EARLY HISTORY OF CASS COUNTY

The earliest exploration by white men on Nebraska soil was that of two brothers, Pierre and Paul Mallet. Coming up the Missouri River, they reached the mouth of a river which they named the "Platte" on June 2, 1739. They followed the river upstream for seventy miles.

Lewis and Clark made their famous trip in 1804 and 1805, using three open boats for their famous expedition.

In 1819, Long's Expedition reached the Platte on the "Western Engineer", the first steam boat to navigate the upper Missouri. It was he who reported that Nebraska was "uninhabitable for people depending on agriculture for subsistence". Time and the sturdy settlers proved him wrong on this statement, however, for Cass County is well known for its fertile soil and fine farms.

In 1848, the Mormons founded the town of Coonsville in Iowa on the east bank of the Missouri River. It was later named Glenwood. Libias T. Coon of that place established a ferry, a flat boat propelled by sweeps, with which to transport the Mormons across the river on their way west. They landed on the Nebraska side at the present site of Plattsmouth and drove west across the prairie through Cass County on what was to be called the South Platte Trail, joining the North Platte Trail at Fort Kearney. This route along the south side of the Platte was used much more than most historians have shown. It was heavily traveled by Mormons, gold-seekers, freighters and settlers as late as the 1870's.

In spite of all this traffic, no white settlements were permitted, the land being occupied by the Otoe and the Pawnee Indian tribes on west.

Samuel Martin got special permission from the Secretary of War to build a trading post below the mouth of the Platte with the help of James O'Neil and Colonel J. L. Sharp of Coonville, early in 1853. They moved logs from a house in Iowa across the river on the ice and erected a stout two-story building at the east end of the north side of what is now Main Street in Plattsmouth (Block 31, Lots 6 and 7). This was Samuel Martin's trading post. The small log house that was built north and west of it a little later was his dwelling and council house. He was a fearless pioneer, well acquainted with the Indians and their customs, and he got along well with those with whom he traded. In fact, he kept an Otoe squaw as his wife.

A treaty between the United States Government and the Omaha and Otoe Indians was consummated on the 15th and 16th of March, 1854, whereby they relinquished their title to lands bordering on the Missouri River. "They received as an equivalent a stated amount of provision and other necessities." On the receipt of these stores, the Otoes, unused to such abundance, so overate on pork and sugar that over 70 of the 600 died within a week.

Many emigrants were waiting on the Iowa side for the territory to be opened, and they came over as fast as the ferry could bring them once the treaty was signed and the land thrown open for settlement. Within a short period of time, 250 men had penciled their names upon claim stakes within the present limits of Cass County, this being before the legal organization of the territory.

Preceding, and taking the place of the law at this time, were the "Claim Clubs". These were secret organizations formed to protect the rights of the honest settlers against the unscrupulous speculators who tried and often did succeed in "jumping claims". Disputes were brought before these clubs much as before a court of law, and fair, though severe, settlements were made when the honest pioneers were in control.

The only record of extreme action concerned a rough group from Mills County, Iowa, who had a rendezvous near Fremont's Point, a promontory directly below the city. This group was known as "The Johnson Gang" and they were tried and loaded on boats to take them back to Iowa. The thirteen younger men reached their destination, but the ringleaders were never seen or heard from again.

The population of Cass County in 1855 was 712. In 1856, the government survey was made, followed by the entry of the land. Money was scarce, interest rates were as high as 40 to 60 percent which resulted in many settlers losing their land to the money lenders.

The election returns of 1856 showed a population in the county of 1251, with the largest settlements being Plattsmouth and the Rock Bluff Precinct.

The first buildings in those early days were simple dugouts, with a fair number of substantial log houses. In 1856, a bitter winter caused much suffering and some loss of life to both the Indians and the whites.

Indian scares were frequently caused as much by poor judgment and loose talk on the part of the settlers as by the Indians themselves, for the ones in these parts were peaceable though sometimes troublesome. They did a log of begging and often helped themselves to items that took their fancy. But we must remember that we had taken away their land, killed their game, and broken their spirit in so doing. There was a poor tribe, the Winnebagos, who came through here spring and fall for many years. Their few horses were old and bony, their children looked peaked and under-fed. Many a cherished pet dog ended up in one of their cooking pots as they had little or no meat. It was indeed a sorry state of affairs. They hated the reservation up northwest of Omaha and had permission to visit their Indian relatives in southeast Nebraska, tarrying in Plattsmouth each trip through, as long as htey were able.

In 1856, wild rumors so frightened the settlers in the western part of the county that General Thayer sent a 6# cannon to Plattsmouth on the riverboat "St. Marys" to quiet their fears and impress the Indians. It was never needed and became the object in later years of much excitement and rivalry between Plattsmouth and Nehawka.

The first rural school held in Cass County was in the William Young log cabin northeast of Murray, in 1856. Because they had a two-room house, Mr. Young volunteered the use of the large room for school purposes. In later years, the house was moved from its original site to the Young Cemetery a half mile northwest of the homestead. Here it was rebuilt and is standing today, a reminder of, and a memorial to, our early settlers.

Plattsmouth, Rock Bluff and Kenosha were thriving river towns by 1856, vying for the county seat which Plattsmouth won, it being so designated by the legislature and later by vote.

During the early years, farm produce had to be hauled to Plattsmouth and Nebraska City, later also to Unadilla and South Bend. Still later, it was also hauled to Weeping Water.

The 1860's saw a boom period, with the river traffic heavy and profitable. Farming was also on its way to a good start.

Construction of the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad across the county in 1869 and the Missouri Pacific in 1881 did much to build up out in the county. Towns, such as Factoryville, Rock Bluff and Kenosha faded away. River traffic came to an end when the M & M Bridge was built across the Missouri in 1880. Up to that time, the railroad cars had been ferried across the river on the B & M Transfer boats, the "President" and the "Vice-President".

In 1880, the population of Cass County was 16,688.

In 1911, T. H. Pollock of Plattsmouth built the Platte River Auto and Wagon Bridge, establishing the first north and south auto route west of the Missouri, the KT - "King of Trails" from Omaha to Kansas City. A new era in travel was begun.

Cass County has an enviable military record. Co. A, First Nebraska Volunteers in the Civil War was organized in Plattsmouth by Dr. Robert R. Livingston, who became its Captail. The men came mostly from the river towns and served throughout the war.

The Spanish-American War Volunteers made up Co. B, Third Nebraska Volunteers.
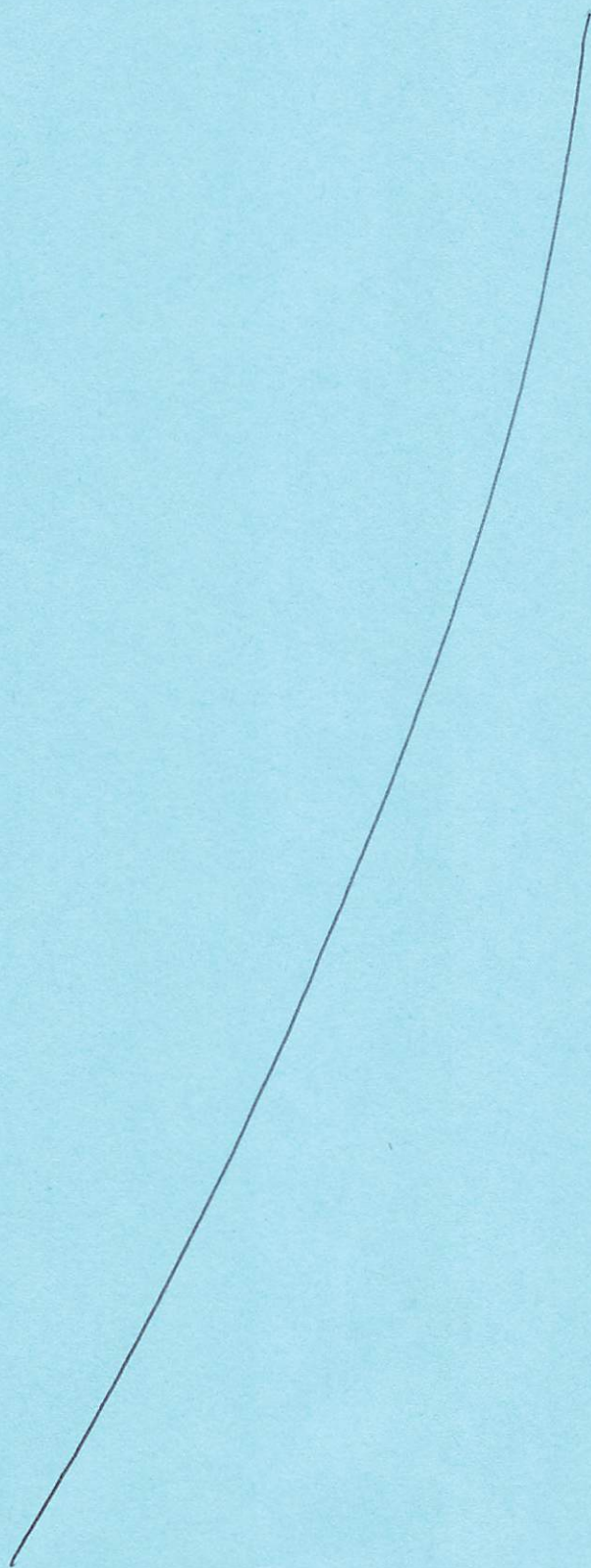
In the First World War, H Company, 355th Nebraska infantry, the "Fightin' Farmers" was enlisted from this county and perpetuated in the present local Reserve Company.

A high percentage of our young men fought in the Second World War, many served in the Korean Conflict, and again, we have men serving in Viet Nam.

The Pioneer Association of Cass County was organized November 29, 1875, at the Courthouse in Plattsmouth. W. H. Shafer, being the oldest citizen, coming here May 25, 1854, was chosen President with William Young and Benjamin Albin being First and Second Vice Presidents. These three men held their respective offices for a number of years. The purpose of the association was to collect statistics, history, incidents and adventures of the first settlers in the county, and to preserve knowledge of the hardships endured by the first settlers, for use by future generations. In 1877, they decided to have a reunion picnic, and many such were held over the years though the ranks thinned. These picnics came to be known as the "Old Settlers Reunion". Some were held near Rock Bluff, at Hutchison's Grove, some at a point southwest of Union, west of the old road to Nebraska City. The reunion held in 1919, after the First World War, had a special program to welcome home the veterans of that war. Time took its steady toll of the pioneers and the picnics were discontinued after 1930.

The Cass County Historical Society was organized in 1935 under the leadership of Dr. George Gilmore of Murray with a county-wide membership. This society constructed a Museum Building in 1960, in Plattsmouth, in which to preserve and display valuable historic relics and records.

- Alice Pollock Perry (Mrs. Virgil W.)

August, 1967

PLATTSMOUTH

The early history of Plattsmouth coincides with much of the earlier events in the county.

Libias T. Coon ferried his fellow Mormons, and others, across the river on a flat boat propelled by sweeps. He operated from 1848 until 1852 when he was succeeded by James O'Neil and Wheatley Mickelwait.

Samuel Martin obtained permission from the Secretary of War to establish a trading post south of the mouth of the Platte River. In 1853, James O'Neil and J. L. Sharp helped him move the logs from his house in Coonville, Iowa (renamed Glenwood when it became the county seat in 1853), and erect a sturdy two-story building at the east end of the north side of what is now Main Street on Lots 6 and 7, Block 31. This came to be called the "Old Barracks". It served as Martin's Trading Post and the cabin built later to the northwest was his dwelling and council house. When the territory was opened to white settlers, on June 24, 1854, his business changed as he began dealing more with the early settlers than he did with the diminishing number of Indians.

Samuel Martin was a fearless pioneer, well acquainted with Indian life and he had no trouble with the Pawnees and Otoes with whom he dealt. In fact, he kept an Otoe squaw as his wife.

The Plattsmouth Town Company was formed October 26, 1854 and was composed of Samuel Martin, James O'Neil, J. L. Sharp, C. Nuckolls, Manly Green and Lafayette Nuckolls.

The city was mapped out by Surveyor O. W. Tyson. It was approved, incorporated and designated by the Territorial Legislature as the county seat of Cass County on March 14, 1855. The only other towns to precede Plattsmouth in incorporation were Nebraska City on March 2; Bellevue on March 5; De Sota on March 7 and Florence on March 13, 1855.

Samuel Martin was not only the first settler in Plattsmouth, but his was the first death, occurring December 15, 1854. He was buried on top of what became known as High School Hill, west of where the High School now stands. After Martin's death, Worley and Slaughter took over the trading post. Later, it was Slaughter and Vallery.

At the first election, Wheatley Mickelwait was elected Mayor with Enos Williams, William Slaughter, and Jacob Vallery (Town Jake) as aldermen. After the second election, held in 1857, the town ceased to be known as Martin's Precinct and was called Plattsmouth as suggested by Braud Cole.

The first recorded wagon journey over what was to be known as the South Platte Trail, and which originated at Plattsmouth, was by Sublette in 1830, followed by Wyeth in 1832. By 1840, this trail had become a great national highway to the west and northwest.

Mail went through Plattsmouth by the fast Pony Express. The Overland Mail and the Overland Stage routed some of their traffic through here.

This South Platte Trail had several advantages over the one north of the river. It was a more direct route; there were no large streams or rivers to ford, there was plenty of good spring water along the way and there was less Indian trouble.

The Plattsmouth Town Company took over the ferry in 1855, replacing it in 1857 with a steam-propelled boat called the Emma that speeded up transportation.

The Emma was followed by the Paul Wilcox, a side-wheeler that struck a snag and sank. This was followed by the Mary McGee which was cut to pieces by the ice on April 8, 1877. The first wire cable ferry came next, followed by the Luella and finally the Belle Morgan.

Colonel Peter A. Sarpy, famous fur trader, for whom Sarpy County was named, put the Survivor on the river in 1859 in competition with the Emma. They used such cut-throat tactics to gain the business that they even took loads across free. After a few months, Sarpy bowed out to the Emma and took his boat upriver where it sank within the year.

Mr. Sarpy moved to Plattsmouth from St. Mary's, Iowa in 1861, engaged in the mercantile business with Henry Kahl and brought over and set up a flour mill. He died in 1865. Later his remains were removed to St. Louis.

Because so many wagons crossed the Missouri at Plattsmouth it was an ideal location for the outfitting companies and in 1859, Tootle and Hanna opened for business on the south side of the trail across from the first log trading post set up by Samuel Martin. In a few years, John R. Clark joined the firm. They had the first bank in town. (Lots 182, Block 32, New lumberyard location.)

In 1860, the population was 474.

In 1863, Edward G. Dovey, from England, and Henry Amison opened another outfitting store on the north side of what is now Main Street at the east end on the east 22 feet of Lots 8, 9, and 10 in Block 31. This was just west of the log store. In a few years, Mr. Dovey bought Mr. Amison's share and in 1877 sold the building to August Bach and moved uptown to 523 - 529 Main Street.

These firms outfitted and provisioned hundreds of wagon trains as they started out on their journey west across Nebraska. They also served the early settlers of the county. This great volume of business caused the town to grow rapidly.

Plattsmouth's ferry records show that 2360 covered wagons crossed the Missouri River at Plattsmouth during the month of May, 1865. The Paul Wilcox brought 125 teams and wagons to the west bank of the river on May 9, 1865. The east bank was lined with white covered wagons and the road through Iowa leading to Plattsmouth was also filled with emigrant wagons.

There was a great deal of rivalry along the river for this trade and the newspapers printed caustic articles aimed at their rivals.

The "Plattsmouth Herald" exclaimed, "Plattsmouth never had such a flow of immigration. The whole movable population of the eastern states appears to have started for Nebraska and the western mines, and are crossing the Missouri at Plattsmouth."

Captain Moer of Omaha was quoted as saying that in contrast to the business done at Plattsmouth, things in Omaha were dull due to the small number of freighters starting west at that place.

River traffic was heavy with much of the merchants' stock coming up river by steam boat from St. Louis, Kansas City or St. Joseph. The <u>Denver</u>, the <u>Omaha</u>, the <u>West Wind</u> and many other boats were constantly on the river except in the winter. The river was just east of where the Burlington tracks now run.

A fine channel lay against this bank and the boats tied up right at the foot of Main Street which sloped to the water's edge where there was a loading dock and a warehouse.

Evening parties and dances were sometimes held on board the steamboats while they were docked here. They not only did a thriving freight business but made a special appeal to passenger trade as well. Both side and stern wheelers were in use but the stern wheelers suffered less from floating debris.

The first mayor, Wheatley Mickelwait was commissioned in 1855 to be the first Postmaster. He carried the mail in his coat pocket or his high silk hat. When the new store, which came to be called the "Old New York Store" was built, a corner of it housed the first Post Office.

Originally open creeks ran along all three avenues, coming together into one stream near the river. All are now confined underground.

The first grist and saw mill in town was built by Conrad Heisel for James Cardwell on the creek out on Lincoln Avenue in 1856.

Mr. Heisel came from Germany when eighteen years of age, taught himself English and landed in Plattsmouth in the spring of 1856. Though only 20 years of age, he started at once in mill work, building two for other men the first summer he was here. The first was on Lincoln Avenue, the second on the corner of 10th and Washington Avenue. He bought the latter in the summer of 1857 and moved it to the creek bank at Eleventh and Elm, just off the Avenue where Kent's Station is now. In later years, he made it into a steam roller mill, the largest in the county and famous for its "Heisel's Best Flour".

In 1861, Enos Williams built a mill at Seventh and First Avenue, utilizing the stream that came down Chicago Avenue. By damming the streams, adequate water power was available to turn the mill wheels.

The fine joint clay found here in abundance was ideal for brick-making and very early at least five brickyards were in operation, the largest the Brick and Terra Cotta Company situated where the high school athletic field is located today.

At the time of incorporation, in 1854, the town contained six houses; three were log that had been built for Samuel Martin east of Third Street, and three were between Third and Sixth Streets built for T. G. Palmer, Wheatley Mickelwait and William Garrison respectively. The first frame house bore the sign "The Farmers Hotel".

In 1856, Wheatley Mickelwait built the frame "Nebraska House" or "City Hotel". It burned in 1882 at which time it was owned by Fred Goos.

Some Firsts in Plattsmouth:

The first Sunday School in Plattsmouth was inter-denominational and organized by Braud Cole in 1854 who was also its first superintendent. He also organized the first Claim Club and set out the first large orchard when he planted 2000 fruit trees in 1857.

It is believed that the first county offices were located on the second floor of the "Old Barracks" in 1856 and in the log house near it called the "Council House". These were the first buildings in town.

Frederick Stull opened the first blacksmith shop in 1856 at 14th and C, south of the Masonic Home.

The first livery stable was owned by Elma K. Parmele in 1857.

Henry Howland came in 1857 to become the first wagon manufacturer. He made light and heavy wagons, canopy type carriages and buggies and fine sleds with iron runners. He was located at 6th and Avenue A.

The first brickyard was located just east of the present athletic field (Main and Seventh Street) and was operated by William and John Reed and Christian Mockenhaupt, Sr.

The first Democratic Territorial Convention was held in Plattsmouth on June 3, 1858.

The first shoe factory started in 1875, was owned and operated by Robert Sherwood and employed several men. Shoes were made to order.

The one and only earthquake occurred in the spring of 1877.

A brass band was organized in 1873 with 13 members, later on known as the B and M Band. Ed Schloff was the conductor.

Plattsmouth Leiderkranz, a men's singing organization, started in 1875. Mr. Schloff directed this group also.

The first High School Class to receive diplomas was in 1882. A smallpox epidemic prevented exercises. Formal exercises were held thereafter.

The first high-wheel bicycles in town came in 1886 and were owned by Tom Parmele and T. H. (Bert) Pollock.

The first high school band was organized and led by L. D. (Demmie) Hiatt. The baseball league was formed in 1891.

The first independent telephone company in the state was organized by T. H. Pollock in 1898.

The first automobile in town was owned by Dr. Ed Cummins in 1901 or 1902. It was an electric and never called an auto or car but a "gig". It looked just like a buggy. He bought an Oldsmobile a little later - the first "real" car in town. In the fall of 1907, he and John Crabill each bought a Ford car, both without tops, the

Doctor's was a two-seater and Mr. Crabill's a single seater, but he added another on behind. They acquired the Ford Agency but had to have two cars on hand to do it.

The first Auto and Wagon Bridge across the Platte River at Plattsmouth in 1911 was built by T. H. Pollock and Ralph Duff whom he bought out the following year. At the Grand Opening, 14 cars were assembled from Omaha, Plattsmouth and Nebraska City.

F. R. Guthmann returned from the west in 1864 and, in a short time, put up a bakery, a billiard hall, a pork-packing plant, cannery and grocery store. He built two houses, three store buildings, a fine brick residence on North Fourth Street and then the much-needed "Perkins House" in 1881. It was a good, fifty room, three story brick hotel located at Third and Main Streets on the northeast corner of the intersection.

The "Platte Valley House" was probably built in the early 1860's. It was a white frame two-story hotel occupying the southwest corner of the intersection at 4th Street and Main. There are pictures of it, and it was said to be quite classy. It was destroyed by fire before 1882 because it was not listed in the City Directory of that year. The first proprietor was Captain William McCarty. By 1865, G. W. Crow was the proprietor and could have been for some time as this is as far back as the Nebraska Herald index goes. This index covers 1865 to 1872 and there are many references to this hotel over these years. This detail is given to show that bits of history can be lost if the same sources are always referred to. If we had not had a picture of it, and my father remembered it, we would not have known to look it up in the Nebraska Herald index. It is not referred to in the histories.

The Saunders House was built in 1869 on Block 28, South part of Lots 5 and 6 on Sixth Street between Main and Avenue A. The Jason Streight and Henry J. Streight families ran this hotel for a number of years. It burned in 1880 at a loss of $27,000.00. Later the Elks Lodge was built on the site. Still later, the lodge was remodeled into apartments.

After the Civil War, the C. B. & Q Railroad extended its line from Ottumwa, Iowa, to the east bank of the Missouri and in 1869, with John R. Fitzgerald as the contractor, started laying the right-of-way west to Denver thru Plattsmouth across Cass County. This new line was called the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad.

Dr. Robert R. Livingston, instrumental in getting this line, was made physician and surgeon west of the Missouri for the B & M Railroad. The shops were built here in 1870 and Plattsmouth became a division point with many men employed on the line and in the shops.

It was said that John Fitzgerald built the right-of-way with Irishmen, mules and hand slips. A number of Englishmen came with their families to fill responsible positions in the shops. David Hawkswroth came from Burlington, Iowa to serve as Superintendent of the B & M shops. A large number of Bohemians settled here, many of whom were skilled workmen.

The boats still plied the river and, though as many as five a day would tie up at the dock, Plattsmouth began to lose the river town atmosphere to become a railroad town. Omaha, Bellevue and Plattsmouth vied with one another for the state capitol, but after a not too efficient effort to defeat them, Omaha won. Plattsmouth kept the county seat after a long and complicated contest, winning over Rock Bluff and Weeping Water, the latter being the main opponent.

In 1867, the Surveyor General's Office was established here for the states of Iowa and Nebraska. It was located in a building set between 4th and 5th Streets on Avenue D which later was remodeled and enlarged to become the Henry Herold residence.

The Fitzgerald Block at 6th and Main Streets, a fine three-story building, was erected in 1867 by John Fitzgerald of Lincoln, Part of the third floor was a large hall for public affairs as dances and meetings. The rest of the building was finished for stores and offices.

The Board of Trade was effected in 1880. Its object was to devise ways and means to build up the town, encourage public and private enterprise and secure for the city some much needed improvements. In short, it was a sort of Chamber of Commerce.

Missouri River improvement work was started in 1881 after which accretion land began to accumulate and the fill on the Missouri bottoms resulted.

The Plattsmouth City Directory of 1881-1882 states the U. S. Census of 1880 showed a population of 16,688 in the county with over 5,000 in Plattsmouth.

The B & M and C. B. & Q. built a steel bridge over the Missouri in 1880 and at last, the trains could cross the river intact without using the transfer boats, the President and the Vice-President. This was a final blow to the river traffic. The town enjoyed a building boom, especially in good substantial brick business houses on both sides of Main Street.

Plattsmouth has had a good many newspapers over the years. It should be mentioned that a complete file of the "Nebraska Herald", 1865-1872, published by H. D. Hathaway, has been microfilmed and is on file and available at the Nebraska State Historical Society Museum. The Deutsche Wacht was published for two years. The first edition of the Plattsmouth Journal appeared on November 5, 1881 with C. W. Sherman, editor, and though changing hands, has continued in print to the present time.

Doctors E. E. and W. E. Donelan were the first physicians in town in 1856. Doctor R. R. Livingston arrived in 1858. In 1861, he sent out a call for volunteers and organized Company A, First Nebraska Volunteers. They elected him their Captain and they served throughout the Civil War. Toward the last, in 1864, they were called to duty at Fort Kearney to help quell the Indian uprisings. Dr. Livingston, by then a Brigadier General, returned to practice here assisted later by two of his sons, Theodore P and Stuart. His son, Guy, was our first casualty in the Spanish-American War.

Many good doctors have served Plattsmouth since but are too numerous to mention.

In 1880, there were two strong banks, the First National at 6th and Main and the Bank of Cass County at 5th and Main.

The Waterman Opera House was built in 1882 on the same site occupied by the Platte Valley House at 4th and Main, Block 34, Lots 1 and 1/2 of 2. It was 66 feet by 110 feet. Space for three stores occupied the first floor while the second floor was the theatre planned to seat 1500 people. The stage was 25 feet by 48 feet with four dressing rooms. The value was estimated to be $40,000.00. It turned a few years later. In later years, the building was owned by the Plattsmouth Journal,

the Bates family and housed the printing office and a retail store which they operated and in which they sold a bewildering variety of items. It now houses a paint and wallpaper store and other businesses.

The city had several grain elevators; the largest being the one built by the Morrisey Brothers in 1880 with a capacity of 100,000 bushels; this drew a large grain trade.

Wayman's had a foundry and machine shop at Washington Avenue and 10th Street called the Cass County Iron Works. Many of the store front frames and the iron stairways leading to upper floors were made to order there.

Plattsmouth had always had a good volunteer fire department. There were four hand-drawn hose carts placed at strategic points over the town. Then horse-drawn equipment became available and it was housed at the fire barn on South 6th Street.

In 1880, the Plattsmouth Fire Department was organized and in 1882 purchased the "Babcock Chemical Engine".

As better mechanical fire fighting machinery became available, up-to-date equipment has been purchased.

A gas and light plant was discussed in 1885 and an ordinance passed August 3, 1885, authorizing the Plattsmouth Gas and Electric Light Company to operate. The gas works were located at 6th Street and 1st Avenue on the south side.

Eastern capital built the waterworks, completing the construction in 1887. They had a 2-year contract with the city which was renewed in 1922 and 1932. The system became municipally-owned in 1943.

In the summer of 1887, bonds were approved and a storm sewer system was begun. That summer, a contract was let for paving from 2nd to 6th Street on Main to use 5" Sioux Falls granite. Many can recall those cobblestone streets.

In 1889, a franchise was granted to O. H. Ballou to build an electric light plant. A street railway system was tried, first with horse-drawn cars, which were replaced by electric cars. The venture was unprofitable and after 3 or 4 years was abandoned.

Several cigar factories were located here. Pepperburgs was the largest. John Bajeck and Emil Ptak made the Acorn Cigars; the Acorn trademark was designed by Mrs. D. O. Dwyer. The Wurl Brothers also had a thriving business.

According to the City Directory of 1890, there had been added to the business in town a canning factory, the Citizens Bank, several stores, a second daily newspaper, three new hotels, the Perkins House, the Goos Hotel at Third and Main, and the Riley Hotel at Sixth and Main.

The coming of a second railroad, the Missouri Pacific, in 1890, spurred business to a greater activity than ever before.

The town had an intensive grading and paving program with more being added each year.

During the 1890's, the Bell Telephone Company had a small exchange here of about forty or so customers. In 1898, T. H. Pollock viewed the telephone exhibit at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition in Omaha and returned home determined to develop a local company. In partnership with C. C. and Tom Parmele, he organized the Independent Telephone Exchange. The farmers begged for lines, many helping with the construction. Before long, the Company had exchanges out over the county and toll lines into the South Omaha Stock Exchange. Stock was sold in the area and the investors did well on it, making 10%, and selling at a good profit to Lincoln Telephone and Telegraph in 1912.

The two-story Stadelman House with confectionery, bakery and restaurant stood at the northwest corner of Sixth and Main until it was moved a block south to the Eagles site at Sixth and 1st Avenue in 1889 to make way for the Riley Hotel, a massive 3-story brick and stone structure. It was a fine hotel to match any in the state, and a fine popular stop for traveling men and the site of many social affairs. It was classed as a $2.00 a day house and strictly first class in every particular. The large double parlors on the second floor were furnished with hand-carved walnut furniture in Victorian style. It burned in June 1961 and with it went the Cass Theatre, originally the "Parmele", built in 1903. Many of the legitimate theatre road shows gave us one-night stands. Later it was converted to a moving picture theatre. The town will never be the same and all that saved the rest of the business district was lack of wind and the valiant efforts of the local and neighboring fire departments.

The Nebraska Masonic Home was located at Plattsmouth on June 22, 1903, in what had been the Jacob Vallery, Jr. home out on Washington Avenue. It was a large brick house with a mansard roof, owned at that time by Mr. Vallery's son-in-law, Frank E. White, who sold it to the Masonic Lodge. A good-sized annex was soon added. In time, an up-to-date infirmary was built to the east on the spacious grounds. In a few years, two wings were added and the residents were moved in April 1953. The original house was then removed.

The Plattsmouth State Bank was organized on June 6, 1904. Its first location was at the corner in the Fitzgerald Block, now another business. The second site, 5th and Main Streets, was completely remodeled recently and a "Drive-In Bank" was built on Chicago Avenue in 1967.

The Burlington and Missouri Railroad started construction in 1869. The shops were built and burned twice from engine sparks. All brick buildings were built from 1874 to 1881. The yards were severely damaged by a very bad flood. The Missouri River bridge was built in 1880 and rebuilt about 1903. The CB&Q Railroad assumed control at that time. After two strikes, the shops were moved away, some to Omaha and some to Havelock. Only the B.R.E.X. remains and it leaves this fall.

The Missouri Pacific Railroad came through in 1890 giving the town a good north and south line. We miss the picturesque Missouri Pacific depot which was removed a year ago as well as the old familiar Burlington Station. We also miss the fine local and transcontinental passenger service enjoyed for so many years on both rail lines. So ends the saga of Plattsmouth as a railroad town.

The Plattsmouth Post Office was moved a good many times but managed to stay on Main Street until it was located on 6th Street, on the south side of the alley in the new Riley Hotel in 1890. When the new Post Office was built about 1912 at 5th and Avenue A, we thought that the ultimate had been reached, but this year, there is a brand new one at Washington Avenue and 8th Street. The previous building has been acquired for City offices.

There have been many changes since the turn of the century. The Platte River Auto and Wagon Bridge built in 1911 put Plattsmouth on the "King of Trails - K.T.", Omaha-Kansas City, now Highway 73-75.

The several livery stables gave way to automobile agencies, garages and filling stations. Numerous apartment houses, supermarkets, laundromats, motels, hot dog, root beer and ice cream stands and the great number of residents who commute to work in other towns, are evidence of change and change means growth.

In 1932, the Business Men's Ad Club planned and developed the first Fall Festival. All the events were held out-of-doors with the agricultural exhibits displayed in a large tent on a side street. Everything was free. The celebration came to be called the Korn Karnival. A king and queen are chosen each fall and crowned at the elaborate coronation ceremony held the first evening of the Karnival. They rule over Kornland until the next celebration. Parades of children, farmers, merchants and organizations are held with large crowds gathered along the parade route. For three days, Main Street is the center of all activity. In 1944, the Kass County King Korn Klub was organized to promote the Karnival each year. It has been an annual event except during the World War for 2 years. The various organizations in town take turns at producing the Coronation Ceremonies. Selected students from over the county serve as representatives from their schools to the Court of King Korn.

On November 8, 1966 Plattsmouth gained another financial institution when the new Cass County Bank opened for business as a state bank, operating under a new charter and as a member of the F.D.I.C.

The Plattsmouth Community Schools

The first school was taught by Miss Stocking in 1856 in a frame building then standing on Gospel Hill, the site now marked by a large stone. In 1857, Mr. & Mrs. J. P. Garrell conducted the city school in a building on the southwest corner of Fifth and Main. By 1860, the city had two schools and ninety scholars. By the next year, it had more than doubled and continued to need more space. In 1873, bonds were voted and a four-story brick building was erected on Main Street between 8th and 10th Streets. The grades occupied three floors with the high school on the fourth floor.

The earthquake in 1877 caused some cracking on the southeast corner and it was thought wise to remove the top floor and construct a new high school.

A one-story brick building was built on the southwest corner of the school grounds, and the original building became known as the Central Building. Five Ward schools were built leaving the educational system well cared for at that time. No changes were made until the new high school at 8th and Main was built in 1918 and the little old high school was removed. A new Central Grade School was built in 1943 and in 1953, First Ward and Wintersteen Ward Schools were replaced with modern quarters. A new building for lower grades was built next to the Columbian School and a fine addition was added to the high school.

St. John's Parochial School

St. John's School was built in 1881. In 1956, the Parish erected a modern grade school building. The old school was remodeled for the Ursuline Sisters Home. Since then, fire damaged it severely and the Sisters are living in the cottage to the east of the church.

The Plattsmouth Library

The forerunner of the present Public Library goes back to the organization of a "Literary Circle" in 1857. The work of the present Public Library dates from February 25, 1885, when the "Young Ladies Social Temperance" was organized. At the next meeting, the name was changed to "Young Ladies Reading Room Association". A room was rented over U. V. Mathew's Hardware Store at 4th and Main on the second floor. This building was across west from the present Courthouse. This became their regular meeting place. The young ladies at once planned and carried out all sorts of projects by which they could earn money. With it, they bought books. Ice cream socials, strawberry festivals, progressive parties, programs, plays and many other schemes were tried. They became known as the Y.L.R.R.A., but it sounded like "Y Lar A". Several locations were used for the library but as interest was high, they decided to put on a campaign to build one.

Mrs. C. H. Parmele gave the site, the lot just north of the present library. This gift started a movement of popular donation to the building project. James M. Robertson gave the sand; Tom Parmele gave the brick; A. W. Atwood the paint; F. G. Fricke the glass and so on.

A reception marked the opening on January 1, 1901 and the library started the new century with 2000 books and 800 subscribers. This building served until 1916 when the modern Carnegie Library was built across the street. Andrew Carnegie donated $12,500.00, providing the city would appropriate $1,250.00 annually.

At the beginning, Miss Olive Jones was asked to take charge of the "Reading Room". She agreed to, but only on a temporary basis. When she retired in 1940 she had served as the Librarian for 54 years. It was her whole life. Every child was welcomed and given special attention. No wonder that Plattsmouth has one of the highest "per capita" reading records in the nation. Miss Verna Leonard, who had been the assistant, took over and carried on. The summer reading classes and trips to the Masonic Home have been two of the most important contributions to the community, not to mention Story Hour and the Playlets.

The Plattsmouth Churches

The first religious meetings in town were Union Services held in a frame building about where 541 Main Street is now. As the town grew, the various denominations formed their own congregations. Following is a listing.

The First Baptist Church, organized October 17, 1856, later became inactive.

The First Methodist Church, organized June 29, 1857 with 20 members. Presently at 7th and Main Streets.

The First Presbyterian Church, instituted on May 8, 1858, first meeting held with a membership of 16. About 1910, 34 members from the disbanded German Presbyterial Congregation joined the church.

The Christian Church, organized in May, 1858.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church, first services being held on August 3, 1860.

Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church, built in 1861. The parochial school was built in 1881.

The German Presbyterian Church, organized September 10, 1876, worshipping in the German school house in the northwest part of town. They disbanded sometime near 1911.

In 1890, the Bohemian members of Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church withdrew and erected a frame church which they named the Church of the Holy Rosary.

Saint Paul's Evangelical Church, organized in 1893. On January 20, 1963, the name was changed to Saint Paul's United Church of Christ.

The Christian Science Society, organized on December 12, 1898.

The German Methodist Church, located at 6th Street and Second Avenue, disbanded in 1909.

Recognized Church of Jesus Christ Of The Latter Day Saints, organized as a Mission in 1911.

Missouri Synod Lutheran Church, formed by mostly members from the Louisville area in about 1939.

Wesleyan Methodist Church, organized in July, 1948.

The First Baptist Church, met in homes until their organization in 1954.

The Jehovah's Witnesses, organized on January 1, 1960.

Plattsmouth Baptist Church, organized in March, 1960.

- Alice Pollock Perry (Mrs. Virgil W.)

August, 1967