a good growth, was of a good color and perfect stand. The success of alfalfa on these plains augurs well for their future in crop production for it solves the humus problem if the farmers will only apply the solution. We saw very little corn, but the early-sown small grain compared favorably with eastern sections of Nebraska. One field of fall rye on

over in the direction of the sand hills region. When we came close to the hills we could see that there was a well defined line separating the sand hills from the "hard lands." Some of the finest fields of grain we have seen this year were in this neighborhood east of Alliance. About six miles out we visited the farm of Mr. Geo. Douglas who has been very successful in growing alfalfa. We do not think that we have seen a better growth of alfalfa this year than was standing on Mr. Douglas' fields almost ready for the mower. It was almost waist-high and very thick. Certainly it was a pleasure to look upon these fields and then away across the grass-covered plain toward Alliance, and beyond, and try to imagine what this country will be when every quarter section has an alfalfa field such as these. We saw some flourishing brome grass on the trip, too, which indicated the possibilities of tame grass culture here.

The country has a somewhat bare appearance as have all new countries where trees have not yet been planted. Only a small percentage of the land has as yet been broken up. Consequently the plains have very much of a prairie completion. Everywhere there is a carpet of native green with here and there a variation in color that marks the location of a grain field. The black patches streaked with green are potato fields where the crop is just getting under headway for its seasonal work of filling the cellars with "spuds."

Potatoes are a crop well adapted to the soil and climate of the Box Butte



KNEE DEEP, AND THEN SOME, IN THE ALFALFA FIELD OF MR. GEORGE DOUGLAS NEAR ALLIANCE.

plains and the farmers are making them their principal crop. Last fall there were shipped from Box Butte county over 400 cars of these life preservers aside from many cars held through the winter and sent out this spring. Small grain, also, is well suited to the agricultural possibilities of this region. Corn will probably never be extensively grown here on account of the altitude. Nevertheless, it will undoubtedly be grown in increasing quantities in future years as strains and breeds are developed with especial reference to their fitness for the conditions at high altitudes. This will certainly be the case if dairying continues to hold the place among farmers that it appears to be gaining at the present time.

The settlers are not now keeping a great deal of live stock and their crops are of a nature to exhaust the humus of their soil. In a few years they will have the humus problem to face. It does not seem, however, that the restoration of vegetable matter to the soil here will be more difficult than in other countries. We have already alluded to the success of alfalfa and brome grass on these plains, and with rotations including these crops it should not be difficult to maintain the humus supply.

There has been an abundance of rain in Box Butte county this spring—too much in fact. Crops are not so forward as they would be if there had been less rain and more sunshine. However, crop prospects could not well be better and the farmers are jubilant over the outlook. Real estate is changing hands so rapidly that it is not safe to venture a guess as to the owner of any given piece of land. Perhaps it was sold only yesterday.

Boosting for Box Butte

From Columbus Telegram:

T. J. O'Keefe and Editor Thomas came down from Alliance yesterday for a brief talk with Columbus real estate agents. Mr. O'Keefe edited the Alliance Herald to his own profit and to the pleasure of the people. Last year he sold the paper to Mr. Thomas, and is now devoting his entire attention to winning new citizens to Box Butte county, the home of the big potato. That particular section of Nebraska appears to have been neglected at the time of the mad rush for western lands a few years ago, but now it is reaping the most aggressive influx of settlers any section of the state has known. While the soil in that part of the state grows everything that will grow in any temperate zone, the big crop is potatoes, there being many established record crops of potatoes yielding from \$15 to \$35 per acre net to the farmers. Mr. O'Keefe is loud in praise of Columbus. He says he knows of no town in the state which is striking the Columbus gait, and he fears the manifold attractions here would win him quick if his home was in any other place than his own beautiful Alliance.

Will Retire from Ranch

John Leith is one of the many prosperous ranchmen that The Herald numbers among its friends. He called at our office yesterday to set his subscription a year ahead, and incidentally remarked to the editor that he had decided on account of advancing age to retire from his ranch fifteen miles west of Alliance, and accordingly has listed the same for sale with the real estate firm of Dineen, Rubendall & Young.

His ranch is a money-making place, has two creeks on it, a ten acre grove, and other features that make it quite desirable for stock raising, or stock raising and farming combined. We believe that whoever gets it will be fortunate, as we believe it is bound to become more valuable as the years go by.

Free Rooms For Girls.

"Domestic Art" is a new department which the National Corn Exposition announces for this year, and a long list of prizes will be offered for sewing and work in home decoration. The women's department this year will be known as the Domestic Science and Art Department.

To direct this important and interesting department, Miss Jessica Besack has again been selected by the exposition management and Miss Besack has many plans for the young women. Though she is now "going to school" herself at Columbia University, New York City, Miss Besack announces that she has made the same arrangements as last year to take care of "her girls." When they come to Omaha in December to take the short course, and attend the exposition, they will be provided free of charge with high class dormitory accommodations where they can live for two weeks just as they would at the best girl's boarding school in the country. These dormitories, under the care of the churches of Omaha, are so located that young women take the car at the exposition grounds and get off at their temporary home without change. Miss Besack maintains an office in Omaha and her assistants are working out the plans while she is working in the laboratories and art department at Columbia.

Have you a farm to sell or exchange? It costs only a cent a word per day to run an advertisement in The Omaha Bee. It will reach over 40,000 subscribers and is almost sure to find a buyer. Write today.

HEMINGFORD HERALD.

HEMINGFORD, BOX BUTTE COUNTY, NEB., JULY 8, 1909.

Hemingford Happenings.

Charley Davison is building a large barn on his farm.

E. L. Everett went to Alliance on business Tuesday.

C. Klenke and wife went to Seattle to attend the fair Monday.

M. P. Solberg and family are visiting at Carl Frostrom's at present.

Mr. and Mrs. Burleigh went to Crawford to celebrate Thursday.

Quite a crowd went to Crawford Friday and Saturday to celebrate.

Mrs. Alex Muirhead went to Omaha Saturday to take medical treatment.

Mr. and Mrs. Dailey are the proud parents of a baby boy born July 5th.

Joe Kuhn is layed up with a sore foot caused by running a nail into it.

Pete Jensen is building a large, new house on his farm southeast of here.

Esther Neeland returned from Crete Tuesday to stay awhile on the farm.

Mr. McGogy from near Belmont was here looking for lumber last week.

Mrs. Curry and son, Robert, went to Alliance Thursday to see Dr. Hand again.

Mrs. Emery Abley went to Seattle Thursday to visit relatives and take in the fair.

Mrs. Daisy Kohrman was thrown from a horse Saturday and bruised up quite badly.

D. W. Butler went to Alliance to spend the 4th with his family, returning Tuesday.

Ray Woods and Gladys Burleigh went to Alliance for a couple of days' visit last week.

Mrs. Rolla Johnson returned from Alliance Thursday where she had been shopping a few days.

Clair Mewhirter from Alliance is taking Mr. Douglas' place as operator at the depot during his absence.

Mrs. Anderson, mother of John Anderson and Mrs. Strong, is here for a short visit, coming Thursday last.

Lillian Blanchard was here for an over night's stay with Mrs. Kuhler before going to her home at Chadron.

The celebration at Henry Wintens' on July 5th was attended by a large crowd and a good time was reported by all.

Clark Olds and wife and Henry Ely were among those going to Crawford Thursday to attend the Odd Fellows' meeting.

Mr. and Mrs. Schunacher came here from Orleans, Neb., Tuesday for a visit with their sister, Mrs. Henry Wintens.

Mrs. Sourwain came home from Marsland Thursday where she went a couple of weeks ago to undergo an operation.

Ed Wildy sojourned to Alliance Thursday where he was married to Sylvia Potmesil from Runningwater. They went to the coast on a wedding tour.

Neighboring Notes

Scottsbluff is planning to secure an alfalfa meal mill.

At the special election held in Morrill county last Tuesday to vote on the proposition to bond the county for a sum sufficient to erect a good, substantial court house at Bridgeport, the proposition carried by a majority of five votes in a total of 559. Only about two-thirds of the total vote of the county was polled.

County Clerk W. C. Mount of Box Butte county was in town last Tuesday looking up the mortgages recorded to the credit of Box Butte county residents and on which they will now be required to pay taxes. He found a goodly number that will add materially to the revenue of his county. —Bridgeport News-Blade, July 2.

Mrs. John King returned from a trip to Hot Springs, Alliance, and Denver Monday, and went out to visit her parents at their home at North Highland. Mr. King remained in Alliance for a few days. —Bayard Transcript, July 3.

Ranch for Sale

I will sell my ranch, consisting of 530 acres of deeded land and one school section. Two sections adjoining can be secured as homesteads and included in the ranch. Most of the land is level and can be farmed. Improvements consist of six miles of three wire fence, two windmills and good wells, supply tanks, two fair houses, etc. Will sell cheap, if taken soon. \$2,000 cash; time to suit purchaser on balance, mortgage on deeded land to be given as security. Call on me if you are interested. JAS. POTMESIL, Long Lake, Nebr., 2 miles west of P. O. 28-3w*

Before ordering anything in the line of office supplies of traveling salesmen or mail order houses call up the Western Office Supply Co., and let them show you samples. Phone 58 or 340.

Pure Bred Poultry.

Choice R. C. Leghorn cockerels for sale. Eggs 50 cents per setting. Call or write Mrs. A. Gregory, Marsland, Nebr. 18-13w*

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