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# WEBSTER COUNTY AND RED CLOUD.

## A Graphic Pen Picture of the Topographical Features, Soils, Water Supply and Agricultural Resources of A MATCHLESS COMMONWEALTH.

### A Region That Has Liberally Responded to the Thrift of Man and Bountiful Yields Result From Nature's Lavish Gifts.

CONTAINING HISTORY, FACTS, PROPHCEY AND DATA.

From the Archives of Time Concerning Its People and Their Allied Interests.--Red Cloud is the Fountain-Head of a Large Trading Circle and All Branches of Business is Represented.

BY M. D. STEINER.

WHEN Henry W. Grady, the great orator, editor and statesman of the state of Georgia, the Horace Greely of the south, a man revered by all liberty-loving American people, declared in a burst of touching eloquence that there should be no north, no south, no east, no west, but one great and powerful republic, free from all national strife and differences, linked together in the bonds of human sympathy, love and mutual welfare, he struck the keynote of American civilization and independence, made dear to us all by the fundamental laws so wisely foreseen and laid down by our forefathers. Had Henry W. Grady lived he probably would have wrought perhaps by this time, the reforms which he so earnestly and ardently championed and united the American people under the one great standard of truth, virtue, honesty, and unity of purpose and brotherly love; bound up and healed all the wounds and differences of the past and present; set uniform standards of moral, social, industrial and agricultural life; established fixed and irrevocable governmental principles in all branches. Then would all this vast empire west of the Mississippi river have thriven, progressed and prospered as never before in her history, and the crowning gem in the illustrious diadem made up of these hardy and dauntless western states would have been Nebraska, and foremost among her energetic, enterprising and growing cities would have been Red Cloud, the home of industry, patriotism and thrift.

But the Creator in His infinite wisdom decreed that these things were not to be. Mankind always was and always will be of diverse opinion, and there will be dissensions and pretensions so long as humanity and the world endure. It is not the intention of this article to deal with politics in any way, shape or form. Its aim is widely different. Only those facts which are accepted and acknowledged by all will be given reference.

Whatever has been the cause, we all know that for a period some years ago, times were hard, money scarce, prices low, and the cry of hunger, want, cold, misery and despair went up from many parts of this country and the whole world. In the face of all these adverse circumstances however, the grand commonwealth of Nebraska and the dauntless county of Webster have forged steadily to the front, maintained their supremacy and shown a zeal and courage in facing a deplorable condition in the affairs of men before which many a less enterprising and wide awake section would have resigned themselves to despair and retrogression, and today she is the center of one of the most prosperous and industrious regions of the west.

From a desert in years gone by, when none but the wily red man and

the deer trod these plains and that splendor of the orient, the fiery sun, cleft the azure robes of night and set her blaze of glory on the eastern skies, it revealed naught but a dreary waste, bleak and bare, save for a rank growth of prairie grass and the footprints of the nomadic buffalo and beasts of the plains. Now, however, connected with the great populations of the east by the spider like bands of steel of the trans-continental railroads, and transformed and awakened by the skilled hand of man, backed by the great principles of civilization, education, and science inherited, the land is indeed a veritable garden spot. The soil is rich and prolific, and its marvelous fertility, coupled with the aid and benignity of Dame Nature, brings forth bounteous yields of all kinds of crops, chief among which are wheat, rye, oats, corn and all the cereals. They grow to perfection in this splendid climate, and although the prices at present for farm products are not extremely high, the profits have been sufficient to afford many a man a comfortable home and to lay aside a neat sum each year.

The energy of man rightly applied can overcome all obstacles and make a prosperous community in the midst of a desert and cause a barren waste to become a veritable paradise. When this same energy and fixedness of purpose is aided by nature, the results are, but the same and man naturally becomes better repaid through his being relieved from the combat with sterile surroundings and consequently finds more in life to enjoy.

Looking backwards over a lapse of but a few short years into the desolate waste land of Webster county, when the coyote and the rattlesnake ruled the domain and the rich land remained untouched by the plow, one can hardly realize that in this once barren plain cities and towns have sprung up as if by magic. The most gifted pen and the most eloquent tongue cannot paint the change wrought within a little more than a quarter of a century. Webster county stands among the first counties of the great state of Nebraska, and within her borders is a city that has made rapid strides--Red Cloud. She is blessed with a location, which like a great magnet, draws trade from a large area of country.

Nature may offer all, but unaided by man remains only a beautiful waste. Nature has done much for Webster county but man has done more. The ever-living energy of those brave pioneers who settled on these broad acres, braved the summer's sun and the winter's blast, has produced thousands of beautiful homes and millions of wealth.

It is true that there are here drones, as in any other community, who live on the drippings of prosperity that their business neighbors permit to drop from their tables, and without

individuality they exist, and show a contrast to their business rivals, that proves beneficial to the latter. But there are only a few of this class in this county, fewer than may be found in any other municipality. But in order that the reader may have exact and definite information touching her resources and capabilities, the following statistics are submitted, and the fact that they have been secured from some of Webster county's best informed men is guarantee sufficient of their reliability.

Webster County was named in honor of the great statesman, Daniel Webster. It lies in the southern tier of counties and is bounded on the north by Adams county, east by Nuckolls, south by Jewell and Smith counties, in the state of Kansas, and west by Franklin county, Nebraska. It has an area of 368,640 acres, all of which is prairie, except a small proportion of timbered land along the streams.

The topography of the county presents some striking features. The Republican river passes through it from east to west from four to five miles north of its southern boundary. An immense number of small creeks flow into it; especially from the north, and this river unlike the Platte, increases in breadth and volume all the way through the county.

The south side of this river, as it passes through Webster county, is bordered with bluffs that rise abruptly to a height of from 75 to 150 feet and the river generally runs next to the bluffs. The valley proper ranges from one to four miles in width and is beautifully terraced. The uplands are comparatively level, but are gently undulated and present to the eye every variety of form imaginable.

The first settlement made in the county was near Guide Rock, April 19, 1870, by Donald McCallum and Emanuel Peters. About the middle of May of the same year the three Garber brothers, Silas, Joseph and Abram joined the settlement, Silas afterwards becoming governor of the state.

During the year 1871 quite an extensive settlement was made. Game was plentiful and the settlers kept their herders pretty well filled. 1872-73 saw many new faces in the settlement and by this time all the better government lands had been taken and considerable of the railroad land sold. In 1874 a large acreage was planted to crops and the prospects were that there would be a wonderful yield. In the latter part of July the grasshoppers came. They came in countless millions. Every green tree, plant and shrub was covered. Not a vestige of vegetation resisted their ravages. Their flight obscured the sun and the sound of their wings was likened unto the rattle of the sabres of a squadron of cavalry at full gallop. This was a time when it tried men's souls. Many left the country, those remaining practiced great economy, and the privations they endured will never be known. Though brave and uncomplaining many must have starved had it not been for help so liberally given by more fortunate states.

April 19, 1871, the first election was held in the sod house of Silas Garber and the location for the county seat was decided upon. The first regular election was held October 10, 1871, and the county commissioners were authorized to issue bonds in the sum of \$2,000 for the erection of county buildings.

The first marriage in the county was that of Wm. J. Norris and Hulda J. Rennecker, July 14, 1871. Rev. Penney preached the first sermon in the county in 1871.

The first white child born in the county was a son to Mr. and Mrs. W. D. McKinney.

The first newspaper published was the Red Cloud Chief, established July, 1873.

The first liquor license was granted to Silas Garber, March 29, 1872, for \$25 for one year.

Two saw mills were erected in 1872,

one at Guide Rock and the other at Red Cloud.

Miss Mary Kinsley taught the first school in a log house near Guide Rock. The first organized religious society was the M. E. church, on Penney creek, organized by Rev. C. W. Wells, August 10, 1871.

The supply of drinking water comes from wells and springs and is of the most pleasant taste. Good water in abundance can be secured at almost any point and the supply cannot be exhausted.

There are at least seventy-five church organizations in the county outside of Red Cloud and all denominations are represented.

The educational resources are good and well up to modern ideas, and as a result we find a well educated people, a sharp but active citizenship.

The climate of Webster county can scarcely be exaggerated in words. It is centrally located between the cold, frigid north and the torrid, hot south. The weather scarcely ever gets extremely hot and the nights are always pleasant during the warmest weather.

The county has as good natural roads as one can find anywhere and are as good ten months of the year as the pikes of the older states.

The streams are spanned at the most important public crossing by substantial iron and pile bridges.

The soil of the bottoms and low lying prairies is a dark sandy loam from 18 to 36 inches in depth. Upland soil is from 16 to 24 inches in depth and is as nearly as productive and for lasting qualities and fertility has no equal in the union. It is warm, never bakes, and is especially adapted for all kinds of cereals.

Very best improved lands range in price from \$15.00 to \$35.00 per acre. Stock farms, ranches and unimproved lands can be had from \$8.00 to \$15.00 per acre. Why should land with equal fertility, a much better climate, sell at these prices when the same lands with less advantages in many of the older states sell at three to four times these prices?

This county is known far and wide as a cattle raising and feeding section. Many of the finest and fattest of these animals that go into the eastern markets being raised in this section. The stock is high grade and is being improved from year to year.

To the poultry raiser we can say that nowhere can poultry be raised more successfully than here. The climate and surrounding conditions are such as to be perfectly adapted to this branch of industry. Just a short drive into the country will reveal large flocks of high grade turkeys, ducks, geese and chickens surrounding every farm house.

Recently the farmers have become interested in incubators and at this season hundreds of small fowl are to be seen throughout the country.

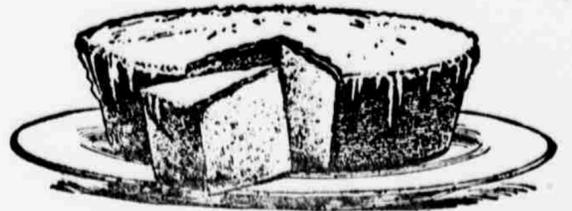
The breeds of cattle consist principally of Herefords and Shorthorns. The Poland China, Berkshire and Durocs are the favorite breeds of hogs, with other strains becoming prominent.

Webster county farms produce per acre 35 to 65 bushels of corn; 15 to 45 bushels of wheat; 35 to 55 bushels of oats; about 5 tons of alfalfa a season.

The county is traversed by the B. & M. R. Ry. from east to west, the N. & C. Ry. through the northern tier of townships in the same direction, and the Missouri Pacific touching the north-east corner, gives the county a total length of steel highway of nearly 70 miles.

A good, honest man with a small capital can come to Webster county, get possession of an excellent farm by paying one-third of its value in cash and the remainder on easy payments. He can go to work at once and meet his obligations as nowhere can money be turned as easily and quickly as here.

Neither political preference nor religious predilection cut any figure of Red Cloud's estimate of a newcomer. The only question asked is as to whether he is a hustler. If he isn't he might just as well put right on through without food or water.



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## THE CITY OF RED CLOUD

### A Thriving Metropolis That Sets the Pace for Sister Cities.

#### BUSINESS INTERESTS REVIEWED.

#### And a Mention of Her Business Men Now Alive.

The city of Red Cloud is an aggressively progressive city of about 1800 population. The inhabitants are charming and hospitable people, wide-awake, ambitious and enterprising to a degree that surprises visitors from all sections. There is no apathy or laziness among them, but exceeding vim, zeal and courageous energy characterize their every action. They extend the open hand of welcome to the newcomer, are frank, generous open-hearted, unselfish and sincere in their efforts, full of commercial vim, level headed and far seeing, what wonder the city presents a scene of life and bustle that must make other places hang their heads?

It is the seat of government of Webster county and is situated on the B. & M. Ry., which gives to its residents direct communication to the east, west and north, and lays to their very doors the best markets of the world.

Red Cloud has eight church edifices occupied by the various denominations and every opportunity is offered to the christian people, as many of the residents are, to accept and embrace the great and transcendent truths which unerringly guide to that greater and hallowed existence whose name is eternity.

The business houses and dwellings are substantial structures of frame and brick, many of them possessing every improvement and adornment known to modern architecture.

The city has a splendid water system, with stand pipe and a direct pressure. Mains and laterals run to all parts of the city and give to its residents the best of fire protection.

Red Cloud has educational facilities which cannot be excelled anywhere. It owns three public school buildings and twelve teachers are employed. These schools with the corps of instructors offer the best educational facilities and as competent instructors in teaching the young idea to shoot and burst forth its bud and blossom into life.

All the prominent secret and fraternal societies are represented and each have a good membership.

The streets are broad, level, well

graded, and the sidewalks are of both brick and lumber.

One of the notable enterprises is the Inter State Fair held in Red Cloud every fall. It has gained more than local prominence and the success it has attained insures its popularity for the future.

The city has two banks, each conservatively managed and with good working capital. It also has three weekly and one monthly newspapers.

There are about seventy-five business and professions represented in the city, and the professions find as able exponents as there are in the entire west.

The city has no boom, but considerable building is being contemplated. Among them are two large brick business blocks, a sixty-room brick hotel and an opera house.

The dealers here have free and direct access to the markets of the world and this being so the merchants are justified in carrying larger stocks of goods than are usually found in cities of this size. Visionary individuals cannot get along in Red Cloud. This is no Klondyke or Cape Nome region. The streets are not paved with gold and you can't pick big yellow nuggets out of the gutter or make a fortune in a minute, but any legitimate business enterprise coupled with energetic endeavor on the part of the promoter will succeed.

Below we give a review of the prominent and enduring business interests of the city:

#### P. A. HANSEN.

If there is one thing above all others that people are particular about it is their laundry work. They want their linen done up in first-class style, just the kind of work turned out by Mr. P. A. Hansen, proprietor of the steam laundry. He has had long training and experience in this line of business and guarantees and gives satisfaction to all his host of customers. Any work left at his laundry will receive the best of attention and out-of-town trade is made a special feature.

#### E. A. CREIGHTON, M. D.

Every city has its full quota of physicians, but Red Cloud is particularly fortunate in having in her midst an array of the fraternity who are indeed a credit to the profession. Among the most successful physicians we might mention the name of Dr. E. A. Creighton. He is a graduate of the Western University of London, Canada, and spent seven years in the courses of this school receiving the silver medal as an

(Continued on page 4, part 1.)