

**IRRIGATION CANALS IN LINCOLN COUNTY.**

The following article on the irrigation canals of Lincoln county was written for the report of the State Board of Irrigation by Mr. E. F. Seeberger of this city. While the article was first published several years ago, the data and statistics will be new to a large majority of our readers.—EDITOR.

Lincoln county has been working steadily on her irrigation enterprises, until now she has more miles of completed irrigation canals than any other county in the state. The total length of completed main canals is 250 miles, built at a cost of over a quarter of a million dollars and covering about 200,000 acres of lands. To the main canal mileage may be added about 250 miles of main lateral ditches that would only need the additional feature of a head in the river to acquire the dignity of a main canal. Present developments of irrigation enterprises assure another 250 miles of main lateral ditches that will be constructed within the next six months. By the close of the irrigation season of 1897 the county will have a foundation on which to base future agricultural developments under irrigation not equaled by any other county in the United States. These are strong statements, but they are borne out by the facts, and they stand as a monument to the enterprise of "the man from Nebraska," especially when you consider that the greater portion of this work was done during the hardest times in the history of the west.

The first irrigation idea to take practical effect in Nebraska was brought from the land across the sea by Mr. John Burke, who settled in Lincoln county, near old Fort McPherson, in the early sixties. In the spring of 1866 he constructed a ditch about four miles long, which tapped the Platte river, on its south bank, about fifteen miles east of the present site of the city of North Platte. This ditch has long since been abandoned, but the banks are yet clearly defined, and the settlers, who came here many years ago to fight Indians and kill buffalo remember well of seeing the water flow to the farm of Mr. Burke, where the patch of vegetables and corn thrived under its influence in a manner never before thought of by them. This was the shadow that foretold the coming of a great system, and the land then irrigated by this pioneer ditch is now covered by a canal forty miles in length that is built to supply 50,000 acres of land.

The first incorporated ditch company in the state was organized in 1871 by Col. Josiah B. Park, the father of Mr. W. L. Park, of Cheyenne, and Mr. Guy C. Barton, now of Omaha. This company constructed a ditch from a point about three miles west of North Platte, on the north bank of the South Platte river, and extended to the city. Many fine trees are still standing to bear evidence of its beneficent existence. It was used for a few years and did good, but a succeeding few seasons of heavy rains brought on a period of nearly ten years of inactivity in this line.

The North Platte canal must be credited with presenting to our people the first practical demonstration on a large scale of the value of the artificial application of water to the soil. The results have been a revelation to our people and have stimulated them to the prodigious enterprises in this direction that are being carried forward with

such commendable zeal. This canal was constructed by the North Platte Irrigation & Land Company, in 1883 and 1884, and has been in constant and ever-increasing use since that time. Its headgate and diversion works are located on the south bank of the North Platte river, four miles northeast of the town of Sutherland. It has a total length of twenty-five miles, covering 25,000 acres of the rich alluvial soil of the delta between the North and South Platte rivers, near their confluence. It empties into the river at a point due north of the city of North Platte. The many fine farms and happy homes under this canal are owned by prosperous farmers, many of whom came to this country a few years ago without a cent. They are here to tell for themselves of the advantages of irrigation farming in Nebraska over sky farming in any other place on earth. That later undertakings in the line of irrigation are not doubtful or uncertain experiments is demonstrated by the farms and orchards under this canal. It shows what a rich and prosperous country this will be when a few more years have added to the development and cultivation of the lands under newer canals.

In 1893 and 1894 three of Lincoln county's progressive farmers, David Hunter, Alex. Neilson and John Conway, built the Sutherland & Paxton canal. This is one of the large canals of the state, built by three men, who, while not as rich as scores of our other farmers, had the remarkable energy and enterprise to undertake the work and the staying qualities to bring it to a very successful completion. This canal heads in Keith county in the North Platte river, follows the north edge of the bluffs as far east as Sutherland; thence takes a southerly direction through the bluffs in a thirty-foot cut, and returns west along the southern edge of the bluffs for about four miles. It is thirty miles long, has first-class diversion and distributing works, and covers over 30,000 acres of especially fine land. As an evidence of the productiveness of the soil and the efficiency of the canal, their magnificent crop record speaks for itself.

Col. W. F. Cody and Mr. Isaac Dillon, who own large and valuable tracts of land adjoining and near North Platte, appropriated water from the North Platte river for their canal in December, of 1893. This canal was completed in 1894, and as result about 10,000 acres of land in the vicinity of North Platte has been put under cultivation. It heads about ten miles above North Platte, covering the Cody and Dillon ranches, and then extending along the north side of the city east to the point at the junction of the North and South Platte. It is about thirteen miles long, and heading in a very favorable location in the north river it furnishes a splendid supply of water to its patrons. The Paxton and Hershey Irrigating Canal and Land Company constructed their canal in 1894, and about 9,000 acres of land is now under cultivation under it and being put in a high state of cultivation. This company has erected about forty comfortable houses on their lands, and they are all occupied by a thrifty and progressive people. This canal is sixteen miles long and heads twenty-four miles west of North Platte in the North Platte river. It has a large head-gate, 125 feet wide, and is well constructed and giving good satisfaction.

[To be concluded next week.]

**Red Wine King Edward's Tipping.**  
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