

The Voice

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EDITORIALS

The views expressed in these columns accessarily, a reflection of the policy are those of the writer and not of The Voice.—Pub



by **JAMES C. OLSON**, Superintendent STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

When J. Sterling Morton came to Nebraska territory as a young man still in his twenties, his father warned him: "Now the sawmill business is a humbug, let it alone. If there are any fools in Nebraska let them build the saw mills and you sell them the timber if they want it and will pay cash for it. . . If I had \$10,000 not a dollar should go into a sawmill in Michigan or Nebraska."

The young man, who was to become one of Nebraska's best known citizens, followed his father's advice, but there were enough people willing to gamble on sawmills to make lumber manufacture the territory's leading industry. The new settlements created a tremendous demand for lumber, and while Nebraska was for the most part treeless, the river valleys of the southeastern section provided a considerable quantity of raw material. The streams provided the necessary power.

The U.S. census of 1860 reported 46 sawmills in Nebraska territory, representing a total investment of \$127,800 and giving employment to 155 men. The annual value of lumber turned out by these mills was \$335,340, more than half of the total value of all territorial manufactures.

In terms of the number of establishments Nemaha was the leading county, with seven sawmills. Next came Richardson

with five. Douglas, Otoe, Sarpy and Washington followed with four each. The remaining counties had from one to three sawmills each, and it is interesting to note that every county included in the census except Dakota had at least one sawmill. In Cuming, Dodge, Johnston and Platte counties sawmills were the only industries reported.

By 1870, the number of sawmills in Nebraska had increased only to 50. The capital invested, however, represented \$152,000, although the value of the product had fallen to \$278,205. A total of 202 men were employed. The census of 18870 reported the type of power supplied each sawmill, and 30 of Nebraska's were powered by steam-engines, the remainder using water-wheels.

Many of the early sawmills sawed lumber "on the shares."

The patron would cut his own logs and haul them to the mill. After they were sawed the mill-owner and the patron would divide the lumber and the slabs equally, the former retaining half of the total product as payment for the milling operations. The sawmills, like the grist mill, became a neighborhood gathering place.

National Bible Week

National Bible Week will be observed from October 15 to 21 this year. It is sponsored by the Laymen's National Committee, a non-sectarian and non-profit organization whose mission is to encourage belief and faith in God, daily reading of the Bible and religious education for all. The work of the Committee has been endorsed by the President, governors, members of Congress, and leaders in industry, labor, and the professions.

Today, in a world which has been corrupted by cynicism and

fear, a thorough knowledge of the teachings of the Bible is more important than ever before. The world's most terrible problems have resulted from the loss and destruction of those spiritual values which our ancestors held to be preeminent. As Walter H. Judd, National Chairman for the Week has said, "Because American pioneers had a firm belief in the spiritual fatherhood of God, they put first in their scale of values the freedom and dignity of individual man as a spiritual being. As a result their political system released, for the first time, the creative capacities inherent in men everywhere. . . We shall not live victoriously, either as individuals or as a nation, except as we come to know God and His eternal laws and love through eternal searching of the Scriptures."

The greatest strength of a people lies in the realm of the spirit.

—A Thought—

A man will remain a rag-picker as long as he has only the vision of a rag-picker. We should have ambition to do our best, and refuse to accept our second best. Doing easy things does not tax us, neither does it challenge us. It is a good plan to make it a point to tackle one hard job every day. If we do this, we will find that we have exercised our will power, our minds, and our bodies to good purpose. One of the rewards of learning to do hard things is the power to do still harder things.

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