

ADAMS COUNTY A KINGDOM OF WONDROUS SOIL WEALTH

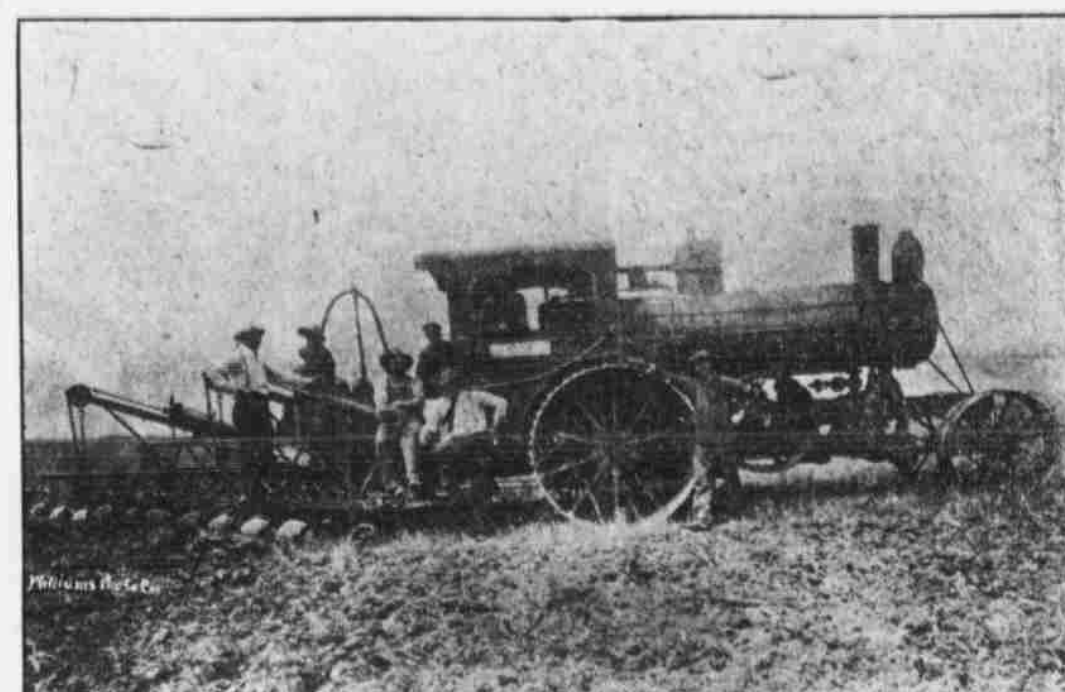
Hastings the Thriving Metropolis of a County That Has More than Realized the Hope of the Pioneers Who First Made Homes on the Broad Prairies of the Republican Valley



FARM HOME OF GEORGE B. DUEKEE, ADAMS COUNTY.



FARM YARD SCENE IN ADAMS COUNTY.



PLOWING IN ADAMS COUNTY.



SOD HOUSE, THE HOME OF THE PIONEER.



RESIDENCE OF W. A. TAYLOR, HASTINGS.



SECTION OF NEBRASKA ASYLUM FOR INSANE, HASTINGS.

LESS than half a century ago, Adams county was a good place to go to trade with the trapper and get scalped by the Indian. But the dim and waning Indian trail has broadened with the years into a highway of civilization. It was a span of miles that became responsible for the discovery of Adams county. This event dates back to a bright spring morning in 1869, when a lone horseman rode out across the divide north of the valley of the Republican. He could see only prairie, except for the narrow winding Blue. A few miles away was the old emigrant road. Here was the trail of the white man through the land of the Indian and the buffalo.

The horseman who came to find the pair of mules that had strayed away from his camp on the Republican, saw in a vision a desert transformed into a productive field; a white man's home instead of a neglected wild prairie.

Mortimer M. Kress, known as "Wild Bill," and M. J. Fouts, "California Joe," were ex-soldiers of the United States. For several years they had tramped through the middle west following the pursuit of trappers. It was "Wild Bill," who came in search of the wandering mules and his search brought him into what is now Adams county. When he returned to camp he induced Fouts to join him in settling in the uninhabited country.

In the fall of 1869, Kress and Fouts settled on homesteads on Section 13 of what is now Little Blue precinct. These frontiersmen were the pioneers of Adams county and both have lived to see a greater development than either expected. Both are still living on their original claims.

These trappers that followed the mules in their aimless wandering, into the most glorious empire of adventure and resources the world ever saw, have lost the frontier. They have bid good-bye to the desert and the wilderness.

The early history of Adams county reads like fiction. Life came, Indian and buffalo, fur trader and missionary, freighter and homesteader, ox team and railroad. Each moved across the stage and has played his part often unconsciously in its dramatic history. Then began the development, little by little. Farms sprang into existence. The soil was tested and found to be prolific for agricultural purposes. Then followed the factory and the foundry, banks and mercantile houses, until today, an industrial and agricultural empire has been ploughed out of the wilderness of half a century ago. There is little left of the cherished surroundings of the days of the early pioneers. An occasional coyote or timber wolf is seen along the streams, but is regarded as a novelty more than a nuisance.

On November 7, 1871, Secretary of state, W. H. James, acting governor, issued a proclamation authorizing the election of county officers and the location of a county seat in Adams county. At the election held on December 12, of the same year, twenty-nine votes were cast and thirteen county officers elected. This election took place seventeen years after the creation of the territory of Nebraska, with an area of over 351,000 square miles. This included all of Nebraska, part of Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas. The census taken in 1870 gave Adams county a total population of nineteen. The first election in Adams county for presidential electors was held in 1872, at which time 124 votes were cast for Grant and 9 for Greeley.

The establishment of the town of Hastings was an after thought with the men who settled upon the three homesteads which formed the original parts of the town. Of the five first merchants, four still reside in Hastings and three are actively engaged in business. Samuel Alexander came to Hastings on April 22, 1872, and on July 18, opened the first business house with a general stock of merchandise. The first drug store in the city was opened March 24, 1873, by A. Andrus. W. H. Stock opened the first meat market January 1, 1873. The firm of Abbott, Batty & Dow, began the practice of law, June 2, 1873. The pioneer newspaper of Hastings was the Journal, established by A. L. Wigton and M. K. Lewis. They issued the first paper on May 24, 1873. The first paper from the press was sold at auction for \$10.50.

In the early months of 1873, town lots in what is now the business district were sold for from \$15 to \$25. Before the close of 1873, Hastings became a thriving business point. By reason of its location at the junction of two important lines of railroad, the Burlington and St. Joe & Grand Island, the town was an active trading point for a large territory. Hastings' first hotel, the Roaring Glimlet, was noted more for its peculiar name than for its excellent accommodation. This hotel was built in 1872 and 1873. The April storm of 1873 will always occupy a notable place in the history of Adams county. It came upon the people late in the afternoon of Easter Sunday, April 13, and lasted for three days. It is remembered by early settlers as the most serious storm which has ever swept over Nebraska.

Hastings has figured prominently as a railroad center since the inauguration of service on the St. Joe & Grand Island in the latter part of 1872. With only two lines of railroad, Hastings would now be inferior as a shipping point to numerous small towns throughout the state; but in the pioneer days, the advent of the second line of railroad marked the beginning of an epoch of continued and substantial growth; for the second road gave that town an advantage over all other in this section of the country. The present superintendent of the Lincoln division of the Burlington, Mr. E. Bignell, ran an engine hauling construction material over this line in June, 1872, and was unable to locate the town of Hastings. Until the postoffice was established in October, 1872, Hastings was not recognized by the Burlington road. The city was named after the contractor who built the St. Joe & Grand Island railroad. Samuel Alexander was one of the three men who selected the name.

No one can lift the veil and look into the future, but it is quite plain that Adams county will become one of the leading counties of the state in the dairy industry. Expert dairymen of the state are confident that cows producing 5,000 pounds of milk and 200 pounds of butter annually are in reach of every farmer or dairyman who will take the pains to bring his cows up to such a standard. The average yield for each cow is less than 4,000 pounds of milk and about 160 pounds of butter. There are 21,000,000 cows in the United States and their average is 3,500 pounds of milk a year. As a nation we consume about twenty pounds of butter per capita per year. About one-third of the nation's output of butter comes from the farmers, where about 3,500,000 farmers and their families still churn. Over 6,000 creameries make the rest of the 1,500,000,000 pounds that we use annually. More and more each year the farmers of Adams county

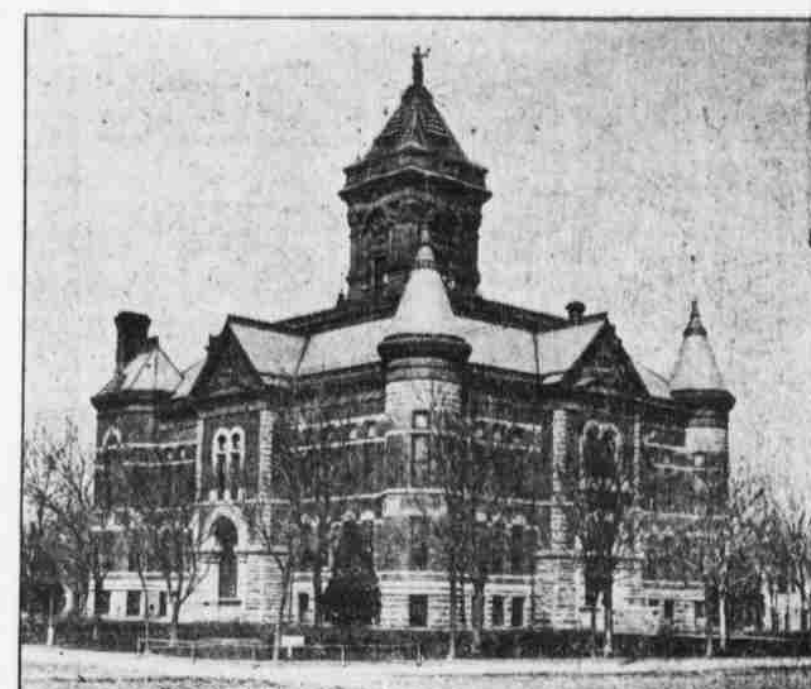
are turning their attention to the dairy industry.

The feeding of stock has become one of the great industries of Adams county. Last year the farmers sold and shipped out of the county 7,400 head of beef cattle and 34,000 head of fat hogs. In the early days before the condensation of freight, when it cost as much to ship a car load of cattle to Chicago as it did a car load of corn, and before the days of great packing-houses on the Missouri river, the farmers of Adams county labored under a great disadvantage. Few people realize the savings to the farmers by the condensation referred to. It takes fully two car loads of corn to fatten one car load of steers. A car of steers is hauled from the local station in Nebraska to the Missouri river packing house for less than one car load of corn and there two cars of cattle are condensed again into less than one car load of dressed beef, and this one car load is hauled to Chicago for less money than a car load of corn was formerly transported. This gives the farmer the full producer's profit on his cereals and also a better profit on his live stock; and is a concentration in freight of at least four to one. This represents millions of dollars each year to the farmers of Nebraska. The average citizen, if he considers the matter at all, gives only passing thought to the resources of Adams county and Nebraska and does not stop to realize its enormous wealth, what has already been accomplished and what is yet to be done.

Adams county has 100,000 fruit trees in full bearing, consisting of apples, peaches, plums and cherries. Last year the county sold and shipped to market 751,000 bushels of corn and 1,800,000 bushels of wheat besides 81,000 bushels of oats. Adams county is about twenty-four miles square and has about 24,000 population. The city of Hastings is the county seat of Adams county and has a population of about 12,500. It is the heart of one of the most extensive and fertile agricultural and stock growing prairie countries on the continent and four of the great railroad systems engaged in the development of the west, have found it to their advantage to build lines into and through the city. It is the end of the division of the C. B. & Q. system with its main Chicago and Denver line, its Kearney, its Aurora, and its Republican valley branches. It has one of the most important arms of the Union Pacific system in its St. Joe & Grand Island branch, which is a link in the main line of that company from St. Louis to the coast. It has a branch of the Missouri Pacific which, with the St. Joe and Burlington roads, give it three competing lines to Kansas City, St. Louis, and points south. It also has an arm of the Chicago & North-western and these four great railway systems have in all ten arms radiating out of the city in all directions, bringing it in close touch with all parts of the surrounding country.

Hastings has first-class water, sewer and electric light plants, with their attendant conveniences for industrial use. For post-office and federal court purposes it has a government building with grounds on which \$135,000 has been expended. It has a county court house, with grounds on which \$100,000 has been expended; a state institution with grounds on which over \$250,000 has been expended; a high school building with grounds on which \$100,000 has been expended; a college with good buildings and a cash endowment of \$100,000; a fine public

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ADAMS COUNTY COURT HOUSE.



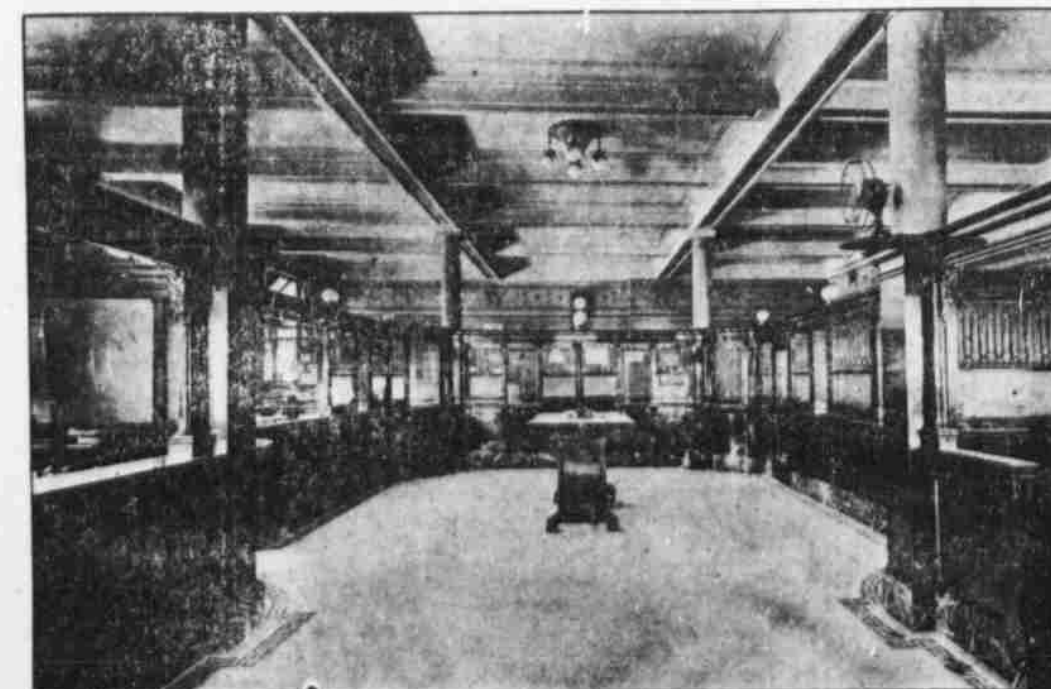
POSTOFFICE AT HASTINGS.



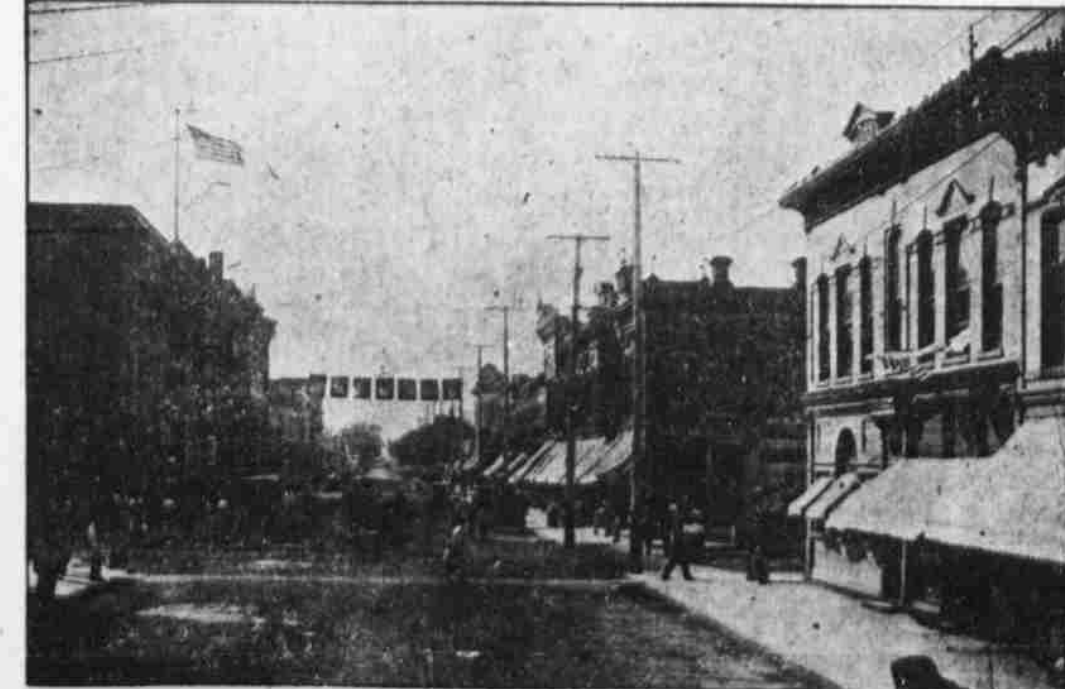
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION BUILDING, HASTINGS.



NATIONAL BANK BUILDING, HASTINGS.



INTERIOR FIRST NATIONAL BANK, HASTINGS.



SECOND STREET, LOOKING WEST, HASTINGS.