

# Stanton Township

Stanton township is located approximately in the center of Fillmore County; its northeastern corner includes a bit of Geneva, the county seat. It was named for Edwin M. Stanton, President Lincoln's Secretary of War. It is bounded on the north by Geneva township, on the east by Chelsea, on the south by Hamilton, and on the west by Momence townships. Its northern boundary is formed by Nebraska Highway 41 and its eastern one by U.S. 81. It is crossed diagonally from its northeast to its southwest corner by the Fremont-Superior line of the Chicago & Northwestern R.R. It is also crossed from north to south by the Fairmont-Hebron line of the Burlington, which runs in a straight line down the middle of

the six eastern sections (Secs. 1 to 36), and through Geneva.

The general lay of the land is quite level. As the township has very few streams, except the south branch of Turkey Creek, which zigzags from southwest to northeast across Sec. 6, it is practically all usable farmland. The soil is a heavy loam which will raise almost all crops quite well; the principal ones are wheat, corn, oats, alfalfa, and milo. The early settlers put in a good many orchards, but for lack of subsoil moisture these are now all gone. With the coming of pump irrigation, more fruit and gardens may again be raised. By July 1, 1967, there were 77 irrigation wells in Stanton township.

**Stanton Township Homestead Map**

William H. Powell	Jesse Walker		Edmund Shreffler	Isaac McBlair		Milo Scriven	William T. Barry	Calvin H. Bane	
Heirs of Isaac Lightbody	Frank Reinsch								
James J. Lightbody	J. John Marson	George Bowman	George E. Bigelow and McKenzie Conwell	William Huntley		Virgil A. Jones	David Lee		
		5 Railroad Land			3 Railroad Land			1 Railroad Land	
		Cornelius M. Bowman	William Roles		William Burnett			William H. Read	Solomon Harbaugh
		William H. Bowman							
		John Trehka	Anton Lutz		Fred Webb	Adam Brunner	Lyman Kirkland	Jane Lemmon	Hiram J. Stevens
				9 Railroad Land				11 Railroad Land	Isaiah Saylor, Jr.
Nicholas Paulus	John M. Wadman	Mary McDougal	Daniel McDougal					J. C. Rosenberg	James L. Richards
Nicholas P. Gergen	John Cobb	William Gibson		16 School Land				Jacob Earnie	Thomas W. Stout
					15 Railroad Land			Oliver C. Brown	
		James Thompson	Charles Mau		George W. Barber	William Hull		John W. Yates	Edward T. Yates
		Charles Charlton	Children of Mary E. Pumphrey		Preston R. Snowden	William P. Friend		Peter E. Yates	Minor W. Platt
				21 Railroad Land					Elias Yates
John C. Grattopp	Allison Foulk				Joseph Axtell	Austin M. Baldwin		Davis B. Watson	Robert Shields, Jr.
Francis A. Bull	James O. Merryman			29 Railroad Land	Francis H. Beach	James D. McPeck		Noah Browhard	Robert Shields, Sr.
Fred Busse									
		Omar H. Harvey	Daniel Axtell						
		James P. Stone	Charles A. St. John						
				33					
					William McPherson	Theodore D. Blackwell			
					John Goodwin	Henry C. Cromwell			
								35 Railroad Land	36 School Land

The township contains four school districts. The first school was the Martland school; the other districts are Nos. 13, 46, and 47.

On Easter Sunday, April 13, 1873, the area was enveloped in a blizzard which lasted for three days. In the summer of the same year, the entire township was stripped of every green blade of grass and every green leaf by a horde of grasshoppers. In 1907, a spring cold snap caused some injury to fruit buds and other tender vegetation. The thermometer went down to 18° above zero. In 1916, the thermometer went down to -20° F., the winter's record.

Many changes have taken place in Stanton township. Today almost every home is modern, with a telephone, electricity, indoor plumbing, and all modern conveniences. The first telephones were installed in 1903. Electricity came (R.E.A.) in 1951.

### Martland and Community

Nebraska in the early days was truly a wild and endless prairie, covered with buffalo grass, which billowed and waved in the western wind. Tumbleweeds and jack rabbits scurried across the plains with nothing much to stop them, as there were no fences or trees, and only a few crude "dug-out" homes or "soddies."<sup>1</sup>

There were drouths, hailstorms, and blizzards as well as grasshoppers to fight, and our grandparents were some of the fighters. They were some of the early settlers who came westward to stake a claim for themselves and to build homes. It was difficult to tame the prairie, but our grandparents had the stamina to do just that.

There are nowadays no reminders on Nebraska farms of the sweat and tears dropped in those first long furrows which made the virgin soil into productive farmland. One cannot forget the spirit of helpfulness that existed in a new country where the richest men had little money, and courage was the strong man's creed.

Yes, our grandparents, the early settlers in and around Martland, triumphed over drouth and pestilence. They stayed and watched the cottonwood switches they had pulled from the sandbars of the shallow, slow, winding Blue River, grow into great trees; some of them are still standing, living monuments to them. They stayed on until their acres were converted into fields of wheat, corn, and grass. The comfortable farmhouse replaced the rude dugouts and sod houses. They stayed on and helped conquer the land and build the great empire of the Middle West.

The first comers to the prairie found plenty of "buffalo chips" to use as fuel. Great herds of bison had roamed those plains for a thousand years; their offal, drying in the sun, remained as firm and hard disks for years, until, under summer rains and winter snows, they disintegrated and returned to the soil. But the settlers had plenty at first. Grandpa used to tell about gathering a wagon load and dumping it beside the sod house for fuel. Later on, cow chips were used; then, as corn crops were raised and gathered, cobs became a standby. Also, on occasion, slough grass or coarse hay was twisted into tight rolls and used as fuel. And there came a time, one year or more, when corn was so plentiful and cheap—a load of corn hauled into town would bring back not more than a couple of bushels of coal—that we used corn for fuel. Grandma used to say, "Some day the country will pay for that sin!"

In the sod house, which was easy to keep warm, a small cookstove was used.

One winter Grandpa bought some trees from a man who lived near the Blue River. He saved even the small limbs and brush in our yard, piled helter-skelter and hard to separate. The boys had to chop up armloads of it into stove-lengths for the house. I fear Grandma had to go to the brush pile herself many times to get fuel with which to cook dinner! The neighbors used to call that brush heap "Aanlam's Crow's Nest."

One day, I heard Grandma relate that a "Home Comfort Wrought Iron Range Company" sent a salesman from St. Louis, Missouri, out through the new country, with a demonstrator range in his light wagon. He asked for lodging for himself and team for the night. The next morning he demonstrated how strong and durable the range was, and he stressed "always a supply of water in the reservoir."

Truly, Grandma deserved that kitchen range, but the price was the drawback—\$95, which was an awful lot in those times. Easy payments were worked out, however, and in due time the new stove came by freight. It really proved to be a "Home Comfort," Grandma said, and it was a real pleasure to cook on it. That was 'way back in the 1870's. Who would have ever dreamed that nowadays we would be cooking with gas or electricity?

**Martin Danielson** and his wife Ellen, came to America from Sweden in 1884, and settled on a farm one mile west of Ong. Mrs. Wayne Churchill of Geneva was formerly Irene Hillgren, the daughter of Gus and Mary Van Buren Hillgren. After the death of her mother, she was adopted by her cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Hillgren. Roy's mother, Anna Danielson, was the daughter of Martin Danielson. Mrs. Charles Higginbotham, who passed away in Geneva on August 18, 1954, was also a daughter of Martin Danielson and came over to America with them. The Danielsons moved into Fillmore County and bought land northeast of Shickley.

Since it was "Mart's land," the folks who were interested in starting a little village there thought it was only right and proper to name the village "Martland"; and so that's how Martland got its name.

It was surveyed in January, 1887, by V. A. Jones. Mr. Danielson was an instigator in starting the first store there. George Bates helped build it. It was a branch store. One of the first storekeepers was John Swails, father of Lonnie (Rastus) Swails of Geneva, Rastus's earliest recollections are from 1888 or 1889. It seems that W. R. Hitch and Rathburn backed up the store, and Mr. Swails ran it for a while. Though it didn't do well financially, the store carried on. It was not generally known who really owned the store.



Photo from Nebraska Signal  
Martland Store



Photo from Mrs. Wayne Churchill  
Martin Danielson, for whom Martland was named.

The John Swails family lived upstairs over the store. Pearly Swails was born there. In 1891, the Swails family moved to a farm a few miles north of Martland.

Other storekeepers who served in the store were: Bert Skinner's father and Kavan, Bert Skinner, Ashmore, George Matthewson, W. F. Dale, David Baker, Pratt Woodard, Albert Gruenhagen, Ed Snodgrass, Fred Worthington, Roy Hillgren, Darold Richards, Reuben Lichti, and Bill Snowhard.

<sup>1</sup>This section, "Martland and Community," was written by Mrs. Edgar Schelkopf.

## Martland Church

The first church which served the Martland community was 1¼ miles S of Martland. It was a United Brethren Church and the first pastor was Preacher Cornish, as they called them in those years.



Photo from Mrs. Wayne Churchill

Martland Church in 1916. Rev. Charlton, minister, at far right, holding child.

I wonder if the hardships of the pioneers didn't draw them closer to God and keep them praying more. We all know that the closer we live to God the happier and more satisfied we are. Maybe that is why those pioneer years were called the "Good Old Years."

The John Browns lived across the road west of the church, and across the road south of Browns lived the Chris Ackers. Some of you older folks will remember these families. George, Charley, and Homer Acker were sons of the Chris Ackers. The church was moved to Martland in 1892, and placed about 20 rods west of where the former old school-house stands.

Some of the later pastors from 1912 on were: Rev. Melville, Rev. J. C. Strickler, Rev. J. C. Mower, Rev. E. H. Pontius, Miss Esther Olewine, and Rev. A. B. Small.

This little church in Martland stood out for many years as a refuge and strength for those in the community; even though at times it kept us guessing as to how we could keep the expenses up, we always came out all right. The Ladies' Aid was always alive with new ambitions to keep up the interest that never seemed to lag in the Martland Church.

The Martland Church was remodeled and redecorated in 1949. On November 2, 1949, it was rededicated. The Rev. Walter Chittenden was the pastor. The Rev. W. P. Watkins, district superintendent, gave the address.

The fund for the redecorating was started when Rev. Walter Millett served the church. The "Lord's Acre" project was worked out at that time. Each person or family gave the amount that an acre would produce. The church men rented 80 acres and farmed it two years for the church. The fund continued, and building was done, while the Rev. John Reger was pastor.

It was used about two years after that. Then, as many had moved away from the community, there were only 10 families remaining who were regular attendants and could be depended upon to keep the church going. The merger of the Evangelical and the United Brethren Churches raised the salary of the student pastor beyond the amount that these 10 families could pay, along with higher benevolences. The merger of York College with the one at Le Mars, Iowa, removed local student pastors and those few families could not possibly support a full-time pastor.

This was the pressure that closed the church. The Geneva United Brethren Evangelical Church purchased the Martland Church seats and hymnals.

Later pastors of Martland were: Rev. Seth Jacobsen (1936-37); Rev. Ray Thompson (1937-39), Iowa student; Rev. Howard Hines (1939-41), Colorado student; Rev. Everett Tracy (1941-42), Nebraska student; Rev. Omar Wetherell (1942-43), Fulton, Mo., student; Rev. (Prof.) Walter G. Noll (1943-44), York College; Rev. Walter Millett (1944-47), Omaha student; Rev. John Reger (1947-49), Nebraska student; Rev. Walter Chittenden (1949-50), resident; Rev. Richard Shapland (1950-51), Nebraska student.



Photo from Mrs. Maynard Merryman

Rededication of Martland E. U. B. Church, November 2, 1949

## Martland Elevator

Of Martland, nothing is left standing except the elevator, still on its original plot and still serving the community, Mr. Camerman was the first manager. While there, he had some kind of fever which took all his hair and left him completely bald. Charley Conner operated the elevator in 1896. That was the year of a big corn crop, which sold at 10 and 11 cents a bushel. Some of the following managers were Al Russell, Jim Burke (1910), Anton Posvar (1917-1927), and Fred Worthington. The present manager is Robert Hall, whose family live in the former Fred Worthington house.

The following accident story is from the *Nebraska Signal* for August 7, 1947:

"Tragedy struck this vicinity Saturday forenoon about 11:30, when a bin filled with wheat at the Martland elevator suddenly gave way, snuffing out the lives of three men. Those killed were Fred Worthington, Sr., proprietor of the elevator; Glenn Richards, a farmer of near Martland; and Roy Carter of Bruning. Mr. Richards and Mr. Carter had gone to the elevator to settle for wheat previously sold there.

"The accident was discovered by Virgil Steffens, who, about 10:30, had delivered a load of wheat at the elevator, then had gone on an errand. About 11:30 he returned to the Martland store about ¼ mile from the elevator. He noticed wheat spilled over the driveway and out into the roadway. Accompanied by Reuben Lichti, proprietor of the store, Mr. Steffens went over to the elevator. They knew at least one man was buried in the grain as they could see the top of Mr. Richards' head.

"They hurried back to the store and called Sheriff Tobiassen and the first-aid truck of the Geneva fire department. The sheriff put in a line ring for men with scoops to come to aid in shoveling out the grain. By the time work began the wheat had settled so the top of Mr. Worthington's head was visible. Not much could be done in the way of reaching the men until farmers arrived with scoops, which was very shortly.

"Mr. Worthington and Mr. Richards were found in a standing position, close together, at the corner of the driveway and a runway that led east to the railroad track. The former received a head injury from flying timbers and his death is believed to have been instantaneous. Mr. Richards suffered internal injuries, but whether death was due to them or suffocation is not known. Mr. Carter was found about the center of the driveway under several feet of wheat. His legs were pinned down by parts of the bin. He was on his back.

"The bin that gave way contained 6,000 bushels of wheat and was a double bin along the west side of the driveway. The collapse must have occurred without warning, as the men apparently were trapped about where they stood. There are two more large divisions with two bins each west of the ones that gave way. The sound of the collapse was not heard at the Worthington home about 70 or 80 yards from the elevator.

"Mr. Worthington was loading a car of wheat at the elevator, which is no doubt why the other two men were there instead of at the office close by. Martland is 7 miles SW of Geneva on the Northwestern Railroad. The elevator had been filled to capacity at times during the harvest season."





Photo from Merritt Hedden  
Martland Elevator Collapse

### Martland School—District 55

The "Merryman School," as it was called, was moved into Martland about 1893. It seems that it was moved in the night. It was placed a little west of the present schoolhouse, which was built about 1899. I remember Mr. Adams and Sheridan Owens were two of the earlier teachers in the new schoolhouse. L. O. Swails tells me that my mother (Mrs. Sada Heery, now deceased), Sada Davis then, was his first teacher in the Merryman schoolhouse, when it was across from Jim Merryman's, and his father's brother, Ed Swails, taught there one term. Teachers who have taught in the later-built schoolhouse are: Nelson Ronne, Ruth Schelkopf, George Rotter, Herbert Frank, D. D. Brown, Frances Patten, Wilma Whittaker, Lucille Nicholson, Florence McCauley, Marion Kroll, Ruth Sutter, Clara Busse, Irene Gruenhage, Jeanette McNamara, Helen Schwab, Gladys Anderson, Helen Hedden, and Roine Kempf.

The Martland schoolhouse is presently being used as a community hall.



Photo from Mrs. Maynard Merryman  
Martland's high school and lower grades (District No. 55, 1926).

### Depot

When word came to Geneva that the Northwestern Railroad would be built through here, the flag was immediately run up on the courthouse to let the people know the glad tidings. In the evening, a big crowd gathered and indulged in a jubilee. Guns were fired, bonfires lighted and the band played.

The railroad came through Martland in 1888 and the necessary depot was erected. The first agent was Louis Wilkie. Some of those who followed him were Charlie Crocker, John Muir, Milton Hoak, and Charlie Clements. Some of the section men working out of Martland were D. R. Martin, Sam Saltzman (for a time), and Charlie Clements, before he went into the depot.

### Post Office

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Davis kept the Eden post office in their sod house, 2 miles S and 1/4 mile E of Martland for a time. Mention was made in the "70 Years Ago" items of the *Nebraska Signal* (1956) of a hog belonging to Mr. Davis getting snowed in on January 3, 1886. He did not find the animal for 44 days. The hog was weak, but otherwise all right. Mr. Davis was the grandfather of Mrs. Edgar Schelkopf of Geneva, the former Essie Crowley. Edgar Schelkopf

was the son of M. L. Schelkopf who was chairman of the county board in 1908.

After Mr. Davis, Ed Beach kept the post office in their sod house across from Martland for a year or so, after which it was located in the new depot. Later, about 1903, it was moved into a building which was built north of the store. The second story of this building was later used for a Woodmen lodge hall.



Photo from Mrs. Norris Mülle  
Martland School (District 55) pupils in the spring of 1918. Semicircle, left to right: Cleo Theobald, Earl McPeck, Isabel Diederich, Margaret Walker, Fern Cruse, Dorothy Clements, Edna Posvar, Trudy Theobald, Lavonne Mülle, Ruth McPeck, Leroy Merryman, Irene Gruenhage, Clara Augustine, Lola McPeck, Ada Bass, Lorena Walker, Helen McPeck, Florentine Rotter, Archie Merryman, John Walker, Morris Merryman, James McPeck (in front), Maynard Merryman, Kenneth Clements. Front row: Fred Posvar, Joe Walker, Royal Cruse, Fred Gruenhage, Leroy Diederich, Bill Posvar.

The following three items are from the files of the *Nebraska Signal*:

### History of Eden Post Office (By Mrs. Grant Bail)

Last week, the *Signal* reported a visit to this county by William H. Beach of Racine, Wisconsin, who was trying to locate his family home in this county and also learn something of a post office called Eden, which he believed his father operated.

Several readers remembered the Eden post office, but they remembered it as being located on the Henry Davis place in Hamilton township. The Beach homestead was located just east of Martland, on property now belonging to Mrs. Reese Austin.

Mrs. Grant Bail of near Martland, a long-time resident of Stanton township, this week wrote a letter to the *Signal* explaining the apparent discrepancy. Her letter is as follows:

"I remember when the Eden post office was started. It was in the Francis H. Beach sod house. When the people learned we were to have a post office the neighbors met at the Beach house one evening to decide on a name for the office. The people who settled this part of the country thought it the Garden of Eden, so they named the office Eden.

"I played with Maggie and Everett Beach. I have Maggie's picture yet. When the Beaches left here they went to Beloit, Kansas. Then the post office was moved a mile south to the Henry Davis home. They kept the post office several years. It was still called Eden.

"A man came on horseback once a week with the mail. My folks, the James Merrymans, got their mail at Eden. They lived one mile west of the Beach place on Section 30." —*Signal*, July 24, 1952

### Got Mail at Eden Post Office (By Fred and Dora Ekwall)

Fred S. Ekwall of Sheridan, Wyoming, a Stanton township pioneer, writes the *Signal* some interesting early-day history as follows:

"Sheridan, Wyoming, July 31, 1952

"Dear Friends:

"As to the early history of the Eden post office as told by Mrs. Grant Bail in the *Signal* of July 24, I want to compliment Mrs. Bail on her write-up. No one knows the early history of Fillmore County better than Mrs. Bail (as to the early settlers and happenings in those days).

"In the early 1880's we got our mail at the Eden post office. We were living with an uncle of ours at that time on Sec. 29, Stanton township, 1/2 mile W of Martland. Since I had a saddle pony it was up to me to go to Eden post office and bring our mail home.

"I well remember the Henry Davis family, the sod house, and the mailman delivering the mail on horseback. The mail was placed on the bed and was handed out to those getting their mail there. In our mail that I would bring home was the *Nebraska Signal* published at Fairmont at that time, the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, and the *Kansas City Star*, which were always welcome at our home.

"When the Chicago Northwestern Railway surveyors were laying out the town site of Martland and doing other railway surveying, they got their meals at the home of our uncle, Swan Ekwall.

"Mother, at that time, was taking care of the house. At the dinner table the question came up as to what to name the town site that had been laid out. Uncle Swan mentioned that the land on which the town site was laid out was owned by a man by the name of Martin Danielson. One of the men in the surveying party spoke up and said, 'Let's name the town site Martland.' So that's how Martland got its name.

"I helped to unload the first load of grain that was brought into Martland. It was loaded into a railway box car before the elevator was built. After the elevator was built, I was in charge of it that fall and winter.

"Many happy days were spent at Martland with our folks and friends, but no more Martland—just memories."

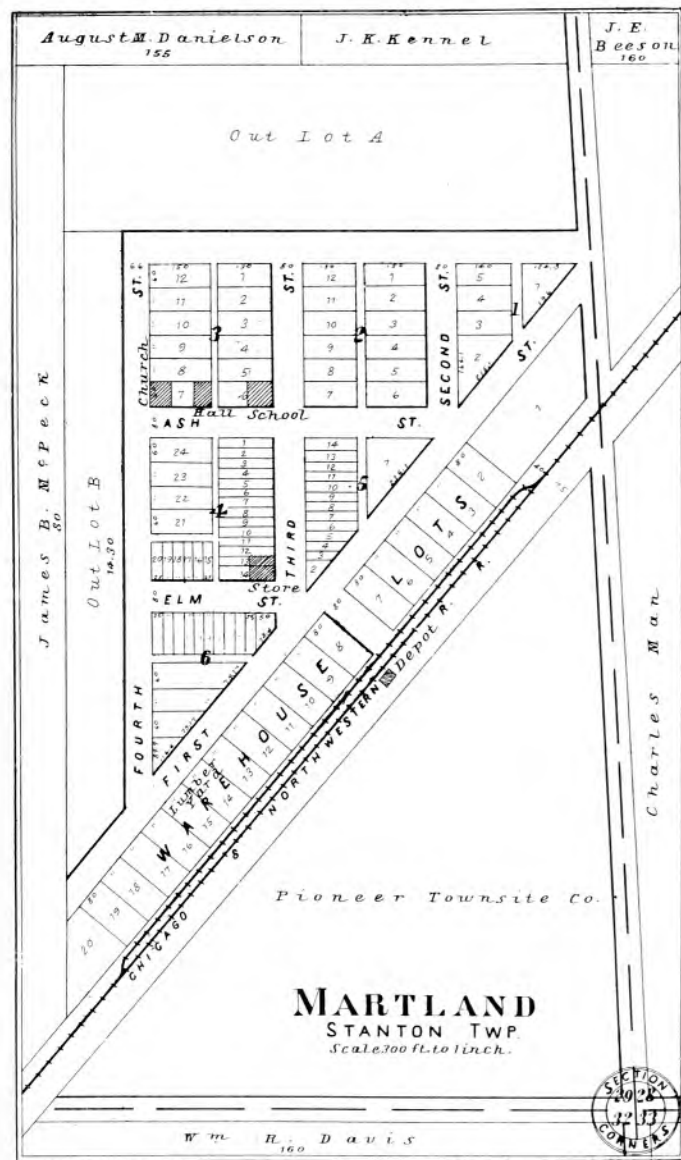
—Signal, August 7, 1952

#### Martland Post Office No More

The Martland post office was discontinued as of Friday evening on orders from the post office department. The mail will go through Shickley rural route 1. Patrons of the office had become very few.

Martland had a post office many years. It was formerly at the Northwestern depot and John Muir, the agent, was also postmaster. Later it was moved to the Martland store and the store proprietor was made postmaster.

—Signal, October 6, 1949



Standard Atlas of Fillmore County (1905)  
Map of Martland in 1905

#### Newspaper

The first newspaper published in the village was the *Martland Midget*, an 8" x 12" sheet of four pages, published by Bert Skinner and a man named Bushkirk. It carried news

of local events, church notices, announcements of Woodmen lodge meetings, and liberal advertising.

#### Blacksmith Shop

Oxen were used by some in this early settlement. There was a blacksmith shop started up east of the store, which was run by John Shuster. After Mr. Shuster, Frank Kabley operated it.

#### Lodges

The Martland Woodmen lodge was organized in the early 1890's. Charley Crocker served as clerk for some years. In 1916, the Woodmen Camp annual reunion was held at the M. L. Schelkopf home. At that time the lodge was the only organization in Martland. Later there was a flourishing Royal Neighbors lodge.

#### Stanton Woman's Club

On the afternoon of Thursday, June 30, 1921, 22 women of Stanton township met with County Agent J. L. Thomas at the Martland schoolhouse and organized a Woman's Farm Bureau Club. The following officers were elected: Mrs. Milton Hoak, president; Mrs. William Wilkins, vice-president; Mrs. Ray Carson, secretary; Mrs. Clark Yates, treasurer; Mrs. Grant Bail, press correspondent. They voted to meet on the last Wednesday afternoon of each month. This club has proved to be a success and a big help to the community. It is still active today.

The following account of the local community program was written by Mrs. Roy Hilgren in 1926:

I am proud of my community: First, because of the Woman's Club organized five years ago in our township, called Stanton "Woman's Club," with a membership of 20. It has this past year 91 members. After organizing, our next question was a place to meet, many of the homes being too small to accommodate the gatherings. Through the kindness of the taxpayers, our township hall was enlarged and a stage put in; in fact, a good-sized community hall was the result. Our club bought dishes, an oil stove, and necessary utensils. Many times community dinners were held in the hall. It is fitted with chairs, benches, and a piano, all purchased by the club. This past summer a music teacher gave lessons on the piano there.

The club has a Community Chest, fitted with gowns, sheets, and almost everything necessary for a sickroom. All sick and "shut in" friends are remembered with flowers. We also have stork showers for all new babies.

Boys' and girls' clubs both in canning and sewing have been organized and excellent work has been accomplished.

Second, because of the excellent 10-grade district school under the supervision of 2 very competent teachers, thereby enabling our young folks to be at home while they receive the proper training.

Third, because of the Martland Band of 12 young people in charge of a competent leader of our own community. This furnishes a pastime for our young people and there is nothing like good, clean music to build character.

Fifth and last, but not least, is the church, with preaching every two weeks and Sunday School every Sunday morning. The Ladies' Aid of our church is very active, and much good is done by these "Hand Maidens of God."

#### Band

A band was started in 1899 and continued until 1902. It was composed of 25 pieces. The bandmaster was Silas Camp. Later on, in 1926, a group of 12 young people in charge of a competent community leader, Anton Posvar, furnished music for our many entertainments that Martland was always working out. This furnished a pleasant pastime for our young folks, and it had its part to play in building character. Martland always seemed to have folks in and around about who had talent and who enjoyed helping with community programs.

#### Literary Society

A literary society was organized at Martland in 1907 with Arthur Larson as president, Guy Carson as vice-president, Jesse Tomlin as secretary and treasurer, and George Cruse as sergeant at arms.



## Community Hall

The little town of Martland, Nebraska, has only a church, school, store, elevator, and depot, but it has a woman's club of 60 members that has been responsible for the creating of unusually progressive community spirit and the building of a fine community hall. The woman's club, known as "Stanton Woman's Club," consisted of both town and country women.<sup>1</sup>

When the organization began to grow, it was found that the little town hall as well as the schoolhouse afforded insufficient room for a meeting place. A larger place was needed. So, after threshing the problem out, it was decided to enlarge the old town hall.

A committee was appointed to meet with the town board and discuss plans for building an addition to the hall. The proposition took favorably and in March it was put to a vote of the people of the community. There was only one negative vote. Work on building the annex began on a Wednesday in March, and by Saturday night of the same week, the extra section was up, enclosed, and shingled. Thirty men did the work and the Woman's Club members fed the workers. All of the work was given free and the material for the annex cost approximately \$400, which was appropriated from the township fund for public improvements.



Photo from Mrs. Essie Schelkopf  
Community Hall, Martland

The enlarged community building which is shown in the accompanying picture will seat a goodly crowd of people. It has a stage, dressing rooms, a piano, an oil stove for cooking meals, dining tables, and chairs. It is equipped to accommodate home talent plays, literary programs, Farm Bureau meetings, community dinners, and other affairs.

Nobody ever says that "It can't be done" in Martland. This is the creed that we live by:

"Somebody said that it couldn't be done,  
But he, with a chuckle, replied  
That maybe it couldn't, but he would be one  
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried."

## SCHOOLS

School District No. 13—comprising the S  $\frac{1}{2}$  of Sec. 1 and all of Secs. 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 in Stanton township—was organized on January 22, 1872. The election of officers was held at the home of Daniel Lee on January 27, 1872.



Photo from Caroline Lauenstein

District No. 13 (about 1947). A play acted by the pupils. Left to right: Caroline Janing, Shirley Sanders, Sharon Theobald, Dick Theobald, Richard Janing, Larry Sanders, Perry Lindbloom. The teacher (not in picture) was Miss Virginia Moor.

In the early days the pupils ranged in age from 5 to 20 years, and most of them walked to school. The roads were little more than trails, and so some of the younger ones often

<sup>1</sup>The date of this account is not known. Consolidation of farms had by 1967 reduced the membership to 19; but the club was still active.

were absent for weeks at a time. Many of the boys stayed out when farm work was pressing; some of the older ones did not start till the corn was cut and quit when spring field work started. The schoolhouse was crowded, with three in a seat, and sometimes with not enough books to go around. The children who were absent got behind in their work, so that a 20-year-old might be in a class with a 10-year-old.

It was thought to be a proper thing to run the teacher out of school, and so it sometimes took two or three teachers to finish a term. In the early 1890's, the board hired consecutively three men teachers who could and did use a bat to good effect. That ended the teacher baiting.

As more graduates went on to high school, it became necessary to keep the work more in line with that of the town schools. Attendance became more regular, and as the farms became larger the number of pupils became smaller. Some went to church schools and others went to town schools, so that the enrollment dropped to two or three pupils. In 1951, the district started contracting with District 75, and buses from Geneva picked up the children.

The first schoolhouse stood on the SE corner of Sec. 2, where it remained until the summer of 1888. To get it farther away from the railroad and nearer the center of the district, it was then moved to the SE corner of the SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 11, where it remained until it was sold in 1954.

Year	Teachers	Term	Salary
1872	Pearley Reed	3 months	\$30 per month
1873- (?)	Emma Harney	Not listed	Not listed
1874- (?)	Emma Harney	Not listed	Not listed
1875-76	Maggie Stewart	2½ months	\$30 per month
	A. D. Stevens	6 months	\$40 per month
1876-77	Nettie Howe	3 months	Not listed
1877-78	J. B. Sexton	2 months	Not listed
	Erma McElba	2 months	Not listed
1878-79	Frank Hoff	4 months	Not listed
1879-80	Mary Hart	3 months	Not listed
	Sewell May	3 months	Not listed
1880-81	Mary Hart	3 months	Not listed
	S. A. Slaughter	3 months	Not listed
1881-82	Mary Hart	2 months	Not listed
	Lance A. Weed	1 month	Not listed
	W. P. Evans	3 months	Not listed
1882-83	Luella Harbaugh	3 months	Not listed
	Flora Harbaugh	4 months	Not listed
1883-84	Flora Harbaugh	3 months	Not listed
	Sadie Martin	4 months	Not listed
1884-85	Flora Harbaugh	10 months	Not listed
1885-87	No record		
1887	Kate Fisher	3 months	Not listed
1888	Flora Harbaugh	6 months	Not listed
1888-89	McKeegan		Not listed
	"Two Kennedy girls"		
1889-90	Stephens	(About this time	Not listed
1891-92	Miss Huston	the word "term"	Not listed
1892-93	J. L. Adams	comes to mean	
1893-94	W. G. Phillips	the "school year,"	
1894-95	Milt Ames	from fall to	
1895-97	Mattie Heebler	spring)	
1897-99	Ed Lane		Not listed
1899-1901	Irene Holister		
1901-02	Jessie Clark		
1902-04	R. A. Case		\$44 per month
1904-05	Stella Wilson		\$40 per month
1905-06	Hazel Combs		\$35 per month
1906-07	Lydia Hafer		\$35 per month (raised to \$40)
1907-09	Margaret Kenney		Not listed
1909-10	Margaret Kenney	(Six months; two	Not listed
	Eva Embree	months filled out)	Not listed
1910-11	Della Yates		Not listed
1911-13	Emma McGraw		Not listed
1913-17	Margaret Kenney		Not listed
1917-19	Ada Huston		Not listed
1919-20	Rhea Bumgarner		Not listed
1920-21	Stella Gilmore		Not listed
1921-22	Merle Coleman		Not listed
1922-23	Angela Shemmer		Not listed
1923-24	Genevieve Rock		Not listed
1924-25	Iris Kinney		Not listed
1925-26	Eva Myers		Not listed
1927-29	Audra Henry		Not listed
1929-30	Velma Reichert		Not listed
1930-31	Lena Moss		Not listed
1931-32	Audra Henry		Not listed
1932-34	Doris Haver		Not listed
1934-37	Burnice Fussell		Not listed

1937-39	Wilma Mau	Not listed
1939-41	Marcella Kelly	Not listed
1941-42	Marjorie Sinn	Not listed
1942-43	Jean Stephenson	Not listed
1943-44	Mrs. Apley	Not listed
1944-48	Virginia Moor	Not listed
1948-51	Maxine Bornschlegl	Not listed
1951	School contracted with District 75, Geneva.	

**District No. 46**, in the southeast corner of Stanton township, consists of Secs. 22 to 27 inclusive and Secs. 34, 35, and 36. This district was formed on May 20, 1872, at the Peter Yates home on the SE corner of Sec. 24. Robert Shields was notified to let the homesteaders and others interested know of the meeting. There is no record of the officers elected, or of school being held in the district before 1878. The first years after the district was formed, the pupils went to other districts (Nos. 13 and 45).

The first schoolhouse was built on the NE corner of Sec. 26. In 1892, it was moved one mile W to the NE corner of Sec. 27. It remained there one year and then was moved  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile S, still on the east side of Sec. 27. This first schoolhouse was used until 1907, when a new building was erected. The site remained the same until the schoolhouse was sold in 1952.

The last time school was held in District 46 was the spring of 1945. For two years they contracted with Martland, and since then have contracted with the Geneva school district.



Photo from Mrs. Wilbur Anderson

District No. 46 in 1925. *Front row, left to right:* Russell Dubois, May Toren, John Fisher. *Back row, left to right:* Elva DuBois, Mabel Wells, Helen Reinsch, Frances Fisher.

The first teacher of record was Laura Welb (Mrs. John Yates) in 1878 and 1879. Those who followed her were:

1880	Eva Janes
1881	Flora Harbaugh
1882-83	Mary E. Deming
1884	Ella Merrill
1885	James Evans

From 1883 to 1890 the following teachers served: Mary Jaynie, Erma Stephenson, Lucy Kimbrough, and Ella Demaree.

1891	Ella Allen (Mrs. Al Kline)
1892-93	George Madison
1893-95	Miss Arrowsmith
1895-96	Miss Bumgarner
1896-97	No record
1897-98	Miss Jessie Morgan
1898-99	Clara Cole, C. H. Merryman
1900-04	M. P. Ames
1905	(spring) Verna Mowry (Mrs. Tom Wagner)
1906-07	Carrie Sauer
1907-08	Meda Welty (Mrs. Clark Yates)
1908-09	Mary Davis
1909-11	Delia Fisher
1911-12	Nora Dunn
1912-13	Mable Benson (Mrs. William Hourigan)
1913-14	Raymond Kenney
1914-32	Nora Dunn
1932-33	Verneda Johnson
1933-34	Verneda Johnson and Ruth Stickle
1934-36	Verneda Johnson
1936-39	Elsie Bender (Mrs. Gay Fisher)
1939-42	Maxine Schelkopf (Mrs. Jake Bornschlegl)

1942-43	Norma Ekwall (Mrs. Harris)
1943-45	Mrs. Helen Hedden

In 1945 the school contracted with Martland.

The district made fast advancement starting with dug-outs and sod houses. Within only a few years many new places were built and families moved in. At one time there were 45 farmsteads in the district; in 1967, there were 11. In the early 1890's, 50 pupils were enrolled and attended school each winter. This large school attendance was very high until the free high-school tuition law was passed. Enrollment then dropped to 20 and 30 until the late 1920's when the farms began to consolidate. At one time in 1946 only one pupil was in school.

Very little of the land in the district is still in original family names or still owned by heirs.

Clark Yates owns and lives on the NE corner of Sec. 23 and Claude Kimbrough owns and lives on the SE corner of Sec. 23. The Frantz family moved into the district in the early 1890's and Rosa Frantz owns and still lives on the NW corner of Sec. 26. Bert Yates still owns the NE corner of Sec. 24, and Norman Yates owns and lives on the NW corner of Sec. 24.

The following men are the ones who received the patent or deeds from the railroad: (The odd sections were deeded by the railroad, which received the patent from the U. S. The even sections were by direct patent from the United States government).



Mr. and Mrs. John Yates (about 1900), with children Clark Yates, Blanche Yates Pangle, and Harry Yates.

*Section 22:* George Barber NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , William Hull NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , William P. Friend SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and Preston R. Snowden SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

*Section 23:* Lyman Pardue NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , George H. Hedges N  $\frac{1}{2}$  NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  and John W. Yates S  $\frac{1}{2}$  NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Jared Yates N  $\frac{1}{2}$  SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  and James H. Kimbrough S  $\frac{1}{2}$  SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and Elizabeth W. Jaynes SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ .



Photo from C. J. Kimbrough  
The J. H. Kimbrough home in 1887



Section 24: John W. Yates NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Edward T. Yates NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Elias Yates SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and Peter R. Yates SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

Section 25: James B. Murray N  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and E. N. Morrill S  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

Section 26: Davis B. Watson NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Robert Shields, Jr., NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Robert Shields Sr., SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and Noah Browhard SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ .



Photo from C. J. Kimbrough  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Shields, Sr., in 1880

Section 27: James B. Murray N  $\frac{1}{2}$ , and Thomas S. King S  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

Section 34: William McPherson NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Theodore D. Blackwell NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , Henry C. Cromwell SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and John Goodwin SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ .

Section 35: John Munson NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , W. G. Greene NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , and E. N. Morrill S  $\frac{1}{2}$ .

Section 36 being school land, these were the men who received the first lease or deed: Silas Bailor deed to N  $\frac{1}{2}$  NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ ; Emanuel Kiester S  $\frac{1}{2}$  NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , deed; J. Jensen NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , lease; John Orr SE  $\frac{1}{4}$ , lease; and [Davis] Watson SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , lease.

Until the early 1920's the roads were unimproved. Now there remain in District 46 only 4 miles of dirt roads; 3 miles are paved, and all the rest are graveled.

The first silo, one of the first in the county, was built in 1911. The first pit silo was dug in 1913. It is the oldest pit silo in the county and is still in good shape.

There is very little waste land in the district. Only 2% of the original prairie remains. There is a good supply of water for irrigation under the whole district, and in time it will be mostly irrigated. The first irrigation well in the district was put down in December, 1940, and more have been added since.

District No. 47 was organized May 15, 1872, comprising Secs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, and 18. The first school meeting in the district was held on the banks of the creek, those attending sitting around on its bank. There were 7 or 8 present, J. H. Sager among them. Mr. Sager built the schoolhouse and taught the first term of school at \$2 a month, boarding himself, and furnishing his own kindling.

District 47 dissolved and attached itself to District 75 (Geneva), effective June 1, 1959.



Photo from Mrs. Owen Cartwright  
District No. 47 entry in the annual corn carnival held in Geneva each fall (taken in 1929). The teacher was Jeanette McNamra; the truck belonged to Walter Mau.

District No. 55 was the Martland (or "Merryman") school, described above under *Martland and Community*.

## FAMILIES

Silas E. Bailor, son of Adam Bailor and Sarah Coombs, was born in Warren County, Ohio, on December 25, 1857, and died at the age of 91 in Wellington, Kansas. The Adam Bailor family came to Nebraska in 1876 and took up a tree claim a few miles southeast of Geneva. Here Silas completed his grade schooling and later attended Geneva High School for a time.

On March 15, 1883, Silas Bailor and Della Adams were united in marriage at Geneva and began farming 5 miles S of town. To this union were born three daughters and one son; one daughter died in infancy. The other two daughters, Mabel and Blanche, attended school in District 46 for a time. The family later moved to Geneva. Mabel is now Mrs. Henry Wernimont of Geneva; Blanche is Mrs. Cecil Wilson of Wellington, Kansas. The son, Silas Bailor, Jr., was power-plant superintendent for the Caneo Co. in Hilo, Hawaii, until his death on July 6, 1965.



Photo from Mrs. Mabel Wernimont  
Silas E. Bailor on cultivator he invented in 1892—A. M. Webb in background.

Working on his farm and at the foundry in the south part of Geneva, Mr. Bailor designed and built the first successful two-row cultivator in 1892. He sold this patent to the Dempster Manufacturing Co. of Beatrice. In 1912, he and others formed the Bailor Cultivator Co. in Atchison, Kansas. The achievements of this part of his life are summarized in this passage from a catalogue issued by the company in the late 1920's: "Mr. Bailor has given to the world the two-row cultivator and two-row lister by a lifetime spent in close attention to every detail and his familiarity with the use of these tools on the farm. The winnowing of a lifetime spent in hard study, many privations, discouragement, and finally success."

Cultivators, listers, harrows, and other machines designed and patented by Silas Bailor were widely used throughout the Great Plains area. They were especially popular in the southern part of the Great Plains and in the lighter-soil areas of the corn belt. The ideas of mechanization of corn and cotton cultivation which Mr. Bailor saw through to reality have contributed extensively to the general modernization of farming during the past 40 or 50 years. It is particularly interesting to note that the two-row cultivator designed by him and exhibited by the Midland Plow Co. at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in 1904 was given the "Highest Award" in competition with other makes from all parts of the world.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Deming came to Fillmore County in 1871 by covered wagon and homesteaded in Stanton township southwest of Geneva. They lived in a sod house for several years. The family of 4 children—Ward, Wallace, Lucy May, and Ida—grew up locally. Besides farming, Henry Deming also taught school. Ida Deming married Emil Eliason, the son of a neighboring pioneer.



**Joseph Diederich** came to Nebraska from Wisconsin in 1875 and purchased from the Burlington Railroad the SW ¼ of Sec. 7 in Stanton township, slightly less than 159 acres. He built a house and brought his family out the following year. His son John bought 80 acres from his father in 1900 and bought the other 80 acres in 1924; Joseph retired to Geneva. After John's death in 1947, the place was turned over to his son, Phil Diederich, who still lives there. Phil has an interesting document, an old tax receipt which shows that the taxes on the farm in 1880 amounted to \$20.33.



Photo from Mrs. John Reinsch  
Joseph and Anna Diederich (about 1888), with their children. Back row, left to right: John, Anna, Lizzie, Albert; Front row: Mary, Barbara (on mother's lap).



Photo from Emil Eliason  
John Eliason and his wife Cecilia

**John E. Eliason** was born in Gothenburg, Sweden, and came to America at the age of seven years. He lived in Kane, Pennsylvania, until he met and married his wife, Cecilia. They came to Stanton township in 1881. The first year, they lived on the Swan Ekwall farm until they could build a sod house on their own land. In 1898, Mr. Eliason went to Chicago, where he lived for a while and worked for the City Railway Co. Later he came back to Fillmore County and farmed. After his retirement, his son Emil took over the place and farmed it until he moved to Clay Center, Nebraska.

(This account, by **E. F. Huntley**, titled "Pioneer Days in Fillmore County," appeared in the *Nebraska Signal*, April 13, 1939.)

I came with my parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Huntley, from Steuben County, Indiana, in 1867. My parents left in a covered wagon, along with four other relatives and their families, also in covered wagons. We left Indiana April 4, 1867. The sickness of my grandmother on my father's side forced us to stop at Waterville, Kansas, where she died. After a five-week stay in Kansas, we came on to Fillmore County and landed on Turkey Creek south of what is known as the Jim Lightbody farm.

Father homesteaded a quarter of land on Sec. 4 in Stanton townships. All of the uncles took homesteads southwest of us in Stanton township. In August, 1867, we built three sod houses, as one uncle was unmarried. Then we had to go to Lincoln, the nearest post office and town, to get our food. We got our fuel for winter on the North Blue with buffalo chips.



Photo from Sam Huntley  
Mr. and Mrs. Elijah F. Huntley and their children in 1917. Back row, left to right: Theresa, Leslie. Middle row: Francis, Arthur, Sam, Chester. Front row: Paul, Elijah and Mrs. Huntley, Fred.

After we finished our sod houses, we had five good teams and we had brought our breaking plows with us. We had to cut hay for our horses with hand scythes, and you can know it took work. After they could unload in the first house they built, they took the wagons and went to Lincoln after food and feed for the horses. After they got the hay made, they had to make fire protection, or fire guards, as they called them, by plowing around hay and burning between strips of plowing. The blue stem was so rank and the grass so heavy that there was great danger of fire.

That was not a bad winter, but the next spring came the Easter storm that lasted three days and three nights. My folks' food supply ran out. There was food at our uncle's, 3 miles away, but the storm was so severe no one could get it, so we were without food for 24 hours. We had some homemade yeast and we children ate the yeast while Mother wept with sorrow and homesickness. The snow drifted until it covered the house, but it did not do any damage to the garden we had planted. We raised sod corn and garden that year.

They lived on the homestead until 1878. Then Father sold it and moved to Bennett township, where they lived four years, and then moved to Momence township.

After I was 21, I was in Colorado one year. Then I came back to my folks in Momence township.

I moved with my folks to Elwood, Gosper County, and stayed there two years. Then I came back to Fillmore County and was married to Miss Addie Mann in 1889. We lived in Bennett township until 1896, when we moved to Clay County, northeast of Edgar. We lived there seven years, then moved back to Momence and we have lived in Momence and Bennett since 1903. So we have lived in Fillmore County 63 years and 72 in the state, taking out the year I was in Colorado.

(Editor's note: "Mr. Huntley is past 78 and Mrs. Huntley is 70. They will have been married 50 years on September 9, 1939.")



Photo from Mrs. Ernest Heinrichs

The Charles Mau family in 1923. Back row, left to right: Gussie (Frantz), Charley, Anne (Otte), Walter C., Minnie (Salzman). Front row: Dorothea (Russell), Charles and Matilda Mau, Rose M. (Cruse).

**Charles Mau** came to the United States as a German immigrant at the age of 20. He came as far west as Omaha, where he found work milking 28 cows a day; after that, he worked in a brewery. In the fall of 1870, he came to Stanton township and took a homestead and moved onto it in the spring of 1871. He built a dugout on the bank of a stream that ran through his land and lived in that until he was able to afford a two-room house. His good friend and neighbor, Chris Gratopp, shared the hardships of people in a new country. Many times they kept warm by the same fire of buffalo chips during the hard and cold winters of those early days.

Mr. Mau was a livestock feeder of cattle and hogs. In the first days of his adventure in livestock, he would buy and herd them himself. Fences were very few in those days. He lived for nine years on his homestead before he met and married his wife. She was Matilda Schoenborn, who had come with her parents from Germany at the age of 10 years. They were married on January 24, 1879. In 1881, Mr. Mau purchased 180 acres just north of his homestead from a family who lived in Wisconsin.

Mrs. Mau was a lover of trees and flowers, and on their homestead they planted fruit and flowering trees of every kind hardy enough to stand the Nebraska winters. Mrs. Mau planted many roses (her favorite flower) that her father had brought with him from Germany. Six of their children were born on this homestead. Later, they purchased a farm near Martland, where their seventh child was born. Again they planted trees and flowers on this new land and built barns and a big house for their family. This farm near Martland was the one that is remembered as their home place. They lived on this farm until they purchased a home in Geneva.

Soon after they moved to Geneva, Mr. Mau passed away, on September 5, 1924. Of his 80 years, he spent 60 in Fillmore County, as one of the oldest pioneers. His wife lived many years after he was gone, passing away at the age of 86 years on April 27, 1950. She had spent 71 years in Fillmore County and had known all the hardships of a pioneer's wife.

**James B. McPeck** came to Nebraska from Ohio in April, 1872, by train. He landed in Omaha, where a cousin, George McPeck, was teaching school. Soon after this, he pre-empted his first piece of land, 160 acres one mile E of Martland; for this he paid \$1.60 an acre.

The land office was at Beatrice. Mr. McPeck and two other men walked from Crete to Beatrice to file for their claims. There was a rush for land there, and several men were after the same tracts, and so these three men were up early and on their way, while the rest slept.

James McPeck's first team was oxen and his first farming equipment was limited. With his crude plow, he broke sod for his one-room sod house and soon had a place to live; then he began farming. He and a man by the name of Steve Dille lived in his sod house for the first winter. The second year, he returned to Ohio, having run out of funds to carry on. He

worked there for a farmer, by the month, and in the fall season cut corn and shocked it, many hours by night, for extra money.

During this time he met Ida Haines, and they were married on October 6, 1876. He returned to Nebraska the same fall and built a small frame house for his bride, who came the following April. By this time, he had bought a small team of mules and a wagon. With this rig, he met his new wife at Fairmont, where they bought scanty furnishings for their new home. Their hardships were the same as those of all the pioneers. Hot winds, grasshoppers, and other discouraging elements, but still they stayed on, determined. As the family grew, he and James Flory of near Shickley added to their homes. The McPecks had two sons, Gilbert and John, and one daughter, Maude.

In the 1890's, James McPeck bought 400 acres of land from James Holcomb across the road from the 160 acres he had pre-empted. He used 100 acres for pasture to feed his cattle and rent to neighbors for their stock. By 1903, his son John had married and was farming a part of the 400 acres, on which a farmstead had been built; and his son Gilbert, also married, was farming the original home place and the rest of the 400 acres. James B. McPeck had retired and moved into Geneva, where he and his wife spent their remaining years. His daughter, Mrs. Maude Flasche, now lives in Florida.

The children of James McPeck are Leslie, Francis, and Gladys, of Geneva, and Mildred, of Lincoln. Gilbert's children are Helen and Lola, in Ohio; Ruth, in Indiana; Jim, in Omaha; Dwaine, of Malcolm, Nebraska; and Earl, of Harvard, Nebraska.

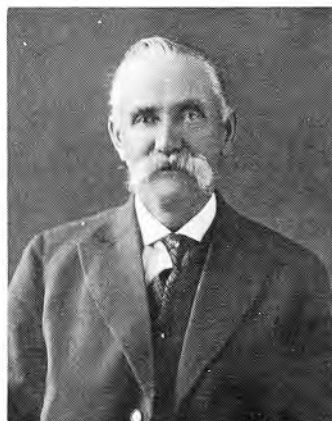


Photo from Derald Merryman



Photo from Maynard Merryman

Mr. and Mrs. James O. Merryman, Sr.

**James O. Merryman** (account by Mrs. Cora Merryman Bail, in the *Signal* for October 15, 1942):

I want to tell you what a pleasure it was for me to eat dinner Sunday, October 11, 1942, at the home of my nephew, LeRoy Merryman and family. I came to that place 71 years ago October 10, when 4 months old. My father, James O. Merryman, homesteaded the SE ¼ of Sec. 30, Stanton township, in the fall of 1870.

That fall he built a dugout and dug a well. In the spring of '71 he came from Cass County, Nebraska, and broke some ground and planted sod corn. He then went back to Cass County where the folks lived with my uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Piper.

June 2, 1871, I was born at my aunt's home. We stayed there till I was a little over 2 months old. By that time father and mother thought I was old enough to bring to an organized county, the place that was to be my first home. I lived there until I was past 21. I was married to Grant Bail February 1, 1893. We moved to our present home, where we have lived almost 50 years.

Father and Mother came from Peoria, Illinois, to Cass County, Nebraska, in a covered wagon and later came to Fillmore County in the same wagon.

Crete was our nearest town. Geneva was unheard of then. So many changes have come that I wonder what the next 50 years will be like.

There were 16 members of our family present Sunday. It was also little Karen Merryman's fourth birthday. If the other six of our circle had been present I feel it would have been a perfect day. Not many can go to their first home after 71 years.

The *Signal* added a few details to the interview with



Mrs. Bail. James Merryman was born in Baltimore, Maryland, and went as a young man to Peoria, where he met and married Miss Jennie Mills on March 10, 1870. They homesteaded on Sec. 30, where they lived in a dugout from 1871 until they built a sod house in 1873-1874. Mr. Merryman had to go to Beatrice to get their homestead recorded. When he came out of the office, he met Charles Mau and Chris Gratopp going in to record their claims for land in Stanton township. J. O. Merryman, Sr., died February 17, 1917, at Towson, Maryland; his body was brought to Martland for burial. His wife Jennie survived him only eight weeks, passing away on April 14, 1917.

Besides Mrs. Bail, other children of the Merrymans were Mate, J. O., and Ray Merryman. Mate died January 28, 1913. Ray, born April 1, 1883, died in 1956. James, Jr., died April 5, 1956. LeRoy Merryman, son of J. O. Merryman, Jr., was accidentally shot while hunting pheasants on October 31, 1957. LeRoy's wife, now Mrs. Virgil Eppler, and his three children still live on the original homestead.



Photo from E. A. Roles  
Ed Roles an early-day character, holding reins of a team of racing mules.

Ed Roles married Jessie McGaffey of Martland in 1894. Her brother, Dick McGaffey, married Roberta Gagey. The Gagey family also lived south of Martland. Ed Roles, in his younger days, was well known for his comic antics and his ventriloquism in entertainments at the old Martland Hall.

Most of the following account of John H. Shively was written in 1957:

John H. Shively was born at Petersburg, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, on August 30, 1866. He was one of a family of 10 children, six boys and four girls. He arrived in Fairmont by train, at the age of 19, on March 27, 1886, and worked for Jap Mosher that year. He helped build the railroad through Geneva. The first Fillmore County Fair was held in Fairmont in 1886, and John was there. In 1892 he moved to Geneva and in the same year married Allie Merrill of Geneva. He is past 90 now; his brick house is still standing.

Mr. Shively operated a threshing machine and threshed at every place between Geneva and Milligan. Robert Turner, the first milkman in Geneva, started a dairy on the place where he lived. Mr. Shively's son-in-law, Maurice McAvoy, lived in Franklin, Nebraska, where he was county superintendent of schools for several years before moving to Lincoln. Mr. McAvoy's grandmother was burned to death on the Fourth of July, 1886, when a tossed firecracker set fire to her long skirts.

Mr. Shively went through the tornado of June 5, 1908. His baby boy that he was carrying in his arms to the cave was struck by some flying object and killed. His own face was torn across, halfway between his eyes and chin. The doctor was sure he would not live and sewed it up roughly. He lay unconscious for nine days. He was badly disfigured but very alert and had a remarkable memory. His other child was also killed, as was the hired girl, who was tangled up in a rake. He is the only one alive of all the family who were in



Photo from Mrs. C. C. Camp  
Remains of John Shively farm home destroyed by cyclone June 5, 1908.

the storm. His daughter Welcome (Mrs. Maurice McAvoy) was born later.

The day he was telling this to me at the history meeting in Geneva, my coat sleeve caught on the cream pitcher on the tray being passed at lunch, spilling cream on my dress and coat. He laughed and said, "What was to be! It's like I've always said, 'Whatever is to be, will be.' I was supposed to be in that storm and everything that happened that day. I, who wasn't expected to live, have outlived them all." About that time his cup slid off his plate onto the floor, smashing, and he said, "Whoopee! What do I owe for the cup—5 cents?"

Mr. Shively spent his later years at Franklin, Nebraska, with his daughter, Mrs. McAvoy. He enjoyed frequent visits to Geneva, which he always called "home." He never missed a county fair. He was publicly recognized at the fair on the evening of August 19, 1958, which was called "John Shively Day."<sup>1</sup>

—Nellie Sheridan

Jake Swails purchased 80 acres, the W ½ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 21 in Stanton township, southwest of Geneva, from the railroad for \$1,200. He paid for the place at the rate of \$100 a year plus interest; it took him 12 years to pay for it. Jake's son, L. O. Swails of Geneva, purchased the place from the estate of his father after World War I. He paid \$8,000 for it, but paid for the place in three years. He wonders who, in the light of the earnings from the farm, paid the most for it. Although no one lives on the place now, it is still in the hands of the family.

Edward Arthur Tomlin, an energetic and prosperous farmer, resided on Sec. 21, Stanton precinct. He was born in Mason County, Illinois on January 6, 1859. He was the son of Hathorn and Sarah A. (Preston) Tomlin, who retired to Mason City. The former died at the age of 70, and the latter at 60.

Mr. Tomlin's grandfather, who became quite wealthy, came from New Jersey, and had been a seaman while living in the East. He spent his last days in Illinois. He died at the

<sup>1</sup>Since this part was set in type, Mrs. McAvoy has supplied her father's death date: John Shively passed away on April 24, 1962, at the age of 95.



Photo from Mrs. Guy Brown, Sr.  
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Tomlin



age of 70 and his wife at 65; both were buried in the Mason City Cemetery.

Mr. Tomlin was educated in Mason County, and taught school in both Illinois and Kansas. On December 25, 1884, he married Maggie Cruse, who had been born in Mason County on May 1, 1865, and educated there. She was the daughter of David and Hannah (Tomlin) Cruse. David Cruse was a native of Pennsylvania and Hannah Tomlin a native of New Jersey. Six sons and five daughters were born to the Cruses: Walker C., Matthew M., Elizabeth E., Maggie, Roxanna B., Sidney D., John S., Ora E., George I., Charles R., and Josephine.

From Illinois Mr. and Mrs. Tomlin moved to Kansas, and then in March, 1890, to Fillmore County. He bought 160 acres in Mommence precinct, near Shickley, for which he paid \$4,000, and 18 months later sold it for \$5,000. He then bought 160 acres in Stanton precinct for \$3,900, which he transformed into one of the best farms in the area. He was a member of the Prohibition party and of the United Brethren Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Tomlin were the parents of four children: Sarah Gertrude (Mrs. Gertrude Dever), Jessie May, Ora Alta (Mrs. Guy Brown, Sr.), and Golda (Mrs. Harper Anderson).



Photo from Mrs. Ray Serk  
Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Walker and family about 1917. Back row, left to right: Blanche, Russ, Charlie, Ann, Cyrus, Jerome, Frank, Jess, Mag, and Maude.

**Jesse W. Walker** and his wife, Adeline (Sager) Walker and their family left Lewistown, Pennsylvania, by train in 1871, stopping first in Illinois and then in Iowa. They came on from Iowa in two covered wagons, one drawn by a yoke of oxen and the other by their riding horse and the family milk cow. They reached Omaha on October 9, 1871, and came out to the home of Jesse's uncle in Saline County, where they spent the winter.

During the winter, Mr. Walker took a homestead on 80 acres in Sec. 6, Stanton, and built a dugout with a log front. The family moved into this home in the spring and lived there for 11 years. Mrs. Walker once killed a rattlesnake on the bed in which one of the children was sleeping. Later, Tom Walker, Jesse's brother, built them a frame house, which still stands.

They went to Fairmont once a week for mail. Grasshoppers came through the township, taking everything, even eating the curtains off the windows. At two different times, they had butchered meat stolen, and once lost half a barrel of beans. Many Indians stopped in but did no harm; they just wanted food. One day there was a dead pig on the roadside and the Indians ate it. Jesse Walker broke the ground where the Fillmore County Courthouse now stands, using his oxen to pull the plow.

A schoolhouse, District 47, was built one mile S and ½ mile E of their home, and there the Walker children went to school. One of the teachers was Jerome Sager, brother of Mrs. Walker, who made his home with the family. The Walkers retired to a new home in Geneva in 1910, located where the Geneva Post Office now stands.

Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Walker were the parents of 12 children. Three are still living: Mrs. Anna Dowis, 100 years old; Mrs. Maude McPeck, 86; and Mrs. Blanche Merryman, 84, all reside at the Sunset Home. A son, Cyrus Walker, with his family, moved onto the home place after 1910 and lived there until 1947, when they moved into Geneva.



Photo from Nebraska Signal  
Mrs. Anna Dowis at 100 years of age (April, 1967).

Mrs. Anna Dowis, who celebrated her 100th birthday at Sunset Home, was born in Lewistown on April 6, 1867, attended District 47, and later married Ed Dowis of Geneva, where she spent the first half of her life. In 1917, the Dowises moved to Sherman County, near Arcadia, where they lived until Mr. Dowis's death. Mrs. Dowis then came back to Geneva to be near the rest of her family. The *Nebraska Signal* of March 30, 1967, reporting her impending birthday party, described her as alert and by no means showing her 100 years. Her family consists of a son, Jess Vincent Dowis and wife, of Watertown, South Dakota, and a granddaughter, Velma, of Sue Bennet College, London, Kentucky.

**Mabel Bailor Wernimont** has lived in Fillmore County for 83 years, having been born (February 7, 1884), on the George Bailor farm SE of Geneva and at the age of two weeks taken to her parents' home just south of Geneva. Mrs. George Bailor and Mrs. Silas Bailor were sisters, and George and Silas were cousins. Her late husband, Henry Wernimont, had lived on the same Fillmore County farm for about 75 years. He had inherited 160 acres, had purchased the remainder of the original farm, and by the time of his death had increased its area to 480 acres.

**Edward T. Yates** came to Nebraska from Indiana in the spring of 1873. He bought the E ½ of the SE ¼ of Sec. 13, T6, R3, in Stanton township, from the Burlington Railroad. He took the NE ¼ of Sec. 24, T6, R3, as a timber claim. His brother John had homesteaded the NW ¼ of Sec. 24, so that they could live together while they proved up.

The brothers built a two-room shack over the dividing line. With a pit underneath and the walls banked to the windows with sod, they had a snug home on the wind-swept knoll. Ed used two yoke of oxen and a gang plow to break the sod and seed it to wheat, which they harvested with a header and threshed with a horse-powered thresher.

After proving up on the claim, Edward built a four-room frame house on the 80 and brought his mother and sister out from Indiana. They lived with him for a time before they got land of their own. Later, Ed rented his place to John H. Morgan, another Hoosier, who had taken an adjoining farm in Chelsea township.

John farmed Ed's land while he was building on his own farm. In the meantime Ed drove the hack for his brother Sam, who had a mail route between Fairmont, Geneva, and Belvidere. In the spring of 1883, Edward moved onto the farm and continued improving it. He raised a family of seven and lived there until his death in 1917.

After he died, his wife, Martha M. Yates, continued to live on the farm and worked it until the children were all of

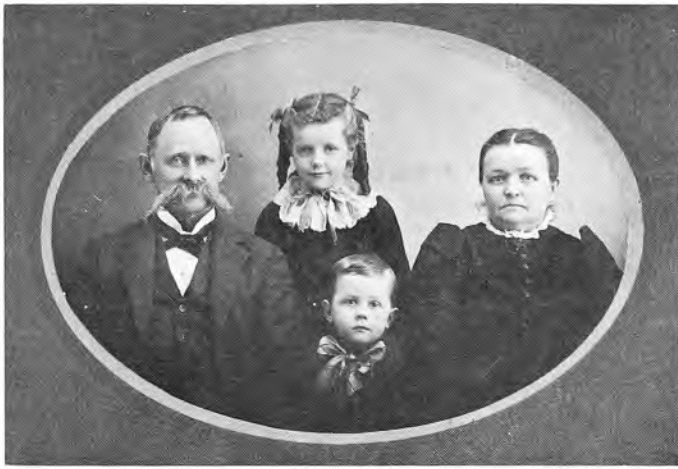


Photo from Mrs. Hobart Ridpath  
Mr. and Mrs. Edward T. Yates, with children Edith and Howard (about 1900).

age. Then Eugene B. (Bert) Yates took over the operation of the place, but the mother lived there until her death in 1944. The heirs sold the place in 1945, and Bert Yates bought it. Another house was added in 1947, and a nephew, Robert Yates and his family, live in that. The farm is operated jointly by Bert and Robert.

## FILLMORE COUNTY POOR FARM

On June 17, 1872, the governor of Nebraska, Silas Garber, signed a document permitting the sale of the SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 16, T6, R3W. This land was originally given to the government by the railroad to be used for school purposes. A public auction was held and the land was sold for \$1,280.

The land was cultivated and, on August 1, 1873, was rented to O. C. Brown for \$1.50 per acre. Mr. Brown agreed to make payment on or before January 1, 1875, giving his note from date without interest.

The county board met on August 29, 1875, to consider building a poorhouse on this quarter, later known as the County Poor Farm, rather than renting out the land to a private party. Bids were to be taken for a specified construction project, and on September 14, 1875, five bids had been received: W. C. Massey, \$2,600; J. B. Thompson, \$2,800; J. Lee, \$1,775; J. H. Haughwout, \$1,674.50; and W. H. Chapin, \$1,473. On September 20, 1875, W. H. Chapin contracted to construct the building, within 60 days, for \$1,169.60.

Payment for the building was to be made from the \$806.74 already in the county's poorhouse fund, and from the sale of a \$368 warrant issued by the county board.

J. B. Williams was contracted to drill a well at the poor farm. He was to be paid 80 cents in cash or 95 cents in warrants per foot, at the option of the county commissioners.

On October 5, 1875, Dr. G. R. Hart contracted to serve as the poorhouse doctor for \$190 a year, payable quarterly. The single bid received for caretaker and lessee of the poor farm, that of Cyrus Marcy, was accepted on January 10, 1876. Mr. Marcy was to receive \$1.30 per cultivated acre of land, and \$3.70 weekly for care and board of each pauper. At the same time, a contract was let to J. C. Rosenberg for \$50 to build a 13' x 20' x 7' four-stall stable to be used by the lessee.

On February 7, 1876, the poor farm was ready for occupancy. On November 8, 1876, Dr. Brazelton and Dr. Dailey agreed to take over the medical treatment of the paupers for \$149 per annum.

Four dollars for conveyance to and from the poor farm to Geneva, Nebraska, was agreed upon June 15, 1878.

Cyrus Marcy asked for his release and was replaced by A. D. Stevens on December 14, 1878. Mr. Stevens was to receive \$1.25 per acre of land and \$3 per week for the care of each pauper. Doctors Hart and Oliver replaced Doctors Dailey and Brazelton on December 22, 1880. They continued their service until 1883, for \$70 per annum.



Photo from Mrs. John Reinsch  
Fillmore County Poor Farm. Back row center, Hugh Huston, manager; extreme right, Marion Diederich, assistant; sitting on arm of chair, Mrs. Hugh Huston. The other five people were residents of the home.

Some minor changes and improvements were made, and caretakers and doctors were occasionally replaced as the years went by, but the poor farm largely continued in its original way under the supervision of the county board until 1937.

Some of the caretakers after 1890 were Deal Fletcher, Walt Trask, James McPheren, Ed Dowis, Albert Kline, John Parnell, Carl Hurless, and H. C. Huston.

The wives of the managers of the county farm usually belonged to the Martland Aid Society and Club. Consequently they were invited to hold their meeting at the farm home once a year.

In 1887 the *Signal* reported that John Williams, an inmate of the county farm, died as the result of a fall down the cellar steps. Another accident happened a few years later when one of the inmates, who was from York, a Mr. Owens, was gored by a bull and died soon afterward.

In 1937, the poor farm was discontinued. It then became the Fillmore County Assistance Home, managed by the County Assistance Office. All of the former poor farm residents became eligible for Old Age Benefit checks and were allowed to stay in the Assistance Home if they paid for their board and room and their medical care. Private patients were also admitted. The Assistance Home operated successfully for the next eight years. During this time, a cattle barn, a granary, a hog house, a two-car garage, an irrigation well, a silo, and windbreaks were built on the premises. The original two-story frame house was destroyed by fire, and was replaced by a new brick home. Behind the



Photo from Mrs. Essie Schelkopf  
Sunset Rest Home (formerly County Farm Building), dedicated October 29, 1943.



cornerstone at the southeast corner of the new home is a bottle-sealed history of the Fillmore County Assistance Home. The new house was paid for by the fire insurance. The other improvements were financed by the farm's income. Few overhead expenses were necessary, since much of the farm labor was provided by relief-script labor and convict labor provided by the sheriff's office.

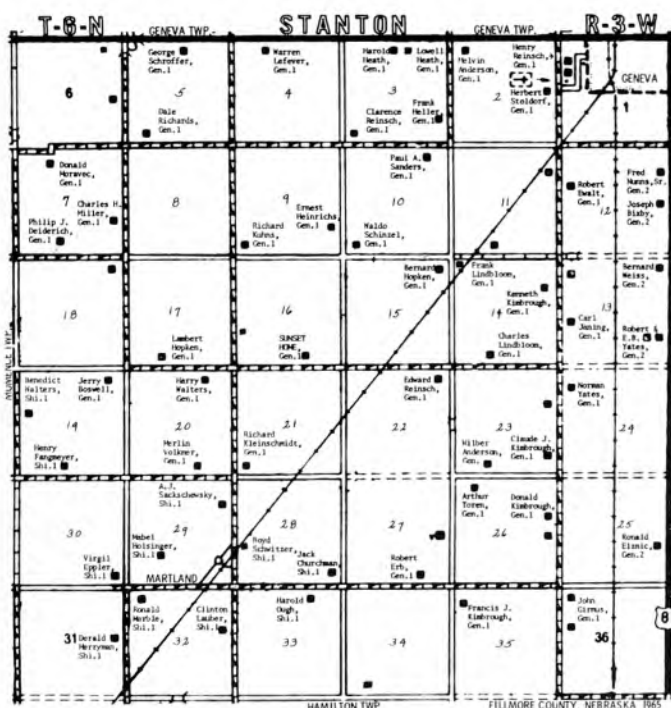
Throughout the operation of the Assistance Home, many people showed much generosity toward it, in giving both their time and their services. The county officers and especially Dr. Bixby should be commended for their faithful services.

There were about 15 residents there during this period. Since many of the patients were bedfast and in need of medical care, the home gradually developed into a nursing home. On April 6, 1949, the Assistance Home was sold at auction to the Mennonite Church and was renamed the Mennonite Sunset Home. Before reopening the Home, Joe Kennel of Shickley, Floyd Steckly of Beaver Crossing, and William Kremer of Milford were named as the board of directors. There was also a five-man Benevolent Board representing the Mennonite congregations.

The Home was opened on March 1, 1950, with Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Troyer serving as first superintendent and matron and Mabel Gingrich serving as nurse. Later, Lena Schweitzer was employed as cook. Ernest Snyder of Shickley was the first guest. Dedication services were held on May 28, 1950.

Later, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Shantz of Canada served as superintendent and matron for several years. On April 1, 1956, Mr. and Mrs. Chester M. Helmick of Pinto, Maryland, replaced Mr. and Mrs. Shantz and served from then until 1958. Succeeding them were Mr. and Mrs. Abe Troyer (1958-1964); Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Leonard (1964); Mr. and Mrs. Wes Stutzman (1964); and Mr. and Mrs. Orville Troyer (1965-1967). In August, 1967, the operation was taken over by Mrs. Ivan Birky. The Home has an average guest list of about 30, ranging (in 1967) from 58 to 100 years of age. A Geneva physician provides medical services for the guests.

Members of the local church board include Paul Oswald, Mennonite Church, Shickley; Milford Est, Fairview Church, Milford; Albert Hostetler, West Fairview Church, Beaver Crossing; Chris Hargleroad, Roseland Church, Ayr; and Dan Nitsche, Plum Creek Church, Beemer. In addition, a Board of Missions and Charities in Elkhart, Indiana, which supervises all Mennonite homes, helps with the operations at the Sunset Home.



## STORMS

### Blizzard of 1888

(This account was written by Mrs. Sada Heery, now deceased):

The blizzard of January 12, 1888, took 200 lives in Nebraska and neighboring states. The weather changed in five minutes from a light snow from the south to an impenetrable sheet of blinding snow from the northwest. Several country schoolteachers in this county were compelled to stay all night in the schoolhouses with their pupils. I, with my pupils at the Bluff Schoolhouse, managed to get to a neighbor's house near the school, and spent the night and part of the next day there until the storm abated and roads could be cleared.

I will be remembered as Sada Davis if any of those old-timers are still living.

### Tornado of 1908

There was great havoc on the night of June 5, 1908, when a tornado went through Stanton township. It started around Shickley. It killed Mr. and Mrs. Arganbright, who lived 2 miles S and 3/4 mile W of Martland. All their buildings were destroyed, as were the buildings across the road on the Andrew Baachman farm, but the Baachmans miraculously escaped injury. The tornado moved northeastward, hitting farmsteads of J. O. Merryman, Sr., Pete Saltzman, Sr., Roy McPharren, J. O. Merryman, Jr., Henry Bohlen, Ernest Ekwall, Bill Carson, John Dondlinger, and John Shively.

At the J. O. Merryman, Jr.'s, all buildings were destroyed and the family found shelter at the Herman Thole home 1/2 mile east. The tornado then went north and tore all the buildings down on the Bohlen farm. Next, at the Ernest Ekwall place, a short distance east, two legs of the windmill were blown out. At the Bill Carson place, the house was blown off the foundation. The storm, now going northeast, struck the John Dondlinger place and took out the middle section of the house. Last, the John Shively farm, about a mile west of Geneva, was struck.

At the John Shively farm, three people were killed and three were injured. The Shively family, noticing threatening clouds, had been in their cave for some time. They thought the storm was over and so came out and went back to bed. Soon a clap of thunder aroused them. They started for the cave again, but the storm hit before they could get to safety. Killed were Miss Lulu Schmidt, 18, who was employed at the Shively home; Sarah Irene Shively, 9, and Ralph Donald Shively, 5, daughter and son of the John Shivelys. Injured in the storm were Mr. and Mrs. Shively and Edward Fussell, who worked for them. John Shively's watch, which stayed in his pants pocket although its stem ring and leather chain vanished, was broken by some heavy object and had stopped at 9:22 P.M.

One of those interviewed after the storm was a neighbor, Henry Muhlenberg. His story was this:

"The clouds looked so bad we went to our cave. The cyclone struck about 9:30. We could hear a terrible roaring sound below, and apparently above that was a whistling noise. After the storm had passed we came out of the cave expecting to see our buildings blown away but they were not. We looked about and flashes of lightning did not reveal any buildings at John Shively's, about 1/4 mile E of my place. Irvie Zink and I took a lantern and went to Shively's. I told Irvie to go to town for help and I stayed there. Irvie walked to Geneva, where the fire siren was sounded for help."

Andrew Baachman and family lived across the road south of the Arganbrights. All their buildings were destroyed, but none of the family was seriously injured. Two of the children left in their beds were found on the floor of their bedroom. There were seven in the family.

Another interesting incident was reported about this storm. Conductor Hedburg and Brakeman Shoemaker, on a Burlington freight train, left Martland the evening of the storm about 9:30, just as the tornado broke out in all its fury. The twister turned west, and so the engineer kept going on toward Shickley, the next stop. Some of the wires had got badly tangled by the terrific wind and the train whistle would



not work; consequently, he coasted into Shickley, arriving safe and sound. No other damage was done to the train; everyone marveled at this.

This account of the 1908 tornado at the J. O. Merryman farm was related by Blanche (Mrs. J. O.) Merryman in 1957:

At our farm the storm took the house and all the other buildings. We had put the two children to bed and Grandma Merryman had gone upstairs to bed when Jim said that a storm was coming and he was going to call his mother down so we could all go to the cellar. I went and got the children up but Archie just sat down on the floor. I picked up Morris and went out in the kitchen to have Jim go after Archie but the door blew shut after me. By that time Grandma was down. She grabbed her shawl that was hanging on the stairway. She didn't know what she was going to do with it. She put her hand on the wall of the stairway and felt the plastering give way, so she put the shawl over her head and sat down on the floor. By that time the kerosene light had gone out and the windows had blown in. Jim said, "We are going." In a few minutes he called, "Where are you?" Grandma said, "Here I am, but I think Blanche and the children are dead."

I said, "Here I am, but you will have to help me up because there is plaster on me." A commode had fallen across my legs and I had Morris in my arms. Jim came and got Morris and gave him to Grandma. I got up and then Archie yelled, "Mama, where are you?" Just then a streak of lightning flew across the sky and I saw Archie sitting on the highest pile of rubbish.

By then the wind had changed to the northwest and it began to rain. There was a big elm tree out south of where the house had been. We got behind it to try to keep out of the wind. Jim went back and found a feather bed. He brought it over and we sat down on it. In a little while Jim went back and found a mattress which he dragged over and stood up against a tree to break the wind. We stayed there until it stopped raining. We found a bedspread and a quilt which we wrapped around the children. Then we could see the lights at the depot, so we started out to find shelter. The moon came out, and we could see the Herman Thole place a half-mile east of us.

Jim didn't have any shoes on, and neither did I. Grandma only had on one. That was the way we walked over to the Thole place. We had to wade through a draw where the water was up to our waists. Jim was carrying Archie with a quilt wrapped around him and I was carrying Morris with a wet bedspread around him. Thole's were in bed and didn't know there had been a tornado. It took the wheel off their windmill and the chimney off their house. We stayed there that night.

Jim and Mr. Thole went back to see if they could find any of the stock. They found some of the horses with their halter ropes tied to pieces of manger. Other horses had their halters, still buckled, pulled off their heads. Some of the horses were about 80 rods away from where the barn had been. One horse was standing in the creek with a cut 18 inches long in her shoulder, cut clear to the bone. Only 2 hogs were killed. The cattle got out of the pen in some way, though the gate was shut and the wires were broken. The chickens that survived were featherless.



Remains of James Merryman farm destroyed by cyclone June 5, 1908.

The next day, June 6, 1908, was like the Fourth of July because of the great number of rigs coming to see what had happened.

The storm went north from our place to the Henry Bohlen place,  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile N and  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile E, where it tore all their buildings down. Mr. and Mrs. Bohlen had gone to the cave. When he came up to get a lantern the storm caught him and carried him out in the trees north of the house. The storm continued its destructive course northeastward. Besides much property damage, it caused the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Arganbright and two children of the John Shivelys, as well as Miss Lulu Schmidt.

The storm went east from the Bohlen place to the Ernest Ekwall place, where it did some damage. The oddest thing was the fact that the storm took two legs out from under the windmill and left the other two with the platform on them. They found Mr. Bohlen and took him over to the Ekwall place. The storm went northeast and struck the John Dondlinger home. The house had been built in three parts. It took the middle part and left the other two parts standing.

After striking the John Shively place about a mile west of Geneva it continued on to the Girls' Industrial School, where it did some damage.



G. Hillgren home destroyed by cyclone June 5, 1908. Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Another severe storm hit Stanton township about 6:30 p.m. on June 6, 1956. It did considerable damage but no lives were lost. Most of the damage was to barns and out-buildings and windmill towers. A good many telephone and electric lines were also damaged.

### Accidents

Fern Geneva Schelkopf, the 18-month-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Schelkopf of near Martland, was drowned about 5 o'clock Tuesday evening, April 21, 1914. The child had been playing near the house while her mother was washing windows. When she was missed, the mother, father, and hired man promptly began a search. The child's body was found in the stock tank a few rods from the house. Dr. Wilson of Shickley was called. The parents applied artificial respiration, but when the doctor came he pronounced the baby dead.

It was supposed that the child had pulled herself up on some wiring near the edge of the tank, lost her balance, and fallen in. The funeral was held at the Martland church and interment was in the Geneva cemetery.

Another accident in the community caused the death of Harry Stoldorf, youngest son of Charles Stoldorf. He died in the Lutheran Hospital at York on Thursday, April 15, 1926, as a result of injuries received two days before, in a discing accident. It was guessed that the tongue dropped to the ground while the machine was turning, frightening the six-horse team and making them run toward the barns. The bouncing of the disc threw him forward in such a way that his right leg was caught between the braces and held tightly, while his body, back against the ground, was swept along under the heavy disc for nearly half a mile.

His wife, who happened to be outside, was alarmed by the noise and hurried to the halting team. She found her husband unconscious under the disc. After unhitching the horses, with almost superhuman strength she raised the disc and removed his mangled body. At the York hospital, where he was taken immediately, it was found that his skull was fractured and he had received fatal internal injuries. No operation was attempted. Although at first he regained partial consciousness, he was not able to give any details of the accident, and soon sank into a coma, dying in about 48 hours.

The following Thursday, neighbors with teams and tractors went into Mrs. Stoldorf's fields and plowed them for her. Those helping were William Wilkins, Ora Brown, Roy Davis, Grant Bail, Albert Diederich, Fred Bartels, Frank Grote, Bert Stoldorf, Merritt Hedden, Warren Nickell, Lou Otte, George Grote, Harry Beavers, William Stoltzfus, Fred Reeb, John Augustine, Everett Ingels, George Hillgren, A. J. Sackschewsky, J. O. Merryman, and Archie Merryman. The ladies served dinner at the hall.

The fire that burned the grandstand at the Fair Grounds on September 15, 1938, although not within Stanton township, touches Stanton history indirectly. A. A. Russell, a former resident of Martland who later farmed north of there, was president of the Fair Board in 1938, the year of that large but luckily non-fatal conflagration.



Photo from Mrs. Mabel Wernimont

On the Bailor farm in 1892.  
Left—Adam Bailor plowing  $\frac{1}{2}$  row of corn with one horse. Norman Wood, riding the horse.  
Right—Mrs. Silas E. Bailor riding the first two-row cultivator, invented and built by Silas E. Bailor in his blacksmith shop on his farm in Stanton township.



Photo from Nebraska Signal

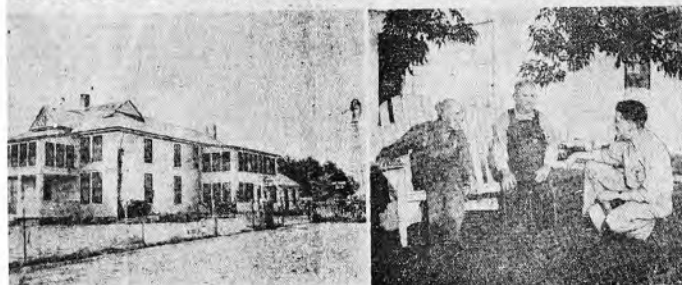
Vernon Pearson, chairman of Shickley Irrigators Ass'n, shown measuring the static water level in one of the 45 wells measured by the directors of the Irrigators Ass'n.



Photo from Geneva State Bank

Fillmore County Poor Farm (June 17, 1928).

## FILLMORE COUNTY ASSISTANCE HOME.



Fillmore County "Co-operative Farm," 1940.



Photo from Nebraska Signal

Extension Council, 1965. Back row, left to right: Earl Ely, William Krejci, Clair Christiancy (president), Derald Merryman, James Wythers. Front row: Mrs. Ray Wells, Mrs. George Nun, Mrs. Bill Eich



Photo from Mrs. Maynard Merryman

Banner Sunday School Class of Martland (1926). Front row left to right: Elizabeth Schelkopf, Anna Saltzman, Lola McPeck, Blanche Hillgren, Ruth McPeck, Dorothy Clements, Edna Posvar, Helen McPeck. Back row: Fred Posvar, Unidentified, Leroy Merryman, Kenneth Clements, Fred Gruenhage, Unidentified, Maynard Merryman.



Photo from Nebraska Signal

Exeter Feeders' Tour, 1966 (at Schelkopf Brothers Farm).