



STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS, AUTHOR OF THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA BILL.—From an Old Photograph.

November 30, 1844. The secretary refers to Fremont's first explorations (1842) in the Rocky mountains and then says:

The Platte of Nebraska being the central stream leading into or from the South Pass would very properly furnish a name to the territory which I propose suggesting to be erected into a territorial government, with, and preliminary to, the extension in that direction of our military posts. I would confine the Nebraska territory to our undisputed possessions on this side of the Rocky mountains. Its boundary line would commence at the mouth of the Kansas and run up the Missouri river to the mouth of the Running Water and pursue that river to the head of its northern branch, thence due west to the Wind river chain. From this point turning southward the line would continue alongside the Wind river range and the main chain of the Rocky mountains to the head of the Arkansas, and following that stream to the mouth of the Pawnee fork, would pass by the heads of the Neesho and Osage again to the mouth of the Kansas.

The secretary adds that there are not enough inhabitants in the region for a full territorial government, but urges that the territory should be organized anyway in order to throw the authority of the federal government around the Oregon emigrants. He asks for \$100,000 to erect a chain of military posts from the Missouri to the Rocky mountains in order to enforce our claim to the Oregon country, and says "troops and supplies from the projected Nebraska territory would be able to contend for its possession with any force coming from the sea." So the first idea of Nebraska was a means of holding Oregon and securing foothold on the Pacific.

Following the exact lines of the secretary of war is the report on December 17, 1844, Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois introduced his first Nebraska bill into the house of representatives. The bill called for one territory to be named Nebraska, with Secretary Wilkins' boundaries. The laws of Iowa were extended over Nebraska until her own legislature should meet. Nothing was said about slavery. Suffrage was limited to free white males until the legislature should enact a change. This bill with slight amendment was reported from the committee on territories on January 7, 1845, referred to the committee of the whole and never reached further consideration. The Texan question, the Mexican war and the fierce debate over the Wilmot proviso absorb the public mind and the time of congress. But while the Nebraska question sleeps in congress the emigrant's wagon marches on. By 1846 there are 12,000 Americans in Oregon and thousand of Mormons are filling the valley of Great Salt Lake. Nearly all of these crossed the Nebraska plains and several thousand of them wintered in 1846-7 at Florence and the mouth of the Niobrara. April 23, 1846, Nebraska City is founded under the name of Fort Kearney. A garrison is maintained there until 1848, when the new Fort Kearney is established on the south bank of the Platte opposite the present city of Kearney, and only a squad left at the old Fort Kearney until 1854. The Polk administration has given up its war cry of "Fifty-four forty or fight" and

out our Oregon claim in two in order to have a free hand to acquire Texas and a vast southern empire stretching from the Rio Grande to the Pacific. The Plymouth Rock and Jamestown streams have both reached Pacific tidewater.

It is not until March 15, 1848, that Stephen A. Douglas, now a senator, introduces his second Nebraska bill. The boundaries now extend only from latitude 40 to 43 and from the Missouri river to the summit of the Rocky mountains; the Iowa law is again to be extended over the new territory and no mention is made of slavery. This bill is reported from the committee on territories and, like its predecessor, dies without a hearing.

The Pacific Railroad and Nebraska Struggle.

There is a new phase to the Nebraska question—one not presented by any of the historians. From this time on the organization of Nebraska is linked with the conflict of commercial interests as well as the extension of slavery—the question whether the north or the south is to have the first Pacific railroad. The Oregon dispute is settled, there is no longer need of Nebraska as a military outpost against Great Britain, but the organization and settlement of the territory is a long step toward making the Platte valley route for a Pacific railroad and the far-sighted leaders north and south grasp the point. February 7, 1848, Senator Benton of Missouri introduces his first Pacific railroad bill in



GOVERNOR CROUSE'S FIRST RESIDENCE AND LAW OFFICE AT RULA, IN 1864.—From Photo Made in 1901.



MRS. WILLIAM HAMILTON, WIDOW OF MISSIONARY TO OMAHAS; MRS. HENRY FONTANELLE; MRS. HENRY MACAULEY.

congress, providing for a reserve one mile wide from St. Louis to San Francisco and that 75 per cent of the proceeds of land sales in California and Oregon and 50 per cent of the proceeds in other states shall constitute a railroad building fund. The bill meets the instant opposition of members south of Missouri. The record of congress for the next ten years is the story of skirmish and battle between the north and the south on Pacific railroad propositions. The compromise of 1850 settled the slavery agitation forever—so said both the whig and democratic parties—so said an overwhelming majority of the voters in the presidential election of 1852. With the sectional slavery issue out of the way it was time to push on the great westward movement. On December 12, 1852, Representative Hall of Missouri introduced a bill to organize the territory of Platte. It was referred to the house committee on terri-

ories, of which W. A. Richardson of Illinois, Douglas' personal friend, was chairman. On February 2, 1853, Richardson reported a new bill from the committee. It was to organize the territory of Nebraska—bounded south by 36-39, north by 43, east by Missouri and Iowa, west by the mountain summit. The provision that the law of Iowa should govern until changed by the legislature is left out. No mention is made of slavery. On February 10, 1853, there is a warm debate in the house over this bill. Not slavery, but Indian rights, is the theme. Houston of Alabama, Howard of Texas, Brooks of New York hotly denounce the bill as a violation of sacred Indian guarantees. The bill itself provides both the land and the government of the Indians shall be undisturbed, but this does not satisfy the champions of the red men. They want to know how many white men live in the region. Hall and



WHERE THREE STATES MEET—NEBRASKA, KANSAS AND MISSOURI—WOMEN IN FOREGROUND ARE DESCENDANTS OF JOSEPH ROUBIDAUX, EARLY FRENCH FUR TRADER.