

# Fur Trade Attracts White Men First to Franklin County's Fertile Soil



RESIDENCE OF J. B. MCGREGOR, BLOOMINGTON.

**T** WAS the fur industry that opened the way to Franklin county. The hunter is a destroyer and the trapper is heartless and cruel. History has kept scant record of the hunter and trapper, and the true story of his life has never been written. Above the scout or freighter he stands strong and lonely as a grizzly. You meet him on every trail, every highway and byway, and where there is no way, in a new country. It is self-evident that the gambler and not the commercial instinct predominates in trapping in the west. The fascination is in the hazard. The spell so binding usually is not of avarice, but lies in that delicious, feverish, intoxicating charm of chance.

The every-day trades, the tame beaten path, are not in the trapper's line of march. He is for the remote, the distant, the easy-going and cool-headed, yet as ready to fight as an old bear, and you never can tell when he is going to begin. He is a man whose experiences are only wide, not deep. All his life he has lacked the refining influence of women. Mountain and wood and stream and other men have been his companions. Yet the trapper has been the pathfinder of more than half of the boundless west. It was he who blazed the way to Franklin county.

Franklin county is in the southern tier of the counties of the state and 175 miles west of the Missouri river. It is one of the most fertile counties in the Republican valley. Previous to the year 1870 there had been no settlement in the Republican valley, but about this time reports from hunters and occasional travelers, describing its extraordinary fertility, parties were organized to examine and report on the truth of these statements. As a result the settlement of Franklin county was commenced. The Republican valley had been the best hunting ground of the Indians, and their hostility and occupancy of the ground had rendered its settlement impracticable.

For many years a number of hunters and trappers had spent the hunting season here, and as early as the winter of 1866-67 a settlement was made in the western part of the county, but had to be abandoned on account of the hostility of the Indians.

At this time there were no white settlers within 100 miles eastward, and on the north no settlements nearer than the Platte river. In 1859 several companies were organized in Omaha, for the purpose of making settlement somewhere in the western part of the state. One of the parties proposed a location in the Republican valley. Therefore on the 11th day of September, 1859, William C. Thompson and five others started out on a tour of investigation, but on account of the unfriendly attitude of the Indians, they advanced with great caution. They found wild game of all kinds common to the western prairie, in abundance. In October the party returned to Omaha with glowing accounts of the country and many people entered homestead claims without seeing the land.

The first homestead claim in Franklin



BLOOMINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Franklin Durand, born October 1, 1871. The first houses were built of sod or logs. In the fall of 1871 many of the settlers left the country to spend the winter farther east, where they could secure employment. The only crops raised that year were corn, potatoes and a few other vegetables. The winter of 1871-72 was a severe one, and though other provisions were scarce, game was abundant. Buffalo, antelope, wild turkeys and other game were plentiful and as there was an abundance of timber along the streams, there was little danger of starvation or freezing. One thousand five hundred Texas cattle were driven in to winter, but the weather was so cold and the snow so deep, that by spring only 600 of the cattle were left.

Early in the spring of 1872 the settlers who left the country the previous fall, after their breaking was done and houses built, returned and put in their crops. During the spring many fresh emigrants came, and the county was fast growing in population.

Up to the spring of 1872 Franklin county had acquired but little importance. In April the county seat, which had not been established at any given place, was located here, and the upper story of a building belonging to E. A. Kirkpatrick was leased for a court house and the county records removed here, but in 1874 Bloomington became the county seat.

The first marriage license issued in the county was March 1, 1872, to a couple from Maricopa county. The first Fourth of July celebration was held in the same year in a cottonwood grove, near the Republican river, on the farm of J. P. Pugliese. About 100 people were present. J. P. Zediker read the Declaration of Independence and his wife, Mrs. Julia Zediker, read an essay on "Nebraska, Ten Years Hence." Her prophesies of the churches, villages, railroads and other improvements were more than fulfilled.

The first school district was organized in the summer of 1872, and the first school was taught by Miss Maria Peery, in a dugout.

In this same year a town company was organized in Brownville, Neb., for the purpose of locating a town in some desirable part of Franklin county. The site of the present town of Bloomington was selected. The first newspaper in the county was published at Bloomington in August, 1872, by J. D. Calhoun, and was called the Bloomington Guard. In June, 1873, the Franklin County Agricultural society was organized and the first agricultural fair in the county, as well as the first in the Republican River valley, was held at Bloomington, October 1 of the same year. Governor R. B. Furnas delivered the address and complimented the farmers and citizens on the remarkable progress they had made and the large and magnificent display of products.

In 1874 a large acreage of crops of all kinds was planted with the prospect of an abundant harvest, but in July the grasshoppers appeared in multitudes and in a few days' time everything was stripped of its foliage.

In the fall of 1874, the first herd of Shorthorn cattle, numbering about 100, was brought in by A. R. Gage, who settled on Crow Creek.

In 1875-76 Franklin county, at the state fair, was awarded first premium and various medals for the largest and best display of agricultural products.

In 1875 bonds were voted to the Burlington & Missouri River railroad to induce them to extend their road through the county, and the road was completed and trains began running as far as Bloomington that same year. Previous to this time grain and produce was hauled to Lowell and Kearney to market. The latter place, nearly fifty miles from Bloomington, was the principal market.

Riverton is one of the thrifty towns of Franklin county. It is located in the Republican valley. It has several excellent



BLOOMINGTON CATHOLIC CHURCH.

water powers. The town has a population of 500 and is one of the oldest settled portions of the county.

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The Franklin flouring mills were erected in 1880 by Rice & Potter on the Republican river.

Franklin has a population of 1,300. Bloomington, the county seat, is a thriving town of about 900 to 1,000 inhabitants, situated on the Republican river, whose valley is one of the garden spots of the western plains.

Every line of business is represented, there being two strong banks, four general

stores, one of the largest lumber yards in the state, harness shop, bakeries, restaurants, hotels, drug stores, jewelry stores, printing offices, meat markets, furniture stores, clothing store, automobile delivery and many other institutions, besides many groups of professional men. There are other lines of business which are yet unrepresented here, which will be filled in a short time from all present indications.

Educationally, Bloomington is equipped much better than any town in the state of her size, having maintained for many years a full twelve grade school, fully accredited at our state university, to which institution a large number of our students have gone to complete their education. In churches several denominations are here represented there being six church buildings in the town.

The town is situated on the main line of the Burlington between St. Louis and Denver, which is the shortest route of that line between Chicago and Denver. The town is also on the new line surveyed in the summer of 1907 by the Salina & Northwestern.

Nearly every resident of the town is the owner of his property, very little speculation having been entered into with building and loan associations, and as a result, the business of the town is stable.

The farming interests in the county have been bettered vastly in the last few years and there is no fear of a retrograde movement in the values of property, either city or farm. In fact, the values are on a steady rise. It is a good place to make a home, it is a good place to make a business and an acquaintance with the town will convince any who are seeking a change. The people are respectable, law-abiding citizens, generous and hospitable.

Franklin county has seven railroad stations and fifty miles of railroad. It has 875 miles of public highways and a population of 12,000. The property valuation of Franklin county is about \$17,000,000. The farms of Franklin county contain 230,000 acres, 155,000 of which are under cultivation. On these farms were produced last season, 75,000 acres of corn, 42,000 acres of wheat and 12,000 acres of oats. These farmers sold and shipped out last season, 25,000 bushels of corn and 67,000 bushels of wheat. A very large proportion of the corn is consumed on the farm. The wealth of this county consists largely of fat stock. Last season the farmers sold and shipped out 25,000 head of beef cattle and 72,000 head of fat hogs. Also 4,500 mutton sheep.

The future of Franklin county will depend largely upon the dairy industry. Already the farmers have 6,000 cows on their farms, and each year they are using more and more separators and adopting modern methods in this industry. Last season they sold and shipped out of the county 362,000 pounds of butter and 63,000 gallons of cream. The poultry industry is fast coming to the front as a money-maker for the farmer's wife. Last season there were 285,000 dozens of eggs and 200,000 pounds of dressed poultry sold.

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TYPICAL BLOOMINGTON HOME.

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## Experiment and Result in the Widening Field of Electric Application

### Automatic Phone Exchange.

**V**ICE Consul William Washington Brunswick of Chemnitz thus describes the working of an automatic telephone system that has been introduced by the government.

"The first automatic telephone exchange system in Germany has just been installed in Hildesheim by the imperial German postoffice, requiring no central to make the desired connection, each subscriber being his own connection. The apparatus is like a clock, with indicating numbers. The Hildesheim subscriber's set, connected to the automatic exchange, is composed of a disk on which are to be found ten holes numbered from the bottom up, 0 to 9. These halves are just large enough to permit the insertion of the average person's forefinger, the holes being on a movable disk. If, for instance, a person desires to be connected with No. 861, the subscriber first removes the receiver from the hook, then places his forefinger in the slot numbered 8 and rotates the disk as far as it will go—that is, until his finger strikes an obstruction. He then removes his finger from the slot and permits the disk to return to its normal position under the action of a spring, whereupon the forefinger is inserted in the hole marked 6 and the disk is again rotated until the finger meets the obstruction, the disk being again permitted to return to its normal position; the subscriber then again places his forefinger in the hole marked 1, again rotates the disk and lets it return to zero.

"The manner in which the connection is made is as follows: When a subscriber rotates the disk by placing his finger in the hole 0 and rotates the disk he sends the requisite impulse over the line to the central office to move, in the case of No. 861, the 100 switch nine steps, or, in other words, the switch picks out the ninth number. Similarly, when his finger is placed in the hole 6 and the disk is rotated, it is again rotated through a predetermined angle and sends back to the central office five impulses, which in turn move a final selector, which had in the meantime become connected to the 100 switch above referred to, five spaces, which will correspond to the 6s in this particular 200; and so again with the 1, until finally the apparatus in the central office has been connected through to line No. 861 from the calling subscriber's line. It is not necessary for the subscriber to ring, inasmuch as this is also done automatically.

"The subscriber, having finished, terminates the connection by hanging the receiver on the hook. Immediately another person can be called up. Should the subscriber wish to call while a number is in use he can get no connection until the user has ceased conversation, and this, of course, does away with the annoying feature in telephones of being interrupted in the midst of a conversation by some one breaking in. By this system the subscriber

can readily be connected at any time, whether day or night, and it is evident that it will ultimately do away entirely with the exchange girl, as it reduces the cost of maintenance. The government is energetically pursuing experiments for the improving of the present telephone system, and the automatic device seems to have solved the problem."

### The Electric Dressmaker.

In those good old days still within the memory of most of us, every community supported one or more dressmakers who traveled from house to house and made the gowns for our mothers and sisters. These dressmakers cut the cloth according to a tissue paper pattern and sewed it mostly by hand, although the old sewing machine was called in now and then to do its share of the rougher work. The dresses were basted and fitted and then the goods were passed along to other operatives. One machine, driven by a tiny electric motor and managed by a young woman, sews the sleeves together in a trice while all about her are other motor-driven machines stitching together the other parts of the dress. These machines sew at the rate of over a thousand stitches a minute, which will give you some idea of how fast they run. Even the buttons are sewed on by electricity and another electric machine fastens and completes the buttonhole. When the dresses are finished they are pressed with an electric iron, packed in boxes and delivered to the railroad station in an electric truck. The fact that electricity drives the various machines makes it possible to complete thousands of dresses a day, thereby saving nearly all the former cost of making each dress by hand.

The various governments of the world own together 880 cables, having a total length of 14,940 miles and containing 2,500 miles of conductors. The French government, which takes the lead as to length of cables, has 3,430 miles in fifty-four cables. As to number, the Norwegian government comes first, with 33 cables, having a total length of 248 miles. Finally, as to the length of conductors, the English government comes first, with 8,908 miles of conductors, divided among 115 cables, having a total length of 1,233 miles.

Private companies to the number of twenty-eight own 288 cables, having a length of 13,844 miles and containing 17,592 miles of conductors. The French companies, only two in number—the Compagnie Française du Telegraphe de Paris & New

York and the Societe Francaise des Telegraphes Sous-Marins—have eighteen cables, with a total length of 7,530 nautical miles. The most important of the private companies is the Eastern Telegraph company, which operates seventy-five cables, with a total length of 23,247 miles.

The total number of cables in the world is 1,168, with a total length of 140,344 miles and 1,812 miles of conductors. It is not sufficient to reach to the moon, but would extend more than half way there.

**Electricity in Toyland.** While Santa Claus still adheres to the good old-fashioned ways, driving the same old reindeer and sleigh, carrying the same

old pack laden with good things to eat, toys and things boys and girls like best, he is not at all adverse to applying modern methods whenever he can. So it is that the best Christmas tree this year will be lighted with tiny electric lights of many colors, completely eliminating the fire risk of the old-fashioned candles, which have spoiled many and many a promising holiday.

Germany leads the world as a maker of toys, exporting more than \$50,000,000 worth last year. Toys, which ranked second, shipped only half as much. This country is the largest purchaser of toys in the world, as last year we imported nearly

20,000,000 toys and dolls, and it is estimated that we spent not less than \$30,000,000 for foreign and home-made playthings. While we cannot hope to compete with the foreign countries in the manufacture of cheap toys it is nevertheless gratifying to note that our Yankee ingenuity and the expanding demands of American boys' has greatly increased our home production of electric toys and model devices which are exceedingly instructive as well as entertaining. The American girl, for the most part, is not so exacting, being content with the old-fashioned doll, but the modern doll house is most complete, even to being electrically lighted.

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