

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF BOX BUTTE COUNTY

Telling a Few Things About the Organization and Growth of the Leading County in Western Nebraska, and What Is Being Done at This Time.

Box Butte County Map and Description

BOX BUTTE COUNTY

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; Geo. W. Clark, county clerk; Fred Shonquist, sheriff; Eli 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 organization of the county the population of the county was approximately 5,000. The boundaries 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.

The county is one vast plateau, in area 30,336 miles, with its surface gently undulating. About 95 per cent of the land in this county is perfectly level, and water is obtained only from wells that furnish an abundance of water at an average depth of 50 feet.

The soil is principally a black, sandy loam, rich in phosphates. 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.

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, and in favorable years the yield has been enormous. Box Butte county potatoes have established a reputation for excellence that extends over several states.

Where any attention has been paid to raising small fruits, plums and

cherries, the effort expended has been abundantly rewarded.

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 no inmates.

Moving the Box Butte County Court House to Alliance

This illustration graphically portrays the moving of the county court house from Hemmingford to Alliance. This feat of engineering was successfully accomplished in 1901. After an attempt was made to move the large building overland, a distance of 20 miles, the railroad company, through its efficient employes, succeeded in hauling it to this city without damage and in a short time. The "house of justice" is 40x50 feet in size, two full stories, with a heavy truss roof, constructed with a heavy pine frame weighing ten tons. On the road there were two cuts to pass through, and an effort was made to get the building high enough on four 40,000 capacity trucks to clear the banks. The building was thus "in the clear," and with several loaded flat cars to balance the engine, No. 185, with W. A. Meyers at the throttle, moved slowly to its destination, 20 miles away. Once the court house reached Alliance, the building soon rested on its present site and today the story of its strange adventure can only be verified in the minds of the astounded hearers by a photographic representation of the real facts.



WHY ALLIANCE SHOULD CELEBRATE

The City will be Twenty-five Years Old February 28, 1913. Rapid Advancement and Wonderful Prosperity Should be Fittingly Celebrated on that Date.

Scenes of Alliance During Its Growth

THE BIRTH OF ALLIANCE AND PART OF ITS HISTORY

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.

The appellation "Metropolis of Western Nebraska" is indeed fitting to our city. Only twenty-five years of age, it is the most important town of its size in the west. It has installed municipal electric light and power plant, city water, city sewer, and cluster street lights, like the picture shown on this page, are being installed. Its city officials are men of esteem and business ability and its city affairs are managed in a businesslike manner. No other town in this section of the west has made as rapid a growth as has the city of Alliance. A few years more of prosperity and good crops will place Alliance and Box Butte county in the front ranks.

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 western 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 Strutsman, marshal.

In 1892 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. Hewitt, 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 homeseekers had by no means abated. Onward it marched until today Alliance can boast of 5,500 population, and a city in structural appearance second to none in the state.

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.

A splendid and adequate water system is one of the proud features of our city's institutions. It was installed 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 five immense wells and equipping same with the most modern pumps that could be purchased, so that at this time the water system is worth fully \$80,000. 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 twenty-five business houses and dwellings were consumed

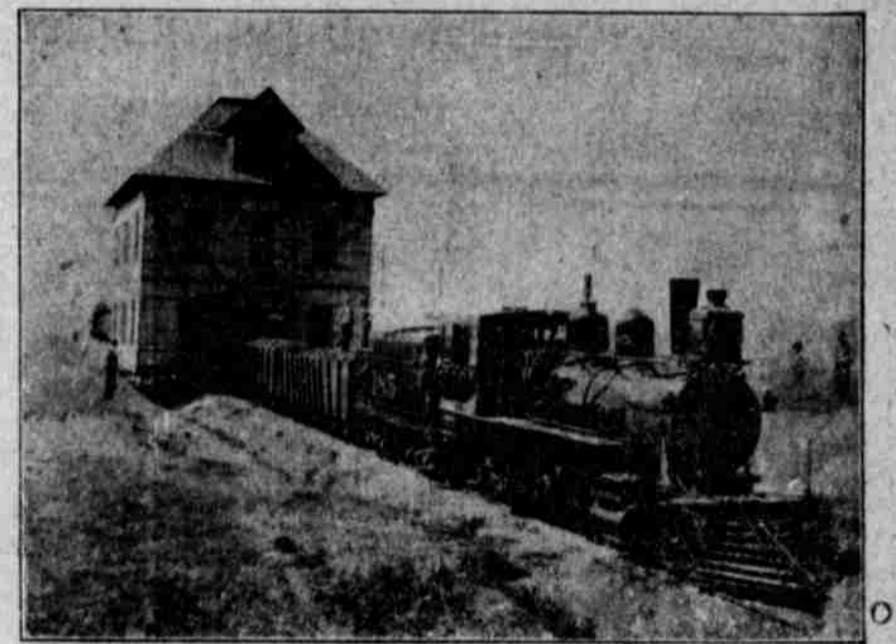
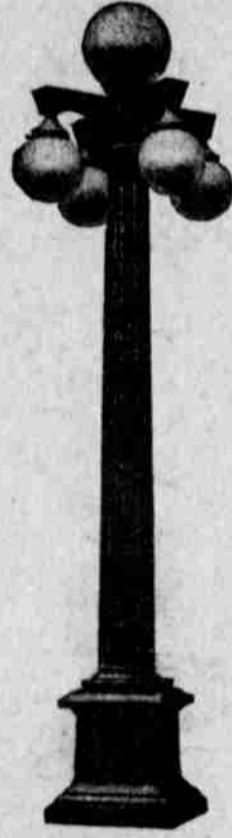
in this conflagration. Alliance is a division point on the Burlington & Missouri River railroad, which maintains a large round house and machine shops, and which gives employment to a great number of workmen. The payroll for these shops and the trainmen and office forces exceeds \$60,000 a month, which is a very important factor to the city's welfare.

Summary

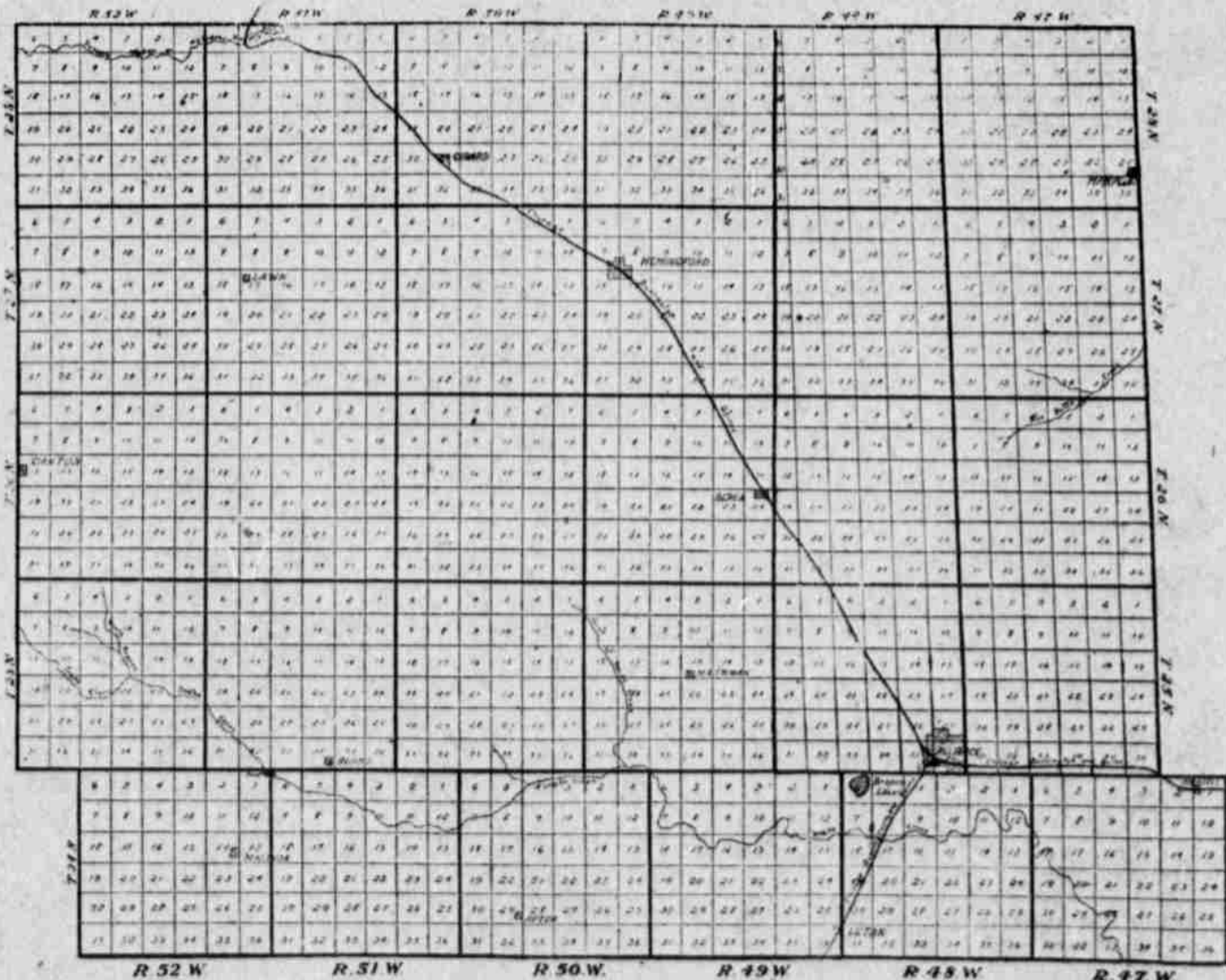
Alliance has three public school buildings, including high school; St. Agnes Catholic Academy; a number of first-class hotels; water works and electric light systems owned by the city; modern sewer system; telephone system with rural lines covering surrounding country; creamery which manufactured 492,996 pounds of butter in 1911; several wholesale houses; two newspapers; two national banks with capital and surplus of \$200,000 and deposits of more than a million dollars; a passenger depot, one of the finest in the state, costing \$80,000; eight church buildings, Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, United Presbyterian, Episcopal, Baptist, German Congregational, Christian, and German Evangelical Lutheran; there are also several other church societies having regular services, including Christian Scientist, Seventh Day Adventist, African M. E.; forty fraternal lodges and labor societies and several social clubs; Box Butte County Fair Association with grounds and buildings valued at \$10,000; large stock yards; several miles of cement walks; about 140 cement street crossings; United States land office for western Nebraska. The Alliance post office receipts for the year ending Dec. 31, 1911, were \$14,448. The 1911 school census gave a population of 1,011 children of school age, indicating a total population of 5,056. The altitude of Alliance is 3,942 feet. It seems but fitting that the twenty-fifth anniversary of the birth of Alliance should be celebrated with appropriate ceremonies.



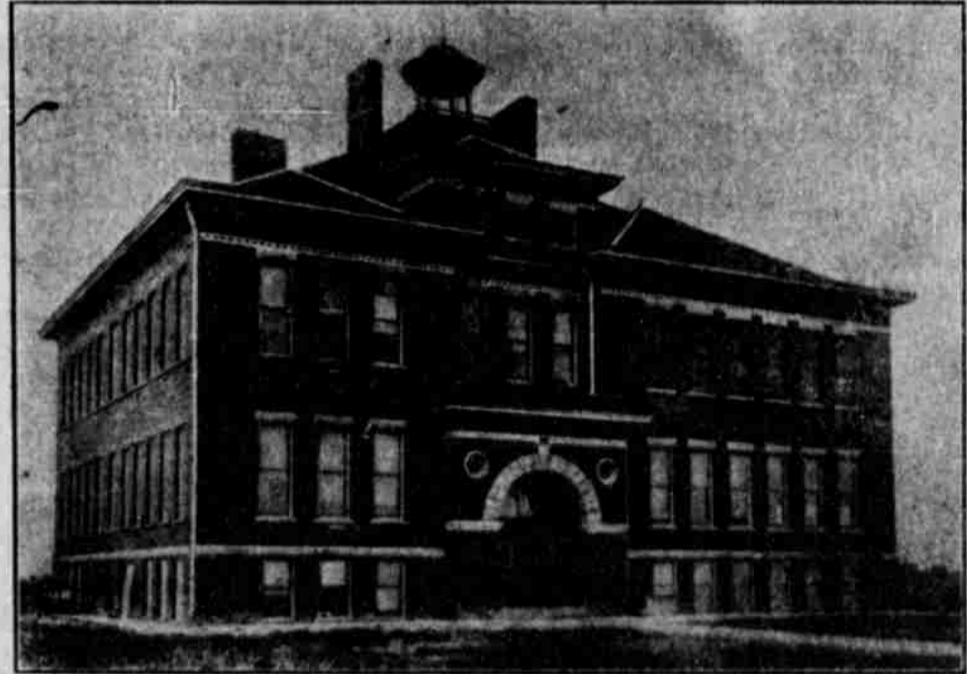
Picture of prominent Alliance real estate dealer and pumpkin weighing 120 pounds raised near Alliance



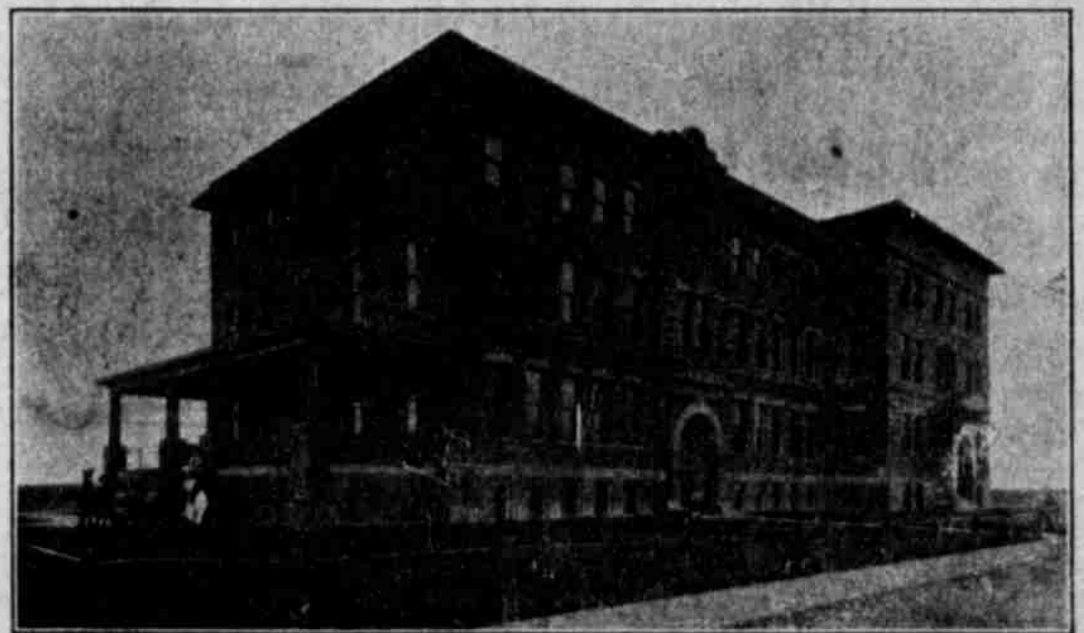
MOVING COURT HOUSE TO ALLIANCE



BOX BUTTE COUNTY, NEBRASKA



HIGH SCHOOL



ST. AGNES ACADEMY