



The shift to the dial system (1963). *Left:* Switchboard before pulling picks for dial system (Miss Emma Ebbeka in foreground). *Second picture:* Pulling picks in old office—L. D. Anderson (*left*) and Roger Bates. *Third picture:* Pulling picks to make change from operator switchboard to dial system. The second man from the front is Lowell Garrett of the Geneva exchange; the other three are from the Lincoln office. *Fourth picture:* Mayor Francis McPeck making first dial call to Commercial Supervisor in Lincoln.

line was completed and the crew moved on, they left Mr. Heisey here to take care of the line, which he did on horseback. With the completion of this line the first independent company was formed. This, called the Fillmore County Telephone Co., consisted of operating exchanges at Geneva, Exeter, Fairmont, Strang, Grafton, Milligan, Shickley, and Ohioa. This company was managed by John Barsby. The office was located over the Citizens' State Bank. Later, because of the fire, it was moved to a room over the *Signal* office. Here it stayed until the new and present telephone building was built in 1924.

The Independent company almost immediately became the dominant one of the two telephone companies then doing business at Geneva. In 1904, the Bell company, with R. J. Dean as manager, was operating only 31 telephones on the Geneva exchange, most of which were in business establishments.

The Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Co. purchased the Bell properties at Geneva in January, 1912, and of the Fillmore County organization in July, 1913. These properties were consolidated in September, 1913, at which time the Bell company was serving 356 subscribers and the Independent 570. This, of course, represented a duplication of service, because a majority of the subscribers of both companies had to have two telephones in their homes or offices, because there was no interconnection between the Bell and Independent switchboards.

In 1913, several switching companies also had telephone facilities on the Geneva switchboard. These were the Chelsea, Alpine, West Geneva, and Big Four telephone companies. The Pioneer Telephone Co., also a switching company, was purchased by the Lincoln company in 1918, at which time the Pioneer company had 78 subscribers who received switching services from the Geneva switchboard.



Photo from Norman Yates

Geneva Fire Company in 1900, taken in front of the old Methodist Church. H. F. Mohrman, chief of the fire department for more than 20 years, standing in front of hose cart (marked with a cross).

At about the same time that the Lincoln company purchased the Geneva properties, it also reached an agreement with the Bell system for a general division of properties in the state. The Bell company withdrew from the area south of the Platte River westward to Adams and Webster counties and Lincoln T. & T. purchased all the Bell properties in these 22 counties. A number of Independent properties were also purchased at that time.

At present (1967), the Geneva exchange serves approximately 1,600 local patrons, as well as all the other towns in Fillmore County, plus Ong and Tobias. Geneva went over to the all-dial system in 1963 and is now on Direct Distance Dialing. The local exchange also provides mobile phone service for microwave transmitters.

The telegraph line was put in at the same time the Burlington line was built in June, 1886.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Volunteer Fire Department

As the village of Geneva grew, so did the need for an organized fire department. In 1890, the first books were kept and the department was named the Geneva Hose Company. The first officers and members of the Geneva Hose Company were the following:

Chief—H. F. Mohrman

Hose Company No. 1

F. A. Kuler, Foreman
C. L. Rathbun, 1st Assistant
O. C. Houchin, 2nd Assistant
W. B. Holmes
G. R. Wolf
S. S. Walker
L. F. Landmesser
W. W. Fellows
Clink Shickley
William McCartney
C. R. Burnett
A. B. Payton
Robert Schofield
Frank McGrew
Will Carson
E. A. Webster, Secretary

Hose Company No. 2

H. B. Young, Foreman
Arthur Atherton, 1st Assistant
F. C. Laffin, 2nd Assistant
Bert Cobb
Walter Spear, Treasurer
Louis Cobb
Frank Crawford
Charles Spangler
W. S. Huston
J. W. Burt
A. Stephenson
A. Koehler
O. A. Beals
J. D. Kessler
J. H. Sager, President
Frank Burke

H. F. Mohrman served as chief for 20 consecutive years. In 1895, he wrote to the city council this letter:

"After 5 years' experience as Chief of the Geneva Hose Co. and knowing full well that at every fire the boys spoil more or less clothing I would therefore pray that your honorable body allow out of city funds the sum of \$1 to each member of the hose co. that answers to his name after each fire. Also \$.25 to each member participating in monthly practice."

The company was located on North 10th St. in a frame building. A large bell served as an alarm until about 1923 when an electric siren was purchased. Their first equipment consisted of two hose carts, a hook-and-ladder wagon, six buckets, and five lanterns. In March, 1890, the department gave a ball to defray the expense of uniforms.

The first fire in Geneva after the completion of the new

water system occurred on September 11, 1890. The barn of C. A. Smith burned to the ground with all its contents. The hose companies were promptly on hand, and though too late to save the barn, prevented its spreading further, which it might have done without them, as the wind was very high.

A terrific explosion occurred on August 16, 1893, at 5 A.M. The fire took place in the Fisher Block in rooms occupied by Byron Mershon, grocer, and J. R. Ballard, boots and shoes. One of the upper rooms was occupied by Ryson & Co. Photo Gallery. The blaze was a loss of \$16,000. Frame buildings adjoining this block were saved.

At 4:30 A.M. on April 9, 1894, a fire started in a frame building owned by L. Fiegenbaum and rented by J. P. Desher for a clothing store. The fire swept to W. L. Spears & Co. hardware store, which had a machinery house in the rear filled with new farm implements. The fire also destroyed one-half of a building owned by the First National Bank.

A laundry and livery stable burned in 1903 and a frame restaurant building in 1904.

A large fire causing a gross loss of \$33,400 occurred at 3 A.M. on October 28, 1904. Destroyed were the Fraternity Temple and properties, property of Company G, Fillmore Co. Telephone Co., Geneva State Bank, and tenants' property on the first floor, and the basement was burned and damaged. The fire originated in the Benson & Hensley restaurant in the little Geiselman frame building that stood next to the west side of the Temple Building (Geneva State Bank location). At first the water pressure seemed below normal, as it was impossible for the hose stream to reach the windows on the second floor. This difficulty was overcome, but later during the fire one of the pumps refused to produce water. The only possible explanation was perhaps an injury or disarrangement of the check valve.

In 1908, the Fillmore Hotel was burned and in 1910 the Citizens State Bank on the northeast corner of 9th and G Sts. was destroyed by fire. On February 26, 1912, a fire estimated at \$25,000 destroyed the Boston Store on 9th St., located the first door north of the *Signal* office in the brick building that replaced a livery barn, damaging the adjoining

post office and *Nebraska Signal*. The mail was saved, however. The local Independent Telephone Co. sustained some damage.

In 1915, the present City Hall was built and the Geneva Hose Company moved into its present location.

In 1917, the firemen were still using their hose carts and were badly in need of a fire truck. That same year the city purchased a Ford fire truck, its first motor-driven vehicle. The city council, which had been asked to purchase one, did so without consulting the firemen as to the type they wanted. This created such a situation that the men all resigned. Knowing that the town could not be without fire protection, a new company was soon organized. W. E. Bruce was made fire chief, a position he held for 18 years; president, Charles Underwood; vice-president, Clay Thomas; secretary, Bert A. Lynn; treasurer, H. E. Fellows. The men then set to work to install on this truck the necessary equipment.

Several years later a second-hand Chevrolet truck was secured. The Mowry fire of 1936 showed the great need for a pumper truck and within a short time it was purchased. On numerous occasions this truck was called out of town; since this left the town without adequate protection, the council purchased another Chevrolet truck to answer fire calls in the country and surrounding towns.

On May 6, 1931, the firemen aided a fellow member when his 19-month-old daughter fell into an abandoned well. After many hours of digging they were successful in returning Carol unharmed to her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Brower.



Photo from Mrs. C. C. Camp
Masonic Temple Fire (Citizens Bank), February 13, 1910.



Courtesy *Nebraska Signal*
Geneva firemen pulling a ladder and bucket cart, about 1913. Left to right: Sam Walker, Fred Eaton, Fred Ford, Harry Ford, Marian Walker, M. W. Dinneen. Notice Lake's Auto Garage at right.



Photo from Mrs. Carol Shafer
Carol Brower rescue, May 6, 1931.

In 1931, an attempt was made to organize a rural fire association. After some 21 years of effort, this dream became a reality in 1952.

On the morning of July 28, 1936, fire completely destroyed the double brick building at the northwest corner of the courthouse square, the Hinkle Package Store, Mowry Tent & Awning and Radio business, and Fiegenbaum's Jewelry Store. Mr. Mowry had had a very interesting display of antique items in his building; just a few weeks before the fire, however, he had moved them to the House of Yesterday at Hastings, Nebraska. The loss of the buildings and their contents was estimated at \$10,000. The Sutton, York, and Ohio fire departments were summoned to give aid.

The Bedford Produce Co. building on the west side of the courthouse square, along with all its contents, was completely destroyed on October 26, 1937. Two International trucks were also destroyed. Grave danger existed for the Coryell filling station on the south and the Barker & Heath ice plant on the north. Without the new city pumper engine, these two would have burned also. The pumper at this fire saved enough property to pay its cost.

In 1938, during the Fillmore County Fair, the grandstand, numerous concessions, and the city chemical truck were all destroyed. Fair officials estimated the total loss at \$20,000. Fortunately the fire occurred between the after-



Photo from Nebraska Signal
Grandstand fire at fairgrounds, September 15, 1938.

noon and evening performances and no one was seriously injured.

The Economy Paint Mill burned in 1939 and the Ellison Cafe in 1943. The Ellison fire proved very dangerous to the adjoining filling station and a near-by home, but both were saved.

In January, 1945, the Geneva Mill was damaged by fire. Firemen fought the fire for a full week, because the grain blazed up intermittently. The owners, John and Charles Grothe, rebuilt the mill.

The last large fire was the Geneva High School Gymnasium on April 29, 1953. A new gym has now been built and the damaged gym has been repaired and is now being used for classroom space.

The fire company is composed of 30 men. Bert A. Lynn recorded the minutes of the first reorganization and served as secretary and treasurer for 44 years until he retired in 1964. Tom Brower, another faithful member (died December 30, 1965), served for more than 32 years. The following men of the present company (1967) have served for 20 years or more: Harry Helton, Kenneth Heisey, Wilbur Kelch, Leslie Shuster, Harold Stiers, Jim Willy, and Wayne Chapman.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal
Long-time members of the Geneva Fire Department: Harry Helton, Tom Brower (deceased), Bert Lynn.

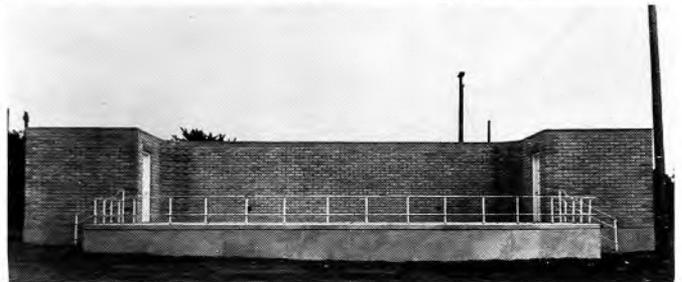
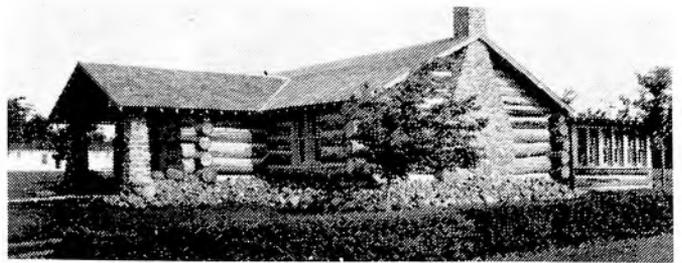
The company has two well-equipped trucks, and also houses the truck of the rural fire organization, which they also operate.

The firemen have always contributed generously to worth-while projects. Over the years, by selling magazines, they have accumulated 10 hospital beds and five wheel-chairs. These are available without charge to any resident of Fillmore County.
—Mrs. Clair Christiancy

City Park

On October 29, 1935, the city council voted bonds not to exceed \$10,000 to buy land for a city park and swimming pool.

The Federal Emergency Administration gave the city a P.W.A. grant not to exceed 45 per cent of the completion cost of the project nor in any event the sum of \$6,955. Contracts were let to A. E. Brabam of Geneva for plumbing; A. Biba Construction Co. of Geneva and E. W. Nichols Construction Co. of Fairmont for the construction; and Everson Filter Co. of Chicago for the filtration plant. Total cost of



Geneva City Park Facilities. Top: Club House. Center: Swimming Pool. Bottom: Paul W. Curtiss Memorial Bandstand.

project was \$15,506.88. C. G. Hrubesky was employed as engineer in designing, erecting, and constructing the project.

On June 17, 1936, at 1:30 P.M. a large crowd participated in a dedicatory ceremony for the new city park and swimming pool. Those in charge of the pool estimated 300 persons swam that day. Robert Miller was swimming instructor and Curt Ogg was in charge of the grounds.

The city has since established a recreation and picnic ground on the rest of the land it owns north and east of the swimming pool. Tennis courts are located to the northeast, a ball field on the east, and picnic grounds between the pool and ball field.

In 1941 the Geneva Woman's Club aroused interest in a shelter house at the park. By June, 1942, a new clubhouse, at a cost of nearly \$1,600, was completed under the leadership of the Woman's Club and other local organizations. The cottonwood logs used in the building were donated by and removed from a farm owned by the Geneva State Bank.

On February 3, 1947, City Engineer C. G. Hrubesky filed plans and specifications for further park improvements. At the city election on April 1, 1947, the voters approved a \$5,000 bond issue for the construction, building, and erection of a public lighting system and ball park, to be located across the street south of the clubhouse, and so the present ball park was built.

In June, 1950, West Brothers of Fairmont were given a contract to erect a bandstand east of the clubhouse at a cost of \$3,979. On the evening of July 27, 1951, a mass band concert was given at the newly completed bandstand and it was officially named the "Paul W. Curtiss Memorial Bandstand." The members of this special band had played under Paul's direction at some time during his more than 30 years

of conducting the city band.

The latest improvement to be built at the park was the modern rest rooms constructed in 1955.

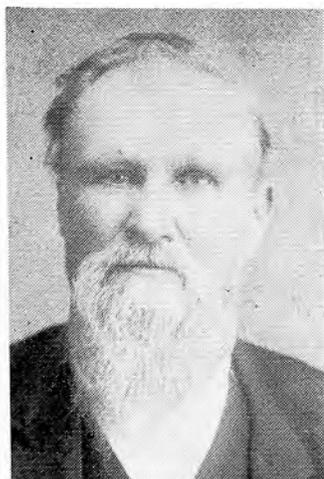
Until this park was constructed the "Courthouse Block" was used for recreational activities and celebrations. In 1896, a bicycle track was built around the edge of the block by the Bicycle Club. Later, a croquet ground and horseshoe court were constructed on the east end of the block; these were wiped out when the parking lot was built. A bandstand was located at the west end of the park area. In earlier days a "swimming hole" was located in the vicinity of the present city auditorium.



Photo from Miss Delia Fisher
"Ol' Swimmin' Hole," located $\frac{1}{2}$ block west of present City Auditorium, was constructed by J. G. Burress about 1897.

Public Library

The Geneva Public Library was originally the idea of Dr. H. L. Smith. In June, 1897, Dr. Smith donated some 2,000 books from his personal library to the Masonic and Odd Fellows orders for public use. These books were housed in a room on the third floor of the Masonic Temple.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal
Dr. H. L. Smith, originator of
the Geneva Public Library.

The library was first placed under a board of nine trustees from the Masonic and Odd Fellows orders. The lodges were to alternate in the majority of the board year by year. J. M. Ward was president and W. H. Stewart was secretary of the first board.

The library was later moved to a room on the first floor of the Citizens Bank building at 9th and G Sts. Dr. Smith granted free rent on condition that the library belong to the City of Geneva on approval of the Masons and the Odd Fellows; this approval was given.

The library was accepted by the city and on January 15, 1906, Mayor A. H. Stevens appointed the first city library board. On November 12, 1906, the library board appointed Miss Nellie Williams, who later became the wife of W. C. Bleaven of Washington, D. C., as the first librarian at the salary of \$21 per month. She served until November, 1915, when she took a position with the State Library Commission at Lincoln.

When the library was opened as a city institution on January 1, 1907, an appeal was made to residents to subscribe to magazines for the library and to donate books. The first subscription—to the *Review of Reviews* for 1907—was the gift of the Hon. Charles H. Sloan.

The building was open on Wednesday from 2 to 6 P.M. and on Saturday from 2 to 8 P.M. for the delivery and return of books. The reading room was open for "the perusal of magazines, papers, and reference books" every weekday afternoon and evening from 2 to 9 P.M. and on Sundays from 2 to 6 P.M.

On February 13, 1910, the Citizens Bank Building burned and the library suffered a loss of \$2,265.40 in books, on which \$2,000 insurance was paid. The library was given temporary quarters in the lecture room of the Baptist Church at 11th and G Sts. Later the library was housed in a rear room in the Dempster Block.

In the meantime, the trustees had taken up negotiations with Andrew Carnegie for a library building. The result was a gift of \$8,000, to which was added \$2,000 raised by popular subscription, and the present library building was erected. The ground was purchased from the Shumway heirs for \$1,900. The four Shumway heirs each gave \$100 toward this purchase and the remainder was raised by popular subscription and a Tag Day which netted over \$150. R. W. Grant of Beatrice was the architect. On May 7, 1912, L. L. Fisher's bid on the construction contract was accepted. The contract for the heating plant and hardware was awarded to Walter Spear. Mr. Skinkle supplied the lighting system and Mr. Hrubesky the cork floor matting.

The library board at the time of the erection of the present building was composed of: E. J. Dempster, Sarah (Mrs. H. P.) Wilson, B. Koehler, Elnora (Mrs. M. U.) Hadsell, the Rev. Charles Becker, Dr. J. Bixby, the Hon. Charles H. Sloan, County Superintendent Alice Jennett (later Mrs. James S. Real of Alhambra, California), and Miss Hattie Little.

The new library building was dedicated on January 7, 1913 with an open house from 2 to 6 P.M. The Geneva Military Band played at 4 P.M., and at 8 P.M. a program was given in the library audience room.

On October 17, 1917, the library received a \$1,000 bequest from the will of Mrs. Pierce B. Brayton, president of the board from June 26, 1906, until her death in October, 1911. This money established the first trust fund for the purchase of books—called the Pierce B. Brayton Trust, as the money was given in his memory.

Since then the library has received several gifts which



Courtesy Geneva State Bank
Geneva Public Library.

established additional trust funds. They are as follows:

Woman's Club Revolving Fund—established June 1, 1937—\$50, for current books.

Community Club Revolving Fund—established in 1944—\$200, for current books.

Martha M. Meyers Fund—established in 1945—\$500, for books for the moral education of children.

Earl H. and Grace W. Wilkins Fund—established in 1945—\$1,000, for books of permanent value.

Miscellaneous Maintenance Fund—established in 1945. The first gift was \$2 from Lt. and Mrs. Krebs who were stationed here during World War II. Other contributions have brought this general maintenance fund to \$961 at the present time.

Josie B. Hamilton Fund—established in 1947—\$2,440, for salaries of librarian and assistants.

Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Nichols Trust—established in 1950—\$200, for general maintenance and salaries.

Grace W. Wilkins Trust—established in 1954—\$1,000 for books of an educational nature.

Nettie Henry Book Shelf—established in 1955—\$100—originated in the gift of Nettie Henry, who had taught in the Geneva Public Schools 50 years before. The members of the class of 1905 have added to this gift until it is now \$2,416.15.—Purpose, purchase of biographies useful to Geneva High School students.



Photo from Geneva Photo Co.
Former Librarians at Geneva City Library. Left: Miss Nellie Williams, first librarian. Right: Mrs. Isabel Bixby, librarian 35 years.

Mrs. Isabel Bixby succeeded Miss Williams as librarian in 1915 and held this position for the next 35 years—years during which the Geneva Public Library grew and increased its services. During this time free library privileges were procured by the citizens of Geneva township, Chelsea township, and for a time, Madison township.

In 1949, Mrs. T. B. Moore became acting librarian for Mrs. Bixby, who was in poor health. In 1950, Isabel Bixby retired and Thelma J. (Mrs. Howard W.) Hamilton, who had acted as librarian from June, 1950, was appointed librarian in 1951. Since that time the library has been completely modernized, with a new floor covering of asphalt tile, venetian blinds, a new lighting system, a new roof, new storm windows, attic insulation, and air-conditioning. In February, 1953, when the major part of these improvements were completed, the library held an open house both afternoon and evening.

Many clubs have made it a practice to give money each year toward book purchasing, and for some years the library has had a Memorial Shelf on which many fine books have been placed.

The following figures show library use in a typical recent year, as indicated in the Librarian's Annual Report:

Amount received from tax levy on Geneva property.....	\$6,080.43
Fines collected on overdue books.....	\$96.78
Number of books on shelves.....	12,123
Books circulated during year.....	13,763
Magazines circulated during year.....	2,510

The library subscribes to about 50 magazines and four newspapers. Some 1,300 individuals hold library cards.

The following persons were members of the Library Board for the term of June, 1966, to June, 1967: Dr. J. Q. Adams, president; John Bixby, vice-president; Mrs. John Fahlberg, secretary; Mrs. Sherman Ashby; and Robert B. Waring.
—Thelma J. Hamilton

Fillmore County Hospital

The need for adequate hospital facilities in Fillmore County had been long recognized. The earliest hospital beginnings pre-date World War I when Dr. Royal Woods and Dr. Joseph Bixby built the two-story frame house east of the schoolhouse in Geneva, later known as the Archer house and later occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Hobart Ridpath and Marion.

These facilities, however, were wholly inadequate and it was not until late in 1925 that the first state-recognized hospital was opened in the county.



Photo from Dr. Edith Ridpath
First hospital in Geneva, built by Dr. Royal Woods and Dr. Joseph Bixby.



Photo from Nebraska Signal
Fillmore Hospital, located at 324 No. 12th, in operation from 1925 to 1942—later the home of Emma Eggenberger.

Anna Eggenberger, a registered nurse, bought the large George W. Smith property located on 12th St. two blocks north of the schoolhouse on October 20, 1925, and opened a hospital which remained in continuous operation from its opening until September 1, 1942.

About March 1, 1937, Mr. and Mrs. William Armstrong of Bruning came to Geneva and converted the former home of Charles Thorpe, world-famous jockey, into a hospital which was named the Geneva General Hospital.

On September 1, 1942, the Fillmore Hospital was closed after nearly 17 years of continuous operation. On the same day Mrs. Mabel Schlecty re-opened the former Geneva General Hospital, which had been closed for nearly two years. She continued to operate this hospital until late in August, 1946, when she announced that she was closing it.

A group of Geneva businessmen, realizing the urgent need for the continued operation of a hospital in the county, met on August 26, 1946, and decided to buy the hospital and keep it going. They started a drive at 4 o'clock that afternoon and by 10 o'clock that evening had enough money

collected and pledged to assure the purchase of the hospital from Mrs. Schlecty.

On September 3, 1946, the Geneva General Hospital Association, Inc., was incorporated by C. G. Hrubesky, John H. Koehler, and Edith M. Elder, with a capital stock of \$15,000. The first board of directors consisted of Dr. Joseph Bixby, John H. Koehler, and C. G. Hrubesky.

The new corporation took over the management of the hospital October 15, 1946, with Mrs. Bertha Leeds, formerly of the old Fillmore Hospital, as manager. About a year later the management was taken over by Mr. and Mrs. Joe Bender, who continued to operate the hospital until it was closed by order of the state fire marshal January 31, 1957. After that date Fillmore County had no hospital facilities.

Those who had salvaged the old Geneva General Hospital in 1946 by the formation of the hospital corporation had realized full well that this was no permanent solution to the need for adequate hospital facilities in the county and that this was only a stopgap measure until something better could be obtained.

Those who had formed the corporation shortly thereafter named a committee consisting of Earl H. Wilkins, chairman, John Koehler, Ross Dorrance, W. H. Weiss, J. A. Fischer, Clarence McCartney, and John Stohs to organize the county for the voting of a bond issue to build a county hospital. Architects were employed and plans prepared for a 30-bed hospital. The committee went to the county board and obtained approval to have placed on the ballot at the general election November 2, 1948, a proposition to vote \$190,000 in county bonds for the erection of a hospital. Despite many public meetings and an extensive effort on the part of the committee and many others interested in obtaining a county hospital, the proposition was defeated by 316 votes (2,003 for the measure and 2,319 against).

The county board, at the request of the committee, again placed the proposition on the ballot at the general election held November 7, 1950. The proposition and plans were the same as in 1948. This time, little public effort was made in support of the proposition and it was defeated by 950 votes (1,103 for it and 2,053 against).

The matter was not again submitted to the voters until a special election held August 10, 1954. State authorities were threatening to close the old Geneva General Hospital unless something drastic were done by way of change and improvement. The county bond issue again went on the ballot. This time, however, different plans were prepared, calling for only a 20-bed instead of a 30-bed hospital and only \$150,000 to be raised by bonds.

A new committee was formed with Earl H. Wilkins as chairman, and an extensive county-wide campaign was made. Notwithstanding this effort the proposition was defeated by 46 votes, the vote being 1,759 for and 1,805 against.

After the old Geneva General Hospital was closed by the fire marshal on January 31, 1957, people became more aware of the need for some hospital facilities in the county.

In order to get a bond issue on the ballot again, petitions were circulated throughout the county calling for a special election. New plans were prepared, this time for a 24-bed hospital. This time it was proposed that a large portion of the cost would be raised by subscription. A goal was set for a bond issue of \$97,000, private subscriptions of \$98,000 and the balance to be raised by Hill-Burton funds. Before the election, solicitors for funds had gone over the top for the \$98,000 to be raised by subscription. The special election was held June 10, 1958. The proposition this time carried almost two to one, the vote being 2,122 for and 1,150 against.

Three days after the special election the committee went to Lincoln for a hearing on Hill-Burton funds and were promised a grant of about \$130,000. The total project was planned to cost \$325,000.

On June 23, 1958, the old hospital corporation gave the old building and site to the county for the new hospital.

August 25, 1958, the Fillmore County Board of Supervisors appointed the following hospital board: Calvin Serr,



Courtesy Nebraska Signal
Fillmore County Hospital in 1961.

Robert Nichols, J. A. Fischer, W. R. Dorrance, and Milo Kottas. Calvin Serr was elected president, with Robert Nichols as secretary.

September 24, 1958, the county board selected the Lincoln firm of Arter & Speece as architects to design and plan the new building. On December 3, 1958, the old building was auctioned off to make way for the new construction.

After plans were prepared, a letting was held June 11, 1959. The general contract was let to the John Beall Construction Co. of Lincoln for \$182,339. The mechanical contract was let to Stewart Plumbing & Heating of Hastings for \$99,007. The electrical contract was let to Myrl Moxham for \$28,375.

Ground was broken for the new building on July 18, 1959. Dedication ceremonies and an open house were held on Sunday, February 5, 1961. —Data from *Dedication Program*

Roselawn Home

On June 1, 1947, Mrs. Irene Bobbitt opened the doors of the Roselawn Home. She had been caring for two well-known Geneva citizens, Mr. and Mrs. Frank O. Edgecombe, in their home. After their deaths, Mrs. Bobbitt was urged to open a nursing home and so secured a state license to open a home for aged women in the Edgecombe residence.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal
Roselawn Home in 1967.

The Home opened with three guests. Within four days there were 10 occupants and soon it was operating at a capacity of 14, with a long waiting list. Applicants wrote in from various parts of Nebraska, Iowa, Wisconsin, Montana, Florida, and other states.

The Roselawn Home held religious services every Monday afternoon. The Rev. Maude Mann, Rev. W. L. Schreurs, and Dr. Walter Bachman, all of the Geneva Evangelical United Brethren Church, served as pastors.

Birthdays of the guests and special holidays were always observed and friends and relatives were invited in for the festivities. The guests had television and other things to make life interesting and to make them feel at home.

On January 30, 1954, Mrs. Bobbitt was honored as Geneva's "Good Neighbor" on the air over radio station KMMJ, Grand Island. She was also nominated by the people of Geneva for "Nebraska State Mother for 1955."

The Roselawn Home, after exactly 20 years of community service, closed down on June 1, 1967, upon the opening of the newer rest home, Colonial Manor.

Colonial Manor Rest Home

This modern rest home, erected by the Turcon Construction Co. of Ainsworth, Nebraska, and owned by Goscor, Inc., of Ainsworth, is located at the north edge of Geneva



Colonial Manor, Geneva's new home for senior citizens.

east of Highway 81. It was built at a cost of approximately \$300,000 and financing of the building was arranged by the Geneva banks.

It is an attractive brick-faced structure with a pentagonal area in the center which houses the office, nurse's station, nurse's utility room, dining room, living room, personal care room, physical therapy room, and kitchen. Four wings extend from the pentagon; three of these are residence wings with space for 69 guests. The fourth wing is a maintenance wing. There are three "drive-in" showers, a whirlpool bath, and two island tubs for the residents.

Construction began in the summer of 1966 and open house was held on May 28, 1967. About 25 employees are needed to operate the home, of which Mr. Bernard Correll is the manager.

Cemetery Association

Shortly after the location and establishment of Geneva as the county seat, the inhabitants formed a cemetery association, but it apparently kept no records and filed no plat of the burying grounds with the county clerk. So no information is now available, although the ground was used for burials.

A meeting was held at the courthouse on July 14, 1877, after a notice had been published for three weeks in the local weekly paper, the *Review*, to organize a Geneva Cemetery Association. At this meeting, J. A. Dempster was temporary chairman, and V. A. Jones, secretary. It was first moved and carried that they do away with all proceedings of the earlier so-called Cemetery Association and organize anew. The following trustees were then elected: C. M. Northrup, C. H. Bane, F. Heiderstadt, S. B. Camp, and J. A. Dempster; and the following residents of the county in attendance were enrolled as members: J. T. Platt, J. D. Hamilton, H. Stewart, J. A. Dempster, R. B. Likes, D. H. Goodrich, C. M. Northrup, S. Burr, S. B. Camp, J. B. Lewis, C. H. Bane, George Selby, F. Heiderstadt, M. M. Neeves, D. Warner, V. A. Jones, and W. V. Fifield.



One of first graves in the Geneva cemetery—William H. Ray, died July 30, 1875.

The trustees were instructed to purchase from the County Agricultural Society not to exceed 20 acres. For this purpose, Mr. F. Heiderstadt was to solicit subscriptions for lots in the new cemetery at \$5 per lot. V. A. Jones was employed to lay out the lots at 25 cents per lot, which he did on the 16th, 17th and 18th of July, 1877. It was moved and carried that all persons holding receipts in the old association be allowed first choice of lots in the new.

Thus was organized the present Cemetery Association. Later, there was received from the old association \$6.68. Mr. Heiderstadt reported on his solicitation of subscriptions, and for 20 acres off the east end of the land of the Agricultural Society, the new association paid the Agricultural Society \$55.16, and the State of Nebraska, \$144.50, a total of \$199.66.

The association then proceeded to function in routine manner until the year 1913. In April, 1913, the First Baptist Church of Geneva, having sold their church property in Geneva, submitted to the president and trustees of the association the following proposition: "1. To donate and place in Trust for the Permanent Care and Improvement of the Cemetery the sum of \$2,000 conditioned that the Association donate \$1,000 and lot owners and others interested donate \$3,000, making a total of \$6,000 to be put in trust, the income to be used for the Permanent Care of said Cemetery." In October, 1913, the association donated \$1,000. The lot owners donated, at \$50 per lot, the sum of \$3,170, and thus the Permanent Care Fund was established with \$6,170 in the fund. Since that date the fund has been increased by gifts and by the payment into the fund of one-half the price of lots sold after that date. On April 1, 1956, the Permanent Care Fund amounted to \$40,688.06. After 1913, with the above start, others gave sums in trust for special purposes on special lots, and these trusts now amount to over \$4,000. So the year 1913 marks the beginning of the present financial structure of the Association.

Since that date the association has operated in regular routine manner, but now it will have to expand and enlarge its platted area.

—Guy A. Hamilton, Secretary (dated March 11, 1957)

ORGANIZATIONS

Throughout the years various groups have organized. Many are still strong in numbers and goals; some have dissolved, perhaps for lack of interest or because their purposes were fulfilled. It is impossible to obtain a history of all organizations that have had a part in the development of the city and surrounding territory, but the following clippings from the city's newspapers suggest many.

1876: *I.O. of G.T.* (Independent Order of Good Templars) was organized May 8, 1876, with 15 members. George Bigelow was Worthy Chief and E. B. Brown, Worthy Secretary. (At one time the organization had a membership of 150 but by 1882 had decreased to 40.)

1879: Lovers of music met at the courthouse to organize a permanent musical association. M. M. Neeves was elected chairman. Twenty members joined. Quarterly dues for men were 25 cents; ladies' dues were free. Professor Ballou was music instructor.

1879: *G.A.R.* (Grand Army of the Republic). Department Commander, Adjutant General Wood, of Omaha, completed the organization of a Post of the Grand Army of the Republic at this place last Tuesday night. The following named officers were elected and installed: Post Com'd, M. D. Williams; S.V.G., W. J. Carrier, Jr.; S.V.C., C. H. Bane; Adj't., G. P. Wintersteen; Surg., G. R. Hart; Chap., M. L. Spear; O. D., G. W. Stultz; O. G., S. Harbaugh; O. M., R. M. Hazlett; Searg't M., J. A. Dempster.

Those who signed the roll and have not been mustered are requested to be present at the next regular meeting, which will be held at the courthouse, Thursday evening next. Soldiers, please turn out; let us remember old ties, and make this organization socially a benefit.

All honorably discharged Union soldiers are cordially invited to join us.

1881: The *Geneva Woman Suffrage Association* meets Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock, September 7, with Mrs. Belle G. Bigelow. Ladies and gentlemen are cordially invited to attend. Gentlemen are entitled to all privileges of the society, excepting eligibility to office.

1882: Company G, First Regiment of *National Guard*, was organized in the summer of 1881 and was first known as the Independent Rifles, but in the spring of 1882 it was transferred to the National Guard. In reviewing the company on July 3, 1882, the Inspector General pronounced it one of the best drilled in the state. Lieutenant N. S. Oliver, an experienced tactician, is drill master. The chief officers are George P. Wintersteen, captain; N. S. Oliver, first lieutenant; W. S. Crawford, second lieutenant.

1890: August. The *Vigilant Society* of Geneva, Madison, Fairmont, and West Blue Townships met at Fairmont, more than 100 determined farmers being present. The object of the society was to put a stop to horse stealing. The officers were: president, George W. Jackson; vice-president, M. Rodgers; secretary, F. F. Robbins; treasurer, William Searles.