

# Cherry County a Land of Lovely Scenery and Properous Ranchers

**C**HERRY county is the largest of all the counties in Nebraska. It is increasing both in wealth and population and the public lands are fast being occupied. At the present time the county has a population of 15,000 and a valuation of \$15,000,000. It has 112 miles of railroad with eleven railroad stations within its borders. The county has three developed water powers, one flouring mill, eight banks and one elevator, about 900 miles of public highway and nearly every farmer or ranchman in the county owns his farm. Cherry county is not only one of the best watered counties of the state, but has more good, practically developed water powers than any other section of the state. In the matter of natural scenery no other county or group of counties can compare with it. With many excellent lakes and a network of streams fairly equally distributed over the entire county, its rivers are famous not only for the pure water, but also for the rugged beauty of their banks. The Niobrara, the Loup, the Schlegel, the Snake, the Minnehadusa, the Fairfield, the Boardman and Seven Creeks, each has some particular form of beauty that makes it noted.

The Schlegel flows through a dark ravine 100 feet deep in places, whose banks are covered with large pine trees which meet above the stream, forming an arch through which the sun cannot penetrate, making an ideal place for picnics and trout fishing. The Minnehadusa, the famous Swift Water of the Sioux Indians, from its source to its mouth is a stream of beauty unsurpassed in this or any other state. Rising in South Dakota, just north of Georgia, it flows dreamily along through fertile valleys until, nearing Valentine, it catches the spirit of the place and comes rumbling and tumbling with a rush and roar until it is embraced by the Gilman dam. The artificial lake made by its pent-up waters is not only the most beautiful, but also one of the largest of its kind in the state. The Niobrara State fish hatchery is located on its banks and one can see all seven forms of fish life, from the egg to the seven-pound bass. On its bosom floats all sorts of boats—fishboats, rowboats and a splendid gasoline launch. Its beauty is further enhanced by the flowers and evergreens that fringe its banks.

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ing, continues its turbulent course to the Niobrara 200 feet below. The Ariskee are not only the highest, but also the most beautiful falls in the state. The beautiful sheet of water falls eighty-five feet without a break and then over another narrow ledge fifteen feet farther. Niagara appeals to you by its grandeur, but the Ariskee by its dainty beauty far surpasses any other falls in the west.

Cherry county is ninety-six miles in length from west to east. The Niobrara river flows across the entire county. The Snake river, to the south, flows through about two-thirds of the county and then joins the Niobrara. These two streams have recently been surveyed with a view of determining their capacity for furnishing water power for electric lighting and manufacturing purposes. It is generally conceded that these two streams combined have about twenty good practical undeveloped water powers. Within four miles of Valentine the water power is now being surveyed on the Niobrara that will furnish 1,000-horse power for 25 days in the year at twenty-four hours per day.

The Niobrara river is one of the swiftest streams in the state. Its volume of water ranges from 500 to 1,000 cubic feet per second at Valentine and from 1,000 to 2,000 feet per second at Niobrara. The river is swift, usually shallow and little affected by storm waters except near its mouth. It is supplied with water from many spring-fed streams issuing from ravines and canyons, one of the best known of which is Long Pine canyon. Nearly all of the tributary streams are weak. The main valley of the Niobrara is narrow and about 500 feet deep below the upland. The valley contains but little farm land. In the vicinity of Valentine the trunk valley is bounded by steep sides and narrow canyons. The river affords water for stock, domestic and irrigation purposes and in time its water powers will be developed.

But few people in Nebraska have any definite conception of the scenery in Cherry county. There are many points that are sure to become popular summer resorts in the course of time. There is everything to make this part of the state a delightful summer retreat. In no part of Nebraska is there as good fishing for black bass as the lakes of this county, and there are four streams that afford excellent trout fishing. The hunting is still excellent in many parts of the county. Small game is abundant almost everywhere. Thirty-four



VALENTINE HIGH SCHOOL.

every two or three years. These farmers are beginning to realize that this is one of the best, most practical and most profitable crops they can grow on their farms, and they are beginning to learn that in many parts of the county, formerly considered of no value for tame grass, alfalfa seems to be especially adapted to some of the land. There is no question but what this county will for many, many years to come be an extensive stock range; but it is equally plain that the dairying industry will become a principal source of income to the average farmer. The growing of potatoes is becoming more prominent year after year. Last year these farmers grew 4,700 acres of potatoes, and it is forming in some parts of the county their principal income. The milling business is considerably gaining ground, and last year there were shipped out from the county 69,000 pounds of flour.

In the raising and marketing of horses, Cherry county stands third among the counties of the state. Last year, there

sixty-one frame houses, five log houses, and five sod huts. Many schools are still held in an unused room of a dwelling or in a claim shack. The teachers vary in professional training from those just able to get a third grade certificate to those having life certificates granted upon university diploma. The highest professional spirit is manifested by the teachers in attendance upon the seven association meetings held within the year. The teachers almost without exception do the reading circle work as outlined by the state reading circle board and annually write a thesis upon some subject assigned at the institute.

Recognizing the desire of the teachers for progress the state has located a Junior Normal here, which has been doing excellent work for six years. Teachers and students at Valentine form a large, happy, mutually helpful family and they are helped in many ways by the genial citizens of the city on the Minnehadusa.

Valentine, the county seat of Cherry county, a town of 1,500 people, is the capital of the largest subdivision of the state of Nebraska. Time was when the vast area of Cherry county was almost entirely given over to immense herds of cattle—when the festive cowboy was its chief inhabitant and when the annual roundup was the chief diversion of the natives. But with the passing of time all this has altered. The vast herds have gradually melted away before the steady advance of the small stockmen and the farmer and the broad prairie and rolling hills of the county are being dotted with the homes of prosperous and progressive settlers and with their inevitable accompaniment—the little white school house.

Valentine, as the center of activity of the county, used to share the reputation of the county and was regarded entirely as a frontier town. Whatever basis there may have been for this reputation in the past, it has been buried in the steady onrush of advancing civilization and today the residents of Valentine can truthfully boast that no quieter, more orderly and more homelike community exists in northern Nebraska. No one who has not seen the town in its early days can fully realize the change that has taken place in every particular, not what energy and resourcefulness must have been the attributes of the early settlers and their successors of today, which have enabled them to build the present busy little city of enterprising commercial concerns and of comfortable homes upon what was twenty-five years ago a treeless waste of sandy prairie. It has become in a few years a town of shrobs and all that goes to indicate the habitude of refined and cultivated people. The crudities and inconveniences of early days have given way to all of the refinements of home comfort that scientific progress and architectural art have devised, so that the interiors of Valentine homes are not only comfortable but in many cases luxurious. Nothing in the history of the Junior Normal has been more pleasant and characteristic of the spirit of the town than the way in which the good people of Valentine have thrown open their homes to normal students in an effort to make them feel at home.

Being distinguished beyond all its neighbors by the possession of a natural supply of building stone Valentine has been able to give to its business section an air of solidity and established character not obtainable otherwise. Its rows of handsome stone buildings are a fitting indication of the character of the stocks within the stores and of the enterprise of the men who own them, and its two banks with average deposits of over a third of a million dollars bespeak the prosperity of its citizens generally. There are electric lights which have been in use for a number of years and the capacity of the water power plant which supplies them is taxed to the utmost.

Valentine is the home of the United States land office, where thousands of homesteaders have made and completed their contracts with a beneficent government, and also of the weather bureau office, which is in charge of a trained observer. There are four churches, the largest of them built of stone, each of them with a comfortable parsonage and all of them out of debt. There is a large public room; there is a splendid fraternal lodge hall; there is a good opera house and the imposing court house of Cherry county. The school building is the largest and best arranged in this section of the state.

On every hand are to be seen newly planted trees, miles of new cement walks and other improvements, all man's handiwork, but neither has nature herself failed to do her part in making Valentine a pleasant place to live. The town is beautifully situated on a broad plateau within a curve of the Niobrara river, which flows on the south and east, while on the north rise the high bluffs which overhang the canyon of the beautiful Minnehadusa. Man has assisted and improved upon nature and the result is both a pleasure and a surprise to those who have not seen the capital of the so-called sandhills, with its enterprising spirit and its hospitable citizens so eagerly interested in everything that will assist in general education.

Of Cherry county comparatively little is known by the outside world. That such a county exists is a matter of common knowledge, but with present day conditions in the county few are familiar. Twenty years ago this vast territory was not the civilized country it is today. The white man who went there to live looked for a life of rough work and danger, but the very fact that the homesteaders from the east faced the uncertainty of these days to enjoy the certainty of prosperity is its greatest testimony. Perhaps the most remarkable characteristic of this county is that it is one of the few counties where the farmer and stockman are living side by side.

Lands are low in price. Many good quarters of sections of land out from three to eight miles from Valentine can be purchased for from \$5 to \$15 per acre.

No prophet could foretell the events of the last few years and their results. For more than twenty years the cattleman and the homesteader have been occupying the middle part of this county, but they have just begun to learn how to use it, how to enrich themselves from it, how to enjoy it, how really to feel the mastery over it. New generations are coming on the stage, new enterprises are being developed, new territory is being opened through the adapting of new farming methods to the existing conditions. It is an unending procession of homesteaders and homebuilders and it continues today with as regular a movement as it possessed ten years ago. It is



DISTRICT SCHOOL NO. 34, CHERRY COUNTY.—From a Photo Made by the Teacher.

one of the great factors in the development of Cherry county.

The United States land office at Valentine commenced doing business on July 2, 1883, and has been busily engaged in helping the people to become the owners of government land ever since that date. James Morris was register and J. Wesley Tucker was receiver when the office opened. Since opening over 13,000 homestead entries, over 1,500 timber culture entries and many thousand cash sales have been made. When the office opened there were several million acres of vacant lands to be disposed of. Now the amount has dwindled to 800,000, a large area when taken in one body, but not so large when it is divided into 640-acre homesteads under the famous Kinkaid act.

The district now embraces the greater part of Rock, Brown, Keya Paha and Cherry counties. The first three counties named have become so well populated under the workings of the Kinkaid act that there is no longer any desirable lands vacant in these counties in large tracts, therefore the scene of activity has been transferred to Cherry county, much the larger of the four. The distance from the railroads of large areas of this county has tended to keep much land in the hands of the large cattleman, but the growing scarcity of free lands farther east has driven the advancing army of settlers into the interior and the day of the roving herd is almost past. In a territory which may best be described as lying in the center of the county, about midway between the Northwestern and the Burlington railroad lines, lie many thousands of acres of government lands yet vacant, among which the intending settler may find a home, if he has energy and industry and the patience to live many miles from railroads and towns and to wait for the happy time when a railroad will surely wend its way

through the interior of the great empire of Cherry. This land is mostly rolling, grassy sandy loam, but here and there may be found the little "dry valleys" which will allow of cultivation and form little oases in which to raise food for the family and feed for the herds which should roam over every foot of Cherry county land.

The new settler should have a little capital upon which to make his start, with which to erect his dwelling and buy a few head of cows—as well as energy and perseverance. The day in which rich farming land was to be had from Uncle Sam for the asking has passed, but with a section of Cherry county grazing land, including a little tillable land, the man who is not afraid of work can make his way.

The Kinkaid act provides that any person who has a homestead right in the United States may enter 640 acres in this district, or if he has exhausted his homestead right elsewhere, he may enter 480 acres here. The act differs from the general homestead laws only in the size of the homesteads which may be entered, that such entries may not be commuted to cash, and the provision that when proof is made the settler must show that he has expended in money, labor and materials the sum of \$1.25, multiplied by the number of acres in his entry, for improvements, or \$90 for a section of land. Whether the act has been a success may be judged from the fact that the voting population of Cherry county has increased more than 50 per cent since the act went into operation.

The records of the United States weather bureau office at Valentine show that the average rainfall is about twenty-one inches and that the so-called "drouth" is no more to be feared here than it is in the thickly settled middle western states, only one such period having been noted in the twenty years in which the office has been located here. Luke M. Bates is register and E. Olson is receiver of the land office, having been appointed in February, 1906.



GROUP OF COUNTY DISTRICT BLUFFS HUNTERS IN CHERRY COUNTY.

account of its winding course, is perhaps the most remarkable river in the state. For miles it has cut its way through solid rock, forming chasms or canyons over 100 feet in depth whose precipitous sides cannot be scaled by man or beast. This is essentially the lake region of Nebraska, and there is hardly a township in our broad area but has one or more beautiful lakes. Most of them are spring-fed and consequently, the waters are cool and clear as crystal. This county has more falls, wider falls, higher falls and more beautiful falls than any other county in the state. The rear of the Stinson falls can be heard long before you reach them, and it requires skill in climbing to reach its exact point where they can be seen to the best advantage. They fall some twenty feet over a perpendicular rock and the spray is charming. The Loup falls are the largest in the state, and it appears to the observer as if the river was dammed at that point. The bridal veil is formed by many divisions of the stream, which, flowing over a huge boulder, drops fifty feet to the next stopping place and then, unit-

ing, continues its turbulent course to the Niobrara 200 feet below. The Ariskee are not only the highest, but also the most beautiful falls in the state. The beautiful sheet of water falls eighty-five feet without a break and then over another narrow ledge fifteen feet farther. Niagara appeals to you by its grandeur, but the Ariskee by its dainty beauty far surpasses any other falls in the west.

Cherry county is, first of all, a stock range and, second, a vast meadow and hay country. This county contains 1,112,590 acres in farms with 54,700 acres under cultivation. Last year the county used 219,000 acres as meadow or hay land. Farmers of the present time have 2,600 acres of alfalfa and this acreage is being doubled

farmers shipped out about 4,000 head of a good grade of work horses. The live stock industry of the county, however, is centered on the cattle business. Last year there was sent from this county to the Omaha packing house or the feed yards in the eastern part of the state, 32,900 head of cattle besides 4,500 fat hogs and 800 mutton sheep.

In the early settlement of Cherry county, one of the first things that these pioneers provided for was the public school, and from earliest existence of the county these citizens have taken a deep interest in everything pertaining to the public school. The first school district was organized in August, 1882, where the village of Valentine now stands. The one room structure has been replaced by a modern brick building of twelve rooms with all necessary improvements. There are now 111 districts which pay annually to their teachers \$25,585.90. The average wage is \$38, the highest \$125. There are 2,431 children of school age, for whom are provided seventy-four school buildings, like the nursery rhyme, one brick house, one stone house,

and as I watched the discomfited youngsters of the week previous footing it in to Plymouth, their lobster colored faces streaming with perspiration and coats unbuttoned, I overheard a jovial old farmer remark to a smart looking officer who was doing his best to look cool:

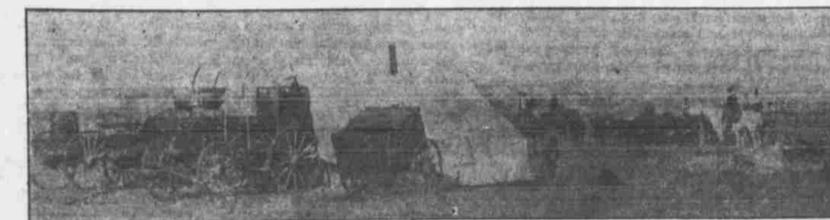
"Well, you've 'ad you're 'oliday, now you be goin' back to work, I s'pose."

Though the young fellow refrained from replying, I have no doubt he reflected on the questionable pleasures of his holiday.

The inhabitants at first strongly opposed the military authorities and at one place a woman fought them successfully. Targets had been set up and the red flag flutters in the breeze. But despite these signs of danger a countless woman marched up to them and comfortably seating herself, took out a packet of sandwiches, declaring her intention of spending the day there.

The amazed military officials protested, remonstrated, entreated, but in vain. The lady proceeded to munch at her sandwiches and defied them to fire. She gained the day, and this particular spot has never been interfered with since.

When walking over the moor you often see huge patches of white on the distant hills which look like snow. These are the china clay works and many are still in operation, for the clay in its finest form has a variety of uses. America imports some for the manufacture of artificial teeth. Paris employs some for its confectionery, some is used in the Staffordshire potteries for porcelain, some is used for adulterating flour and for putting a surface on paper, while the remainder goes to plasterers and masons and is even sold



ON A HORSE RANCH IN CHERRY COUNTY.

## Gossip About Noted People

**Clam-Like Mr. Wickersham.**

THE attorney general of the United States, Samuel George Woodward Wickersham, has every claim that ever lived happily in a mud flat lashed to the mast for mummies. That is to say, he did have when he first began to hang up his hat in his new Washington office, comments Human Life. It's a little different now; he's "opened up" somewhat. They all have to, you know, sooner or later. You can't be a top-holcher in officialdom and work the dumb and aloof act on the newspapermen forever. For that way political death lies.

Wickersham's all right, and he knows law from the ground floor up, but the trouble with him was he didn't tumble on to the difference quick enough between the common people law and the law for the government. The job he had been holding down in New York was a millionaire and corporation clients, and you couldn't get within 1,000 yards of him unless you first had a very private appointment with the common people. We say "presumably," for to our way of thinking there would be mighty few big corporations holding up the public by the throat today if some law or other hadn't been evaded, and would as soon think of com-

praying, would be the corporation lawyer? Having been such, Mr. Wickersham should know the tricks of the trade, the same observation holding good also of those other government gentlemen known by the name of Knox, Root, Ballinger, Nagel, et al. They've all had the trusts for clients, and they all know well enough how the "trimming" is done. The trouble is, however, the powerful "interests" still have their claws on them. If any one of them, say Wickersham, had the grit and ginger of a Roosevelt, he'd break away from the modern bandits, put the screws on 'em, make 'em squawk, crawl in the dust, give 'em a taste of time, live straight, turn over a new leaf, yank the poisoned fangs out of 'em. If he'd serve his country in that fine fashion, he'd carve a name for himself way up on the cornice beside G. Washington's. But, Lord bless you, the trusts, seemingly, "doth make cowards of them all," to borrow a phrase from Hamlet.

Wickersham is not of the log-cabin brand. His family was well off. He honored Lehigh university years ago by studying engineering there, and Lehigh returned the compliment last June by giving him an LL.D. He later switched over from the engineering to law, however, graduating from the University of Pennsylvania, class of 1880. He has several languages at the tip of his tongue, knows a lot about music and art, shows up regularly at the opera, loves horses and rare prints and can put up a pretty fair game of golf. Has two children, a married daughter and a son who is tanking up on law at Harvard! Ladies and gentlemen, allow us to present Samuel George

Woodward Wickersham, attorney general of the United States.

**Health of Multimillionaires.**

James J. Hill and his Summit avenue neighbor in St. Paul, Frederick Weyerhaeuser, are men who have piled up immense wealth by hard work and both are as sound physically as the gold they represent, says the New York Press. Weyerhaeuser has taken it easier in recent years than he did when laying the foundation of his fortune. He knows the natural growth of timber on his vast possessions "triches him year after year more than would the amount he paid for his lands if placed in any other investment. Nature is working for him month in and month out. There is nothing to worry him except forest fires, and these are guarded against as much as possible. But to rise from a man working at manual labor in Pittsburg at \$19 or \$15 a week to one estimated by many to be the wealthiest in the United States must represent hard work and lots of it, and still Weyerhaeuser is in vigorous manhood.

**Prison Built by Americans**

(Continued from Page One.)

Territories were encamped in our neighborhood for a fortnight and the whole countryside for miles around turned out to see them. The first week happened to be one of real Dartmoor mists and driving rain, and the men told me they could neither see nor sit down because of the water in their tents. The following week was one of blazing sunshine,

and as I watched the discomfited youngsters of the week previous footing it in to Plymouth, their lobster colored faces streaming with perspiration and coats unbuttoned, I overheard a jovial old farmer remark to a smart looking officer who was doing his best to look cool:

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for gravelling garden paths.

With the working of the china clay and the granite quarries it became necessary to find a means of conveying the produce to the seaport, and in consequence of this Dartmoor is the proud possessor of the first railway in Devonshire. At the beginning of the nineteenth century a horse railway track was laid connecting Plynthtown and Plymouth, and the little single narrow gauge line now running still follows the same route.

The line winds in and out among the trees until it reaches the grim, forbidding, sombre looking capital of the moor whose little spire towered church has served as a guide to many a benighted snowbound traveler on the vast and inhospitable tract beneath. As we begin the slow descent we skim around the summit of a rocky tor whose sides, ripped open by the hand of the "improver" man, display a new and ugly looking wound about which, great granite boulders lie strewn in all directions. We are thankful when a sharp turn in the line hides this from view, and a moment later we feel a thrill of pleasure and peaceful solemnity as our eager eyes gaze first from one window, then the other.

For then close beside the track and stretching beyond in gentle undulations is a gloriously colored wilderness of purple and gold—heather, gorse and bracken—broken at intervals by lichen covered rocks; below us many tiny rocks riverlets gleam like silver threads in the narrow green valleys from which, stretching upward, are bewildering fields of every size and shape and hue enclosed by perfect hedges of trees. There are fields of brilliant green with browsing cattle, there are fields of yellow mustard, of golden corn, of rich

crimson and copper colored soil and there are forests of ancient well formed trees moving gently in the drying wind.

Yet another bend and we look back up over the way we have come and the bold line of hills whose summits stand out sharply against the sky. Now we get glimpses of sheltered villages, the towers of whose ancient churches peep out from the mass of surrounding trees. Then we see a sheet of water which indicates the whereabouts of Plymouth and beyond and around this range is range after range of hill—the hills of Cornwall—turning a misty blue gray in the evening light.

As we descend into the valley the sun sinks slowly, yet all too quickly, behind a bank of cloud, lining and edging it with gold. The sky above is a deep indigo blue when, as if by magic, there comes a break in the cloud and the heaven is ablaze with fire like a blacksmith's forge. The cloud, now broken into a thousand pieces tipped with soft pink, hovers like an angel with wide, protecting wings outstretched, and as the glory of the heavens and the wildness of the land begot in us a calm and restful feeling we imagine for the moment that we are living far away from the world of work and worry.

What wonder that Devonians love their land; what wonder, too, that Dartmoor with its pure fresh air and exquisite wilderness tumps those who are seeking health and quiet to come and bury themselves in its seclusion, for few spots are more inviolate than the granite heaving moorlands, whereon we dimly trace: Traditional footsteps of many a vanished race.

A wilderness of heath, a paradise of gold. Where every ancient pathway is strewn with stories old.



CHIEF TWO STRIKE, A NOTED SIOUX WHO FREQUENTLY VISITED VALENTINE.