

# Nebraska Folklore

(Book Three)

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# NEBRASKA FOLKLORE

(Book 3)

## PIONEER SCHOOLS

"Schools are like water; you never miss them until you are without them." -- Nicholas Sharp, a Nebraska Pioneer

This thought was shared by nearly all of the Nebraska settlers who, as soon as they had a roof over their heads and the prairie soil broken, began thinking about an education for their children.

The first school for white children in Nebraska was established at Fort Atkinson in 1821. Sergeant Mumford, teacher, received 15 cents per day from regimental funds, and 50 cents per month per child from each officer. The second school, Indian Mission House, was opened near Bellevue in 1834, attended by both Indian and white children. White settlers were not permitted in what is now the State of Nebraska prior to 1854.

Many of the first schools in Nebraska were known as subscription schools. The teacher taught for what he could get from each pupil, the average pay being a dollar-and-a-half a month for each student. A school term was three months in length. Sometimes two or three terms made up the school year. In some districts, it was the custom to hire women teachers for the spring and fall terms, and men teachers for the winter term. Facing the winter storms and building fires were considered too severe for women, by the directors of these schools.

One of the first subscription schools was located in Otoe County near Nebraska City. Each of the twelve students paid the teacher, Margaret Martin, one-dollar-and-fifty-cents a month. The first subscription school in Omaha was held in a room of the old State House. Classes for the forty pupils enrolled were conducted from July until December when they had to be discontinued to make room for government offices.

In 1858 a new system was set up in which each township became a school district with a school board having the power to levy taxes, build a school house, and hire a teacher. It was not until the Enabling Act was passed by the United States Congress in 1864, that the sparsely settled communities found it possible to establish free public schools. This Act set aside the sixteenth and thirty-sixth sections in every township for the support of the common schools, and a total of seventy-two sections in the State for the support of a university. In addition, five percent of the proceeds of all sales by the national government of land within the State, minus incidental expenses, was set aside to defray the expenses of common schools. From these funds was built the basis of our modern educational system. Its effectiveness may be judged by Nebraska's present literacy rating, which is excelled by only three other states.

The progress of establishing schools was slow. A statistical report shows that in 1870 there were 797 districts in Nebraska and 298 school houses. Only one school district out of three had a school.

## EARLY SCHOOL BUILDINGS

The school houses that were built before public tax agencies had been established were usually built by the settlers themselves.

Elijah Filley, according to his son, Dr. H. C. Filley, fought an entire school district in Gage County in 1867 for a large school. Most of the settlers at that time thought a structure large enough to house the nine children in the district would suffice. But Filley wanted a building that would take care of the community's school needs after it had become more settled. He won his battle by building most of the school himself. He and other settlers, who wanted a larger school, quarried the rock and erected the structure.

Three settlers in Saline County dug a school house out of a cave along the bank of the Blue River in 1866. Lumber for the floor and roof was obtained from railroad land fourteen miles away. From there it was hauled to a local mill and sawed into boards. A fireplace, likewise dug out of the river bank, was used for heating. The wife of one of the settlers taught the first school term. Thirteen children attended.

Sometimes the simplest necessities for building were entirely lacking: Charles Lederer had no nails when he built a school in Blair County in 1877. In this instance, with true pioneer ingenuity, the sills and studding were joined together by mortises and wooden pegs.

Nebraska School Buildings and Grounds, a bulletin published by the State Superintendent in 1902, describes a school erected in Scotts Bluff County in 1886 or '87 that had walls of baled straw, a sod roof, and a dirt floor. This strange building was 16 feet long, 12 feet wide and 7 feet high. Two years after its erection, cattle, on range in the vicinity, literally ate it to pieces.

Ellsworth Paine, who combined farming with teaching school in Gosper County during the early '80's, gives the following description of the school where he taught:

The school house was picturesque both inside and out. On approaching it from the southeast it appeared to have bulged up and out of the ground to a height of four or five feet. A rusty stovepipe protruded through the top of a dirt roof. The roof was supported by timbers. From the adjacent background two partially transparent windows broke the monotony of the low sod wall. The door facing the south was approached by a short trench from the creek bank. This door of undressed boards was especially designed for timid "school mams" who desired to inspect their room before entering. By applying the eye to one of the copious cracks, one was able to command a good view of the interior.

Many of the early schools were held in strange places--such as tents, a room or corner of a settler's home, a granary, a dugout, or church, until the community became prosperous enough to erect a school building.

Mrs. Maude Hershey, of North Platte, says that her first school building, in 1868, was held in a large room with a grocery store conducting business at the other end. This arrangement was also used in Crete, where classes in the winter of '71 were held in the front part of Ocker and Grimm's carpenter shop. The Rev. T. W. Worley, son of a circuit-riding minister, tells in his unpublished

memoirs of attending school in the Congregational Church at Milford in the same year. The teacher, G. B. France, was a lawyer, but his practice was so limited that he found time for teaching.

Lizzie Lockwood, of South Sioux City, attended her first school in 1870 in a granary in Dixon County. Mrs. M. E. Armour, of South Sioux City, first attended school in Mrs. Will Berger's home in that city. Classes were held in the dining room, which was also used by the family. The teacher, who was the housewife, arranged her schedule so that when she was cooking in the kitchen the pupils studied, and when the family used the dining room at noon the children played in the yard.

The first school in Allen, Dixon county, was held in a granary; later a sod school house with sliding windows was built. The first school in Holdrege was taught in the attic of Solomon Timber's home in 1876. Seven children attended. The first school in Gering was held in 1887 in a saloon that was temporarily vacant. District No. 52 in Madison County went through the evolution experienced by many districts. The first school structure was a sod house to which, as time went on, wood was added for its walls and roof until it came to resemble a board shanty. In 1892, when the community had become sufficiently built up, a new frame building was erected.

J.B. Jones, who taught in Custer County in 1887, says his school had been excavated out of the side of a hill. On the top and back of the school house corn for fuel was stored. Wandering pigs often raided the fuel supply by running across the roof of the school.

According to S. G. Jacoby, who attended school in Sioux County in the 70's, gophers were another nuisance. Mr. Jacoby says they sometimes tunneled their way into the school room through the earth floor.

Mrs. M. A. Springer, who attended school in Dakota County in the '70's, recalls an afternoon when the entire school had to vacate the building through a window because a large rattlesnake stood guard at the door.

Mrs. Lola Bradbury McComb of Wilsonville, Nebraska, remembers the buffalo that, like Mary's fabled lamb, followed the children to school each morning. She says, "He was a tame friendly fellow that spent hours nibbling at the grass in front of our door, but he always seemed to be resting in the doorway when we wanted to go in or out of the door. And he wouldn't move. Many a bare leg scrambled over the shaggy side of our schoolhouse buffalo as we went in and out of the door."

Grant Essex, of Lincoln, who has lived in the State since 1878, says the school house of pioneer days was never locked because it was often used as a haven during a storm or other emergency. A few sandhill schools were also stocked with food caches for travelers who became lost or caught in severe storms. This custom was dropped when it was found that travelers used the supplies in fair weather or when there was no real emergency.

## EQUIPMENT

The equipment and furnishings of the early schools were often as primitive as were the school

houses themselves. The County Superintendent's school report for District 16 in Seward County from 1874 was typical of many schools:

S. H. Williams, director; Miss Caroline Jenson, teacher. Department behavior of students, fairly good; recitations pretty well conducted. An old sod house, poorly lighted and ventilated; no cupboard for books, maps, etc.; no hooks for hats, caps, etc.; no out houses; furnished with board seats and desks. School house and seats wholly inadequate for the number of pupils. No recitation seats; no chair for teacher; teacher's desk; 24 feet of blackboard surface; no globes, maps, charts, dictionary or books of reference. Pupils in the district, 47; enrolled, 34; present 25; average attendance, 29. No visits by director. Several visits by parents.

In Crete, in 1878, the teacher's chair was a nail keg, the desk was made out of an organ. J. Estella Allen says that in her school, in Fillmore County during the '70's, they used for desks, rough tables, none of which had been scaled down to fit the different ages and sizes of the children. When there weren't enough benches to go around, as was often the case, the children sat on the floor. Too often this was a dirt floor, dusty in dry weather or muddy with pools of water from a leaky roof, following a rain.

Isabell Cornish, who taught in Custer County in the early '80's, says that her first blackboard was made by applying a coating of soot and oil to six feet of builder's paper. When the commercially-made slate came into vogue it made school work easy for both teacher and pupils. The boys usually erased their figuring or writing by spitting on the slate and then rubbing it off with their coat sleeves. The girls, more fastidious, carried pieces of cloth with which they washed their slates after wetting the rag at the water pail.

The chalk for these blackboards, according to L. W. Conklin, who taught in Saunders County in the '70's, was sometimes made of soft white rock found in the gullies. Soapstone was also used.

Purple ink, according to Grant Essex, who attended school in Chase County during the early '70's, was made by steeping poke-weed berries in water.

Nicholas Sharp, who taught near Liberty, Nebraska, in 1870, says he also made his own ink. Either powder or indelible sticks were used, with water added. Stove soot, with oil, was also used. This strange concoction, being thick, resembled printer's ink. The quill pens were, likewise, made by the teacher or by his older students. It was a common practice to bury the bottles of ink in ashes taken from the stove to keep them from freezing solid. Some teachers used a box filled with sand as an anti-freeze storage place for ink.

Even lead pencils were a luxury. There was only one in the school taught by Miss Lockwood, and it was constantly borrowed by the settlers in the neighborhood who, according to the teacher, kept it wrapped in paper.

The most common stove for burning wood was the square box type, E. J. Estes, who taught near Fairbury in the '80's, says he always kept a foot-warming log in front of the stove so the pupils would have a place to warm their feet when they came into the room on cold mornings. Another school stove was the upright barrel type which came into common use after coal had taken the

place of wood and corn cobs as fuel. But the most unusual kind of school stove, according to Nicholas Sharp, who taught in Gage County in the late '60's, was a horizontal wood burner which had a hollow heating drum on top of the fire box. Wood and corn were the most popular fuels.

The playground equipment used during intermission in the early schools was very meager; often there was none at all. Consequently, simple games like drop the handkerchief, hide and seek, blackman, and dare base were played by the smaller children. Older pupils played shinny and ball. The ball was usually made of string by one of the pupils. Judge W. M. Ryan, of Homer, says that the favorite pastime in the winter was coasting on the snow. Since there were no small sleds for this pastime, the tops of desks, boards, dishpans, and coop shovels were used as substitutes.

Many schools held box socials in order to raise money for a school bell, a new blackboard, or any other equipment needed. Sometimes, according to Mr. Sharp, voting contests were held at a penny a vote. The purpose was to determine "who was the most luscious girl in the neighborhood."

## TEXTBOOKS

The pupils furnished their own textbooks until 1891 when the Nebraska free textbook law--one of the first in the nation--was passed. Some pupils were unable to furnish any books. The lack of uniformity was the bane of the early teachers. Many of the textbooks had been brought from the East by the parents of the pupils. Mrs. Cornish found six different kinds of readers in a class of eight beginners.

A.B. Cornish and Mrs. Cornish, who before their marriage taught in the same county, printed lessons in a small account book given out by a patent medicine concern for one boy who had no book during the first seven weeks of school. The first school in Jefferson County, in 1860-61, did not have a single textbook during the first year of school. The teacher had to substitute as best she could with the Bible and Pilgrim's Progress.

Dr. A. A. Reed, who taught school in Gage County in the early '80's, says the salesmen, in an attempt to drive a wedge for their particular books, argued that the frequent changing of texts gave the spice of a variety to hum-drum school work by stimulating new interest and effort. After the new books had been installed, the salesman took the opposite side of the argument by saying the school had perfect textbooks so it would now be wisest never to make a change. Such sales sophistry was practiced by book salesmen throughout Nebraska in the '90's.

## EARLY TEACHING METHODS

The early schools devoted most of their attention to the three R's, reading 'riting and 'rithmetic. Little else, outside of occasional singing, was taught. There were no uniform methods of teaching, the systems employed depended on the training and temperament of the teachers.

Edna Davis says that when she taught writing in Washington County she ruled lines into the slates with a knife. The multiplication table was sometimes sung. Several tunes were used, the

most popular being "Yankee Doodle".

Some of the young pioneer teachers knew little more than their pupils. They were hired because sparsely settled communities could not afford to pay wages demanded by more experienced teachers, or because they needed the position, or had relatives on the school board.

Mrs. A. V. Wilson of Lincoln, tells of an experience she had in Colfax County where she went to school in the '70's. The teacher, a young girl whose education had not extended beyond the fifth reader, managed fairly well until she came to the advanced grades where, whenever she encountered any lessons she didn't understand, she skipped over to the next lesson. When the director visited the school, one of the older boys, who was aware of her real reason for skipping lessons, would invariably appear to get confused, and then, selecting one of these omitted lessons, he would ask the teacher questions about it. She, knowing her limitations, would just as invariably say: "The lesson has been passed over because I don't think it is important enough for class work." Nothing was ever done about her lack of knowledge, so the skipping of lessons continued.

Discipline was often very poor. Mrs. Herzing recalls one parent saying, when bringing in her unruly youngster, "Remember lickin' and larnin' go together." Mrs. A. Witte says that her teacher in Lancaster County enforced discipline during study hours by standing in the back of the room where the seated students couldn't see her without turning around in their seats. This method is still in use.

## EARLY TEACHERS

The life of the early teacher was often far from pleasant. Salaries, when paid at all, were often as low as seventy-five cents and a dollar a day. Nearly always part of the salary was paid by room and board. When this was done, the teacher made the rounds living with the various families of the district who had children in school. The longest time was spent with the families who had the most children. Usually the sod home was so crowded that the teacher was forced to sleep with one of the children. Sometimes the entire family slept in one room.

Food was quite a problem. A teacher in Saunders County spoke of being fed nothing but milk and parched wheat in one home of many children. Home-made molasses and corn-bread was another common diet.

B.C. Jones recalls that, when teaching in Custer County in 1887, he had so much difficulty in finding a place to stay that for a time he thought he would be forced to sleep out in the open. At one soddy, he shared a bed with two boys, chickens roosted at the foot and pigeons were in the rafters overhead. Finally, he secured a permanent place with a Bohemian family. They prepared his meals American style, while they ate theirs out of one large family bowl.

Teaching qualifications were very low in the '70's and '80's. The passing of the sixth reader was often considered sufficient for a boy or girl to enter the profession.

Isabell Cornish tells of teaching school in Custer County in the fall of 1884, when she was

fourteen. She came to the school, younger than some of her pupils, wearing short skirts, and with her hair in long braids. Later, dressed as a typical lady teacher of the time, she wore high shoes, a long skirt, a tight waist, and a blouse with long sleeves and a high neck. Her hair was coiled high on her head. Some teachers added a professional touch to their appearance by wearing a white apron in the school room.

## SANITATION

Little attention was given to sanitation. The old dipper and water bucket were in almost constant use in the average school room, gathering, during the course of the day, a muddy pattern around them. Edna Davis tried to solve this problem by keeping the water in a large jug where it could not be contaminated. Usually the teacher satisfied her conscience as far as sanitation was concerned by watching the children when they took a drink of water to see that they didn't pour back into the bucket any water left in the dipper.

Eleanor Brown, of Madison, who taught school in the '80's, writes that it was then the custom to devote one day out of the school year to cleaning and scrubbing the school room. Pupils and teacher worked together at this task. Edna Davis, who taught school in Washington County in the '80's, used to assign one of the students to sharpen pencils at the end of the school day. This was done on a sandpaper disc grinder.

## BALLADS

The ballads in this collection and many more, were sung in pioneer Nebraska. They have come from the people themselves, having been repeated by word of mouth from generation to generation. Social life, in the early days, was limited to church activities, home gatherings, and occasional political rallies. It was at the latter two places that ballads were sung, nearly always from memory and usually with improvisations--in which the singer expressed some of his own interpretations of the life about him.

It has been only within the past twenty years, since the advent of the automobile, the radio, and the development of metropolitan journalism, that these old ballads have been neglected. Interest in them, today, is chiefly limited to a few scholars and to academic magazines. The radio, while helping to keep some of the old tunes alive in the minds of the people, has detracted from their local flavor.

It is only from spontaneous folk singing that the ballads can be given color, atmosphere, and new themes, so many of which have been suggested within the past few years by such Nebraska events as the drouth, three-cent hogs, ten-cent corn, farm foreclosures, and the Farm Holiday movement.

## Hard Times

The cynical ballad, "Hard Times," was recovered by L. C. Wimberly, Professor of English at the University of Nebraska, and editor of Prairie Schooner, from Miss Ruby Beaty of Wilcox,

Nebraska. While widely sung in other states it belongs and is a part of Nebraska's early pioneer atmosphere.

Come listen a while and I'll sing you a song,  
Concerning the times--it will not be long--  
When everybody is striving to buy,  
And cheating each other, I cannot tell why;  
    And it's hard, hard times.

From father to mother, from sister to brother,  
From cousin to cousin, they're cheating each other;  
Since cheating has grown to be the fashion,  
I believe to my soul it will ruin the nation;  
    And it's hard, hard times.

Now, there is a the talker, by talking he eats,  
And so does the butcher, by killing his meats;  
He'll toss the steel yards and weigh it right down,  
And swear it's just right if it lacks forty pounds;  
    And it's hard, hard times.

And there is the merchant, as honest we're told;  
Whatever he sells you, my friend, you are sold;  
Believe what I tell you and don't be surprised  
If you find yourself cheated half out of your eyes;  
    And it's hard, hard times.

And there is the lawyer, you plainly will see,  
He'll plead your case for a very large fee;  
He'll law you and tell you the wrong side is right,  
And make you believe that a black horse is white;  
    And it's hard, hard times.

And there is the doctor, I like to forgot--  
I believe to my soul he's the worst of the lot!  
He'll tell you he'll cure you for half you possess,  
And when you are buried he'll take all the rest;  
    And it's hard, hard times.

And there's the old bachelor all hated with scorn;  
He's like an old garment all tattered and torn;  
The girls and the widows all toss him a sigh;  
And think it's quite right, and so do I;  
    And it's hard, hard times.

And there's the young widow, coquettish and shy,  
With a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye;

But when she gets married she'll cut quite a dash;  
She'll give him the reins and she'll handle the cash;  
And it's hard, hard times.

And there's the young lady, I liked to have missed  
I believe to my soul she'd like to be kissed.  
She'll tell you she loves you with all pretence,  
And ask you to call again sometime hence;  
And it's hard, hard times.

And there's the young man, the worst of the whole;  
He will tell you he loves you with all of his soul.  
He will tell you he loves you, for you he will die,  
And when he's away he will swear it's a lie;  
And it's hard, hard times.

### In Kansas

Dr. Wimberly, as a boy, remembers hearing this sung by a tobacco-chewing Keith County woman. Her hatred of Kansas was intense, Dr. Wimberly believes, because her second husband had come from there. She always recited this ballad of disparagement with unusual passion and color.

Oh, they chaw tobacco thin  
In Kansas.  
They chaw tobacco thin  
In Kansas.  
They chaw tobacco thin  
And they spit it on their chin  
And they lap it up agin  
In Kansas.

Oh, they churn the butter well  
In Kansas.  
They churn the butter well  
In Kansas.  
They churn the butter well  
And the buttermilk they sell  
And they get as lean as hell  
In Kansas.

Oh, the potatoes they grow small  
In Kansas.  
Potatoes they grow small  
In Kansas.  
Oh, potatoes they grow small

And they dig 'em in the fall  
And they eat 'em hides and all  
In Kansas.

Oh, they say that drink's a sin  
In Kansas.

They say that drink's a sin  
In Kansas.

They say that drink's a sin  
So they guzzle all they kin,  
And they throw it up again  
In Kansas.

Come all who want to roam  
To Kansas.

Come all who want to rom  
To Kansas.

Come all who want to roam  
And seek yourself a home  
And be happy with your doom  
In Kansas.

## Nebraska Land

"Nebraska Land" was widely sung in the state during the last years of the nineties, when Dr. Wimberly heard it in Chase County. A Methodist farmer, named Cyrus Korben, sang it to him one windy afternoon while putting up hay.

Another version of this satirical ballad is "Dakota Land," in which the word "Dakota" is inserted in place of "Nebraska." The air is "Maryland, My Maryland."

We've reached the land of desert sweet  
Where nothing grows for man to eat.  
The wind does blow with blist'ring heat  
O'er the plains so hard to beat.

Chorus:

Nebraska land, Nebraska land,  
As on thy desert soil I stand  
And look away across the plains  
I wonder why it never rains.

There is no wheat, there is no oats,  
Not even corn to feed our shoats.  
Our chickens are so thin and poor

They come and peck crumbs off the floor.

Our horses are broncho breed;  
They nothing have on which to feed,  
We do not live, we only stay;  
We're all too poor to get away.

### In That Little Old Sod Shanty on the Claim

Dr. Wimberly picked up a companion piece to the pessimistic ballad, "Nebraska Land," when he visited Keith County in 1903. Making a living in this region was as difficult then as it is depicted in the ballad. Kate Deems was reduced to using cow chips for firewood, "the biggest that could be found," so it seemed appropriate she should have obtained special pleasure from singing "In That Little Old Sod Shanty on the Claim."

A bumper crop of corn we raised in eighteen ninety-two;  
To dress our wife in silk we thought was plain;  
But we sold our corn for thirteen cents, three cents beside a share,  
So the wife stayed in the shanty on the claim.

Our hogs they died of cholera, our chickens had the pip;  
The baby swallowed buttons like a chain;  
Our wife was married thirteen years before she saw a dime  
When we lived in that sod shanty on the claim.

Yet for all the hardships we went through, we never gave up hope,  
But plugged the harder till we made it gain,  
For love was close beside us in all our ups and downs  
In that little old sod shanty on the claim.

### PIONEER CHURCHES

The first sermon ever preached in Nebraska was delivered at Camp Missouri, later named Fort Atkinson, in 1819. Fourteen years later, in 1855, the Baptist minister, Moses Merrill, preached in the river town of Bellevue. It was not until after 1854, when the Nebraska Territory was opened, that ministers and missionaries of various denominations began to come in--Baptist, Catholic, Christian, Congregational, Methodist, and Presbyterian.

Among these was the Rev. Peter Cooper, a Methodist minister, who preached the first sermon in Omaha on August 15, 1854. The congregation consisted of 20 persons who met at the home of William P. Snowden. Later in the spring of 1855, the Rev. Isaac Collins, who had succeeded the Rev. Mr. Cooper, conducted services in the new Territorial Capitol building. Only six people were sufficiently interested to attend.

The first Catholic mass of record in what is now Nebraska was celebrated September 14, 1851, at Fort Laramie Treaty Council. In 1857 the Catholic Church designated the Nebraska Territory as a separate apostolic vicarate. At this time there were only two Catholic clergymen in the territory, serving three hundred families in towns along the Missouri River. By 1863, however, the Catholic population numbered 7,000, including Indians who had been converted.

The Christian Church, often called Campbellites in the early days, had a minister in the State as early as 1845, when, on June 15, the Rev. Mr. Foster preached near the present site of Ogallala. Congregationalists were represented at an even earlier date, 1834, although their churches were not established until twenty years later, in 1854, when the Rev. Reuben Gaylord came to Omaha for that purpose. The Rev. Mr. Gaylord, two years later, complained that the religious sentiment in Omaha had yet to be created and there were few to aid in creating it.

Baptists, who had been represented in Nebraska since 1835, built their first church in Nebraska City in August, 1855. Its first congregation was composed of 22 members.

One of the first Lutheran sermons in the new territory was preached in the front room of the Bates House, Dakota City, in November, 1858. The Rev. H. W. Kuhn, a Trinity Lutheran missionary from Pennsylvania was the minister. Lutheran churches were founded in Omaha and Fontanelle in the same year.

The Mormons spent the winter of 1846 at the present site of Florence. A number of this group, who did not choose to continue with the mass migration to Utah during the following spring, settled in Genoa, Niobrara, and at scattered points over the State.

The Seventh Day Adventists, Episcopalians, Mennonites, Unitarians, and Quakers had ministers and adherents in Nebraska by the time it had reached Statehood, 1867. Jews had also settled in Nebraska, for the most part in Omaha and Lincoln.

## PLACES OF WORSHIP

Many of the early church services were held in strange places, such as sodhouses, barns, machine sheds, cellars, courthouses, on the open prairie and near creeks, in saloons, in tents, in hotel dining rooms, and with the coming of the railroad, in boxcars and depots. Such primitive housing facilities were used until there were people and wealth enough to justify the building of churches.

The Baptist Church of Cuming City, for instance, was organized by the Rev. E. G. Groat in April, 1869, in a side-tracked boxcar. Services were conducted here for several months. Another new congregation met in a sod stable.

When the Congregational minister, the Rev. A. E. Ricker, arrived in the new village of Crawford, he preached in a tent that also served as a feed store. Members of the congregation seated themselves on rough boards that had been laid across feed bags. A barber, with keen business foresight, moved his chair into one corner of the tent where he was kept busy at his trade, shaving and cutting the hair of the male members of the congregation throughout the service.

The Rev. Mr. Wells also relates that it was the custom for members of the congregation to bring their own lighting facilities when services were held in country schoolhouses at night. At one such meeting, where the Rev. Mr. Wells was scheduled to preach, each church member came to the meeting expecting the other members to bring lamps or candles. The result was that the minister, after a fifteen-mile drive, was forced to preach his sermon in the dark.

The Rev. George Scott, who came to Nebraska as a young Congregational minister in 1871, was assigned to organize a church near Covington. His first services were held in a log school house while the money and labor for a church were being secured. Many of the men in the Rev. Mr. Scott's congregation hadn't heard a sermon for years, so it was natural, in this rustic environment that they should be slow in adjusting themselves to conventional church deportment. One of their worst habits consisted of chewing tobacco during every waking minute. They even insisted upon bringing a liberal supply of it to church meetings. The school house floor, during these occasions served as a cuspidor.

When the congregation had moved into the newly built church, the members still insisted on chewing. The Rev. Mr. Scott, in desperation decided to do something about it. So, one Sunday morning, he opened his sermon by saying:

"Many of you men used to chew tobacco and spit all over the floor in the school house. I didn't say anything about it at the time, but now that we are in a new church I wish you wouldn't do it. I know it will be difficult for some of you, but you can surely arrange to give up chewing for an hour if you want to.

"If you can't, we will get a log of wood and place it outside of the door where, as you enter the church, you can place your quid, using whatever precautions you wish to avoid getting them mixed up. If you find, during the hours of service, you can't endure the abstinence, you may get up and chew by the log for a few minutes. After chewing you may return to the meeting. You will not be considered as disturbing the services and I guarantee that your quid will be where you place it, because there isn't a hog in the country that would touch it."

## PREACHING EXPERIENCES

The most colorful figures in the State's pioneer religion were the circuit riders, who conducted services at stated intervals over a wide area of territory. Each circuit rider had a given number of appointments where his congregation met, the number determining how often he could preach at any given point. For instance, a man with six appointments could, by hard riding, manage to conduct services for each congregation every two weeks. If he had more congregations, he would come less often, sometimes only once a month.

The circuit rider's life was hard, since he had to be out in all kinds of weather, ranging from a blistering hundred degrees in the shade to a biting snowstorm. The majority rode horseback, with their few belongings in a saddle bag, although a few were able to afford light rigs. Occasionally an impoverished minister had to walk, as was the case when his pony had died and he didn't possess sufficient money to replace it.

Much of the circuit route was made over uncharted plains with only a broken trail, at best, to follow. In some instances the rider would cover 60 or 70 miles of open prairie without seeing a house or a human being.

A circuit rider who came early to the State was the Methodist minister, the Rev. J. A. Nichols. His field of operation during the 1870's was Thayer County. The Rev. Mr. Nichols recalled that when making pastoral visits, which were an important part of the pioneer minister's work, he had to walk the prairie and try to locate the homes of his members by scanning the grassy levels and slopes for signs of smoke issuing from the ground, since the dugouts, in which most of the families in this community lived at this time, were excavated along the sides of small hills or ridges.

Mr. N. C. Ryerson, of Lincoln, who is now 94 years old, came to Nebraska in 1874. He was never an ordained minister but preached a number of sermons for the Free Will Baptists in Saline County, where meetings were held in dugouts or low sod houses. Mr. Ryerson believes that the services conducted in these rude surroundings were among the most sincere that have ever been held. He says that everyone took part in both the prayers and songs; but what was most interesting were the testimonials made by members of the congregation.

The Free Methodists, likewise, ignored all attempts of formality at their early services. The congregation added emphasis to all sermons, prayers and testimonials with such phrases as "Amen," "That's right," "Ah yes," "He's right, Lord," "Oh, those sinners!" Further ejaculations came from the more excited members in carefully timed moans and groans. At the close of the services the entire congregation got up and milled about, fervently clasping hands and greeting each other. As they threaded back and forth, their movements developed into a rhythm, in some ways a quadrille. Through this emotional activity the sermons, which were often threadbare and dull in themselves, were given an enlivened and inspired meaning.

The singing of hymns also gave added zest to the services. The singing was usually begun by "raising a tune" with a tuning fork, since there were few organs in the new country. Even hymn books were lacking. The minister would "line the hymn" for his congregation by singing two lines of it, after which the congregation would repeat what the minister had sung. Then the minister would "line" the next two lines, and so on until the hymn was finished.

There is the story of one preacher who had poor eyesight and was unable to read without his glasses. One Sunday, when he was conducting service in a sodhouse, he found that he was unable to "line the hymn" because he had forgotten his glasses. He tried to explain his predicament to the congregation by saying:

"My eyes are dim, I cannot see,  
I left my specs at home."

The congregation, thinking he was "lining a hymn," burst into song and faithfully reproduced his words. The minister, now frantic, made another attempt to clarify the situation by saying:

"I did not mean that you should sing."

I only meant my eyes were dim."

But the audience, now warmed up to the singing, hastily repeated these lines. It is not known how he finally made them understand he wasn't singing a hymn.

The salary "begged for," in the Rev. Mr. Chadwick's case, consisted of \$250 a year and a furnished parsonage. Nor was all the salary furnished in actual cash, since "gifts" of feed for the horse or fuel for the house were invariably deducted from the salary. The salary was further augmented through "pound parties"--to which each member of the congregation brought a pound, or more, of food. But there were instances where the minister also took deductions from his salary because of these "pounds."

The Rev. Mr. Chadwick, in recalling these days, said: "The coming of the minister was quite an event in the sodhouse home and every effort was made by its occupants to provide a big company dinner when their pastor was expected. My wife ate so much fried chicken during these visits that one day she said, 'I hope I never have to eat another chicken, or even see one cross the road ahead of our horse.'"

## RIVALRIES

The intense rivalry between the Methodists and the Christians, better known then as Campbellities is illustrated by an incident that is reported to have occurred on April 10, 1858, when the Rev. Zenas B. Turnman and the Rev. Mr. Burch, Methodist ministers, were crossing the Nemaha River near Falls City in a ferry boat. When they were half way across the river, the Rev. Mr. Turnman's horse jumped overboard into the water. Its owner however, held onto the bridle. This enabled him to force the horse to swim to shore alongside the ferry. After the party had safely reached the opposite shore, the Rev. Mr. Turnman led his dripping animal up to the Rev. Mr. Burch and said in a loud whisper, "Brother Burch, I have just found out the true sentiment of my horse. He is a Campbellite, so I will sell him. I refuse to own such a horse."

Disagreement with the opposing denomination's belief was sometimes shown through the medium of prayer. Mrs. W. B. Alexander, of Lincoln, whose husband was an early Nebraska minister, states that "guests" who had come from the opposing camp often stood up at "prayer time" and asked for forgiveness and guidance for the believers of the denomination they were visiting, "in order that they might find the True Religion." The "true religion," of course, was always their own. A variation of this type of prayer took place at a Seventh Day Adventists' camp meeting held in Lancaster County when a visiting Methodist minister, who was asked to pray, insulted his hosts by leading off with the words, "Oh Lord, if it be possible, bless this meeting."

Sometimes a pitched battle of prayer debate would take place with the members of the two denominations praying for the opposition "to see the Light and the Truth of the Word." Both factions, in this way, were striving to establish themselves in a position that was impregnable.

## NEBRASKA SONGS OF THE '90'S

These Farmer's Alliance songs have been gleaned from the files of the "Farmer's Alliance"--the official organ of the Nebraska State Alliance. This weekly paper, published in the 1890's, was later known by a variety of titles, such as the "Alliance-Independent," "Nebraska-Independent," and the "Wealth-Makers." It was always liberal and strongly Populistic in its views.

The Farmer's Alliance party was formally organized in Lincoln, Nebraska, January 5-6, 1888, when delegates from 25 counties met in Lincoln. This organization--later absorbed by nationwide Populist Party--was an attempt on the part of the farmers of the State to secure, through political means, higher prices for their farm products, and protection against unfair farm foreclosures. All these grievances had been caused, or aggravated, by rampant speculation, drouth, and financial panic.

A third party, in those turbulent times, seemed to be the only answer to those problems, since nearly every farmer in the State was dissatisfied with the two major political parties, both of which they thought favored the large monopolies and Eastern bankers. This attitude was well expressed in a song called "The Hayseed," adapted to the tune of "Save a Poor Sinner Like Me."

I was once a tool of oppression,  
And as green as a sucker could be,  
And monopolies banded together  
To beat a poor hayseed like me.

The railroads and old party bosses  
Together did sweetly agree;  
And they thought there would be little trouble  
In working a hayseed like me.

But now I've roused up a little  
And their greed and corruption I see.  
And the ticket we vote next November  
Will be made up of hayseeds like me.

Throughout Nebraska, from 1885 to 1905, crusading farmers gathered at hundreds of political rallies, barbecues, and picnics to hear orators from among their own people, many of whom had never spoken to a crowd before, discuss pressing questions of the day. To reach these meetings, it was necessary for many farmers to drive in clumsy lumber wagons for long distances. Seemingly endless parades of farm wagons were arranged in order to impress the spectators. Sixteen hundred teams paraded into Hastings for one meeting. In order to add excitement to these parades, and create diversion between speeches at the rallies, songs were sung. Glee Clubs were organized. The Cat Creek Glee Club of Custer County, became so popular that it sang at the National Populist Convention held in Omaha in 1892.

For the most part, however, the farmers and their sympathizers did their own singing. They especially liked parodies of old familiar tunes, such as "Nellie Gray," or "Sweet Memories." All the songs in this collection, by members or sympathizers of the Nebraska Farmers' Alliance party, are of this nature. They reveal much of the tense, revivalistic nature of the Alliance campaign.

## MARCHING FOR FREEDOM

By Mrs. J. T. Kellie

(Tune: Marching Through Georgia)

The John H. Powers mentioned in the chorus was president of the Nebraska Farmers' Alliance, and was a candidate for governor on the People's Independent ticket during the campaign of 1890.

The farmers of Nebraska are in a fearful plight,  
For years they have been worse than slaves; it is a woeful sight  
To see the way they have been robbed by banks and railroads'      might--  
But now they are marching for freedom.

Chorus:

Hurrah for Powers, a farmer true and grand;  
Hurrah; For Powers we pledge our heart and hand--  
And ne'er again shall lawyer or banker rule our land--  
For we are marching for freedom.

Oh, nevermore to party rule the farmer's knee shall bow,  
To work his own salvation out he takes a solemn vow.  
He'll vote for home and justice, for wife and baby now,  
For we are marching for freedom.

No banks shall corner the exchange provided by the State,  
No speculator shall get rich on wealth that we create,  
No railroad e'er again shall tax three fourths our crop for      freight,  
For we are marching for freedom.

## VOTE FOR ME

By Mrs. J. T. Kellie

(Tune: Father Come Home)

Oh father, dear father, come vote for me now  
My clothes are so worn out and old,

You said you would get me some new ones this fall;  
But now wheat and corn are all sold.

The roads took the best, the banks get the rest,  
And nothing is left us at all;

We thought if we worked through the heat and the cold,  
We'd have lots of news things this fall.

Chorus:

Be free, for me;  
Come, father, please vote for me now.  
Oh father, dear father, come vote for me now,  
Heed not what the railroad men say,  
Of course they will tell you they love you the best,  
You know that was always the way;  
Yet our sod house is old and lets in the cold,  
And Ma's always patching, you see;  
The rest of the children, their shoes are so old--  
There's no one can bring cobs but me.

Oh father, dear father, come vote for me now,  
You know that I can't go to school,

For summer or winter, year round I must work,  
And when I am grown be a fool;

Oh what can I do when grown up like you,  
And nothing I know but to save,

Free land will be gone and naught else I can do  
But be to the rich man a slave.

Oh father, dear father, come vote for me now,  
Let money men threaten or pray,

They told you last summer we all worked too hard,  
This year we are lazy they say;

Dear father, that's right, oh, what a glad sight,  
That old railroad ticket thrown down,

Now Ma will be hopeful, her heart will be light,  
I'll have clothes like rich boys in town.

## WHAT'S WRONG

By W. E. R. Hoping

Oh what is the matter? Oh tell me what's wrong;  
That the farmers and workingmen can't get along;  
Though the harvest is great that we get in the fall.  
When the spring rolls around we have nothing at all.

Chorus:

Rouse, sons of freedom: Something's not right;

Drive out the darkness, let in the light.  
There is over-production it has often been said,  
Where in parts of our land they are calling for bread.  
If it's over-production, and that is conceded.  
Why not enjoy it 'till there is more needed?

But the cry comes rolling up over our land,  
Give us money in volume to meet the demand;  
We must have money to exchange production,  
Pay mortgage and debts, or we go to destruction.

What's wrong, that our government favors a faction  
Who work for themselves and cause a contraction?  
The interest we pay to these great financiers  
Will ruin us all in a very few years.

When money is issued on real estate,  
And the interest is low, say one per cent rate;  
Won't money be plenty and prices be high?  
And we'll pay all our debts "in the sweet by and by."

The board of trade and the great corporations--  
Who live on our earnings, and ruin all nations--  
We must break their shackles, for slaves we'll not be  
But we'll say to the world "our country is free!"

## THE GREAT BLIZZARD

The morning of January 12, 1888 was warm and the sun was shining in most parts of the State. Early in the afternoon the wind suddenly changed to the northwest with a roar. As it was impossible to see in the blinding snow, many persons lost their way and perished. Great heroism was displayed by many a teacher in saving the children.

## COLUMBUS MAN LED PUPILS TO SAFETY

John Ratterman of Columbus, who taught a rural school in Cedar County, tells how he led thirty-five pupils between the ages of ten and eighteen to safety.

Calling the boys and girls together, Mr. Ratterman informed them of the dangerous situation. Some of the boys tried to leave the school for home, but the teacher succeeded in persuading them to remain with the group. He formed a hand-to-hand chain of the pupils with the older boys in the lead and himself at the end. The group left the building and started south of the school. The boys failed to lead due south as instructed and the chain arrived at the southeast corner of the school grounds. They were forced to turn directly west facing the blizzard. With great difficulty they managed to reach their destination just as two girls dropped exhausted in the snow.

Mr. and Mrs. Ratterman kept the fires burning all night to keep the children warm. Next morning only the tops of the fence posts were visible through the drifts, yet the parents, who had spent a restless night, arrived early and were grateful and happy to find their children safe in the teacher's home.

### SPENT NIGHT UNDER SLED

One of the most remarkable escapes was due to the ingenuity of a sixteen-year-old farm hand, Devoice, whose given name is unknown.

While the storm was raging furiously, Devoice, who was employed by J. C. Malloy of Saunders County, started with a sled and team of mules for the school house after the children. He placed the six Malloy children and a daughter of M. K. Dixon in the sled, and had proceeded some distance towards home when the mules became blinded by the storm and refused to go any farther against it. The driver unhitched the mules and left them to find their own way home. Then he turned over the sled box and placed the children under it, covered them with robes, and prepared to await the recession of the storms. When he ventured out the next morning, he found that one of the mules had refused to go home and was frozen to death.

### THE WESTPHALEN CHILDREN

One of the most touching tragedies of the blizzard was the death of the two Westphalen girls, ages eight and thirteen.

Although advised by their teacher to go home with her, the older girl, Ida, insisted that they should go to their mother who was a widow living a mile north across the fields from the school. They lost their way and wandered around in circles. After three day's search, their frozen bodies were found a few feet from one another about two miles east of their home.

The noble self-sacrifice of the thirteen-year-old girl in caring for her younger sister was a case of remarkable heroism. She took her heavy wraps and put them around the younger one and doubtless helped her along until they both became completely exhausted and slumped down in the snow.

### PRISONER IN A HAYSTACK

Miss Ettie Shattuck, who taught school four miles southeast of Emmet, met with an experience during the storm which reads like a tale of fiction.

After wandering aimlessly around in the storm for some time seeking shelter, she stumbled against a haystack. With her hands she dug a hole in the stack and crawled into it, pulling hay into the hole after her. The snow drifted over the spot and partially protected her from the cold. She sang hymns until she fell asleep.

When Miss Shattuck tried to get out the next morning, she found that the snow had frozen so hard that she could not budge it. She lay helpless and hungry all day Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The neighborhood turned out in search of her, but on Sunday night they gave up and

returned to their homes.

The farmer, into whose stack Miss Shattuck had burrowed, needed some feed after the storm, and drove to this particular stack among several on his farm. While scooping away the snow, he noticed that the hay had been disturbed and that there was a funnel-shaped hole through the snow. Reaching his hand down into the hole, he felt an overshod foot. Though hungry and weak from her 78 hours of imprisonment, Miss Shattuck was able to respond when he called, "Ettie, is that you?"

Miss Shattuck's legs were so badly frozen that it was necessary to amputate them. She died from the effects of the operation in February.

#### EXPERIENCE OF MISS ROYCE

Another Nebraska teacher, Miss Royce, had an experience similar to Miss Shattuck's. When the blizzard struck, she formed a chain of children and started for home. She found no house, but finally bumped into a haystack. With her hands she dug a tunnel in the hay, crammed the children into it, and sat at the opening herself. The next day frantic parents found her there, unable to speak. The children were all safe, though some were frostbitten. Miss Royce underwent several operations to remove frozen parts from her hands and feet. Eventually, she died from the effects of the operations and exposure.

#### CURIOUS REUNION ON SNOWY PRAIRIE

The element of coincidence in the dramatic story of the 1888 blizzard as told my Mrs. John Rudder of Cortland is amazing.

Mrs. Rudder, who was a little girl at the time, attended a rural school near Pickrell. Her home was nearly a mile northwest of the school. The teacher dismissed the children as soon as the storm struck. The child and her two little friends lost their way as they tried to face the fury of the storm. They came to a drift so deep that they could not go through it, and while they stood, not knowing what to do, a neighbor who had started to school after his children came up. He too was lost. Fortunately there was a haystack nearby in which they took refuge.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Rudder's father, who was caring for his stock when the blizzard struck, started to the school with more wraps for the children. He reached the school in safety, but became confused when he was forced to face the storm on the way home. By some strange coincidence, his wanderings brought him to the same haystack that sheltered his children.

An older brother was in Pickrell three miles west of home when the storm broke. He rode his pony toward the school where he thought the teacher would keep the children. On his way he was joined by a neighbor who was riding a work horse. When the two found the school empty, they started for home. In the deep snow the brother's pony rode out from under him. Fearing that his companion would ride over him, the boy called out. The father recognized his son's voice and yelled to him.

Mrs. Rudder said, "Brother and neighbor came to us, making seven in all. We huddled together,

trying to keep warm. Because we knew it would be the end for anyone who went to sleep, my brother and I sang songs and talked all night. I think it was God's will that we should be saved or we surely would have perished."

All were badly frozen, especially Mrs. Rudder's father and one of the other men, but the next morning each member of the party was able to find his way home. All recovered from the effects of the exposure.

### SPENT NIGHT IN THE SCHOOL HOUSE

Joe Holt, who was a fifteen-year-old boy at the time of the 1888 blizzard recalls how he and several companions spent the night in the school house on Logan Creek about one mile northwest of Laurel, Nebraska.

Mr. Holt says: "The weather was so warm in the morning that I came to school too poorly clad to face the storm. When the storm struck about three o'clock in the afternoon, I realized that we must have plenty of coal in for the night. Being the oldest boy in the school, I took the lead and we succeeded in getting sufficient coal from the shed which was about ten rods north of the school house. About the time the coal was in, Mr. L. C. Tolles came for his children. He wanted to take us all home with him but we were afraid to go, so he left us. About an hour later he returned with our suppers. I shall never forget how kind and strong he was. He came on a sorrel mule and carried a three-tine fork with the handle cut off short. When he left, he warned us not to leave the building. All night we kept the fire burning. We had no light--just opened the stove door for light. By eight o'clock the next morning we could see quite well and soon my father came for us. He greeted us with, 'I never expected to see you boys alive again.'"

### THE BLIZZARD IN VERSE

The following verses, by Mrs. Mae Schneider, nee Percival, who attended school at Stuart, Nebraska in 1888, are typical of many, written about the great blizzard.

The winter's sun rose bright and clear  
On that morn so long ago,  
Nothing to herald the coming storm,  
Not a cloud to be seen and--so  
Men went about in summer attire,  
Little dreaming a change would be seen,  
When out of the North came a whistling sound,  
All wondered what it could mean.

A message had come from a far distant place,  
Giving warning to all 'long the line,  
That a blizzard so great was on the way  
Such as no one had seen in all time.  
A flour-like substance soon filled the air,  
The mercury dropping meanwhile,  
The storm was riding hard and fast

Had traveled for many a mile.

It was not safe for man or beast  
To venture far that day;  
But what of those already gone,  
Well started on their way.  
For there were many who never returned  
In the Blizzard of eighty-eight,  
Who wandered for many a mile,  
Till overtaken by their fate.

'Twas in Holt County's broad expanse  
That the monster of terror held sway,  
For seventeen dear ones lost their lives  
On that fierce winter's day.  
Enroute that day to Stuart town,  
A lady with her grandchildren ear,  
They were found next day near their sleigh,  
On their cheeks the frozen tear.

A man coming on the midnight train  
For Dustin had started that day,  
His child was sick they needed him;  
But the poor man lost his way.  
Not able to hire he had started to walk,  
And when the fierce storm came down,  
He walked in a circle for darkness came on,  
He was found half a mile from town.

He walked on a shed and fell through the roof,  
Was safe among the calves so they say,  
Which soon warmed him up thus saving his life,  
From the terrible effects of that day.  
A cattleman's daughter with a lady friend  
On their homeward journey intent,  
Was forced to remain in an old sod house  
Till the fury of the storm was spent.

The father grief-stricken walked the floor that nite,  
Then early with men will chosen,  
The storm abating they ventured forth,  
expecting to find them frozen.  
But with heroic efforts they'd kept awake  
Thro the long night a vigil keeping,  
They'd danced and sang, shouted and wept,  
To keep themselves from sleeping.

Children in the towns were rescued that day  
Scarcely ere their tasks were begun,  
But in the schools away they remained all day  
And many till morning had come.  
Many a teacher in districts remote,  
Would fasten the door securely,  
Lest some might stray and be swept away  
In the path of the storm's great fury.

A teacher who feared by the creaking sound,  
That the building soon might sever;  
Tied the children together thirteen in all  
And prepared to emerge together.  
As the roof went off they left the place,  
Battling the storm as it raved,  
She guided them safely to shelter,  
And in this way all were saved.

While there are a few who yet remain  
Of those who faced these dangers,  
We gladly honor these brave pioneers  
Who risked so much for strangers.  
Many acts heroic are told of that day,  
And many went unrecorded.  
But the Giver of Good who knoweth all,  
Will not leave them unrewarded.

## PIONEER DANCE CALLS

"Chase the possum, chase the coon,  
Chase the pretty girl 'round the room."

Lines like these were a part of a once popular form of entertainment in Nebraska, the old-time dance. The dances then in vogue, the quadrille, the polka, the schottische, and others, followed conventional patterns, and the dancers were guided through the steps of these patterns by appropriate calls. Partners and couples swung, turned and bowed in rhythmic unison, taking their cues from the voice of the caller against a background of lively music.

Transportation in those days, limited as it was to buggies, two-wheeled carts, and democrat wagons, permitted trips of no great distance. The dirt roads, often no better than trails, sometimes hardly passable in rainy weather, further narrowed the social horizon. The pioneers, thus confined to infrequent contacts with the outer world, as represented by the larger cities of Lincoln and Omaha, created a social life peculiarly their own. Church sociables, Sunday visiting, and dances came to be their only forms of organized recreation and entertainment.

Among their dances the quadrille, better known as the square dance, was one of the most popular. The callers employed variations of calls brought to this State by emigrants, and occasionally composed original calls. Many callers could conduct a dance all evening, lasting several hours, without repeating the same call twice.

The calls reproduced in this pamphlet have all been obtained from the dictation of native Nebraskans.

The environment of a Nebraska square dance was usually rustic. For instance, John Hartje, of Lincoln, told a Nebraska Writer's Project interviewer that in the 1890's he used to conduct dances in a long machine shed on his farm, located 12 miles south of Lincoln. A stream of buggies, carriages, spring wagons and horseback riders would begin arriving at his farmyard as soon as the shadows of early evening had begun to fall. Later, after sundown, shadowy figures, laughing and bantering in the dusk, converged upon the machine shed, whose entrance was lighted by a huge iron lamp.

Inside the building a dozen kerosene lanterns shed a pale glow over the rustic walls and benches. The girls and women wore long checkered gingham dresses with wide skirts and tight waists. Their hair was long, combed into coils and fastened with many pins and side combs. Some had long, thick braids hanging to the waist, tied with colored ribbons. Now and then "topped" shoes were revealed when skirts were daringly whisked aside. The men, old and young, wore every possible kind of garb, from tight fitting pants and high collars to overalls.

A kitchen and barnyard spirit was created at the apron-and-overall dance, so called because all the ladies wore aprons and the men overalls. Another variation was the necktie and apron dance. For this the women made up an apron and necktie from the same piece of cloth. Before going to the dance the lady would put on her apron and place the matching necktie in an envelope. At the dance the men would purchase the envelopes, the money was usually donated for some charitable purpose, and the purchaser was entitled to dance for the rest of the evening with the lady who wore the matching apron.

Claude C. Haggarty of Lincoln, has a certain magnetism that makes itself quickly felt on the dance floor. His voice, which has a trace of brogue, carries to the farthest corners of the hall with the sharpness of a whistle. Old-timers in Bennet like to tell of the time he called for a barn dance in their vicinity, when members of a family living a mile away from the dance were able to go through his calls in their own backyard. Mr. Haggarty, who likes to be called "Pat", began calling dances in Nebraska in the early '80's. The following are five of his popular calls.

#### IRISH WASHERWOMAN (Tune: Irish Washerwoman)

First couple balance,  
Right into the middle,  
And make your left foot,  
Keep time to the fiddle.  
Ladies swing in and gents swing out,  
Join your hands and circle about.

The lady swing out and the gents swing in,  
Hold your holds and circle again.  
All the men left,  
Grand right and left,  
Meet your partner  
And promenade home.

### BUTTERFLY WHIRL

Pat says that "glamorous" is the best description of the intriguing figure created by this call,  
popular sixty years ago.

First couple lead to the right,  
And four hands 'round,  
And break and swing  
With a Butterfly Whirl.  
And ladies doe and gents you know,  
And chicken in the bread pan  
Pickin' out dough.

### MY GAL IS PRETTY

(Tune: Billie in the Low Ground)

This call has been used in Nebraska for over sixty years.

First couple lead out to the right of the ring,  
Four hands 'round,  
You swing my gal,  
And I'll swing yours.

My gal is pretty and so is yours,  
You swing your gal  
And I'll swing mine,  
Four hands 'round.

Ladies doe and gents you know,  
Dosie Doe and a little more dough.  
Chicken in the bread pan  
Pickin' out dough.

Take that lady and lead to the next,  
And four hands 'round,  
You swing my gal,  
And I'll swing yours,  
Four hands 'round.

And ladies doe and gents you know

Doe-si-doe.

Chicken in the bread pan  
Pickin' out dough.

On to the next and four hands 'round,  
You swing my gal,  
And I'll swing yours.

Your gal is pretty and so is mine,  
You swing your's and I'll swing mine,  
Balance home and everybody dance.  
Swing corner lady,  
And now pass one,  
And don't be too late.

All the men left, right to your partner,  
And grand right and left.  
Pat her on the head,  
If she don't like biscuits,  
Feed her slap jacks,  
Promenade home.

(Second couple, third couple and fourth couple repeat as above.)

#### GRAVE VINE TWIST

This is Pat's version of one of Nebraska's square dances in which the figures follow the encircling, entwining design of the grape vine.

First couple lead to the right  
And four hands 'round,  
Grand right and left four,  
And promenade four,  
And four and two and six hands 'round,  
Grand right and left six,  
And break to the head  
With a grape vine twist.

(Second couple, third couple, fourth couple repeat as above.)

#### VIRGINIA REEL

The following version of the Virginia Reel was very popular among the pioneers who lived in Nebraska during the '70's and '80's.

Head lady, foot gent,

Forward and back,  
Side the same.  
Head lady, foot gent,  
Right hand 'round,  
Side the same.  
Head lady, foot gent,  
Doe-si-doe,  
Side the same.  
Head couple down the center and back,  
Swing once and a half at the head,  
And opposites down the line,  
And up the center.  
Ladies to the right,  
Gents to the left,  
Form needle's eye,  
And balance pass through.

(This move places the head couple at the foot of the reel. Repeat above call for the number of couples there are on the floor.)