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Article Summary: This article presents the edited reminiscences of Mrs Alma Carlson Roosa, an early homesteader in Cherry County, Nebraska.

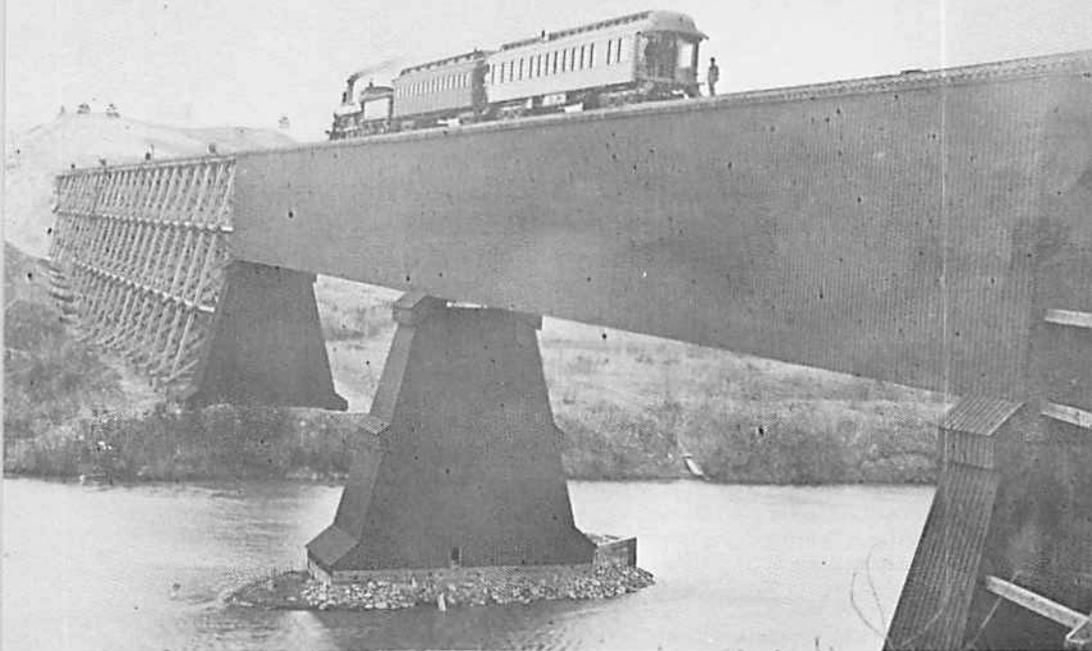
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Photographs / Images: Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad bridge over the Niobrara River east of Valentine, May, 1889; Andrew Anderson homestead, log house built in 1884; John A Anderson, photographer, about 1889; Indian soldiers of Company I, 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Rosebud, South Dakota, 1890; Eagle Man (Wanbli Wicassa), Sioux; Sam Kills, aka Beads, working on his winter count; Nellie Good Shield, Sioux; Preparing papa saka (dried beef) at Rosebud Agency, South Dakota, about 1890; Nancy Blue Eyes, Mrs Pawnee; Indian women drying beef; Mounted Indian police at Valentine guarding payroll; Indian woman before tipi, about 1890; Soldiers' canteen at Fort Niobrara about 1886; View to the northwest of Rosebud Agency, South Dakota, about 1889; Indians butchering a cow, 1893; Indian family unit; Colonel Charles P Gordon, Indian trader about 1889



*Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad bridge over the Niobrara River east of Valentine, May, 1889. (All photos from John A. Anderson Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society.)*



*Andrew Anderson homestead.  
Log house built in 1884.*

# HOMESTEADING IN THE 1880'S: THE ANDERSON-CARLSON FAMILIES OF CHERRY COUNTY

*By Alma Carlson Roosa*

## INTRODUCTION

Mrs. Alma Carlson Roosa, now 98 years old, was 5 years of age when her parents and grandparents homesteaded in Cherry County, Nebraska in the 1880's. She lived nearly all her life either in or near Valentine, where her husband, Burt Roosa, for many years operated a grain elevator. Her reminiscence has been edited by Henry W. and Jean Tyree Hamilton, who became friends of Mrs. Roosa while they were working on the life and photography of her well-known photographer uncle, John A. Anderson (1869-1948).<sup>1</sup> Young Anderson lived for a time after his mother's death in 1879 in the home of a married sister, Amanda Anderson Carlson. Her daughter Alma Carlson Roosa contributed to the Hamiltons much valuable information on Anderson's boyhood. Many of his Fort Niobrara and Rosebud Reservation photographs are now owned by the Nebraska State Historical Society. A selection of them accompanies this article. Mrs. Roosa now lives in Phoenix, Arizona (fall, 1977).—H.W.H.

*The Anderson Family Leaves Sweden*—My grandfather, Andrew Solomon Anderson, felt that his family could better prosper in America than they had in Sweden. Relatives and friends had made the long hard journey and were pleased with their new lives. So early in 1870 he traveled to America to see if it would be advisable to move his family there to start life anew. After looking things over, he wrote his wife that America was a good place for them and to start packing.

Grandmother Anna Anderson was sitting in a rocking chair holding 3-year-old Oscar on her lap while she read the letter. She was happy to get the news, but sad to leave her old home and was crying. Oscar said, "Don't cry Mother, father will soon be back and you will go to America and be happy, but I am not going to America." Grandmother said, "We will not go without you, Oscar." Oscar said, "No, Mother, I am not going to America, but I will be happy here. I packed away all of my playthings today; I will never play with them again." Oscar had always been a strange child, talking about supernatural things. While they were preparing to go to America, Oscar became ill and died. He was buried in the cemetery of a little church which had an organ that grandfather had carved. Last summer (1976) one of my grandsons from California went to Sweden and saw the family home and church. He had a hard time getting to see the handsomely carved organ, now stored where it can be preserved. Grandfather had done a great deal of carving in Sweden.

A fisherman, grandfather owned a large boat. When the men went out on the North Sea to fish they never knew when they would return because they did not come in until the boat was full; sometimes this took a long time, and their families would become nervous. When a returning boat neared land, a special flag was hoisted on the mast, which could be seen for a long distance. The children would watch for this flag and as soon as it was sighted would run to tell their waiting mothers. Before leaving Sweden, grandfather sold the boat, a grist mill that he owned, and a bakery that grandmother ran.

Grandfather, grandmother, three sons (August, Charles, John) and three daughters (Amanda, Emma, Mary) started to America on May 10, 1870, aboard a ship of the Red Star Line. At first they stayed on Long Island, New York. Grandfather learned of a hotel in Chicago for sale, so the family traveled to Chicago. They were pleased with the hotel, but the price was too high, and the Andersons moved on to Missouri where they bought a farm. They were just getting settled when informed that the sale was illegal. On returning to Chicago to accept the price asked for the hotel, they found the city destroyed by the fire of October 8, 1871.

With relatives still in Pennsylvania, they returned, first to Salladasburg, then to Limestone. There two children were born, a daughter Jennie and a son Claud, who were two years older than I.<sup>2</sup> When Claude was 2 1/2, grandmother died. Amanda, the married daughter (my mother), then living in Williamsport, went

home for the funeral and took John, the 10-year-old son, with her. Her husband, Gustave Carlson (my father), became fond of John and thought of him as a son. Father was foreman of Luppert's furniture factory and was a skilled workman with wood. John became interested in the factory, so whenever there was an opportunity father gave after-school jobs to John, who became a skilled woodworker.<sup>3</sup> John was more like a brother to me than an uncle.

Hearing of the new oil wells, Solomon Anderson took his family to Bradford, center of the great field that helped make Pennsylvania one of the richest states in the union. Nearby were vast forests producing a great lumber industry and huge anthracite mines producing coal. Bradford, once a quiet village of 500 persons, by 1878 was transformed into a beehive of 18,000 people. The oil wells were flowing; some did not have to be pumped. From many wells a flow of gas was so strong it was kept burning day and night. People were buying and selling oil and oil lands, drilling wells, and selling coal. It was a land of excitement; many came poor and got rich. Some saved the money, but the majority squandered it. Solomon Anderson was one who saved his money.

As people became tired of the ups and downs of oil work, they began to look elsewhere for jobs. Some took the advice of Horace Greeley and went West to grow up with the country. A group of men including Andrew Anderson and C.T. Fulton formed "The Nebraska Mutual Aid Colony," which established rules for settlement. (One was, "The manufacture or sale of intoxicating liquor shall be prohibited as a beverage and gambling houses shall not be permitted.") A committee of three went to Nebraska to determine the area for homesteading. On April 12, 1883, the committee reported the location as being in northern Nebraska instead of the better-known Platte Valley. Those who were disappointed said they could not go so far north and so near the Sioux Indian Reservation, which lay across the line in South Dakota.<sup>4</sup> Those who decided to go included my grandfather.

A. S. Anderson, four sons and two daughters, Mr. and Mrs. Peterson, and Mr. and Mrs. Leavstone, entrained at Bradford on April 24, 1883. They traveled on one of the first trains heading up the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Line toward a place called Valentine in the Sandhills of Nebraska. The travelers found to their disappointment and dismay that the train would go no farther than Stuart, two counties east of Valentine, and an overland journey confronted them. They bought two teams of



*John A. Anderson,  
photographer, about 1889.*

horses and two wagons in Stuart and went on to Valentine to file on homestead claims at the land office.<sup>5</sup> They made a sod shanty to live in temporarily. Grandfather had bought a cook stove in Stuart and set it up under a tree while the soddy was being built.

Later on a freight train into Valentine brought grandfather's furniture from Bradford. Included was a large organ, a dining table and twelve dining chairs that had fruit carvings on their backs, a large mirror, a chest of drawers (four large and two small drawers), and his big clock. The children who came to Nebraska with grandfather Anderson were Emma, Jennie, August, Charles, John, and Claud. Emma was planning to get married, but when her mother died in 1879, she decided to keep house for her father. Jennie was only eight when they came. His daughters Mary (Mrs. John Johnson) and Amanda (my mother, Mrs. Gustave Carlson), continued to live in Pennsylvania. Since his mother's death, John had lived with the Carlsons until his father left for Nebraska.

Grandfather and his sons dug into the side of a hill and made a sod shanty large enough for the cookstove table, beds, and other things. It had a hard-packed dirt floor, and when my 3-year-old sister Emma was asked what kind of a floor it was, she thought a minute and said, "Its marble!"

One of the first things grandfather and his sons did when they got to the homestead was to go down in a canyon and dig a well. It was shallow, walled up with stones, and contained good, cold water. To get the water out, a pulley was built and a rope passed through it with a pail on each end. When you got a pail full of water to the top, the empty pail went down to the water. There were barrels which were filled at the well and pulled on a horse-drawn sled to the house.

I was born in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, December 2, 1879. My father Gustave Carlson, was the foreman of Luppert's furniture factory. When I was 4 years old, he made me a set of furniture—a bed and chest and a tiny bed to match for my big wax doll. It was of both light and dark wood. The bed was put in my room on Christmas Eve, 1883. This was our first Christmas in our new Williamsport home with its beautiful stairway that my father had just finished. The home was filled with new furniture, unlike the old house which was rented furnished.

It was shortly after this that my father's health began to fail and he had to leave Pennsylvania. The doctor said that if father did not get out of the factory dust, he would be dead in six months. Grandfather Anderson, who had gone to Nebraska the year before and settled on a homestead, had written us how clean the air was. My father went out to see if he might find a place near grandfather but found all the land taken. He was disappointed but found the air pure and fresh. Luckily he met a homesick young man from the East who had filed on the homestead adjoining grandfather's land. He told my father that if he could get \$50 to pay his way back home, he would sell his claim. Father was happy to give him the \$50 and immediately wrote my mother to come to Nebraska. I was 5 years old then and sister Emma 3.

John Anderson, who came to help us pack, played in the Williamsport band. When we were ready to leave, we heard something in the yard—the city band and a delegation of well-wishers giving us a serenade as a send-off. It was the spring of 1884 that Gustave and Amanda Anderson Carlson and their daughters Emma and I, Alma, moved to Nebraska.

We were happy to go and my father's health improved. In six months time he was able to work again at carpentry. He constructed many of the first buildings in Valentine and vicinity. We found grandfather's family living in a shanty of sod, logs, and boards; it had no floor and just room enough for the cook stove, table, and several beds.<sup>6</sup>

Grandfather and his sons built a log house of pine trees from the canyons of the nearby Minnechaduzza River and from his own homestead.<sup>7</sup> There was a large kitchen, two small bedrooms, a large living room on the main floor, and a stairway leading to the attic floor with two bedrooms. When the house was nearing completion, two cowboys asked father if he would let them have a housewarming party. Grandfather agreed and they promised to bring refreshments and furnish music. They came with a houseful



*Indian soldiers of Company I, 16th Infantry, Rosebud, South Dakota, 1890.*

of people and a bushel basket of canned oysters to make stew. Mother and Aunt Emma had never seen canned oysters. When one of the cowboys offered "to make the stew if you will give me the wash boiler, milk, cream, and butter," mother got the ingredients. He made "the best stew they had ever eaten." Grandfather's furniture had by then come from Pennsylvania, and the grand organ was played beautifully by one of the cowboys. I have often wondered where all those people came from.

My mother said that there were three things she was afraid of at first in Nebraska—Indians, cowboys, and windstorms. But the cowboy party showed my mother that most cowboys were just like other people. Grandfather and all the folks enjoyed it. I was only 8 years old, but I still remember it vividly. Emma was 5 and Effie was a baby. Grandfather's home was built on a hill above the canyons of the Minnechaduzza, and as children we played in the pine trees of the canyon. When the wind blew, there was a wonderful murmuring sound. I loved to hear it and still do. I loved the sounds of the prairie, the voice of the coyote, the frogs after a rain, too. Grandfather planted a grove of cottonwood trees in front of the house and cherry, plum, and apple trees in the back. Aunt Emma planted a big bed of flowers.

One of the neighbors, Mr. Charles Tinker, soon organized a community Sunday school which met at grandfather's log house every Sunday morning. It was called the Cottonwood Grove Sunday School with Mr. Tinker as superintendent. There were several families near enough to attend; some were settlers from Illinois and some from Missouri.

Grandfather took wheat and rye to the little mill on the Niobrara River and stayed to help grind white, rye, and graham flour. He enjoyed doing that because he had owned a gristmill in Sweden. The miller appreciated the help. We didn't waste anything. One use for the wheat straw was in ticks for mattresses, and we put straw under the carpets to make the houses warmer.

Grandfather had a vegetable garden from which mother and Aunt Emma filled bins in the cellar in preparation for winter: potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, turnips, rutabagas, cabbage, squash, carrots, pumpkins, dry beans, and peas. Barrels or half barrels of vinegar, pickles, sauerkraut, and molasses were prepared from products grown in the good soil of the homestead. Harvest time was such fun for children when fall vegetables were mature as we helped put the vegetables in the wagon box, and then rode on the load to the cellar.

When a man came into the country digging deep wells grandfather had one dug.<sup>8</sup> He soon bought a windmill and had no more use for the shallow canyon well. Before the deep well was dug, the washing was done by the well in the canyon. Grandpa's big iron kettle was put over a bonfire to heat the water and clothes were put in tubs and rubbed on the wash board. The soft soap was made by mother and Aunt Emma, using lye made from some kind of bark ashes. My father invented a washboard on which he got a patent. It had a pocket in the back of the board to hold soft soap, and the rubbing surface was perforated with small holes. When the clothes were rubbed, the soft soap came up to the materials through the perforations. Wash day was enjoyable for the children because we had a picnic dinner by the well.

We lived in the soddy while father built the log house. The log house had two rooms with a two-room attic reached by a ladder with hinges that allowed it to be swung out of the way during the day. Effie was born in the soddy, and when she was three days old we moved into the log house. The little 8 x 10 foot soddy with the half window and a door then became a community blacksmith shop after my father equipped it with a forge and other tools. Homesteaders in the vicinity came to sharpen plowshares and repair or make other things.

We had lived in the soddy our first Christmas in Nebraska. There was an Illinois family whose claim was near the George Bristols who came about the same time we did. The father and three grown sons at once built a large sod shanty much like ours. They commenced soon afterward to build a frame house. Mr. Bristol manufactured lumber materials and had a steam engine to run his saw. The Andersons spent Christmas Eve with them the first year both families were on their homesteads, with a pine tree from the canyon, a program of songs and readings, and homemade cookies and cake. We often had our own Christmas trees in grandfather's big log house. We picked round red rose seed buds and strung them together with the corn mother popped to make trimming for the tree. Emma and I each got a doll one year; mother bought the heads and made the bodies. The Bristols had four daughters. The youngest, Effie, married grandpa Anderson's second son, Charles. They raised a family of several children. Once the community had a 4th of July celebration in Valentine and grandpa Bristol took all the children in the community for a ride on a hayrack drawn by his steam engine. We were all dressed in white with red sashes with the names of the states.

For a long time we had no school house, no school books, but learned our ABC's and numbers at home from the newspaper, the *Pennsylvania Grit*. The editor, a friend of our father's, always sent us his paper. We would make lists of words from it and have a spelling lesson; mother saw to it that we studied every day. When districts were organized, a school house was built near us—Sparks School, No. 8.<sup>9</sup> We were proud of our school house, where we were able to attend the first six grades with other children, some of whom had already been in "real school." The school house was about 2 1/2 or 3 miles from our house, but we did not mind the walk. A Sunday school was formed there, and once a child's funeral was held in the school house. One of the Bristol boys, Joseph, went back East and returned with a bride, Nellie Allen, who became our school teacher.

When grandfather came to Nebraska he brought his big Newfoundland dog, Tiger. He was given to Claud. Father got a shepherd dog, Colonel, for sisters Emma, Effie, and me. The dogs were friendly when they were by themselves, but when they were with the children, they were jealous. Tiger would not let anyone touch Uncle Claud, who was just two years older than I; and Colonel would not let Claud or Tiger touch us girls. We saw some terrible dog fights, which mother and Aunt Emma would stop by pouring cold water on the dogs. Claud made a harness for Tiger, who pulled the sled in winter and the wagon in summer. When he got tired he would lie down in his harness and go to sleep.

When we first went to the homestead there were so many rattlesnakes that mother was afraid for Emma and me to go outdoors. Colonel soon declared war on snakes. He would pick up a rattler by the neck, give it a hard shake and kill it. As a watch dog, he knew everyone and everything on the place. He knew the pen for every pig and chicken. He would not let anyone approach the house across the field. A stranger could come in on the road and knock on the door, but he would not let them turn the door knob. Mother set several brood hens in boxes in a shed just outside the back door when she wanted to keep an eye on them. When the little chicks became older they had to be trained to go to the hen house to roost. Mother, Emma, and I at first carried them to the hen house. Colonel was always with us. One night mother let them roost around the barn yard. In the night she was awakened by squawking. It was Colonel carrying the chickens, one at a time, to the coop without hurting them. When Mother wanted to cook a chicken she pointed to one she wanted and Colonel caught it.



*Eagle Man (Wanbli Wicassa), Sioux, holding a carved wooden gun decorated with scalps taken in battle when he was a young man.*



*Sam Kills (also known as Beads) working on his winter count.*

Once he tugged at father's pantleg to tell him that pigs had gotten through the fences. At milking time father would say, "Time to get the cows, Colonel," and the dog would go to the pasture after them. Up the road from our house was a hill where Colonel would meet Emma and me returning from school. We always saved something from our lunch pails for him to eat. After one of our hens hatched a setting of duck eggs, it did not take the ducklings long to find the pond. The mother hen almost went crazy trying to cluck them out of the water, and Colonel helped by returning the ducklings to land, but they would go right back. Neither he nor the hen could understand why.

Father's first broom corn crop produced well, and he helped start a broom factory in Valentine. He and grandfather raised lots of sorghum cane and built a sorghum mill to press the juice from the stalks. A pair of wooden rollers powered by a horse crushed the juice out of the cane. Nearby was a cookhouse with a fireplace and a 10 x 2-foot pan in which to boil the juice into syrup. Father made wooden knives with which the children could strip the leaves from the cane stalks. It was an excuse to stay up late. Sorghum made excellent taffy and popcorn balls, rural delicacies. We liked to pull the taffy with our hands, and sometimes we had a "taffy pull" with the neighbors.

We had lots of fun in those days. One evening the young people from Valentine came to the Carlson home for a surprise party. In winter-time it was never too cold for a skating party on the Valentine lake or old mill pond, which was circled with bonfires for warmth. Sometimes we would go for a winter ride in a wagon box on a bobsled with lots of hay, buffalo robes, and blankets covering the bottom. In summer hayrack rides were popular. Outings usually ended with a wienie roast.

It was in 1887 or 1888 that one of the small traveling circuses came to Valentine. Children are excited by circuses and we were specially pleased to find that we would get to say in all night in town. There was a store there and a hotel with little bedrooms. Our parents, baby Effie, Emma, and I, had on our clothes and were on the way in the wagon by 4 o'clock in the morning. It was the first circus Emma had seen, but I had seen P.T. Barnum's circus and Jumbo the Elephant in Pennsylvania before we moved. The thing that Emma and I enjoyed most about this circus was the girls in their short dresses riding horses. Later we took ribbons and tied them around our waists making our dresses very short and played riding horses on the rafters in the granary.



*Nellie Good Shield, Sioux.*



*Preparing papa saka (dried beef) at Rosebud Agency, South Dakota, about 1890. From left—unidentified, Nancy Blue Eyes, Mrs. Pawnee, unidentified. Below: Indian women drying beef.*





*Mounted Indian police at Valentine guarding payroll to be carried to Pine Ridge Agency, South Dakota. Below: Indian woman before tipi, about 1890.*



On Arbor Day in 1887, when I was 8 years old, I went to the Minnechaduzza canyon on grandfather's homestead and dug up a small pine tree with a knife and planted it in our front yard. It grew to be a beautiful tree and was only cut down a few years ago when the home was sold.

My mother, a practical nurse, used to help people when they were sick.<sup>10</sup> Once a neighbor girl my age became sick. My mother helped but could do nothing, and the little girl died. My father made a coffin for her, and mother and Aunt Emma lined it with cotton batting and lace. Once a distraught young mother came to the door with a sick baby boy 9 months old. His father was the well digger who had dug grandfather's well. The family was new in the area, and she knew only about where the Andersons lived. She had hurried over a dim prairie trail carrying the baby. My mother did what she could, but the baby continued to fail. One of the young men in the family got on a horse to search for the father and brought him back to the house before the baby died. Mr. and Mrs. Clarkson stayed at grandfather's house until the baby was buried. Again father made the coffin, and mother and Aunt Emma finished the inside. Another grave in the new cemetery.

My father made a number of coffins over the years, and Aunt Emma and mother finished the inside so they would be pretty. My parents never charged for the things done for a bereaved family.

Finally a woman doctor, Dr. Perry, and her husband filed on a Cherry County homestead. She was a blessing to the community. My mother went with her as her nurse on many cases. When people needed the doctor they would come for her in their heavy work wagons over the rough roads, driving as fast as the horses could go. Dr. Perry was always ready to go. Sometimes the Fort Niobrara doctors would help the sick homesteaders.

Fort Niobrara was established April 22, 1880, to protect Nebraska homesteaders from the Sioux Indians on the nearby Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations in South Dakota. The Indians were unhappy because the whites had killed off their natural supply of food, the buffalo, that grazed over the Great Plains, and their lands had been taken from them. Fort Niobrara was established to protect the whites from the Indians, but the Indians needed protection from the whites too. Some whites illegally grazed their cattle on the Indian Reservation. Texas cattle had been brought to the Plains to replace the buffalo. Settlers moved along the lines of travel and onto the good agricultural lands.



*Soldiers' canteen at Fort Niobrara, about 1886. Below: View to the northwest of Rosebud Agency, South Dakota, about 1889.*



One day a homesteader came rushing to tell us that the Indians were on the warpath. He told Aunt Jennie to run out in the field and tell her father to get his gun and come to the fort. Jennie took the message but came back alone: "My father says to tell you he is not afraid of Indians, and he has a lot of plowing that must be done." The man on the horse said to Jennie, "You had better get up on the roof and watch for them." There were several scares like that, but my father and grandfather ignored them. We stayed home and did not go to the fort for protection.

The men of the fort did many fine things for the community besides serve as an Army outpost.<sup>11</sup> The doctors helped the sick. In 1886 the soldiers gave a benefit show to raise money to buy seed for farmers whose crops had failed. Later the fort dramatic club gave a variety show and play in Cornell Hall in Valentine. The receipts amounting to \$30 were given to the Grand Army of the Republic, a Civil War veterans organization, for charity. The fort brought good music to the community through its band. One soldier from Italy was a great violinist. After retreat formations on Sunday nights soldiers held "praise meetings," to which the public was invited. There were hymns, readings, and other entertainment. The Army had a fine variety of musical instruments, including a grand organ. The Army bandsmen helped form the Valentine town band.

I remember a sad thing that happened at the fort. One morning a private, named Weaver, I think, who was armed and on guard duty went berserk, drew his gun and shot and killed Sergeant Livingston. He then began shooting at everyone. A member of the guard shot the man. We all went to Sergeant Livingston's funeral, but I think Private Weaver was buried without a funeral.

The soldiers used to come to our Methodist Episcopal Church meetings in Valentine and play their instruments for us. There were several soldiers who were friends of our Uncle John and they spent a lot of time at our grandfather's home. One attraction was our Sunday dinner. We have a picture taken by Uncle John Anderson of soldiers at a dinner table with grandfather at the head. One reason that Uncle John had so many friends among the soldiers was that his studio was at the fort.<sup>12</sup>

*John Anderson, Frontier Photographer*—After the Chicago fire the Solomon Anderson family lived in Salladasburg for a while before they went to Limestone, Pennsylvania. There they lived next door to J. A. Miller, the village schoolteacher, who taught the



*Indians butchering a cow, 1893. Below: Indian family unit.*



three Anderson girls and the two older boys. John, the youngest, then 4 years old, "ran off" to school with the others so often that Miller permitted him to stay. Years later after John had become a photographer at Fort Niobrara and the Rosebud Reservation, he remembered his first school in Salladasburg and his first school-teacher. Anderson returned to Pennsylvania to get pictures of the area. He not only got photos but an invitation to the Miller home. While there he became enamored with Miller's daughter Myrtle, and they became engaged. Before they were married, John returned to South Dakota to get his affairs in shape. My father offered to build him a home as a wedding present if John got the building materials to the site at Rosebud. Arrangements were made and the house was started. When John brought Myrtle back as a bride, the house was finished.

Myrtle Anderson did many charitable things for the Indian women. They loved her and she loved them. John took many hundreds of photographs of the Indians, who respected him and his work. We never feared the Sioux perhaps because Uncle John Anderson was so friendly with them. At first they resented having their pictures taken, but later they gave him that privilege when they found he was honest with them. I remember that once Sioux Agent C. E. McChesney at Rosebud and Frank Mullen came to Valentine with Indian police guards to pick up the \$15,000 payroll in silver dollars at the railroad station. It weighed 876 pounds and the express charges from Chicago were \$60. Uncle John made a photograph of the group.

John and Myrtle Anderson had a profitable business in Rosebud, though Mrs. Anderson looked forward to returning to Pennsylvania. John had promised her that if she would go to Rosebud for five years, he would then open a studio in Williamsport. He did as promised, but his Pennsylvania venture was not as profitable as hoped for. He could not be happy in the East when his heart was in South Dakota. Colonel C. P. Jordan, Indian trader, encouraged him to return to Rosebud and be a part owner in the Jordan Mercantile Company. John consented to go and Myrtle, while not happy about it, returned with him. They operated a photography business and the trading post until they retired.

Uncle John took many exceptional pictures of Indian life which have been widely published in magazines and displayed in exhibits. To the Indians Anderson was the "Little White Chief." Uncle John and Aunt Myrtle acquired an exceptional collection of

Indian things—clothing, weapons, beadwork, and art. Anderson for a time operated the Sioux Indian Museum at Rapid City, South Dakota, where his photographs and famous collection of Indian artifacts were displayed.<sup>13</sup> Remington Schuyler, an artist and life-long friend of Uncle John, printed postcards from Anderson's Indian photographs which found a large sale in the East.

*The Blizzard of 1888*—Some of the most delightful evenings on the homestead were when the winter snows swirled, the wind howled, and the drifts piled up around the log house. This was true when we knew the livestock was fed and sheltered and we were snug and warm inside the house. It was a wonderful feeling of comfort and satisfaction. We popped corn and roasted peanuts we had raised.

But sometimes storms were terribly bad. I remember the day of the awful blizzard of January, 1888. My father got to the barn to see that the stock was all right. The storm kept getting worse by the minute, and my mother worried that he could not find his way back to the house. She would open the back door every few minutes, stick her head out and scream with all her might into the white drifting snow. He eventually got back but he said he could never have done it if our dog Colonel had not been with him. Many people got lost and died in such storms.

John Anderson had been home for a day or two that January visiting at grandfather's house only a few hundred yards from ours. He intended to go back to his studio at Fort Niobrara early the next morning. He could walk to meet the mailman just over the hill from our place and ride with him. On his way he stopped at our house for a cup of coffee and a visit with my mother. It was a calm day, not very cold, and the sun was bright and warm. All at once it got darker. When John started to leave and opened the door a terrible gust of wind with snow came in. Visibility was poor, but he was able to get back to his father's house by following a barbed-wire fence between the two places. If he had started over the hill to meet the mailman, he would have been lost in the blizzard.

The wind was so strong and it snowed so much that drifts covered buildings. The wind so packed the snow that one could walk on the mountain-like drifts. As soldiers began to "dig out," John Anderson took pictures of Fort Niobrara showing the adobe buildings almost covered with snow.<sup>14</sup> This was the worst snow



*Colonel Charles P. Gordon,  
Indian trader about 1889.*

storm that I remember. It caused much damage and great suffering for both people and animals.

*Early Cherry County*—Cherry County, named for Lieutenant Samuel Cherry who was killed by a soldier while stationed at Fort Niobrara,<sup>15</sup> is in the Sandhills of Nebraska, an unexcelled cattle country. In 1887 Cherry County received several back-handed blows from nature. In the early spring there were several prairie fires and a general drouth. In May and June there was wind and hail in spots, but a good rain apparently "made" the crops. Then on a Sunday afternoon the wind blew in gale force as hail and 3 inches of rain hit Valentine. The path of the hailstorm was about 10 miles long and 3 miles wide. The men shoveled up washtubs full of hail stones. Mother and Aunt Emma mixed a water pail of cream for ice cream, which we froze with the ice. It was fine ice cream, all you could eat, but it didn't compensate for the damage done to crops by the hail. Even with all the bad weather, some areas of Cherry County had great crops that year. Samples were brought to town to exhibit.

A tragedy in which two boys died occurred one Sunday afternoon in 1888 about 6 miles west of Wood Lake. Two neighborhood children went into the hills to gather sand cherries and after getting their baskets full sat down to rest in a blowout. The bank caved off, smothering them with two feet of sand. The bodies were found by Paxton Hornback and Frankie Davis.

The little village of Sparks, about 14 or 15 miles from Valentine, was our post office.<sup>16</sup> It had a little grocery store where the homesteaders could take their eggs and trade them for sugar, coffee,

and tea. It was only twenty years after the Civil War, and many of its veterans found a future in Cherry County by filing on homesteads. Articles appeared in eastern newspapers advertising homestead land in Nebraska. Many families in white, canvas-covered wagons came by our homestead going farther west.

*Valentine*—In 1882 the railroad was nearing that sun-flooded space of prairie surrounded by the Minnechaduzza hills and one of the surveyors entered a homestead on the place that would become Valentine,<sup>17</sup> named for Edward Kimball Valentine, 3rd District congressman. It began as a trading post at the end of the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad, but remained the end of the line only a short time. The first buildings included five saloons and a Lutheran church.<sup>18</sup> The settlers collected \$120 to dig a well on Main Street. The water was free, but you had to pump it yourself and carry it home in a pail. The most interesting thing about going to town for us children was fording the Minnechaduzza River, though the adults did not like it. When the railroad built a high wooden-trestle bridge across the Niobrara River, everyone was proud of it. Later this bridge was replaced by a steel bridge, one of the highest in this part of America at that time.

In about 1902 or 1905 Valentine's concert band, which trained at Fort Niobrara, furnished music for Norfolk's 4th of July celebration. Musicians, wearing uniforms of red blouses and white trousers, played all day and far into the evening. It was considered a good advertisement for Valentine, a small town hoping to grow.

On July 4 and 5, 1921, the Valentine American Legion World War I veterans, sponsored the greatest celebration ever held in the town. There were horse races, foot races, motorcycle races, a circus, a parade with floats, band concert, speeches by Nebraska dignitaries, and a water fight. Charles H. Cornell, president of the First National Bank, headed the planning committee. His father, C. H. Cornell, had participated in the birth of the little city of Valentine and headed many civic enterprises. Charles followed his father as a community leader. The elder Cornell's wife first came to Valentine as a missionary for the Episcopal Church. My father was a close friend of the Cornells.

## NOTES

1. Henry W. and Jean Tyree Hamilton, *The Sioux of the Rosebud, A History in Pictures* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971).
2. Jennie, born June 13, 1874; Claude, born October 10, 1876. *Ibid.*, 3.

3. Both Gustave Carlson and John Anderson later did carpentry work in Valentine.
4. The Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, established in 1878 for the Brule Sioux.
5. The Andersons settled in northeast Cherry County in the Sparks area east of Valentine.
6. This sod house, built on the Anderson homestead in 1883, was part dugout. The main building was a single room, with a partly enclosed lean-to extending to the right. Hamilton, *The Sioux of the Rosebud*, 23.
7. The log house, built around 1884, was said to be the first log structure in Cherry County. For a number of years it was the meeting place for Sunday school, church, and various gatherings. *Ibid.*, 24.
8. Dug by a Pennsylvania well-digger, Anderson's well went down 300 feet and at one time utilized horse power to draw water. Charles S. Reece, *A History of Cherry County, Nebraska* (Simeon, Nebraska, 1945), 131.
9. The Sparks school district was organized in 1885. Bina Miller, the first teacher, received a salary of \$17 per month and boarded with her students' families. *Ibid.*, 132.
10. Mrs. Carlson's name appears on the "honor roll" of Cherry County women who "endowed by nature or training, or both, . . . stood ready to go to the home of a neighbor and render aid when sickness came." *Ibid.*, 37.
11. Fort Niobrara was a valuable stimulus to the early Cherry County economy. It provided a market for cord wood, hay, grain, poultry, and dairy products; and served as a source of supply for clothing and other items. *Ibid.*, 24.
12. John Anderson began work as a photographer at Fort Niobrara in 1885. Later he apprenticed himself to W.R. Cross, a commercial photographer who had established a studio at the fort about 1886. By 1889 he was civilian photographer for the army and had his own studio. Hamilton, *The Sioux of the Rosebud*, 4, 33.
13. The Sioux Indian Museum, built to house Anderson's collection of Sioux ethnological materials, was at first a private venture. Anderson charged admission and conducted guided tours. *Ibid.*, 11.
14. As far as is known, Anderson's photographs of the great snow drifts at Fort Niobrara after the 1888 blizzard are the only photographic record of the storm. "John Alvin Anderson, Frontier Photographer," *Nebraska History*, 51 (Lincoln; Winter, 1970), 470.
15. C. S. Reece, Jr., *Murder on the Plains* (Valentine, Nebraska: Cherry County Historical Society, 1974).
16. The Sparks post office was named for four brothers—Eldon, James Allen, Charles, and Levi Sparks, who had laid out a town site on land belonging to Eldon. Lillian L. Fitzpatrick, *Nebraska Place Names* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960), 41.
17. Railroad surveyor David Y. Mears. Reece, *A History of Cherry County, Nebraska*, 118.
18. The author may be mistaken about the Lutheran Church. The first church to be built in Valentine was an Episcopal Church constructed in 1886. *Wagon Wheels to Wings* (Valentine, 1959), 25.