

## JONATHAN EDWARDS PIONEER OF NEBRASKA AND OMAHA

Descendant of the Famous Preacher Who Has Spent His Boyhood and Manhood Years in the Work of Building Up Omaha and Nebraska to Greatness Even Among the Greatest of the World.

THE great, great grandson of Jonathan Edwards, the eminent New England theologian, is a pioneer of Nebraska and of Omaha. His name is the same as that of his illustrious ancestor. The only break in the line from the great theologian to the pioneer of Omaha was merely one of name. The son of the theologian was named Timothy. But Timothy's son and grandson and great-grandson bore the name Jonathan.

A wise man and a close observer of the effect of heredity and training upon men said that one should exercise great care in choosing one's ancestors. Though this is in a sense humorous, it contains a great deal of truth. Jonathan Edwards of Omaha was extremely careful in the choice of his forefathers. The men were nearly all either ministers of the stern, strict old Puritanical type or else patriots taking a leading part in the government of the colonies in the early days. Among his illustrious ancestors are these: Jahlcel Woodbridge, who was seventh in a line of ten preachers; Joseph Dudley, who was chief justice of the colony of Massachusetts and afterward governor of the same colony; Rev. Solomon Stoddard, a famous missionary of Northampton, Mass.; John Elliott, a famous missionary among the Indians at Spockbridge, Mass.; John Pierpont, a famous minister in Connecticut. John Gordon, a cousin of Mr. Edwards, was once in a meeting of sixty-two ministers and found that he was related more or less nearly with all but ten of them.

The original Edwards who sailed from England and planted his family on the unknown shores of the new world was William Edwards, who came over when a boy with his mother. That was in 1642. The old world ancestry was Welsh and English, and from the former probably came the deep religious grounding which has characterized the several generations since that time. The family was very prominent and influential during colonial days in religious and educational work and the men could assume the uniform of war as well as the gown of the church, as they showed during the revolutionary days.

### Some Modern Relatives

Aaron Burr was a cousin of Mr. Edwards' father. Others of his ancestors and near relatives who attained prominence in public life were the following: Henry Edwards, who was governor of Connecticut; Matthias Ogden, who was governor of New Jersey; Pierpont Edwards, a brother of Mr. Edwards' grandfather, who was a circuit judge in Connecticut. All the presidents of Yale college during the last hundred years, with the exception of only two, have been members of this family. These include Timothy Dwight the first, Timothy Dwight the second and Timothy Dwight Woolsey.

The grandfather of Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, wife of the president, and Mr. Edwards' father were first cousins. Nicholas Butler, now president of Columbia university, is his first cousin.

The family has moved westward constantly and steadily as far back into the centuries as it can be traced from the time when William Edwards crossed the Atlantic with his mother and settled on the bleak shores of New England down to Mr. Edwards in Omaha; yes, even to his grandson, who has carried the name on to Colorado.

The grandfather of Jonathan Edwards of Omaha moved west to New York and carved a home out of the wilderness. The father of Mr. Edwards moved west to Ohio in his turn and later came to Nebraska. This man was 20 years of age when he settled in Ohio. That was in 1820. He took an active and influential part in the politics of the young commonwealth. In 1840 he "stumped" the state on behalf of General Harrison in the "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" campaign.

The present senior member of this famous family first set his hold foot upon the site of Omaha June 2, 1858. He was only 8 years of age then, having been born August 10, 1846. Of course he didn't venture alone into the land of Indians. His father, mother and sister were in the party. They had started westward from Pittsburg, Pa., making their way by water and land in true pioneer fashion. The little party proceeded west from the Missouri river and built their cabin in Forest City, near the present site of Gretna. It was a brave little community with big expectations and a nice-sounding name, but with little other prospects for building up a great city. At that time the country was still almost in a primeval state. The buffalo roamed free and the Indians considered the white men their rightful prey. The shriek of the locomotive and the roar of the flying train of cars had not yet displaced the raucous cry of the bull whacker and the slow, creaking progress of the cumbersome emigrant or freight wagon.

### Early Day Manners

"Less than two weeks after our arrival we were initiated into the manners of the new land," says Mr. Edwards. "There was a land dispute between two men named Noonan and Matthews. They had nearly come to a settlement when a well-known character named 'Ranger' Jones happened along with a jug of whisky. The jug was opened and shortly afterward the dispute was also opened. Words changed to blows and suddenly Matthews raised his rifle and deliberately shot Noonan through the head, killing him instantly. The murderer fled. About twenty years afterward I saw him while I was with a surveying party south of Sidney."

Jonathan Edwards, who had been a political factor in the early Ohio community, soon took a similar position in the primeval wilderness of Nebraska. "General" Edwards was soon the recognized leader in Forest City and all the other settlers looked to him as to a father for care and counsel in the emergencies which presented themselves in the pioneer community.

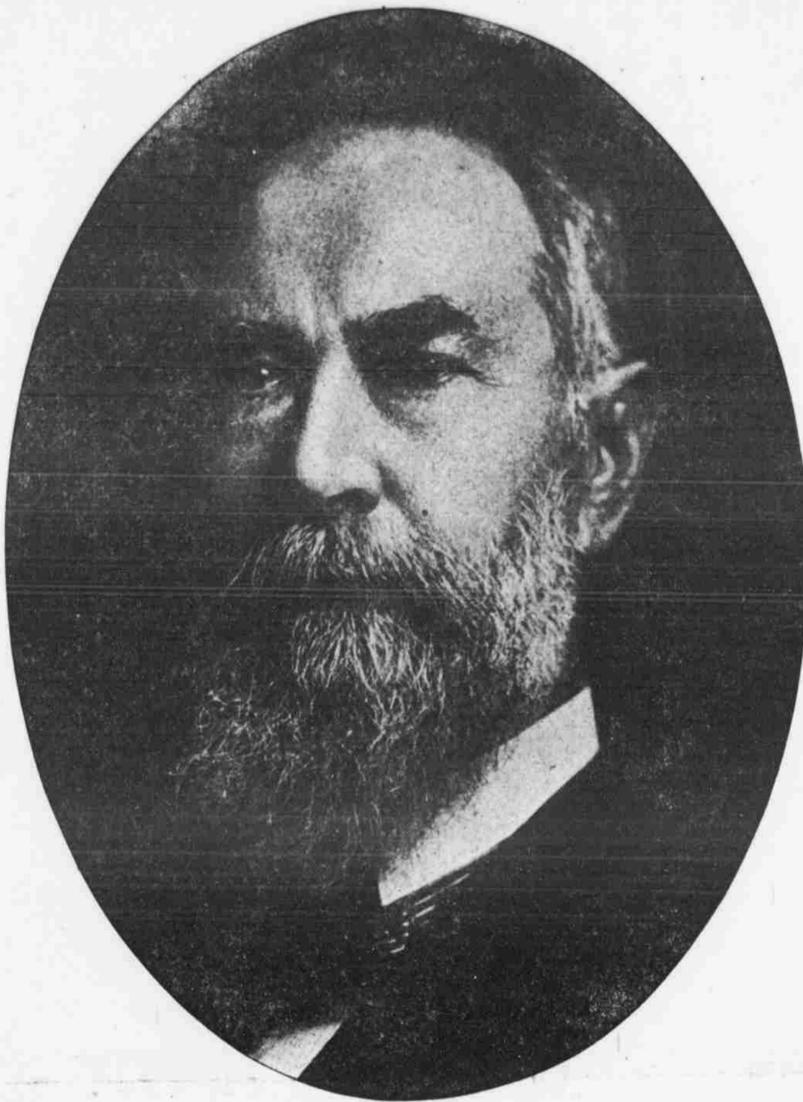
"We had one Indian scare there," says Mr. Edwards in relating an amusing scene of excitement. "Someone started the rumor that the redskins were coming and all the settlers rushed to the home of my father. Preparations were made there for defense. The night passed, however, and there was no sign of the Indians. The scare subsided by next morning. However, a neighbor of ours, Bob Shields by name, had left his home in such excitement that he had no time to put on his pants. Arriving at our house he begged my father to furnish him with an extra pair. Now, most men in that country and time had but one pair of these useful articles of dress. But my father having just come from the east was the possessor of two specimens and he gave one to the terrified Mr. Shields, who put them on in such a hurry that he had them reversed. But neither this fact nor the fibes of those who saw him interfered with the speed of his flight."

"There were many incidents of that kind in the life of a boy on the frontier. One day I remember seeing twelve big, dirty Indian bucks slouch up to our cabin during the absence of my father and demand of my mother the preparation of a meal. There was no help for it and she had to go to work and cook a big 'feed' for them out of our scanty store of provisions."

### Fine Trip for a Boy

"When I was a boy of 15 years it was nothing for me to drive alone in a big wagon through the unsettled country to the mouth of the Platte river, where the nearest grist mill was located. It was a somewhat dangerous drive, but I never feared. Once on the way some I fell asleep on the wagon, the oxen wandered off the road and when I awoke might had come on. I got off and walked in each direction in search of the road. I dared not go any farther than such a distance as I could hear the sound of the clanking of the oxen's chains. But I couldn't find the road. So I calmly unhitched the oxen and lay down under the wagon, where I slept until morning, when I found my way and reached home safely. My father and mother were not at all worried because of my not arriving sooner. Boys in those days had the self-reliance of men. They drank it in from the very air."

When the civil war broke out the youngest bearer of the name, Jonathan Edwards, felt the blood of his revolutionary ancestors stirring in his veins. He immediately demanded of his father that he be allowed to enlist. But his father did not see the proposition in that way in view of the fact that his son was only 17 years of age.



JONATHAN EDWARDS.

But within a year he passed his eighteenth birthday. A few days after that he left the little cabin, walked the twenty-five miles to Omaha and enlisted in the First battery, Nebraska cavalry, Company D, known better as the "Black Horse cavalry," with Major Armstrong of Omaha in command. After one year's service it was consolidated with the First Nebraska regiment under Colonel John M. Thayer. Soon after the organization was completed the Sioux Indians in western Nebraska and Wyoming went on the warpath and the regiment was ordered west to fight the red man instead of east to fight the white. There the regiment remained until the close of the war.

Young Edwards was mustered out by special order of the War

department in Omaha. As he was about to start for home a very small incident happened which had a very great deal to do with his life's happiness. A comrade, Walter Walker, asked him to take some of his effects to his home. Walker's father, Louis A. Walker, was a farmer. His farm comprised the land on which Swift's, Hammond and Armour packing houses are now located. This was right on Edwards' way home and he gladly consented to do the errand. And there he met his fate. At the house he was met by a girl who seemed to him the most beautiful and lovely creature he had ever seen. She was Miss Lucy Walker, sister of the young man who had sent the package home. When young Edwards left the Walker farm he had left not only the package, but his heart there as well. It

was love at first sight. During the next two years he was a frequent visitor there and on October 17, 1867, he married Miss Walker. The marriage took place in a house which stood on the very spot now occupied by the main Armour packing house. Rev. F. M. Dimmick of Omaha officiated. After the ceremony the two rode away on their honeymoon trip across the plains to the Edwards farm.

"It was love at first sight with me, all right," says Mr. Edwards. "And it was the kind that lasts. It was a very hard blow when she died seven years ago. Even in her last years she was one of the handsomest women in Omaha and I used to be very proud to walk out with her on the streets of the city."

### Lean Life in Kansas

On the farm they remained until the father of Mrs. Edwards moved to Kansas. She insisted that they should not go, but her husband thought he saw that she was homesick and therefore insisted that they go also. They moved, accordingly, to Montgomery county, Kansas, where they remained four years, which were lean years of grasshoppers and drouth.

At the end of that time they returned to Nebraska, settling in Omaha, where Mr. Edwards entered the employ of the Union Pacific and did much surveying in the west. Then he was in the operating department for several years. In 1889 he left the railroad and entered the internal revenue service under Collector John Peters. He was with the Woodmen of the World five years and during the last three years he has held and is still holding the position of chief clerk in the tax department of the county clerk's office.

Since the death of his wife Mr. Edwards has made his home with his daughter, Mrs. Frank H. Schwalenberg, Jr., 3006 Dodge street. She is the only daughter. There is also one son, Louis W. Edwards, special salesman for the M. E. Smith company. "My wife named him after her father," he says in explanation of the fact that he does not bear the honored family name, Jonathan. "I named our daughter and she named our son." But Louis Edwards has a son who bears the name Jonathan Edwards, and so the name is being handed on down the generations.

Mr. Edwards is a member of several orders, two of which he is particularly proud. These are the Sons of the American Revolution and the Grand Army of the Republic. He is eligible to the former on several counts. Two of his great grandfathers and one of his grandfathers were prominent during revolutionary war days. Jahlcel Woodbridge was a member of the continental congress. Timothy Edwards was a member of the committee of safety of Massachusetts and Robert Ogden was speaker of the house of burgesses of New Jersey and on the committee of safety of New Jersey. When the British occupied New York he was compelled to flee for his life.

### Prominent in Grand Army

He has taken a prominent part in grand army affairs. He was commander of George A. Custer post, No. 7, Omaha, in 1903. He was junior vice commander of the department in 1904; he has been a delegate to the national encampments and is now on the staff of Commander-in-Chief Charles G. Burton.

Mr. Edwards had the distinction of being the youngest county commissioner in Nebraska, when, in 1871, at the age of 25 years, he was elected to that office in Sarpy county. He was also a member of the Board of Education in Omaha from 1895 to 1897 and was president of the board in the latter year.

There are many stories told of the members of the Edwards family who have appeared in the different centuries through which the family history is traced. Jonathan Edwards, grandfather of the Omaha member of the family, used to say that his father, Timothy Edwards, "had sixty feet of daughters." Though daughters are not usually measured this way, it was a striking way of stating the size of the family of Timothy, for he had ten fine daughters and every one was six feet tall. Rev. John Pierpont had a daughter, Sarah, who became the wife of the great preacher, Jonathan Edwards. She had marvelously beautiful, lustrous, brown eyes. These eyes appear at times in some member of the family to the present day and are known as "Pierpont eyes." Mr. Edwards' cousin, William E. Annin of Washington, has a daughter, Susanna, who has the eyes in the present generation. Timothy Edwards was a noted preacher of East Windsor, Conn., who had charge of one church continuously for sixty-four years and was still in the active discharge of his duties when he died at the age of 89 years.

Mr. Edwards' father died at the age of 81 years and his mother at the age of 92. His sister, the wife of John Hickey of Gretna, Neb., died in 1902.

## Government Method of Redeeming Damaged Money

WASHINGTON, June 27.—If you are a foolish woman you have probably already put your surplus cash into the oven for summer storage. It's a habit to which foolish women succumb in the spring.

In the spring a young man's fancy gets busy with thoughts of love, but the mind of the foolish woman of maturer age begins figuring on just what she shall and what she shall not secrete in the stove for summer safe keeping. Whatever things she decides against there is one item which is sure of admission. That's money. It's like a disease with some women, which causes them at the mere sight of a cold oven to be seized with an uncontrollable longing to stuff some money into its darkest corner.

The madness attacks them even at sight of a cold stove of any description, and it is no exaggeration to say that at this moment there must be thousands of dollars wrapped in wads of paper and lying in the lap, so to speak, of a parlor stove in countless American homes.

If anyone doubts this statement he has only to communicate with the Division of Redemption at the United States treasury in Washington. There the tragic truth will be disclosed. Spring is the season for the outbreak of the disease, but the results reach the treasury in both the spring and the autumn.

The explanation is simple. When the weather turns warm in the spring the foolish woman, true to her instincts, decides that summer is on the job to stay. No more fires in the parlor stove. Out go the ashes and, after cleaning up the interior, she stuffs a lot of paper inside and sooner or later cooly conceals the family surplus of cash beneath that paper.

Sooner or later, also, there comes a cold day. Daughter has a caller and wants to make things cozy and pleasant for him. Or perhaps pa, trying to entertain the minister while ma and the daughter are getting supper, hits upon the happy thought of starting a little blaze. Or, most tragic of all, the foolish woman herself flustered by the meeting of the Missionary society with her, does the deed herself in an awful lapse of memory.

In any case the result is the same and can be viewed any day at the treasury. Sometimes the fragments are smaller, sometimes larger. Occasionally even the ordinary eye and intelligence can detect signs that the charred pieces were once dignified legal tender. But as a rule it takes the

wonderful skill of Mrs. Amanda E. Brown to find any such evidence.

For twenty years Mrs. Brown has been identifier-in-chief of damaged currency for this government. To her skill scores of banks and hundreds of business firms and of private individuals—including foolish women—owe their receipt of crisp new bills in exchange for little heaps of hopeless-looking shreds and patches.

Mrs. Brown's desk is directly under the light of a north window on the ground floor of the Treasury building. In its pigeonholes and compartments are official-looking manila envelopes and a few boxes, each of which contains a case—that is, some fragments of alleged money. The tools of her work lie before her—several fine steel scalpels, a four-inch magnifying glass and a half-inch thick piece of plate glass the exact size of a bank note and ruled off in fifty squares of exactly equal size.

As the reporter sat beside her the other day she spread a sheet of stout manila paper before her, picked up one of the boxes and emptied out ten or twelve charred pieces of paper ranging from bits about a quarter of an inch square to a couple of pieces containing a square inch or a little more. They looked absolutely blank at first. They might have been any pieces of burned paper.

Mrs. Brown did not handle them with her fingers, but with marvellous delicacy of touch separated them with the scalpel till they lay spread out upon the manila sheet. Then she handed the magnifying glass to the reporter, indicated one of the larger fragments and intimated that it showed the word "dollars" and a figure or design found only on United States twenty-dollar notes.

"This is the case of the burning of a store building," said Mrs. Brown. "We received this box, about four by six inches in size, full of charred pieces accompanied by a letter stating that in it were the remains of \$65—two twenties, two tens and a five."

"When I first turned the contents out it seemed as if there was nothing but mere burned paper. But I carefully sorted it until I discovered these pieces, which were unmistakable fragments of currency."

"You know it is an easy matter, at least for the experienced eye, to discriminate between burned money and any other burned paper. Currency is made of the best linen paper, especially manufactured for the government. When burned it looks almost like burned linen cloth and can be

separated at once from ordinary paper.

"After I had identified these fragments as money I gave them several baths in acid, which brought out traces of the engraving. I have not finished the case yet, but the identification of one twenty-dollar note is certain."

"As the fragment contains less than two-fifths of the original size of the note, the person having it redeemed will be required to make affidavit to the circumstances of its loss. He will then receive one-half the face value of the note. In that way, you see, the government is protected against redeeming the same note twice for full value. Oh, yes, such attempts are often undoubtedly made, but owing to the precautions taken they do not succeed."

"Do you ever receive money from wrecked vessels?"

"Yes. We often have money that has been in salt water some time, but those cases are rarely difficult. The bills are generally intact and can be spread out to dry."

"Is most of the money you receive damaged by fire?"

"Yes. After a great fire we always have particularly heavy receipts of injured bills. Now we are getting money from the Chelsea fire, but we are also still receiving damaged bills from California, even though it is two years since the disaster."

"We have received hundreds of thousands of dollars from San Francisco for redemption and 90 per cent of it has been made good by the treasury. That is an unusual percentage; but the San Francisco money came to us in excellent condition."

"In the first place most of it had been put away carefully. The bills had been laid in piles instead of being all crumpled up, as they often are in small stores or in private houses. The fire coming on at night, the money was in safes, which at least prevented some injury, even when the safes were not fireproof."

"Then, too, our men were on the ground when the work of recovery began and told people how to ship the burned money. The piles of bills must not be handled more than is absolutely necessary. They must be packed in cotton and put into stout boxes which contain nothing else."

"We sometimes receive packages containing both bills and coin which have been through a fire. The coin, no matter how it is wrapped, is so heavy that it will slide about, and as nothing

is much more fragile than burned paper, the bills are broken into little pieces, which are entirely useless for identification."

"Suppose someone had a counterfeit bill and burned it and sent the fragments for redemption—has that happened?"

"Well, we have had burned counterfeit money, but it may have come with other bills, you know, and not have been recognized till it came to us."

"Then you can detect a counterfeit even in these little black scraps?"

"Oh, that is one of the most important requirements. And it is not so difficult as you would think. The quality of the paper is as distinguishable when a good bill and a bad bill have been charred as they were before."

"Do you receive much money from women?"

"Mrs. Brown smiled. "In the spring and the fall we get it every day from people—chiefly women, I am afraid—who have hidden it in the stove or range."

"Oh, not every day!"

"Every day, I assure you. Sometimes two or three cases a day. Here's one now. The woman writes that the bills were in the fire all the time it burned and remained in the ashes several hours after the fire was out. Two hundred and ten dollars in all. Too bad."

"I suppose," said the reporter, "you get many letters full of appreciation and gratitude."

Mrs. Brown smiled again, this time with a peculiarly significant expression. She admitted that the redemption division is not embarrassed by any particular richness in the shape of thanks.

Of course people do receive only their legal due, but if they could see the infinite pains and care taken by this wonderful little woman to rescue for them some salvage from the results of either misfortune or their carelessness, it does seem as if they would realize that but for her extraordinary patience and skill they would be many dollars poorer than they are.

Not long ago a small bank in a western state was burned, and as the safe was not fireproof the money contained in it was reduced to a charred mass. The banker, not wanting to trust the burned bills to the express or the mail, put them in a suitcase and brought them himself to Washington.

Within a few days the entire amount of the money which was said to have been burned with the exception of only \$5 was identified.