

Fairmont Township

The following account is based on one provided by A. L. Brown:

Fairmont township is a 36-square-mile area of gently rolling, fertile farmland in the northern tier of Fillmore County, the second township from the east. It is bounded on the north by York County, and on the east by Exeter, on the south by Madison, and on the west by West Blue townships. On survey maps it appears as T8N, R2W of the 6th Principal Meridian. It is named after the community of Fairmont, the largest population center within its borders, one of the many railroad-developed communities in Nebraska. The town itself was called Fairmont (according to *Nebraska Place-Names*) because of its "fine surroundings and somewhat elevated position."

The township is crossed from east to west, about one section below its middle line, by the Omaha-Denver line of the Burlington, and by U. S. Highway 6, which closely parallels the railroad. Its western boundary is formed by the north-south U. S. Highway 81. The 32-mile Fairmont-Helvey branch of the Burlington runs southeast out of the town of Fairmont, and its most southeasterly section (Sec. 36) is crossed from northeast to southwest by the Fremont-Superior line of the Northwestern R.R.

Watered only by Indian Creek, which winds from south to north through several sections east and northeast of Fairmont, the region was originally almost barren of trees. Only a few sections boast natural water the entire year; the number depends on the amount of annual rainfall. This lack of a reliable water supply and of timber for fuel and homes demanded settlers with deep faith and a strong back. Lumber and provisions were hauled overland by horse and wagon from Lincoln and Nebraska City until 1871, when the Burlington Railroad laid tracks into the town of Fairmont. This rail link to the eastern towns and cities of Nebraska closed the first chapter in the township's history and opened the area to a new wave of settlers.

To compensate the railroad for the cost of building, the government granted the Burlington R.R. alternate sections of land within a five-mile reach of both sides of the tracks. The railroad in turn offered inducements to settlers to purchase the newly-acquired land for farm and home sites. The township began to gain residents. Many Civil War veterans, encouraged by the Homestead Act, dreamed about plentiful harvests while turning the rich soil. Each homesteader planted 100 trees in an effort to block the soil-stealing winds which whipped over this expanse of prairie land.

Most of the settlers took advantage of the 80- and 160-acre tracts that were offered. Some held one-half, three-quarter, and one-section farm lands which they leased to tenants. Some of these holdings were known then as the Fisher and Mellen sections. Charles Dumond held land titles to more than 640 acres.

The industrious settlers were beginning to prosper when in the summer of 1874 a sea of grasshoppers swept over the land, devouring everything that had not been harvested. A tract of 40 to 60 acres of corn was stripped within a few hours. Garden vegetables disappeared in a matter of minutes. Even fork, shovel, and hoe handles were partially eaten by the insect marauders.

A second major tragedy occurred on January 12, 1888, when nature unleashed a blizzard that still today is the measuring stick for the severity of any Nebraska winter storm. A dry, fluffy snow fell steadily through the morning and afternoon, creating a blanket of white. Suddenly, about 2:30 P.M., wind raced out of the northwest, picking up the loose snow with suffocating force and obliterating the day.

The youngsters were in school, and the stock was on the range. There was no time for a general alert, no time to prepare for the storm. Some teachers realized the danger of dis-

missing school and kept pupils in the schoolhouses overnight, saving many lives. Livestock, not so fortunate, traveled with the storm and perished.

The storm played itself out during the night, leaving behind it drifts 8 to 10 feet high, packed hard enough to withstand a man's weight. The temperature stood at 30 degrees below zero.

This frigid, never-to-be-forgotten night left behind it at least one heart-warming story, the story of a boy and his dog. The pair started home in the midst of the storm. They didn't make it. A searching party the next morning was attracted by a tiny spout of steam rising from one of the drifts just north of the John Hall corner east along the railroad right-of-way. Digging through the hard-packed snow, they found the boy and his dog unharmed by the blizzard. The warm breath of the dog had kept open a passage in the snow sufficient to provide air, and his body heat had helped keep them both from freezing.

Despite nature's cruel tormenting, the population of the area increased. A census taken in 1888 showed that Fairmont township had approximately 400 and the village of Fairmont had 1,800 residents. Every 80- or 160-acre farm was occupied by the owner or a tenant, and some of the occupants were prosperous enough to afford help in the home and in the fields.

When courage began to wilt along with the crops under a relentless summer sun, many of the settlers in the northern and eastern portions of the township turned to Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Horton for counsel and comfort. The Hortons, who were among the early settlers, had journeyed from Illinois in a covered wagon. They lived in a sod house on their homestead (the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 2, T8, R2W) for their first 11 years before moving into a solid frame residence. It was to the sod house that their far-flung neighbors came seeking answers to their problems. The Hortons would read from the Scriptures, offer a prayer, and extend their hospitality. Mr. Horton held church and Sunday School services on the homestead for many years, following the service of the Church of God. A prayer session with the Hortons became a welcome Sunday-morning custom for men and women attempting to build a life in a country that constantly tested their courage and their faith.

When the first death occurred in this pioneer neighborhood, the Hortons gave a piece of their land for a cemetery. This pioneer cemetery is located on the NE corner of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 2, T8, R2W, about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles NE of Fairmont. Many pioneers were buried there; by 1923, the Horton Cemetery contained 39 grave markers—14 for infants and small children, 25 for adults. Seven infants and 15 adults rested in unmarked graves. It is still used as a burial place for some of the pioneers' descendants.

A schoolhouse erected in this section later replaced the Horton home as the gathering place for Sunday church services. The Horton homestead is now owned by Bert Schwab, a grandson of James Whitaker, who filed on his homestead in 1866.

The railroad had continued its journey westward to span the nation while maintaining passenger and freight schedules in those communities which it had joined. One passenger train regularly spent the night in Fairmont. This overnight stop meant providing water and coal for the engines. To provide the water, wells were dug on a site 3 miles E of Fairmont, just north of John Hall's corner. (John Hall owned the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 26.) An elevated tank was built there, and power to operate the pumps was furnished by windmill (when the wind cooperated), or by horse power. Somewhat later, wells and coaling facilities were provided in Fairmont as the town sought to improve its desirability as a stopover point.

Population growth created a need for better school facilities. Fairmont township, like the others, had districts designated for schools. Bonds for a schoolhouse in District 19 were voted on September 11, 1872, and Fairmont established a grade school and a high school. The site selected was the block between Main and Jefferson streets (east and west) and between Violet and Myrtle avenues (north and south). This is still the basic site for the Fairmont school system. School opened, according to the *Bulletin* for November 19, 1872, "last week with Miss Elva Lewis, teacher." A second grade school was established in 1885; by this time the school population included 340 students in the town district and 120 in the rural districts.

The first mail route in Fairmont township was established in 1901, running to the north and west of the town. The second route embraced the southern and western sections of the township. By 1920, four rural mail routes were in operation.

Crop failures and skidding farm prices twice threatened the survival of the area. The first series of "bad years" occurred in the 1890's. Corn and wheat went for 8 to 10 cents per bushel, and eggs sold for less than one cent apiece. Hogs dropped from \$2 per hundredweight to 25 cents.

The second such period occurred during the 1930's when Nebraska was caught in the deadly twin pincers of drought and national depression. Bank closings ruined many. Federal aid programs such as the Works Progress Administration provided sorely needed work for men who could no longer make a living from their farms. Surplus food and clothing were made available to the needy. The start of World War II and a sharply increased demand for food for our allies sent farm prices upward. At the same time, nature contributed much-needed moisture.

The young men of the area went off to war, and machines, in ever-increasing numbers, came into common use. Farms had more mechanical cornpickers, elevators to crib the corn, hay balers to care for the alfalfa, and self-propelled combines which could be operated by one man.

More acres were placed under cultivation. Increased production was encouraged by increased attention to conservation of the land. Contours, terraces, and proper drainage facilities replaced older, more haphazard methods on most farms. A new era of farming had commenced.

Thanks largely to the efforts of Nebraska's Senator George W. Norris, electricity came at last to the farm home. Modern plumbing, refrigeration, and lighting were among the benefits that came with public power lines.

About the same time as the electric lines came much-improved highways, this time as the result of state rather than Federal action. Gasoline-tax revenues led to the development of an all-weather road program in Nebraska. The statute provided that the first mile and the last mile of each mail route from the post office were to be graveled as soon as money became available, then the second nearest and farthest miles, and so on until all postal roads were fully graveled. By the simple process of adding one mile of graveling each year, by 1967 only six miles of Fairmont township roads remained ungraveled. The township was further helped by the construction by Fillmore County of all-weather farm-to-market roads in areas not covered by the mail routes.

The first Rural Free Delivery route, Route No. 1, out of Fairmont was the second rural route established in Nebraska. The first postal carrier appointed was Frank R. Robinson, who assumed his duties in June, 1901. He drove a team of horses, and sometimes rode a bicycle. It was necessary to stop at noon to feed the horses and let them rest. He was succeeded by J. Lewis Davis, a Fillmore County homesteader. He drove the first automobile used on the route, a Brush roadster. Upon Mr. Davis's retirement after about 14 years of faithful service, Ernest Souba carried the mail for a short time.

In June, 1916, a young man, Preston P. Ogden, became the carrier. He was soon claimed by the Navy in World War I. Desiring to do his bit toward winning the war, a Methodist minister from Exeter, the Rev. F. C. McVay, drove every

day to Fairmont and carried the mail on R.F.D. No. 1 until Mr. Ogden returned from the Navy. Mr. Ogden remained a most efficient and faithful carrier until his retirement on March 26, 1962. At that time, Willis Biegert of Geneva took the route and is still the carrier.

Other carriers working out of Fairmont over the years have included Floyd Abbott, George Rudisell, George Curtiss, H. Carson, S. E. Beckman, M. E. Mellen, O. A. Izer, W. Crandall, and E. Bender.

FAMILIES

A. M. Black, a Civil War veteran, settled in the township in the early 1870's. He homesteaded the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 22, which still remains the property of his descendants. His farm was one of the finest in the township. Much of the lumber he needed was transported in wagons from Lincoln. He helped organize the Presbyterian Church and was a faithful member until his death on November 15, 1919.

Another pioneer farmer was **Jacob Witter**, who arrived in 1870 by wagon from Illinois. He settled on the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 12, where he built a sod house for his family, later adding a fine set of farm buildings. He took great pride in maintaining one of the best homesteads in the area.

Other settlers who should be remembered were: A. B. Compher, C. B. Thompson and his brother John, J. Kemper, E. Milner, J. Lefler, and J. Hall. This list is necessarily incomplete.



An early sod house, built in 1878. (The people in the picture are Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Brown.)

Fairmont

Written by A. L. Brown (in 1954)

In the spring of 1871, the South Platte Land Company, following usual practices, sent four ex-soldiers into this locality to pre-empt four quarters of land not deeded to the railroad. This section was to become Fairmont, Nebraska.

The site chosen for the town was in the west portion of the section, about one block south and two blocks west of where the Methodist Church now stands. Four board shacks were built on the four inner corners of the area, each shack located on a different quarter-section. Here offices were established while the South Platte Land Company completed transactions for title to the tract. The land company then surveyed the town site and offered lots for sale. Several buildings were put up in the fall of 1871, and by May, 1872, the town boasted 40 structures.

The town's fortunes improved with the arrival of the first Burlington train. The opportunity to live in a "railroad town" attracted new settlers. In addition, one train laid over each night in Fairmont, giving citizens a chance to see new faces and to hear the latest news from eastern parts. It made home seem a little closer for the early settlers.

Stores started to spring up even while ground was still being broken for the town site. J. E. Porter's general store, located on the corner now occupied by the Cubbison Block, was among the first. In the spring of 1872, William Spade, a pioneer carpenter, built a store just north of Porter's for his brother, Dan Spade, who sold general merchandise.

The post office, called Hesperia before it had a town to be identified with, was moved from its first location on the northeast corner of the section into the Spade store. The

postmaster was W. H. Brown. As the business district expanded, the post office was moved to the Talmage corner, one block west of the present Farmers State Bank building. The new postmaster was Roy Finney. Pictures of this new post office appeared in the *Fillmore Chronicle* on April 14, 1927, and again on April 4, 1939.

By the fall of 1872, the name of Fairmont had been tested and accepted by residents of the new town. A school building, hotels, more stores, lumber yards, and coal and feed yards were under construction. Three brickyards were started to supply materials. One of the brickyards was west of the branch railroad line leading toward Geneva. The other two located east of what is now the railroad track leading toward Helvey. Evidence of their efforts may still be seen in Fairmont today. Some of the buildings made from bricks supplied by these companies which still remain are the Farmers State Bank, the hotel, the library, and the old Opera House.

Fairmont has had three different "main streets" during its first century. The first main street (Fillmore Avenue) ran from the west side of the present depot south to the Cubbison Block corner, a distance of two blocks. The second main street (Jefferson Street) ran from the Cubbison corner east; and the third, Fairmont Avenue (often called, erroneously, "Main Street"), became and remained the main business street. The citizens were not fickle, and the changes of main street were not the result of any political tug-of-war. Fire and water, or the lack of water, determined the changes.

A disastrous fire that in 1886 burned the Cubbison Block and other business houses on Fillmore Avenue was responsible for the first change. At that time Fairmont had a water-pressure system for fire protection which consisted of two reinforced wooden water tanks, one of which was 50 feet high and was to be used only for emergency purposes. When the higher tank was put into use for its first emergency, the extra pressure burst the wooden water mains, and the town was helpless to combat the flames.

Rather than rebuild on the destroyed site, the businessmen started a new main street running east from the Cubbison corner. Once again business houses opened up on both sides of the street. Burned out once, the town turned largely to brick for its new stores. The old wooden water mains were replaced with iron pipes. But Mother Nature still had a trick up her sleeve for the citizens of Fairmont. In the early summer of 1899, she hurled tremendous gusts of wind and rain at the elevated water tower and toppled it. Then, on April 19, 1901, fire destroyed the R. G. Hall hardware store, the O. E. Miller drugstore, and the offices of Dr. S. F. Ashby, M.D., and Dr. Horner, the dentist. This fire was enough to change the history of Jefferson Street and turn it into a side street.

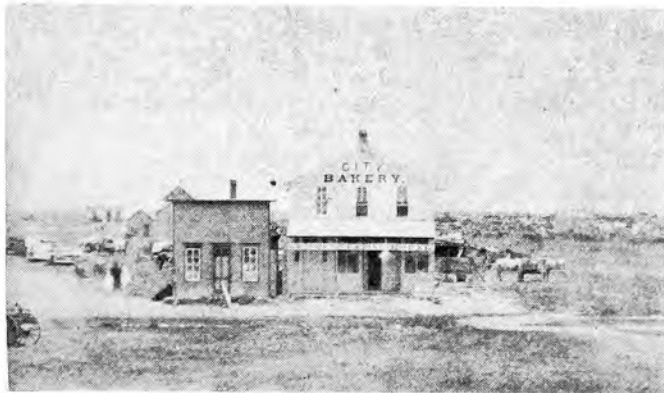
In 1901, Bert Aldrich began construction of a modern steel standpipe, which is still in use. The town sank two new wells to guarantee an adequate water supply, extended the mains throughout the town to give homes greater protection, and acquired a large steam plant to operate the pump.

The first mayor of Fairmont was E. L. Martin. Sitting with him on the council were John Cubbison, F. G. Usher, William Gaylord, and Fred Page.

Mayor Martin was both prominent and colorful. He was about the same height as "Uncle Sam" and had chin whiskers and longish hair. For patriotic occasions, he dressed himself in high-waisted trousers, a swallowtail coat with red and white stripes, and a tall stovepipe hat with stars in the band. During those early years, no Memorial Day or Fourth of July parade was complete unless Mayor Martin, thus patriotically attired, was at the head of the marching forces, which consisted largely of uniformed Civil War veterans.

In 1876, Fairmont merchants decided to show their appreciation to their patrons throughout the area by providing all with a day of rest and relaxation. Bunting and Chinese lanterns gave the city streets a festive air. A superb noon dinner was served; games and sports were arranged, and time was allowed for visiting and the exchange of both tall and short tales. A public speaker made the customary re-

marks, and a band concert climaxed the program. The event proved so popular that it became an annual affair. In honor of the early merchants and their patrons, the occasion is called the "Old Settlers' Picnic Day." It is still held annually in July or August. The date varies slightly from year to year, depending on the dates when a carnival is available.



Picture from Lewis M. Whitehead
View of Fairmont (July 4, 1876).

By the year 1888, Fairmont's population was pushing 1,800; it was the metropolis of the area. Business firms began to fan out more widely. The growth resulted largely from the start of new business and industry which, in turn, created new job opportunities. The railroad, for instance, gave employment to more than 50 men who worked in the depots, the freight yards, the roundhouse, and on maintenance and coal and water crews.

Real-estate offices opened up to aid the families searching for a home or a farm site. These were followed by insurance agencies, two weekly newspapers, and the beginning of the town's professional class: lawyers, doctors, dentists. Fairmont Avenue was lined with men's and women's clothing stores, shoe shops, wagon and blacksmith shops, and an implements dealer.

One of the larger businesses was the Fairmont Creamery, which used the town as headquarters for its widely scattered services. It gave employment to butter makers, cream gatherers, packers and freight handlers, office and clerical help, and so made up the town's largest single pay roll. Production capacity at one time was 100,000 pounds of butter per year.

Other enterprises which helped give Fairmont the right to call itself a metropolis of sorts were four hotels or inns, four livery and feed stables, and two lumber yards.

Fairmont was not without manufacturing in those early days. One of the major industries was the Chase & Clark Hardware, Tin, and Cornice Works. It had a contract to produce 1,000 20-gallon cans for the creamery. The company's ornamental cornices were used to decorate the fronts of most of the town's brick buildings.

Another early industry was a monument works established by R. Conroy. White marble and granite were shipped here by the flatcar-load from Vermont. Fairmonters shaped and polished the stone. Fairmont also had a flour mill with a daily capacity of 80 barrels, and two cheese factories. Other products manufactured in Fairmont were incubators, sanitary mite and louse-proof chicken roosts, and post-hole diggers.

Before an annual county fair was set up at Geneva, Fairmont boasted an exhibit center where livestock, grains, vegetables, and handicrafts could be displayed. The 40-acre site was at the extreme northwest corner of the city area and was encircled by a race track. No fair was complete without horseback races and trick and fancy riding. After visiting the exhibits, Fairmonters and their visitors would gather around the track to eat dust and cheer their favorite drivers, who rode on buckboards or light conveyances drawn by two horses. Bicycle racing also made a place for itself on the Fairmont track. It was here that Robert Bennet, later to

gain national fame as a bicycle racer, first raced his bicycle against other riders and fast horses. The fairgrounds included a horticulture building, some permanent horse and livestock barns, and a judges' stand. The first fair of the Fillmore County Agricultural Association, organized in May, 1872, was held in Fairmont in 1875. This fair prospered, and continued for several years after the establishment of the Fillmore County Fair in Geneva.

The town acquired its first weekly newspaper, the *Fairmont Bulletin*, in 1872. It was not an immediate financial success and passed through the hands of numerous unsuccessful publishers during its first 15 years. It was purchased in 1886 by Joseph Frazier and renamed the *Fillmore Chronicle*. Frazier and his son, L. W. Frazier, operated the paper; it remained in the family until the death of the son on November 19, 1954. After that date, it was published by John Edgecombe of Geneva, until it was merged (May 1, 1957) with the *Nebraska Signal*, of Geneva.

In the early days, Fairmont boasted a second paper,

the *Nebraska Signal*, edited and published by Will R. Gaylord and Dr. J. B. Brazelton on the first floor of the old Opera House. This newspaper was founded in 1881 and was moved to Geneva by Frank Edgecombe in 1896.

The town's waterworks system was acquired from B. E. Aldrich by T. J. Bender in 1908. He added an electric plant which provided for street lights and home electricity. At first electricity was available only from early evening until midnight; later, service was provided on Monday and Tuesday when the housewives did their washing and ironing.

Man is by nature gregarious, and five fraternal organizations appear in the town's history. The Masons were granted a charter in 1874, perhaps a step or two ahead of the Odd Fellows. Other lodges active in the town's early years were the Woodmen, the Workmen, and the Knights of Pythias. The Masons and Odd Fellows remain active in Fairmont today; each group is housed in a building equipped with lounge and recreation facilities, and meeting and dining rooms.

Fairmont Township Homestead Map

William H. Tidyman		Charles D. Brower					Ella M. Gaylord	Charles Peterson	Wilson Dart	James Morehead						Louis Steiger	Henry Muller and Wife				
Napoleon B. Roe																S. H. Kingery	David R. Bivins				
Thomas Roe		James M. Lowder					James Bratt	Jerome Halsey								Samuel Bair	Ezekiel Horton	Jonathan A. Horton			
			Milton Bailey	Oliver Crowder	Philip Winand					Edward Dawson	David B. Hoover	George Helms							Aaron B. Stonerock	Jacob Witter	
					Wm. M. Armstrong							Theodore Winters									
			Arthur P. Gray		B. H. Turner					Joseph Watson		Christopher Emigh							Jacob Pflug	David Kelley	
Charles Fosdick	Peter Rose	Richard H. Wirts														Cyrus B. Thompson	George W. Winand				
Joseph Michael		Virgil A. Stewart					School Land									Noah M. Thompson	Rice Kelly	Samuel J. Atkinson			
			Elvira Cramer		Fred M. Chapin					Abraham M. Black	Delazon M. Black								Mary F. Phillips	James Campbell	Phillip Schwab
			Isabell Cramer																		
			M. H. Brown		Clarence C. Chapin					D. H. Freeman	Sarah Ballard	J. Ferdinand Torge							Charles N. Phillips	Reason A. Burge	
George Enderly	James Seely						Joseph R. Coffin	Luther T. Gaylord								William Dye	J. Lewis Davis				
																		William Hunt, Jr.			
S. A. Crawford	Obediah Scott						John Crum	Sylvanus T. Gaylord								John Sterrett	Frederick C. Clark				
																		John G. Morris			
			H. G. Bliss		James Jones					Andrew A. Frey	James M. Hill										
			William L. Stewart		Philadelphus G. Carey					Philichus P. Dawson	Thomas H. Davis										
										Hiram Lee											

While people built their homes and developed their farms and businesses, they also took time to build churches. Fairmont in its fledgling years had five churches: Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Catholic.

In 1923, at the urging of the Rev. David Honsaker of the Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian and Congregational churches merged, to solve a membership problem. The following year, the Rev. William Perry was named

minister for the Presbyterian-Congregationalists, and plans were drawn for a church building. The money was raised by subscription. Cornerstone ceremonies were held on October 11, 1924, and dedication services for the new church—of red brick trimmed with white stone—were held in April, 1926. This Federated Church and the Methodist Church are the surviving churches that today minister to the religious needs of Fairmont citizens.

Methodist Church,
Fairmont 1960.

Photo from W. E. Fleischauer



Federated Church
(Presbyterian and
Congregational),
Fairmont (1960).

Photo from A. L. Brown



Photo from A. L. Brown
Methodist Church, Fairmont (before 1914).



Photo from A. L. Brown
Congregational Church, Fairmont, about 1900.



Presbyterian Church, Fairmont, about 1912.

Photo from A. L. Brown

Catholic Church, Fairmont, Nebr. (before 1900).

Photo from Mrs. Alta Roper



One result of a growing town is overcrowded school-rooms. Such was the case in 1885 in Fairmont. Two ward grade schools, one on the north side and one on the south side, were built to relieve the crowded conditions. When they were built, the two schools were considered among the finest of their time. By 1908, further changes were in order, and the town approved a bond issue for the construction of a new school building, centrally located, to accommodate all grades. An auditorium, a gymnasium, and more classrooms were added later to absorb a steadily increasing number of youngsters.



Photo from Ora Robbins
Fairmont High School (about 1887).

Special mention should be made of several educators who devoted a major portion of their lives to educating Fairmont's young. High on the list would be Miss Alice Jackson, who taught the fourth and fifth grades in the Fairmont schools for 37 consecutive years. Miss Jackson taught reading, writing, and arithmetic as expected, but she also interested her students in wildlife, flowers, and nature in general. Her contributions to the Fairmont school were to be long remembered by her former pupils. At a meeting of Fairmont alumni in May, 1951, a motion was made and carried that the association should provide a memorial gift to the schools in her name. Miss Margaret Aldrich, Mrs. Helen Malsbary Brown, and A. L. Brown were appointed as a committee to choose a project. In view of Miss Jackson's unending interest in the welfare of her children, the committee decided in favor of playground equipment for the grades as well as for the high school.

Mimeographed letters stating the cause and the purpose of the project were sent to all members of the alumni association and produced about \$900 in donations. School parents turned out in force to install the equipment. Land



Photo from A. L. Brown
High School Playground Equipment, donated by Alumni. (Alva Brown in front of slide.)

adjacent to the school grounds was obtained to permit the development of a football field and sports area. Bleachers were erected and sod was planted, and floodlights were installed for night games.

Lewis Goodrich, superintendent of the Fairmont schools in 1896, was the father of Willard E. Goodrich, a county board member representing Fairmont and West Blue townships from 1948 to 1960. Miss Carrie Dewey was another early teacher who taught both in country schools and in Fairmont.

Street paving came in 1919, when the city council voted pavement for certain districts, with the costs to be paid by landowners whose property faced the areas to be paved. Because a major highway (U.S. 81) entered the town from the north section line, the council voted to have city pavement run from the street connection with this section south to within one block of the Methodist Church, then west for three blocks. Before this was completed, another paving district was voted, this one embracing the main business area. A hard brick paving was used for the surfacing.

In recent years, highways have reshaped the geographical outline of Fairmont. Specifically, U.S. Highways 6 and 81 cross in Fairmont, and are flanked by motels, cafes, filling stations, and garages. Those service units not located on the highways became casualties of the auto age.

One of the more recent developments in Fairmont was the construction in 1956 of a grain-storage elevator with a capacity of some 200,000 bushels. This greatly helped to meet the storage needs of Fairmont and its surrounding territory.

Fairmont, besides being located at the crossroads of U.S. 6 and U.S. 81, is on the main line of the Burlington R.R., with two branch lines, one going south to Hebron, the other going southeast to Helvey. Its location, coupled with its markets, its consolidated school, its churches, and the hospitality of its citizens, offer ample evidence that Fairmont will have a good future as well as a proud past.

The following account of early Fairmont appeared in the *Bulletin* on June 19, 1873:

Fairmont was laid out in November, 1871, by the B. & M. Railroad Company and contains at this writing somewhere between one and two hundred inhabitants. It is building rapidly and bids fair to be one of the best towns along the road. It has an intelligent, thrifty, wide-awake population, who believe in churches and schools and have no use for gin-mills. There is no liquor sold in the town and not a licensed saloon in Fillmore County. Fairmont has a Methodist Church and is building a \$5,000 schoolhouse. Preaching is kept up by several denominations in the town and vicinity.

The town has two hotels, the Fairmont House and Gaylord House. The proprietor of the latter, Mr. S. G. Gaylord, is an old hotel keeper formerly of the American House, South Bend, Indiana. His house is one of the neatest and best kept hotels in Nebraska. Though it is a small place it is *Multum in parvo*, and we have yet to hear of a man grumbling at the fare of the Gaylord House. Mr. G. is building a large hotel and railroad eating house near the depot at an expense of about \$5,000, which he expects to occupy in a few weeks. When this is completed Fairmont will be better supplied with hotels than most towns of its size in Nebraska. Mr. Gaylord was the first settler of the town site, and is one of the leading spirits in every public enterprise that promises to be of any advantage to the town. Fairmont contains one newspaper, four general stores, one drugstore, one hardware store, two lumber yards, one blacksmith shop, one milliner shop, one harness shop, one shoe shop, two hotels, two livery stables, and one butcher shop.

S. J. Richard keeps the Fairmont House. This is a snug hotel, centrally located and doing a good business. On account of failing health Mr. Richard wishes to sell out and leave the country, and this is an excellent chance for some man wishing to engage in the hotel business in a live and growing town, where the business is not overdone.

Pinney Brothers keep a large store and deal in every article usually sold in a general store except dry goods. Their store of fancy and staple groceries is very large, and we saw something less than an acre of agricultural implements in their yard that they had not yet got housed. They are old

settlers here and keep the post office in their store. They are first-class business men and hold a very large trade of country produce of all kinds, as well as store goods. D. A. Phillips keeps one of the handsomest drugstores in this section of the country. He deals in everything usually kept in drugstores, including paints, oils, etc. Mr. Phillips graduated in pharmacy at Ann Arbor Michigan University, and thoroughly understands his business. He is a shrewd, bright young fellow, still a bachelor and will be a splendid catch for some Nebraska belle. His good looks won't save him.

At Phillips' we made the acquaintance of Frank H. Newton, a dentist by profession and a splendid good fellow by practice. He offered his services gratis to pull all our teeth but we declined the generous offer and shall convince him that we were in the right of it the next time we visit the City Hotel at White Cloud, where he has recently been installed as landlord. The City Hotel is bound to maintain its popularity with such a genuine fellow for a landlord.

P. P. Dawson has a very large hardware store and tin shop. His building is 25 x 85 feet and crammed full of tinware, stoves, shelf, builders' and general hardware and cutlery. He also keeps a large assortment of agricultural implements, including Reed breaking plows, Schutler wagons, Brown's corn planter and Garden City and John Deere Moline plows of all designations. Mr. D. is one of the solid men of Fillmore County, and does a heavy business.

J. E. Porter & Son have the largest general store in the city. Just everything in the goods line, is the shortest way to tell what they keep, or, rather what they sell, for their goods were going out like hot cakes when we were there. They had five hands in the store, all busy, and Mr. Porter informs us that they still had another man engaged outside selling agricultural implements, of which they keep a very large stock, as well as shelf and general hardware. Mr. Porter came from Minnesota, and is the oldest merchant in Fillmore County. He began on a small scale and is now one of the solid men of the county. The son is a chip off the old block and is business all over.

W. C. Ziegler is a young merchant from Iowa. He has a very handsome general stock of goods and the handsomest lady clerk we have met in Nebraska. He is a splendid business man and his wife is a helpmeet that any man might be proud of. He was the busiest man in town and will soon get rich if his present run of trade holds out.

The Gaylord brothers, Will R. and L. T., are sons of the hotel keeper and have a handsome store filled with dry goods, clothing, notions, boots and shoes, hats, caps, groceries, etc. They are live young men and full of business; they trade largely in produce, also, and are bound to keep things moving. Their trade is large and increasing.

Dorrance & Shepherd are among the first settlers, if not the first in the county. They have a very large general store in Fairmont and another at Geneva, the present county seat of Fillmore County, where they keep everything, including hardware and agricultural implements. They are a live firm of shrewd, far-seeing merchants, and are undoubtedly among the best business men on the line of the B. & M. road. They have a very large trade.

The *Fillmore County Bulletin* is the name of a neat six-column paper published in Fairmont, by Strother & Gerrard. It is a handsome, readable sheet, well filled with the local news of the vicinity, and the proprietors are gentlemen who understand their business.

Joseph Michael runs a blacksmith shop with two forges, and seemed to have all the work he could get away with. He is a reading man, an excellent mechanic, and as a matter of course must be a good citizen.

C. J. Cushman is a young, active, wide-awake chap that we met in Fairmont. He has the only meat market in the city, but runs it up to the handle, and keeps his place neat and tidy, and prides himself on always having the best meats to be got in the country.

Chapin Brothers are a firm of contractors and builders, who have a handsome shop in Fairmont. They furnish plans for buildings, being practical architects, and are putting up the best jobs in Fairmont and vicinity. They are live men, and are the proprietors of a saw that beats our buzz saw more than a double discount.

We like the people of Fairmont, and hope it may grow to be a big city. They showed their appreciation of good newspapers by subscribing largely for the *Daily and Weekly Gazette*, for which they have [our thanks].

This "Business Directory" is from the *Bulletin* for March 22, 1877:

Attorneys—J. O. Chase; Eller & Fifield; Conner & Maule; R. B. Likes; Will R. Gaylord; M. F. Bock.
Agricultural Implements—Geo. H. Pinney; C. H. Maxfield; Palmer, Stuart & Co.; M. H. Brown & Co.
Bankers—E. B. Branch & Co.
Bakery—L. Steiger.
Blacksmith Shops—G. Gepfert; S. Gibson
Barber—Frank Grover.
Carpenters—Turner & McCall; W. C. Massey; W. H. Chapin.
Confectionery—J. W. Bliss; John Barsby.
Dry Goods—L. F. Whitehead; W. C. Ziegler; Erwin & McKinney; J. E. Porter.
Druggists—D. A. Phillips; E. W. Wetherby.
Groceries—B. F. Ruffner; S. H. Oldham; J. E. Porter & Son.
Elevators—Joe Price; Palmer, Stuart & Co.
Furniture—J. D. Noble.
Lumber—Freeman & Chapin.
Hardware—P. P. Dawson; Edward Brophy.
Hotels—Henry House (W. C. Henry); Gaylord Hotel (L. Gaylord).
Insurance—H. G. Bliss; J. W. Logan; Eller & Fifield; Conner & Maule.
Jewelry—Robert Locke.
Monuments—Frank Conroy.
Painting—John Vondra.
Land—H. G. Bliss; Eller & Fifield.
Livery—George Rudisil.
Millinery—Mrs. A. Christian; Miss Locke; Mrs. W. Stewart.
Meat Markets—F. C. Bennett; Robinson & Pinney.
Notaries Public—Will R. Gaylord; Eller & Fifield; H. G. Bliss; W. P. Conner; J. O. Chase.
Physicians—Hart & Cotton; Brazelton & Johnston.
Restaurants—J. W. Bliss; L. Steiger; P. Palmer.
Saloon—Ferdinand Schear.
Saddlery and Harness—J. H. Williams.
Shoes and Boots—P. Behnke.
Wagon Maker—C. Beecher.

The next year, the *Weekly Nebraska State Journal* offered this summary of Fairmont's business enterprises (in the issue of October 25, 1878):

The merchants and business men generally of this town are prosperous and well pleased with their location and business prospects. . . .

The artisans of this thriving city are alive to every interest of their place, and neglect nothing that will add to its importance. . . .

The *Fairmont "Bulletin"* is the name of the only paper published here, and Mr. L. T. Calkins, recently from Burlington, Iowa, is the editor. The *Bulletin* is one of the very best local papers in the state, and Mr. C. is a gentleman of many years' experience. This paper has always been a good representative of Fillmore County and has done a great deal towards developing it.

E. B. Branch & Co. do a general banking business, and are regarded as one of the solid institutions of the West. They make collections, pay taxes, negotiate loans, and buy and sell foreign and domestic exchange. The business of the bank is ably conducted by Mr. E. B. Branch, a young gentleman of considerable ability and experience, having been in the banking business for about 13 years, and is assisted by Mr. J. R. Van Buskirk, who is in every way a reliable and thorough accountant. This is one of the pioneer banks of western Nebraska, and the oldest in Fairmont.

The *Fillmore County Bank* is one of the solid institutions of this county, and is in a flourishing condition. Hon. J. O. Chase, the proprietor, is one of the pioneer settlers, is a gentleman of several years' experience, and is considered a good financier. Mr. Chase has been a member of the Legislature, and is also a practicing attorney at law, having practiced his chosen profession for the past seven years. The bank enjoys the confidence of the entire community, and as a consequence does an extensive business. Mr. I. B. Chase, a brother of J. O., is the gentlemanly cashier, and is a young man of considerable business ability and experience.

Messrs. Bliss & Shelley are the wide-awake agents for the sale of Burlington & Mo. River Railroad lands for this land district, and also comprise law, collection, and land agency. They are agents, too, for the sale of lots in this growing town, which they offer at reasonable prices. Special attention given to making collections, paying taxes, buying and selling real estate, examining titles, furnishing abstracts, and making conveyances. They rent and lease dwellings and

farms, negotiate loans, buy and sell mortgages, sell tickets to any point in the world, and in fact do a business that would astonish your eastern readers. Mr. Bliss came here in '71, from Missouri, Mr. Shelley is from Illinois, and has been here about one year.

Conner & Maule, attorneys and counsellors, are men of recognized legal ability, and, having the fullest confidence of the people of this section of the state, thereby enjoy a very large practice in the county, state, and federal courts. They are one of the oldest law firms in Fillmore County, and have made for themselves very enviable records, and are thoroughly identified with the interest of Fairmont and Fillmore County. Mr. Maule has occupied for the past two years the position of district attorney of the first judicial district of Nebraska, and as an evidence that he has given complete and general satisfaction we mention the fact that he has been renominated on the Republican ticket for the same position for another term. Both these gentlemen are young in years, but being constant and applied law students, their opinions upon all matters pertaining to law are regarded as reliable. They have a very large and complete library. We might mention the fact, also, that their collection department is well and systematically arranged and carefully looked after by Mr. Harry Finigan, a young gentleman who has been reading law with them for the past year and who is regarded by all as one of the most efficient accountants and bookkeepers in the state.

George W. Fifield, attorney at law, is a young man of recognized ability, and enjoys liberal practice in the county, state and federal courts. Mr. F. has the fullest confidence of the people of this county, and carefully and promptly attends to all business entrusted to him. He pays particular attention to collections, and has one of the largest businesses in this branch of any attorney in this portion of the state.

Copeland & Fifield are loan agents, and report within the past two or three weeks a very fair business. Their plan is to loan on short time at reasonable per cent, thus giving their customers the opportunity of receiving benefits without bankrupting them. Messrs. Copeland & Fifield are both gentlemen of large business experience and their success is simply a question of time. Mr. C. is from Rockford, Illinois, and came here a short time since.

Richard Witz is a justice of the peace, attorney at law, real-estate agent, a great admirer of Shakespeare, a jolly good fellow, and a regular Nilsson of the male persuasion. "Dick" is one of the old settlers of Fillmore County, and is a Badger born [i.e., Wisconsin] boy.

Brazelton & Farnsworth are physicians and surgeons, and they enjoy a lucrative practice. These gentlemen are experienced physicians, Dr. B. having had 25 years' practice. He was surgeon in the 134th Indiana Regiment, and has lived in Fairmont five years. Dr. F. has resided here about 18 months, and likes Nebraska better than his old home, Illinois.

Messrs. Ruffner & Anderson are extensive dealers in dry goods, groceries, clothing, boots and shoes, hats and caps, and everything, in fact, pertaining to a first-class stock of general merchandise, and inform the people of Fillmore County that they buy all their goods exclusively for cash and are thereby enabled to sell at bottom prices. In fact, they do not propose to be undersold; and by fair and liberal dealing, and selling exclusively for cash, they have gained the confidence of the people of this section and are consequently enjoying a very large trade. Mr. Ruffner conducts the affairs of the firm at this point, and Mr. Anderson resides in Glenwood, Mills County, Iowa.

J. W. Price is the name of the proprietor of one of the largest elevators in Fairmont, and in fact one of the largest along the line of the road. Mr. Price is handling a very large amount of grain, having shipped this season 130 cars from this point, and will, before the season is over, ship about 300 cars more. His elevator at this point has a storage capacity of 12,000 bushels. He also has another large elevator in Grafton from which he ships considerable grain. Mr. Price enjoys the reputation of paying the very highest price for all kinds of grain, and consequently handles a liberal share of the grain from this point.

C. N. Paine & Co. have a large stock of lumber which is offered at prices, in some instances, below those of any Lincoln firm. The yard is directly under the management of Mr. H. S. Gordon, and this fact alone is a sufficient guarantee that the business is transacted to a dot, and that Paine & Co. will

not be undersold by any firm. Their stock is kept up sufficient to supply the demand, and it is no unusual matter for several carloads of lumber to arrive daily direct from the mills, which are located at Oshkosh and Merrillan, Wisconsin. Paine & Co. have one other very extensive lumber yard at Hastings. Mr. Gordon was formerly with Mr. Tuttle at Lincoln, and thoroughly understands his business.

Tidball & Fuller are proprietors of one of the largest lumber yards at this point, which is directly under the charge of Mr. C. H. Kitredge, a gentleman who thoroughly understands every part of the lumber business. This firm has yards also at Crete and Friendville, and carry very large stocks at each place. They sell their lumber on very small margins, and consequently enjoy a very large trade in this county.

Stuart Brothers are extensive grain dealers and have one of the largest elevators in the city. They probably handle as much grain and stock as any shippers along the road. Have been in business about six years, and came from Manchester, Illinois.

Mr. P. P. Dawson is an extensive dealer in hardware, stoves, and tinware, and carries a very large stock of everything in his line. Mr. Dawson is a young man who thoroughly understands his business, and by fair and liberal dealing has built up a very large trade in the county. Mr. Dawson has been in business in this city since 1871, and is one of the pioneers. He is also the proprietor of Dawson's Hall.

Martin & Noble are extensive dealers in wagons and farm machinery. They handle the McCormick harvester and self-binder, Haggood sulky and gang plows, Geo. Esterly & Son's seeder, Moline Plow Co.'s plows, Dickey's fanning mill, Eclipse windmill, Prize mower, Whitewater wagons, Van Brunt & Barber seeder, Elwood Manf. Co.'s goods, Champion corn planters, Buckeye drills and cultivators, iron and wood pumps, standard horse rakes and cultivators, carriages, buggies, and wagons. They are also agents for the celebrated Nichols, Shepard & Co. "Vibrator," and they sell a great many of them. Both gentlemen are pioneer settlers and are from Wisconsin.

S. W. Lockwood has the only exclusive boot and shoe store in town. He has just opened out a full line of boots and shoes of all kinds which he is selling cheap as the cheapest. He makes a specialty of custom work, and pays particular attention to repairing. He came from Ohio last January.

A. S. Shepard is the polite and efficient postmaster at this place, and has two assistants. Mr. S. has had charge of the government business here for the past five years. He is gentlemanly, always pleasant, and in fact has all the qualifications of a good postmaster. This gentleman came here when there was no Fairmont, and has witnessed the unalloyed prosperity and progress of his favorite town with no small degree of satisfaction. Mr. Shepard kindly furnished us with the following report of business transacted at this office. Amount of stamps sold during the year ending Sept. 30, 1878, \$2,000; number of money orders issued in the past year ending Sept 30, 1,239. The mails are at least one-half heavier for the present year than in '77.

George H. Pinney is a wholesale and retail dealer in farm machinery, hardware, carriages, buggies, spring wagons, etc., and carries a very large and general stock of everything in his line. Prominent among the machinery he handles we might mention the Studebaker, Mitchell, and Kansas wagons, the Buckeye mower and reaper, Wood's harvester and self-binder, and makes a specialty of fine buggies and carriages of every make and pattern. Mr. Pinney has resided in Fairmont about six years and is recognized as one of the leading and most reliable citizens.

Gorham, Treadwell & Co. are extensive dealers in agricultural implements and farm machinery, and positively proclaim that they will handle no machinery that is not as good as any in the market. They handle among other machinery all of the celebrated Marsh goods, the Harrison wagons, the Glidden steel barb wire for fencing, and all the Gorham goods. This is one of the prominent firms of Fairmont, and by fair and liberal dealing with the farmers, have their entire confidence, and are consequently enjoying a very large trade.

J. A. Aikins manufactures and deals in all kinds of harness and saddlery and keeps a very large stock of everything in his line constantly in store. Mr. Aikins is a thorough mechanic and turns out none but first-class work. He has resided in Fairmont about one year, and came from Pawnee City, Nebraska.

Lewis F. Whitehead carries a fine stock of dry goods,

boots and shoes, hats and caps, and a general stock of notions. He has without doubt one of the neatest stores in Fillmore County, and does his share of the business. Mr. Whitehead has been here about five years, and came from New York. Mr. Whitehead also has branch houses in Harvard and Friendville.

W. C. Ziegler carries an extensive stock of dry goods, ready-made clothing, boots and shoes, hats and caps, notions, and everything usually kept in a first-class establishment. Mr. Ziegler is at present suffering with an attack of typhoid fever, and during his illness Mr. M. H. Brown, well known in Fillmore County as a clever gentleman, has charge of the store.

Mellen & McNeal are extensive dealers in hardware stoves, and tinware, and carry a very large stock of everything in their line. These gentlemen have been in business here but a short time, having purchased the stock lately owned by Mr. N. H. Pinney, but are by fair and liberal dealing building up a very large trade in this county.

I. H. Williams is a manufacturer of and dealer in harness, saddles, collars, bridles, whips, halters, combs, brushes, etc. He pays particular attention to repairing, and warrants all work. Mr. Williams is an old experienced saddle and harness manufacturer, and formerly carried on extensive business in England. He came here in 1871.

Atherton, Willson & Son are the leading druggists of Fairmont, and carry a fine large stock of drugs, medicines, patent medicines, oils, paints, varnish, toilet articles, stationery, books, notions, etc. They also have an extensive jewelry establishment, this branch of business being carried on by Will S. Willson. This firm sells a great many groceries, also, and their trade comes from all portions of the county.

Blakesley House—A. Blakesley, proprietor—is the only first-class hotel in the city, and Mr. Blakesley thoroughly understands his business as a landlord, never overlooking anything that will add to the comfort of his guests.

C. Beecher, blacksmith and wagon maker, has rather extensive shops and is prepared to do all kinds of repairing of farm machinery. Mr. Beecher keeps none but the best mechanics and turns out only first-class work. He has resided in the county about four years.

Blakesley, Carson & Co. are the proprietors of one of the largest livery, feed, and sale stables in the city, and they keep their stables well stocked with fine horses and carriages. Parties wishing a team can get on short notice as nobby a turn-out at this stable as can be found anywhere in the West.

Mrs. A. Christian has one of the neatest millinery establishments in the West, which she keeps well stocked with a fine line of millinery, notions, and fancy goods. Mrs. Christian is thoroughly conversant with every branch of her business and is well informed in all the very latest styles and fashions. She enjoys a very large trade. Has been in business about two years, and came from Plano, Illinois.

Prescott & Chapin are contractors and builders, and are recognized as gentlemen who are thoroughly conversant with every branch of their business, to which fact the excellence of their work will bear witness.

Levi Jones handles groceries, provisions, queensware, glassware, canned fruits, etc.

O. H. Martin & Co. have a stock of drugs, medicines, paints, oils, perfumeries, and toilet goods.



"Bird's Eye View" of Fairmont in 1879.

Photo from A. L. Brown

The following passages are extracts from a historical article in the *Fairmont Bulletin*, January 3, 1884:

The town, as originally surveyed in October, 1871, comprised the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ and 460 feet of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 30, T8, R3W, in all comprising 188.67 acres . . .

The first sermon was preached in the fall of 1871, at the new railroad depot, by Rev. G. W. Gue. Late the same year the building of the Methodist Episcopal Church was commenced. This was the first church edifice in the county. J. W. Stewart was pastor.

The first newspaper, called the *Fairmont Bulletin*, was established early in May, 1872, by Will R. Gaylord.

The first death occurred in the summer of 1872, and it was that of a young child of Mr. and Mrs. William Chapin.

The first school was taught in the summer of 1872, by Miss Elvie Lewis, now Mrs. Dan Phillips, in a small frame building rented for that purpose.

The first marriage took place in the fall of 1872, and was that of Clarence C. Chapin and Miss Morgan.

The early history of Fairmont is marked by no remarkable events other than its wonderful progress. In the spring of 1873 the town had attained such size that it was determined to become incorporated as a village, which was accomplished May 26, 1873, and A. S. Shepard, H. L. Edwards, W. C. Ziegler, J. E. Porter, and B. F. Parliman were appointed trustees.

Among the first acts of the new village board was to secure the laying out of a park adjoining the town site. The town company donated the land, and a fine park, comprising a little over seven acres, was laid out, and, in due time, was planted to trees. This park has ever since been the pride of the village, and has received careful attention. The result is that at this date the trees have attained sufficient size to afford good shade, and the ground having been sown to orchard grass, the park presents a very attractive appearance.

In 1873, the schoolhouse was built, and was 24' x 48' in dimensions, with two wings, each 10' x 24', and the entire building two stories high. The schoolhouse grounds comprise an entire block, which was donated by the town company. This was planted to trees.

Fairmont continued to improve very fast until the summer of 1874, when the grasshoppers ruined the crop throughout the country tributary to it, when a dull period followed for about two years.

Churches and Schools

The church societies of Fairmont are the Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Catholic, and Episcopal. The first four named have church buildings. The Methodist Episcopal church was built in the fall of 1871; the Presbyterian in 1873; the Congregational in 1881, and the Catholic in 1882.

The schools are in a prosperous condition. To the large schoolhouse erected in 1873, an addition has been built, 24' x 32', and two stories high. The school is well graded and is divided into four departments. Great care is taken to secure good instructors, and the pupils in attendance make rapid progress.

Societies

Fairmont Lodge, No. 48, A.F. & A.M., was organized in 1874. It is now in a prosperous condition and has a membership of 45 in good standing.

Hesperian Lodge, No. 42, I.O. of O.F., was organized in 1874. It is in a prosperous condition, and has a membership of 55.

Stacy Encampment, No. 11, I.O. of O.F., numbers 45 members. J. T. Dennis, C.P.; H. G. Bliss, C.W.; J. S. Walters, Treas.; Dr. S. L. Moore, Scribe.

Fillmore Lodge, No. 1463, Knights of Honor, was organized March 10, 1879, with 13 members. It now has 38, and is in a flourishing condition.

E.A.U. Lodge, No. 218, is an insurance association organized in 1881.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union has a working organization here. The society was organized in 1881.

Business Interests

There are two banking institutions in Fairmont. Chas. S. Miller & Co. began business early in 1882, as successors to the banking house of E. B. Branch & Co., which was established in 1875.

The Fillmore County Bank was organized January 1, 1878, by J. O. Chase. On the 1st of April, 1880, it was incorporated with a paid-up capital of \$20,000. J. O. Chase is president, and Irwin B. Chase, cashier.

The Fairmont Steam Flouring Mill was built in 1878 by Welch & Wiley, at a cost of \$6,000. Mr. Wiley retired from the firm in 1879, and the firm then changed to J. H. Welch & Co., who added improvements to the value of \$2,500, and continued the business until the 22nd day of November, 1883, when they retired, being succeeded by the present proprietor, Mr. E. B. Welch, who contemplates making extensive improvements in the spring, substituting crushing rolls for the present system of burrs, and increasing the output to 100 barrels per day. The present proprietor is a thoroughly competent miller, and the flour made at the Fairmont mill is second to none in the State.

The Fairmont Dairy Association was organized and began operations in the manufacture of cheese on February 1, 1882. About 80,000 pounds of cheese are made in each month, most of which finds a market in Omaha, Lincoln, Denver, and Atchison.

The Fairmont Wagon shops, Beecher & Buckmaster, proprietors, besides the manufacture of wagons and carriages, make corn planters and cultivators.

Fairmont has two grain elevators. The one controlled by Geo. H. Warren & Co. has a capacity of 30,000 bushels, and has handled during the last year 205 carloads of grain.

The one controlled by A. Salisbury has a capacity of 25,000 bushels, and has handled 290,000 bushels of grain during the past year, paying out for the same \$104,000.

The Press

The *Fairmont Bulletin* was established May 1, 1872, by Will R. Gaylord. The *Bulletin* is a seven-column paper, folio, and Republican in politics. Chas. Turner is the editor and manager.

The *Nebraska Signal* is a weekly newspaper published by Brazelton & Putney. It was established October 27, 1881. It is a six-column paper, anti-monopoly in politics.

Telephone Exchange

The telephone exchange owned by the Nebraska Telephone Company, established September, 1882, Will R. Gaylord manager, has at the present time 30 instruments in use in Fairmont, and the number is being constantly added to. The central office attends to 300 calls per day, on an average. They also have connections with Geneva.

Post Office

There were issued from the office at Fairmont during the year:

1,350 postal orders, amounting to.....	\$25,000
650 postal orders, paid, amounting to.....	13,000
Stamps and stamped envelopes sold.....	2,850
Postal notes, since September 3.....	700
Sales this quarter stamps and envelopes.....	650
Total.....	\$42,200

The sales of stamps and stamped envelopes, last quarter, with a reduction of one-third in the price of stamps, amounting to \$650, shows that the business of the office is increasing.

Livestock

E. L. Martin, dealer in livestock, reports the number of hogs shipped for the year 1883, at 6,565; number of pounds, 1,717,000; amount paid out during the year, \$80,800.

Lumber

The Badger lumber yard; Tidball & Fuller, lumber and coal; W. N. Stewart, dealer in coal; and other coal dealers make annual sales amounting to \$85,000.

The Professions

Are well and ably represented. The lawyers engaged in the practice of their profession number seven, as follows: John Barsby, J. W. Eller, Will R. Gaylord, John P. Maule, Rushton & Mathewson, W. A. Sloan, and B. C. Whitman.

The Justices of the peace are R. G. Pinney and B. C. Whitman.

The real estate and loan agents number six, as follows: F. Curtiss & Son, Will R. Gaylord, Geo. Maxfield, Geo. D. Noble, N. H. Pinney, and B. M. Turner.

There are three practicing physicians, as follows: D. B. Farnsworth, G. W. Johnston, and R. Willson.

Three hotels cater to the wants of the public. They are the City Hotel, L. Steiger, proprietor; the Pacific Hotel, J. E. Clark, proprietor; and the Henry House, Mrs. Shepherd, proprietress.

Dr. L. S. Moore, in connection with his drugstore, is a practicing dentist, though he does not practice as a physician.

Business Houses—alphabetically arranged. Amount of stock carried:

Reecher & Buckmaster, wagon shop.....	\$
Bergstrand, A., tailor.....	1,000
Badger, lumber yard.....	
Chapin & Co., groceries.....	4,000
Christian, Mrs. A., dry goods and millinery.....	12,000
Conroy, F. & J., marble yard.....	400
Cubbison, J. & Co., dry goods.....	8,000
Curtis, H., agricultural implements.....	8,000
Dumont, C. W., confectionery, etc.....	700
Howard & Dye, livery.....	4,500
Hohn, J. H., boots and shoes.....	3,000
Heaton, T. J., restaurant.....	900
McClung, blacksmith.....	\$
Mellen & McNeil, hardware.....	5,000
Morris, Richard, organ and musical instruments.....	
Martin & Co., hogs and coal.....	
Moore, L. S. & Co., bankers—responsibility.....	60,000
Martin, E. L., livestock.....	80,800
Noble, Agnes, furniture.....	3,000
Oldham & Calkins, general merchandise.....	7,000
Patterson, W. F., furniture.....	3,500
Peck, Wm., blacksmith.....	
Phillips, D. J., confectionery and fruit.....	800
Peth, Geo., harness and saddlery.....	1,000
Pollard, J. N., groceries.....	8,000
Porter & Son, general merchandise.....	10,000
Prescott & Bennett, contractors and builders.....	
Rullison, Geo., groceries.....	3,500
Ruffner & Anderson, general merchandise.....	
Sawyer, E. C., drugs and stationery.....	4,000
Sargeant, M., drugs.....	2,000
Solomon & Nathan, dry goods, etc.....	20,000
Stiles & Graves, hardware.....	3,000
Stewart, W. N., coal dealer.....	
Steiger, L., groceries.....	1,000
Talmage, J. W., agricultural implements.....	8,000
Thompson, H., livery.....	4,000
Thompson, H., confectionery.....	500
Tidball & Fuller, lumber.....	
Williams, I. H., harness.....	1,000
Willson, W., jeweler.....	2,500
Total.....	\$193,300
Lumber and coal (sums not included in the above table).....	\$85,000
Other stock carried (but not listed in the table), estimated to be.....	11,500
Total.....	\$298,800

FAIRMONT CITY LIBRARY

This account of the library was written in 1953 by Miss Zola R. Shoemaker, the librarian:

When the Fairmont Woman's Club was organized in January, 1916, they chose for their civic betterment project "A Library at Some Future Date."

The first money raised for the library was \$3 from the sale of a collie pup given to the club by L. A. Whitten. In the summer of 1919, the Red Cross gave a dinner for the returned soldiers and sailors. The sum of \$128.15 was left over, and it was voted to use this for a memorial to our soldiers and sailors. This fund was held until 1934, by which time it amounted to \$202.58 and was given to the book committee, which purchased 250 books for the library. They placed in the front of each book a bookplate "In Honor of our World War Veterans."

In 1922, the Woman's Club began looking for a room for a library. The city council consented to their using the City Hall each Wednesday and Saturday of each month. On April 7, 1922, the Fairmont Library Association was organized. The first officers were Myron Gibson, president; Verdellia Brown, vice-president; Mary Badger, secretary; Alice Jackson, treasurer; and Mrs. C. W. Woods, Dr. M. W. Deffenbaugh, and M. E. Boren, board members. Membership dues were \$1 a year. Mrs. W. A. Whitcomb was hired as librarian at a salary of 75 cents a day; she served in the position for 9½ years.

The formal opening of the library occurred on October 14, 1922, at which time punch and wafers were served. In January, 1923, the library was insured for \$300. The first Library Association must have died, as no more records can be found.



Photo from Willard Goodrich
Henry Thompson's Feed and Livery Stable (the site is now the city park on Main Street).

In June, 1931, Miss Jackson talked to the Woman's Club about moving the library to the Wyatt house. Rent for the summer would be free, but the club would have to clean and repair the building. The club did this with the help of the Boy Scouts, and the library was moved the last of June.

In January, 1932, the Library Association was reorganized. The new officers were Alice Jackson, president; W. R. Dorrance, vice-president; Mrs. M. M. Akin, secretary; Mrs. B. E. Aldrich, secretary; and Mrs. M. E. Boren, Mrs. William Winsor, and R. V. Starks, board members. On March 15, 1932, bids were read for the job of librarian. Miss Shoemaker's bid being the lowest, she was elected and began work on March 23, 1932. On February 12, 1934, Miss Cubbison offered the southeast room of the Cubbison Building for a library, at a rental of \$2.50 a month. We moved on March 29, and on April 7, 1934, had our opening. Punch and wafers were served to 183 callers.

On June 28, 1934, the Library Association closed its books and we became a City Library. A new board was appointed by the mayor, consisting of R. V. Starks, president; W. R. Dorrance, secretary; and Miss Alice Jackson, Mrs. Mamie Kemp, and Mrs. M. E. Boren, board members. A quarter-mill levy was set, out of which the librarian received a salary of \$100 a year. At this time we had 4,500 books and 550 borrowers. Many gifts of money and books have been received over the years from friends and organizations: the D.A.R., Campfire, P.E.O., Legion Auxiliary, City of Fairmont, Library Benefits, Royal Highlanders, and Fairmont Women's Club.

Once again we moved, on March 16, 1945, to a city-owned building, on the corner of Fairmont Avenue and Jefferson Street. The building is called the "Library," although it has an apartment upstairs, a basement room, and a rest room. A gas heater was installed, and venetian blinds added much to the comfort of our new home.

I have seen our library grow from 2,000 books to 6,800. I have helped move it three times. May it always remain in its present location! There have been many changes in the more than 22 years I have been librarian.

[Miss Zola Shoemaker ended her service as librarian on April 9, 1955, and was succeeded by Mrs. Russell Snodgrass, who still held the position in 1967.]

FAMILIES

Samuel Smith Shivers was born May 28, 1848, at Gnadenhutten, Tuscarawas County, Ohio. At the age of 14 he moved with his parents to Sullivan County, Indiana, where later he became a schoolteacher. In 1871, he was united in marriage to Marcia A. Gillman and in 1873 they came to Clay County, Kansas, where they were early settlers. They lived there until 1897, when they traded their Kansas land for a home in the north edge of Fairmont. This was their home until 1909, when they purchased a home across the street from the Methodist parsonage.

They brought four of their children to Nebraska with them—Emmett, Maude, Inez, and Blanche—leaving two married daughters in Kansas—Lillie May (Mrs. Wesley Dever) and Samantha (Mrs. Jerome Clark). About two years later Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Clark also came to Fairmont to make their home. A few years later, Emmett married a Kansas girl and returned there to live. Maude became Mrs. Edson Sharp; Inez, Mrs. Nesbit Whitmore; and Blanche, Mrs. Wayne Winchell.

Mr. Shivers busied himself with carpenter work, moving, building, and remodeling houses. A few years later he added to his work the building of cement sidewalks. Much of his work is still in evidence around Fairmont.

Mr. and Mrs. Shivers were devout Christians, being faithful attendants at the Methodist Church, where Mr. Shivers was a class leader and a Sunday School teacher as long as his health permitted. He passed away on January 10, 1918, and Mrs. Shivers on February 15, 1923.

—*Blanche Shivers Winchell*

Wallace Wheeler was born in Brandon, Vermont, March 4, 1840. His father was a carpenter and a wheelwright by trade, and for some time operated a sash, door, and blind factory and also a sawmill in Vermont. He moved to Illinois in 1852 and engaged in farming, an occupation which Wallace also followed until 1886, when he became a farm-machinery salesman. In 1869, he came to Nebraska City, where he organized the firm of Wheeler & Tucker, which lasted for three years. He then moved to Lincoln as the western agent of the Marsh Harvester Company, and remained with them until their failure in 1884. He then, in the same year, came to Fairmont, where he organized the Fairmont Creamery Company and served as its president until his death in 1897.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

The first major business enterprise after the establishment of the steam flouring mill was the **Fairmont Dairy Association**, founded in 1882, as described in the *Bulletin* article quoted earlier.

The **Fairmont Creamery Company** was organized as a stock company by Wallace Wheeler and J. H. Rushton in Fairmont in 1884. Mr. Wheeler, its first president, held that post until his death in 1897. The other officers were J. H. Rushton, secretary-treasurer; V. C. Stuart, vice-president; and J. O. Chase and I. V. Chase, board of directors.

The original plant was operated alone in Fairmont until 1888, when the company purchased the Crete Creamery. The Tobias plant was added in 1890, the Friend and Geneva plants in 1891, the Fairbury, Dewitt, and Milford plants in 1892, and the Hebron plant in 1898.

After the death of Wallace Wheeler, J. H. Rushton was made president, a position he held from 1898 until 1921, at which time he was made chairman of the board of directors. (He died in Omaha, January 2, 1922; Mrs. Rushton died, also in Omaha, May 2, 1934.) Under Mr. Rushton's management the Fairmont Creamery grew to be the largest in the world, with offices not only in New York and other large cities in America but also in Europe.

The Fairmont plant was moved to Crete, but the head office, through the influence of Mr. Rushton, was retained in Fairmont for several years. The company grew to such proportions that larger quarters were required; at this point, Mr. Rushton was "outvoted" by other stockholders, and in 1907

the main office was moved to Omaha. Their Fairmont office building was bought by Dr. S. F. Ashby, and it has been used by Drs. Ashby ever since.

Within recent years, the company changed its name to Fairmont Foods Company, Inc., and does a world-wide business. Though spawned in the lush agricultural region of Fillmore County, no part of the company now remains there. During its existence in the county, it furnished many local jobs and a large volume of postal business. The company distributes dairy products, chips and snack foods, soft drinks, cookies, crackers, and nuts. Its net sales in 1966 were reported as \$199,771,696—a substantial sum to have had its ultimate origin in one Nebraska town!

BLIZZARD

Some of the impact of the Blizzard of 1888 on the Fairmont vicinity is revealed in a letter to Mrs. Hart from Miss Minnie Carver (then teaching in Altoona, Pennsylvania), dated April 18, 1929:

... I always think of it when January 12 comes along. I was teaching four miles north of Fairmont where the Browers, Kempers, Fines, Coxes, Darts, Petersens, and so on lived. I kept 20 or more boys and girls in the schoolhouse all night.

The coalhouse was built over the door which faced a bare prairie towards the north. That saved us some. There were lamps in the room for a lyceum held there, so we were not in the dark. The older boys and girls, Oscar and Frank Petersen and their sisters, Belle Kemper and others helped me to play games, tell stories, etc., so that we could keep awake and keep the fires up.

The smaller children we wrapped in our coats and they went to sleep near the stove. At 10 o'clock the next morning Mr. Kemper, Mr. Dart, and others came for us with a big wagon bed of straw and warm covers and took us to Mr. Dart's home, where we had a good hot breakfast, and later on to Kemper's, where I boarded.

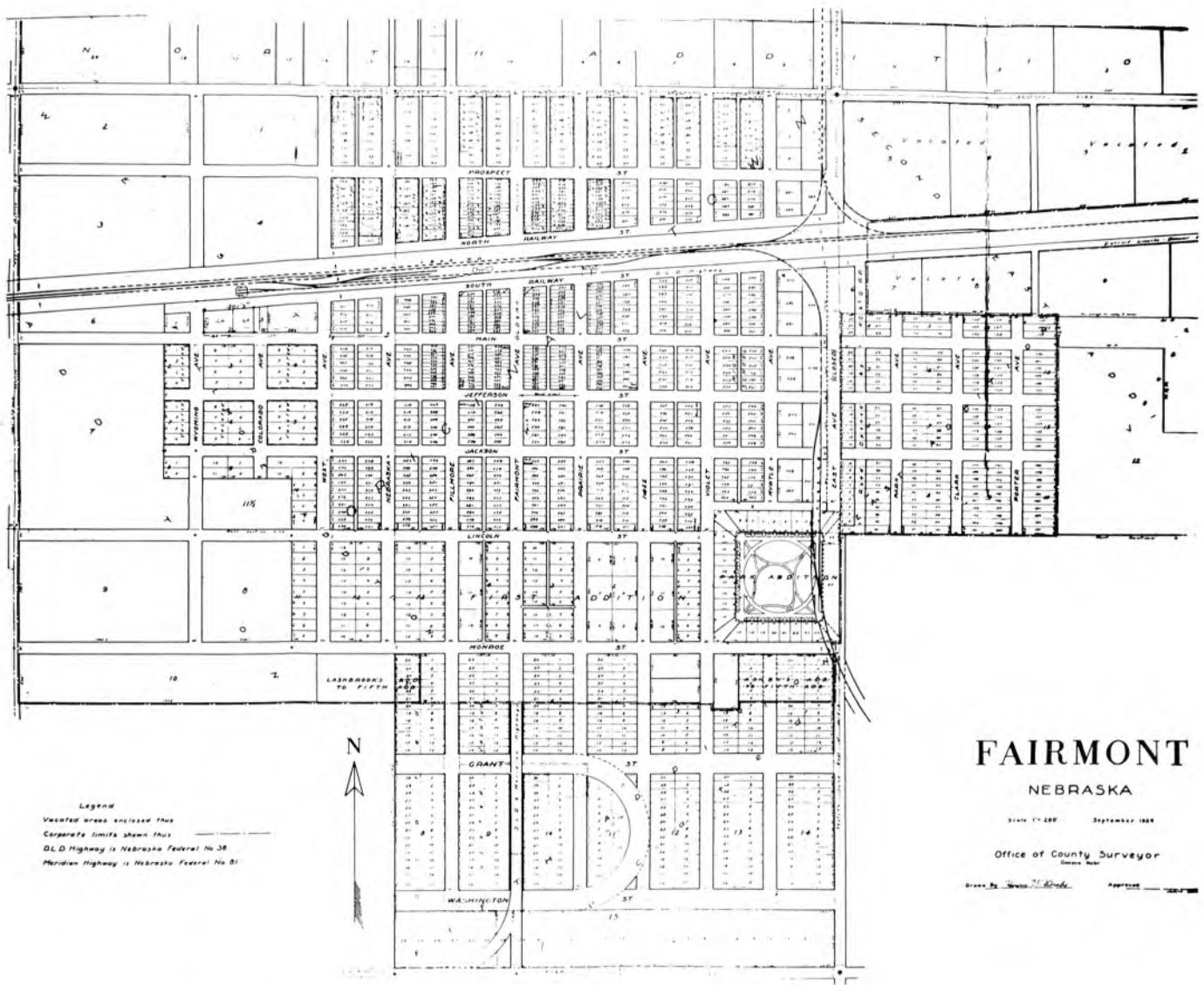
I got to Fairmont and to mother later in the day. She was terribly worried of course. I did not realize then, nor admit now, that it was a great thing I had done. At the time it was the only thing to do and I merely did it. Certainly it was my duty to care for those dear boys and girls I had been entrusted with ...

Mrs. Minnie Kemper Graham, now 89 years old and still living (1967) in Fairmont, was one of Miss Carver's pupils during that winter of 1888. She herself, she recalls, did not go to school on that particular day.

[Mr. Brown, in a note on his original manuscript, gives credit to "early newspaper items and the memory of our oldest citizens," one of whom was Mr. W. E. Black—*Editor*.]



Photo from Clarence Palmer
George Heaton's Bowling Alley in 1904. From left to right—Clarence Palmer, Charlie Narigon, Elmer Ellington.



Scale: 600ft to 1 inch.

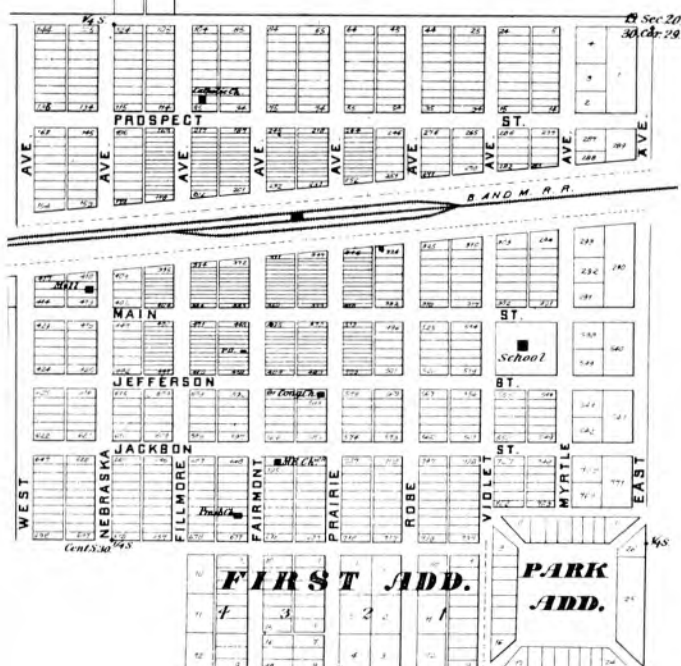
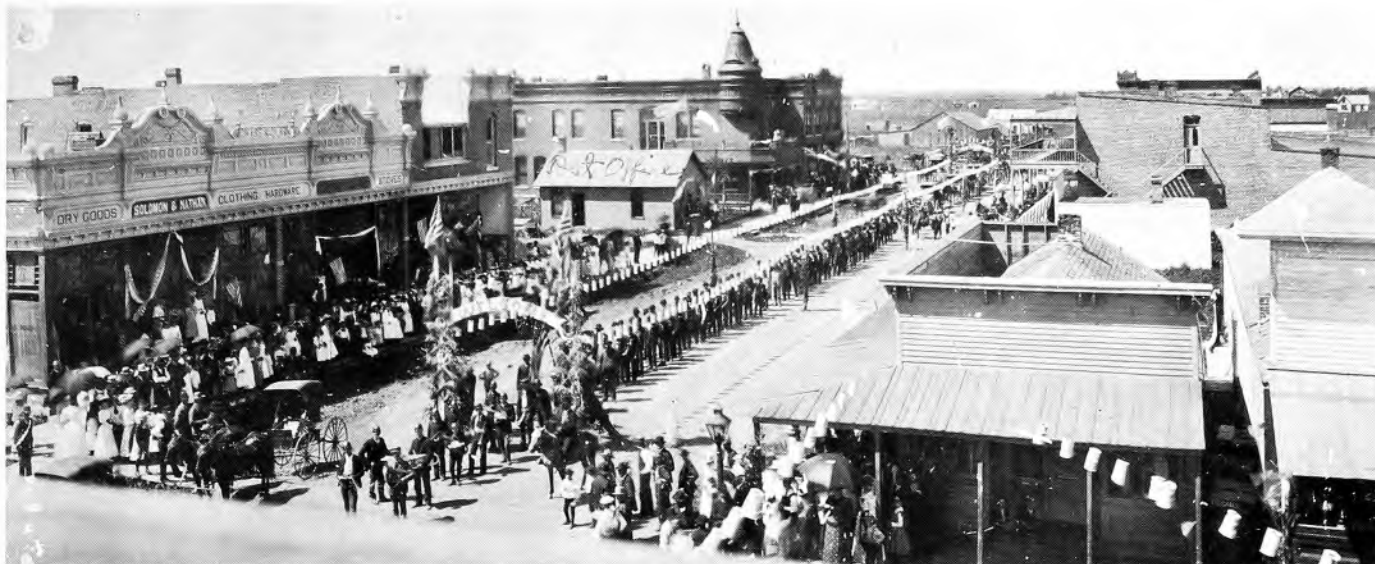


Photo from Clarence Palmer
 North Ward School House, Fairmont, Nebr. Built in 1885. North of
 Railroad tracks.

Official State Atlas of Nebraska (1885)
 Map of Fairmont in 1885.



Geneva Band at A.O.U.W. Convention in Fairmont, before 1893. Looking west on Jefferson St.

Photo from Paul Bender



Looking Southeast from Fillmore Avenue. Fairmont early 1890's.

Photo from Mary Halsey



Fairmont Avenue ("Main Street"), looking south (1910). Bank building in foreground; Methodist Church in upper center; Congregational Church at left. (This picture taken from the Fairmont standpipe.)

Photo from A. L. Brown



Main Street, looking north on pavement (1920).

Picture from Nebraska Signal



Photo from A. L. Brown
Fairmont Avenue ("Main Street"), looking south (July 25, 1940).



Photo from Alva Brown
William S. Brown's Garage (1912)—the first in Fairmont.



Photo from Clarence Palmer
Livery Barn, Fairmont, Nebr. about 1907. Rigs hitched ready for a funeral. Mel Millen and his coach dog.



Photo from Mary Halsey
Fairmont lumber yard. Late 1880's.



Photo from Mrs. Alta Roper
Building built before 1900. Elmer Spahr in front of coal and feed office. Fairmont South Railway St. and Fairmont Avenue. Lot No 371.



Photo from Clarence Palmer
Men who built the Fairmont telephone line about 1880.

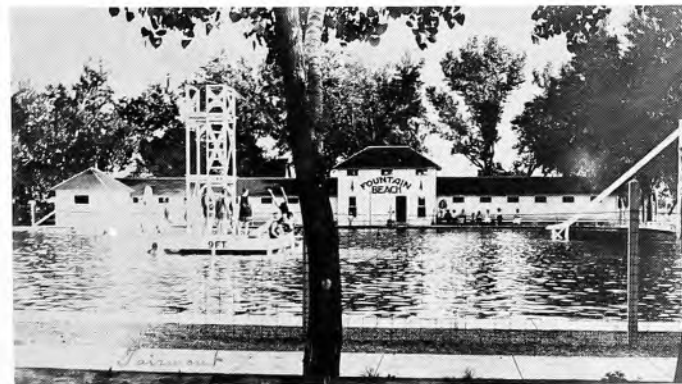


Photo from Ora Robbins
Fountain Beach, Fairmont. Located on lots 645, 646 and 647; bordered on the west by West Avenue, and by Jackson Street on the north. The pool was built about 1900 by Ed Hall.



Photo by Harold Hurst
Original Fairmont Creamery Plant. Present day office of Dr's. Ashby & Ashby.