

# Some of the Everetts<sup>1</sup> PART II

## PIONEER DAYS OF THE EVERETTS AND THEIR FRIENDS

I am writing these recollections for the benefit of the descendants of the people named therein, and especially for the use of the descendants of Franklin and Clara Everett, my father and mother.

Much of the matter contained therein will be of no interest to other people and will doubtless seem like a family history, which indeed it is. But so much of the experiences through which our people lived were common to thousands of pioneer families that they should interest the descendants of any of the old pioneers.

So in this year, A. D. 1914, I will set down such recollections of our early days in Burt County, Nebraska, as my memory retains, with no attempt at literary effect or even system.

Now that the men and women whose efforts changed Eastern Nebraska from a wilderness to a garden are so rapidly passing away, it seems fitting that some record of their struggles, hardships and adventures should be handed down for future generations.

Soon, those of us who came with them as children will have passed to the beyond; then, lacking written records, the inspiration of those brave lives will be lost.

In the Summer of 1866, Josiah Everett, the fourth in direct succession of that name, left Dorchester, Allamakee County, Iowa, and, journeying across that state by team and "prairie schooner," arrived in Burt County, Nebraska, near where the village of Lyons now stands.

"Uncle Si," as everyone called him, was at that time in the prime of life, a handsome bearded man, powerfully built, full of dash and spirit. He had been much of a rover all his life, having gone to sea from the State of Maine when a mere boy, and afterward visited the then unsettled State of Texas, where he remained but a short time.

Returning from Texas, he settled in the State of Wisconsin, which was at that time on the frontier. Soon, however, the breathing spaces of Wisconsin became too restricted by

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<sup>1</sup> By FREMONT EVERETT PORTLAND, OREGON 1916 PRESS OF GLASS & PRUDHOMME CO. PORTLAND, OREGON

settlement to suit his wilderness nature and he moved to Iowa. That was the period when I first knew him. He remained there but a few years; then, hearing of the vast prairies and free lands of Kansas and Nebraska, not yet admitted to statehood, he sold his farm and, loading his family into a covered wagon, started westward.

I have the impression that at the time he started he had no very definite destination in mind, but slowly they traveled westward, ever westward, and after many days, pitching their tents wherever night overtook them, they at last paused on the brow of a beautiful green hill about a mile northeast of the present village of Lyons.

There Uncle Josiah founded his last earthly home, and there, after many years of toil, he died, loved and esteemed by all who knew him.

I, as a small boy, saw him on the day before he started on the long journey from Iowa to Nebraska, and I shall never forget him as he looked that day. He was riding a spirited young horse and carried in his hand a long-barreled muzzle-loading rifle of the Old Kentucky pattern, and would have made a fitting companion for Kit Carson. He was taking leave of his mother, my grandmother, and I stood by and heard the conversation. There was no outward show of feeling, no kisses or embraces, for these hardy old pioneers deemed such things a display of weakness. As I recollect, the conversation ran something like this:

*Grandmother—"Why do you want to go off way out West and git skelped by Injuns?"*

*Uncle Si—"Ain't a-goin' where there's no Injuns."*

*Grandmother—"Well, you'd better stay here; you're doin' well 'nuf."*

*Uncle Si—"Wahl, I guess I'll go, anyhow. Good-bye."*

The next day he started, and he did not do as he said he would, avoid the Indians, for he settled within a few miles of two large reservations, the Omaha and Winnebago. But the Indians of these tribes were always his warm friends, and he never missed an opportunity to do them a kindness.

Poor grandmother, how little she thought that the new land to which he was going would be her home the last twenty years of her life and that the new farm he was about to

acquire would be her resting place in death!

Josiah Everett was the first actual settler in what was afterward known as Everett Precinct. He was speedily followed by Gideon Fritts , M. H. Wilse, familiarly known as "Met," Peter McMullen, Thomas and Mell Senter, and R. S. and Jas. D. Hart.

Glowing reports of the beauty and fertility of the country speedily came back to us in the old Iowa home, and in the Spring of 1867 Uncle Andrew and Uncle Benaiah W. Everett and their families followed Uncle Josiah's prairie schooner route, and took up land a mile or two west of Lyons.

At about that time, Franklin Everett, my father, Charles W. Harvey , who had married Lucy Everett, father's sister, and J. G. Coil, a tried and trusted friend of father, took a trip to Nebraska and took up land. How they went, I am not certain, but they did not go by team, and my impression is that they went from Lansing, Iowa, by steamboat to Clinton, from there by rail to the then terminal of the Chicago & Northwestern, and the rest of the way by stage to Omaha, and from Omaha to Uncle Si's place by livery team. Anyway, they were not gone from home very long, perhaps two weeks.

Coil took up the section of land adjoining Uncle Andrew's on the south, and situated about three miles southwest of Lyons, which land he owned and occupied until his death. He also took up a half section across the Logan, one mile east of the section on which he settled.

Harvey took up the land where Lyons is now situated, but never went there to live, and the land soon became the property of Waldo Lyon, who founded the town.

Father took up the old home place, Sec. 13, Tp. 20, R. 8, which he still owns. Also a half section one mile west across the Logan, which was afterward owned by William G. Waite and Henry Mowrer, who had married sisters of my mother, and they both came there to live. After a few years, Uncle William sold his farm and moved into Lyons, where he still lives. Uncle Henry owned his and lived upon it until the time of his death. The price of all that land at that time was \$1.25 per acre to the Government. By the purchase of what was known as college script, which could be obtained at fifty per cent of its face value and which the Government accepted at par in payment for land, the actual cost of these lands to the purchasers was sixty-two and one-half cents per acre. The land is now worth three

times that many dollars per acre.

On March 13, 1868, our old Iowa home passed into other hands and on that day our family, consisting of Franklin Everett, Clara Everett, nee Spencer, father and mother; Fremont Everett, aged twelve; Walter, aged ten, and Edward Burton, aged three, started via prairie schooner route for Nebraska. Our only sister, Clara Ethel, now Mrs. W. S. Newmyer, was born years afterward in the new home.

The frost was just coming out of the ground and the roads were bad. The first day we traveled only about fifteen miles and stayed that night with Uncle Oliver Waite, who had married another of mother's sisters, and lived at that time near the town of Hesper, in Winneshiek County, Iowa. He afterward sold out there and went to live with the rest of us in the new country, where he still lives. The roads were so heavy that father got Uncle Oliver, who, as he always did, owned a fine team, to go with us for a few days and help us with the loads.

We had two wagons, father driving one team and I the other. As I recollect the matter, Uncle Oliver put his horses on as a lead team through the hard places. How far he went with us I have forgotten, but I well recollect the feeling of loneliness that came over me the morning he swung himself onto one of his horses and, leading the other, rode away on the back track.

At the time of our removal from northeastern Iowa, that state as a whole was very new and undeveloped. The means of transportation were very scanty. The ribbon of country along the west bank of the Mississippi River was very well served by the excellent steamer that plied on that stream, for those were the palmy days of Mississippi steamboating, so much talked of in both history and fiction. But inland there were vast areas reached by neither railroad or navigable stream. The roads were, of course, at that early period merely wagon trails over the prairies and through the forests without grading, and in many places without bridges over the streams, which had to be forded or crossed in rude flatboat ferries.

The Chicago & Northwestern and the Illinois Central Railroads were slowly creeping across the state, the former having reached the town of Booneville in Boone County. However, we had more than a hundred miles to travel before we came near either

line. We struggled along through the Spring mud without actually getting "stuck" until we reached the valley of the Wapsie River. This river is only a good-sized creek, but it flows through a flat, badly drained country in the midst of an extremely wide bottom land. However, it is said that once a school teacher in that country asked his school, "What is the biggest river in the world?" Up went a little fellow's hand. "Well, Johnnie, what is it?" "I know," said the boy; "it's the Wapsie. Father says it's ten miles wide and it hain't got no bottom." Whether or, not it has a bottom we did not find out, but we started to find the bottom and went down in the mud to the wagon axle and stuck. All our efforts to pull the load out failed and father went for help. He returned with a resident who looked about as down-hearted and discouraged as we felt. By the use of fence rails we pried the wagon up, and after many tribulations got across the Wapsie country..

At that time my grandfather, Josiah Everett, was living in Buckingham, in Tama County, Iowa. He and grandmother, Lucy Everett, with their youngest son Seth and his wife, nee Patty Denison, had moved there from the old home in Allamakee County some time after Uncle Si moved to Nebraska and before we made our move. At one time, about the year 1865, there were living in the neighborhood eleven families of the Everett tribe, all closely related. Within a very few years they all sold out and moved away, scattering, so that at this time I have entirely lost track of some of them and know not whether they are living or dead. Grandfather died in the Tama County home, as did also Uncle Seth. Grandmother, at the death of grandfather, moved to Lyons, where she died in 1896. Aunt Patty married a man by the name of Melvin Lovejoy, a cousin of her first husband, and removed to Oregon. I do not know where she is or whether she is still living.

But to resume my story. As grandfather's new place was nearly on our line of travel to Nebraska, father planned to visit our relatives there. Just how long we were in covering the hundred and fifty miles, more or less, between Allamakee County and Tama County, I do not remember, but as I look back it seems to me it was nearly a week. The only thing I am sure of as to time in that trip is that we were nineteen days getting from our old home in Iowa to the new one in Nebraska.

Anyhow, we got to grandfather's and stopped a day or two there. Somewhere about half way between Allamakee County and Tama County, we camped for dinner by a fine

farm and, getting into conversation with the owner, father learned that the place was for sale. He was greatly taken with the farm and came to mother and laid the matter before her, asking her what she thought of the idea of buying right there and saving the hardships of going on and opening up a new and unimproved piece of land. Mother told him to do as he thought best. Walter and I protested loudly, for our hearts were set on getting where Uncle Andrew was, for we were strongly attached to his children, our cousins, who, until his removal, had been our playmates. I do not have any idea that what we said had much weight, but I think father himself rather yearned for Uncle Andrew, with whom he had always played as a boy and worked as a man, for they were nearly of an age, Andrew being slightly the older. Anyway, the farm was not bought and we moved on. I often have thought what a change it might have made in the lives of all our family had we stopped in northeastern Iowa instead of going to Nebraska.

We finally reached grandfather's place, and I think stayed two days with him and Uncle Seth. Father had tired of plodding through mud and drove from grandfather's place to Marshalltown, on the C. & N. W. R. R., and, chartering a freight car, loaded into it all our stuff, wagons and teams. It did not take us very long even on the newly built and very rough railroad to reach Boonesborough, the temporary terminus of the line. At that point we stopped for a day to repack our loads in the wagons. While we were there the town was rife with reports of robberies recently committed in the vicinity. The country was new and sparsely settled, in fact, scarcely settled at all. The advent of the railroad had brought in a number of desperate characters and the law was very laxly enforced. I, of course, knew nothing of this at the time, but I learned long afterward that father was very anxious. He carried several thousand dollars sewed up in his shirt and mother carried a large sum sewed into her petticoat. Many a family has been slaughtered for far less. Father always did hate a gun or a pistol and never would carry firearms. However, he got a pitchfork out of the load and carried it alongside of him in the wagon seat, where he could grasp it quickly. (He told me afterward that his plan was that if any one held him up to hold out his pocketbook to them and when they came to take it to run the robber through with the fork.) It seems a very inadequate means of defense, but knowing father's strength, agility and cool courage, I think it quite probable that it would have proved successful. And as this is

not a connected story, but merely a disconnected string of family and neighborhood incidents, I pause right here to tell of a happening that took place years before in the then new settlement on Portland Prairie, Allamakee County, Iowa.

The Everetts and others had settled on Government land and had complied with the then existing land law to procure title thereto. Among the settlers was a litigious old fellow named George Carver. He long ago passed to his reward, so we will not say anything about his character, but he commenced a system of litigation with the object of depriving the Everetts of their lands. A great feud was the result and the community was divided into two intensely hostile factions.

One day Carver, armed with a revolver and backed by several of his adherents, entered upon and attempted to take possession of a piece of land claimed by grandfather. Uncle Benaiah W. Everett, who was a husky boy of about nineteen or twenty, and who was still living at home with his father, together with my father, who lived close by, went into the field where the Carver party were to serve on Carver a written notice. Neither of them were armed. But Uncle Ben carried a little cherry stick which he used as a cane. Uncle Ben had the notice and when he attempted to hand it to Carver the latter pointed a revolver at Uncle Ben and threatened to kill him. Father, believing that Carver was merely bluffing, snatched the notice from Uncle Ben and pressed forward to present it to Carver. Instantly the revolver was turned upon father and fired. They were so close together that the pistol almost touched father, but in his excitement Carver missed, even at a short range, and the bullet passed through two folds of father's shirt (he was in shirt sleeves) directly over his heart and whistled harmlessly across the field. Carver had no chance to repeat the shot, for father leaped upon him like a tiger, and so great was his strength that the pistol was instantly wrenched from its frightened owner and so roughly that the trigger guard badly lacerated the hand that held it.

Carver, expecting to be shot with his own weapon, dropped to his knees and begged for his life. Father has always declared that he did not feel any anger at all and had no idea of doing more than to disarm his antagonist. In the meantime, Uncle Ben, seeing some of Carver's followers advancing to his assistance, rushed among them with his little cherry stick and laid about him so vigorously that they were speedily routed. Carver got even by

having them both arrested, charged with highway robbery. They had robbed him of his pistol.

I relate this incident to show that father, though armed with a pitchfork only, would have been a formidable antagonist for even a holdup man. However, we met no robbers and traversed the almost uninhabited country lying between Boonesborough and the Maple River without any adventure worthy of notice.

We reached the Maple River at a point near the present town of Castana and stopped over a day to visit William Sylvester Everett, a cousin of father's, who had left Allamakee County in company with Uncle Si, but had stopped in the rich Maple Valley instead of going on into Nebraska. He was prospering finely, although the grasshoppers had paid him a short visit the Summer before our arrival. These "grasshoppers" were probably identical with the locusts of Bible days, and I shall have more to say of them later on in these memoirs. They had not "eaten out" Bill's crops as they did the crops of many settlers, but they had ruined his garden. "Yes," said he, "I had a fine bed of onions—good strong ones—and those hoppers would get their mouths full of onion and sit up on the fence and spit onion juice in each other's eyes and cry."

While there I took my first shot at a prairie chicken. They were very numerous at that time in the Maple Valley, and the next morning after our arrival Bill came to me and said, "Montie, there is a flock of prairie chickens out in the hog pen eating corn with the hogs. Don't you want to take a shot at them?" Did ever a boy of twelve willingly miss such an opportunity? I seized my old muzzleloader and, pouring a big charge into it, followed Bill out across the road to the hog lot. We crawled cautiously up behind the rail fence, and got in easy range of the chickens, who were very busy filling their crops with Bill's corn. He carried an old Harper's Ferry musket, bored out for a shotgun, and he was a fine old hunter, cool and wary. We rested our guns across the fence and had every opportunity to do great execution.

But I was struck with what I suppose was "buck fever"; anyhow those birds looked as big to me as turkeys. My gun wavered about, probably describing about a three-foot circle. At last. I think I shut my eyes and pulled the trigger. The old gun kicked and reared and the chickens flew away. Bill did not fire, but stood grinning' at my failure. "Why didn't

you shoot?" said I. "Wahl," said he, "I was waitin' to get two on 'em in line. Didn't want to waste a shot on one bird." So ended my first prairie chicken hunt.

William Sylvester Everett's place on the Maple was twenty miles from the Missouri River. At the time of which I write, the Spring of 1868, there was quite a village on the Iowa side of the Missouri, opposite Decatur. It was, however, entirely of a transient nature and owed its existence to the body of fine timber that then extended for miles along the river, and to a sawmill owned by a Mr. Moore, who was cutting ties for the U. P. R. R., which was then pushing its way across the plains from Omaha and was paying high prices for anything that could be called a tie. The village was known as Tyeville, Tyetown or Slabtown, according to the whim of the speaker, and never even had a postoffice. The houses were mere shacks, built of slabs, with chimneys of mud and sticks. This timber has long since been swallowed up by the "Old Muddy," which has a first mortgage on all land near its banks. But at that time it was fine; the large trees, many of them from four to six feet in diameter, were cottonwood. But there were also large quantities of ash and mulberry. Father afterward bought eighty acres of this timber and for many years spent his winters in getting saw logs, posts and wood across the river during the cold weather when the ice could be crossed by team. He would haul it over and take the logs to a sawmill owned by Stevens & Welch in Decatur, to be sawed into lumber, and the posts and wood were piled up to be hauled out to the Logan at convenient times. Many of the other early settlers practiced the same thing, especially Uncles Andrew and Benaiah, J.G. Coil, Uncles William G. and Oliver Waite and Joel S. Yeaton. All these men risked their lives at various times teaming on the ice, for the old Missouri is an especially treacherous stream, and solid ice at night would often be open water in the morning.

But father was especially venturesome, and for years I had the feeling that some day the river would get him, Always if he was delayed in his homecoming, which was very often, I would get so worried and anxious that I could hardly stand it—waiting for him to come home. That I had a good reason for these feeling's, the following instances will show;

The second winter that we lived there in the new home, Rev. Dr. J.M. Peebles, a pioneer preacher, supported by the Presbyterian board of missions, but mostly by his own

work and faith, induced the settlers to undertake the erection of a church. How well the work was done is shown by the fact that after forty-four years the building still stands in a good state of preservation, and when I last visited Lyons was occupied by A. W. Hobson as a residence.

Father and Mr. Yeaton undertook to get the sills across the river before the ice went out, and they just did it and no more; for the river was already breaking up, as we called it, and they crossed with these sills the last crossing that was made, and with the horses on the run, the ice giving and slushing under the sled runners and the water from them and the horses' hoofs flying about them. When they were safely landed on the Nebraska side with their precious sills, for which they had risked their lives, an irreligious friend, who had watched them from the bank as they flew across, said, "If you had been crossing anything but church lumber, you would all be under the ice now."

Another time he had a yet closer call, for he always went on the river earlier in the Winter and crossed later in the Spring than any one else. He was getting that one last load of wood or posts over one early Spring day. The road ice was stronger than any other place, for all Winter snow had drifted into the track, been tramped down and frozen into ice, reinforcing the natural ice. Father, as was usual when crossing was dangerous, was driving fast and running beside his sled. Suddenly his feet went into the river; but the road ice held the team and sled; he clung to the reins and the momentum of the team dragged him to safety. On another occasion, along in March, he went to Decatur, and as he wanted to see Mr. Moore, the sawmill man on the Iowa side, he had to cross the river. The ice was not yet broken up, but was so rotten that even father did not dare to venture on it with a team. He walked across, and while he was transacting his business the ice broke up. The ferry was not running. He must find some way to cross unless he went to Sioux City or Omaha or remained indefinitely in Tyeville. He hunted up an Indian who owned a dugout and tried to hire him to ferry over. But that noble redman had a wholesome regard for his own safety; he knew that a dugout is a mighty tricky thing, that the ice was running in great masses and chunks in a six-mile current; he knew that the water was mighty cold—in short, just at that particular moment he had a heap more sense than father had, who was obsessed with the idea of getting across that river, and could think of nothing else. He

knew just as much about the management of a dugout as William Jennings Bryan knows about diplomacy, and was just as willing to try his hand at it; for when the Indian refused to be a candidate for the position at the bottom of the river, father seized the paddle and was going to start across alone. The Indian, either thinking he would not be outdone, or fearing the loss of his canoe, then reluctantly consented to go. They started across, avoiding the ice as best they could. As they neared the Nebraska shore, they encountered a jam of ice that the canoe could not penetrate. Father paid the Indian liberally, sprang out of the canoe and started for shore, leaping from icepan to icepan. For a time all went well, but at last he miscalculated and sprang upon a cake too small to bear him up. Down he went the grim old stream that he had so long defied seemed about to seize him. But his courage, agility and presence of mind did not fail him. Gathering all his strength, he threw himself upward and forward toward another cake, landing face downward across it with his legs in the water. Fortunately it was large enough to carry him and he succeeded in scrambling upon it and regaining his feet. Another rush and a few long leaps carried him ashore. He was wet to the waist, and as it turned cold that afternoon, he reached home with his lower limbs encased in an armor of ice. How many more narrow escapes he had I never knew, but I learned of these as they happened, and they served to keep me worried until in the course of years, changed conditions made it unnecessary for father to cross on the ice. If anybody reads this they will think I am a terribly long time getting from the Maple to Tyeville; but remember, I promised neither literature nor a connected story. And now we will go back again to where we belong, which is on the road between Onawa and Decatur, and we have just got to Tyetown. We got there just at night, and there we were to cross the river and enter the promised land. It was too late for us to be ferried over that night. The ferry consisted of a heavy scow or flatboat, owned and operated by Peter Coyle and John Lewis, brothers-in-law. As there was no hotel on that side of the river, Mrs. Coyle made us as comfortable as she could in her little cabin. I afterward became well acquainted with these kind people and warm friends; and I shall never forget their kindness to us, entire strangers as we were. Mrs. Coyle had a large family of little children at the time, and they were poor and struggling to get along. But I have lived to see those little ones grow up to be a credit to their kind-hearted mother. Several of the boys have filled responsible

positions. The only means of propelling and guiding the ferryboat was a set of long sweeps and it was so heavy and unmanageable that it was largely at the mercy of the wind and current. If the wind blew up the river so as to oppose the current they could man the long oars and work across the river nicely. But if wind and current joined forces against the ferrymen, it made crossing difficult; and it was their custom when that condition prevailed to tow the boat far up the river and then putting out they would work their way diagonally across. As I recollect it, the river at that point was about a half mile wide, and I think that they often drifted down a half mile in getting the half mile across. I do not remember the direction of the wind the morning that we started to ferry over, but I think it must have been unfavorable, for I recollect that they hitched a horse to the tow rope and, driving along the bank, towed the unwieldy old scow as much as a half mile up the stream. Then they pushed off, and with much shouting and frantic pulling at the sweeps at last landed at a point far downstream. They could carry but a part of our stuff at a time, and it was a little past noon when we finally drove the teams up into Decatur.

At about 12:30 P. M. April 1, 1868, we took our first meal in Nebraska, at the hotel of "Clint" Smith in the town of Decatur. Clinton Smith was one of the well known pioneers of eastern Nebraska and lived in Decatur for many years. The rival hotel was kept by A. B. Fuller, who was also a pioneer, and even better known over the state than was Smith. These men and many others had been deeply disappointed that the U. P. and C. & N. W. Railroads had gone to Omaha instead of making Decatur their terminals, as was expected. Indeed, Decatur was and is the logical crossing of the Missouri for those great transcontinental lines. But their location was determined by political "pull," which for some reason Decatur lacked. But Decatur loomed large in the territorial history of the state, and many of its leading pioneers settled there. Among those whom I now recall were the two hotel men already mentioned; Captain Learning, who at that time was a surveyor and locator; Robert and James Ashley, brothers; Silas Brown, James Dun, the Griffins, Mr. Stevens and Mr. Welch, who were very active men and operated a sawmill and grist mill under the name of Stevens & Welch; Rev. John M. Peebles, the missionary before mentioned, and Dr. Whittier. There were many others that I cannot now recall. Immediately after dinner we started on the last stage of our journey. Had we been familiar

with the country we should have reached Uncle Si's place by six o'clock at the latest, but we did not know the country and it was "April Fool Day." At that time there was but one house between Decatur and the Logan Valley. It stood on a high hill on what we have always known as the "Divide," was built by a Mr. Gould, and was visible for many miles on the then-treeless prairie, and was known far and wide as the "Gould place."

We had sixteen miles to go over roads that were but dim wagon trail, with this one landmark to guide us. It was a day of raw spring wind, such as often prevails in Nebraska in early spring, and I well remember how comfortless and chilly it was. I drove a team and toward night I became so tired, sleepy and chilled that I could hardly hold the lines. To add to my discomfort I had for a few days been afflicted with a cankered sore mouth and had hardly been able to eat. Luckily the team that I drove were both tired and gentle and required but little guidance, as they followed the lead team along the dim track.

Sunset came, darkness came, and found us on the illimitable prairie, tired to the point of exhaustion, chilled to the bone and very hungry. Just here I must pause to remind my children and grandchildren and any other friends who may read these recollections that the person who now views central and western Burt County can hardly realize what it was, at the time of which I write. Now the trees and groves planted by those early pioneers have grown up, giving the country the appearance of a forest region. Roads and fences cut up the country and dwellings are everywhere. But on that dark chill night, forty-six years ago, no tree, no shrub, no plant larger than a prairie gum stock broke the monotony of the plain. Not a building, not a fence, not a road except the dim track, which in the thickening darkness we were following with great difficulty. Not a sound broke the stillness except the whistle of the chill wind among the dead grasses of the prairie and the creak and rumble of our heavily loaded wagons. Not a creature stirred, not a night bird cried—utter silence, dreary chill desolation, covered the land as with a pall. Lost on the prairie, mother almost an invalid, three children, too young to be of any use, father the only guide and protector; but he cheered us as best he could and kept steadily on, saying that the dim track we were following must lead somewhere, although by this time he knew that it could not be leading us to Uncle Si's.

At last we detected the feeble glimmer of a light far away across the country and,

following on, we came at last to the newly built shack of a homesteader. Father did not stop to knock or ask for accommodations, but sprang from the wagon and lifted poor, half-frozen, exhausted mother to the ground and exclaimed, "We'll stay here anyway—or fight!" But there was no fight, for the kindly occupants of the shanty had heard our wagons; the rude door was thrown hospitably wide and we were urged to enter and were made as comfortable as the conditions would permit. And the kindly cordiality of our welcome! My children, remember that boiled beans and the glad hand are better than roast turkey and the cold stare. I do not remember what they gave us to eat, but whatever it was, it was the best they had and given ungrudgingly. I think it was only bread and coffee; but we had shelter and a place to rest. I was so exhausted that before I had swallowed the few crumbs of bread and coffee that my sore mouth allowed me to take I fell asleep and tumbled backward off the stool on which I sat (there were no chairs in the shack), hurting myself considerably.

Next morning, at the frugal breakfast, our host, who was one of those early Swedish pioneers who have made Oakland and vicinity the splendid community which it now is, in his broken English apologized for the humble fare. "Ve is poor yet," said he. Listen to the triumphant note of prophesy in that simple sentence. That word "yet" with which it closed was big with hope, pregnant with faith, tremendous with determination and sweet with love of the new home and the adopted land.

Our first day in the Logan Valley broke bright and clear, the sun shone warmly and the breeze blew gently. We learned that in the darkness we had missed the faint track that led to Uncle Si's and had driven several miles to the southward, and our stopping place was about half way between Oakland and Lyons. But neither of these towns was dreamed of for years after that time. Refreshed by our night's sleep, we cheerfully drove off to the northward after taking a grateful leave of our kind entertainers, and in an hour or two came in sight of Uncle Si's homestead with its cluster of little buildings. The first person that we saw was Cousin Eugene S. Everett, then a boy of twelve, harrowing in wheat with a yoke of little stags. We had arrived. It was April 2, 1868.

Father's land, which was destined to be our home for many years, and which he still owns, is one mile north of Uncle Si's, and after dinner on the day of our arrival we went to

see it. In going there we passed by the old M.H. Wilse homestead, now owned by W. S. Newmyer, where Met., as every one called him, was just getting settled in his little homestead shanty.

It is strange what little things will cling in the memory of a child. As we passed that place a little tableau was presented, which is as clear in my memory today as if it was forty-five years ago. A little homely scene, yet I can close my eyes and see it today as in a mirror. The little shack, outlined against its background of boundless prairie, and in front of it Mel and Captain Learning of Decatur were setting a post to carry a clothes line. The captain, who seemed to be visiting the Wilses, was holding the post in position and Met was tamping the earth about it. I never had seen Captain Learning before, but I never forgot him afterward.

I wish I could picture to the young generation the great Logan Valley as it looked at that time.

The season was too early for any of the other grasses to show, but the bunch grass (now practically extinct in that country), the earliest of our grasses, was thrusting up its little spears and tinged the burnt-over country with green. In those days the prairie fires swept the country each Fall, burning the grass into its very roots, and purifying the whole country as nothing but fire can do. In the Spring, when the new sweet grass sprang up, there was an appearance and smell of utter cleanness, such as never can be found in an old settled country. There was nothing to break the view as far as the eye could reach, and to look at it and breathe the fresh breeze seemed to give one a sense of utter freedom, such as I have never experienced elsewhere. Later I used to like to get on a horse and gallop off across the country, where for uncounted miles there was not a fence or other obstruction except the streams that water the country so liberally.

The Logan Valley of those days was a beautiful country, yet was a new land and must yet be subdued to human uses. Many hardships must be endured and some real dangers met before it became the safe and comfortable dwelling place that it now is.

There was at no time any danger from the Indians, who were at all times friendly. The Omahas and Winnebagos lived where they do now and still retained their tribal relations and held their lands in common. The Pawnees and Pencas, who have since been

removed, lived some one or two hundred miles further south, and the various tribes frequently visited each other. On these occasions it was their custom to go in large parties, taking all their families, together with many ponies and dogs. At that time they had no wagons and all their tents and baggage was packed on patient little ponies, while on each side of the pack saddles would be fastened one end of the tent poles, while the other end dragged on the ground beside the trail. Sometimes a sort of hammock would be swung across these poles behind the pony that dragged, forming a place where children too young to walk were carried. They always traveled single file, the braves in the lead, mounted on the best ponies, and patient squaws trudged behind, leading the pack animals. On the occasion of these visits many presents were given and much gambling indulged in. Yet I firmly believe that on the whole the Indian of 1868 was a far better man physically and morally than his descendant of today. In addition to these visits, the Indians used to go each Spring and Fall down to the Republican and Blue Rivers to hunt Buffalo, which were still very plentiful along these valleys. A deeply worn Indian trail passed up and down the valley before it was filled by the plow of the settler, and the natural grove north of Lyons, known as Fritt's grove, was always a favorite camping place for the tribes in their journeyings. On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, the day after our arrival at Uncle Si's, we crossed the Logan on a rude bridge which the settlers had put in somewhere in the grove of which I have spoken above, and went over to visit Uncle Benaiah and Uncle Andrew, whose homesteads lay together a mile or two west of where Lyons now stands. We received a warm welcome at both places and stayed at Uncle Andrew's for a day or two, while father could haul a load or two of cottonwood lumber from Decatur and put up a shack on his land.

That afternoon, while mother and I were sitting in Uncle Andrew's little house, visiting with Aunt Sarah, a shadow darkened the window. Aunt Sarah looked up and screamed, for there looking in at us stood a huge Pawnee brave. His face was gaily painted and he wore a pair of blue army pants. Excepting a light buffalo robe which he wore instead of a blanket, he was naked to the waist. However, his intentions were entirely friendly. He and several of his fellows were invited into the house and Uncle Andrew was sent for. The Indians made it plain that they were hungry and wanted to buy "wamooski" ( flour). Uncle Andrew's supply was scanty, but he spared them what he could and with the

abounding kindness for which he was noted, showed his red guests every civility. But when it came time for them to depart a question arose as to how they should carry the flour which they had purchased. There was no extra sack. One only of the party wore a shirt, a calico shirt. He made signs that that garment would be the container for the flour and, quickly peeling it off, the flour was tied up therein. Uncle Andrew dryly remarked that the bread made from that flour would need no spice. Having made sure of his "wamooski," the big warrior remarked, "Heap Injun out here hungry." And sure enough, there were hundreds of Pawnees on their way to visit the Omahas. They were camping in Fritt's grove and short of food. Uncle Andrew was unable to supply the wants of so many, and doubtless the majority of them slept hungry that night. In two or three days father had thrown up a little shanty 14x18 feet and about 6 feet high at the eaves, into which we moved and in which we lived the entire Summer. In addition to our own family, we had with us much of the time two carpenters, who were putting us up a permanent house — Uncle William Waite, who was arranging to live on his land a mile west, and Edward P. Griffin, a son-in-law of Uncle Si's, who was breaking prairie for us. So the little shack was always full to overflowing.

At the time of our arrival in the Logan Valley there were no wild animals more formidable than a Canada lynx or a prairie wolf, so there was no danger from that source. But one form of animal life was really a menace. Rattlesnakes were exceedingly numerous and much more neighborly and familiar than we relished. The first one that I saw was on the Logan bottom about half way between the foot of the hills and the creek. This was but a day or two after we had moved into the new shack. We had not had time to dig a well, and father, Walter and I were going to the creek with team, taking a barrel along to get water for house use. The new grass was just starting and on the closely burned-over ground there was no hiding place for the snakes, of which we saw large numbers. At first we saw only harmless varieties, garter snakes, blue racers and bull snakes.

It was a warm, sunshiny Spring day, and I suppose the reptiles were all out of their holes to enjoy the Spring sunshine after their long Winter hibernation. We paid no attention to those harmless fellows, but left them to enjoy life in their own way, feeling that they would never do us any harm, much as we disliked their squirming looks. But when we saw

a goodsized rattler lying at ease near the mouth of his hole, we woke up suddenly. We had driven close up to him before we saw him and stood in the wagon looking down on him. Disturbed by the passing of the horses and the rattle of the wagon, the disgusting reptile made a leisurely start for his burrow. We had no stick whip or other suitable thing with which to attack him. I have often killed rattlesnakes since that time with a dry gum stick, but so closely had the fire of the Fall before done its work at that particular place that not even a gum weed was left unburned. Walter and I saw no way to kill the creature, and so far as we were concerned it would have lived, possibly to have afterward sunk its fangs into the flesh of some poor victim. But father, with his usual quick decision and utter fearlessness, did not hesitate to act. Though shod only with low plow shoes that furnished but slight protection from the snake's fangs, he leaped from the wagon, alighting on the creature. We boys were frightened; of course, if father pinned down the creature's head, all was well; but if he only struck the back part of the body the head could easily writhe round and strike father in the unprotected ankle. Fortunately father confined the head and almost instantly trampled the life out of the snake. It was a good lesson to us children, teaching courage and determination, and we always managed in the following years to kill all rattlesnakes that we discovered. I do not now recall ever letting one escape. And as most people followed that plan as far as possible, those venomous creatures, once so numerous, are nearly extinct. However, it has taken more than a generation to exterminate them, and many people have been bitten, a few have died from the bites, and thousands have had narrow escapes. Ed P. Griffin, the friend of whom I before spoke, and who with two yoke of oxen broke up the first forty-acre field on the place, told me that he found and killed twelve rattlesnakes while on that job, and it is not probable that he found one in ten of the number that was living on that forty acres. Undoubtedly, when we went onto old Sec. 13 there were several hundred rattlesnakes on the tract. When we moved into the shack that I described, we put a shoe or drygoods box by the door in front to use as a wash bench, and there we all stood to wash up when coming in from work. One day three-year-old baby Burt, trotting about the front door in his play, saw a rattler thrust his wicked head out from under the box. He knew it was a snake and his baby prattle called to mother, "Mamma, 'nake unner box." Mother removed the box and found the snake comfortably domiciled

within six inches of where the naked toes of us children lined up each time we washed our faces. Our deadly neighbor had so far shown no signs of hostility, and doubtless he was there searching for bug's and mice; but mother was so inhospitable as to instantly seize a hoe and decapitate him. In no other place were the snakes so much to be dreaded as in the harvest field. That was many years before the time of self-binders and the machines then used were self-rakes or "droppers," and they deposited the cut grain in loose bunches or "gavels" on the ground. Usually we had from three to five men following after and binding up the gavels deposited by the machine, each man binding a certain portion, which was called binding a station. It was considered rather humiliating to have the reaper catch you before your station was completed, so we always worked furiously. To rush to a gavel, seize a handful of grain, make a hand, throw it around the bundle in arms, and to drop the whole in a panic when the ugly head of a rattler was thrust out, has been the unpleasant experience of many a sweating harvest hand. But I never knew anyone to be bitten in that way; for a snake must coil before he can strike and, squeezed up in a bundle of grain, he cannot coil.

As my mind goes back to those old times, it seems to me that nothing would tempt me now to take the chances that we then took daily, without giving a thought to the danger. We boys always went barefoot in the Summer time, thus adding immensely to the danger of being snakebitten. Sumner Everett, Uncle Si's third son, was bitten on the big toe; but he had run barefoot for so long that the skin on his toe wasn't almost as tough as leather, and as the snake was a little too far away for effective business he barely punctured the skin and very little of the venom got into the blood. He was only a little boy, but he was courageous. I saw him a few hours after the bite. He sat humped up in a chair nursing his toe. His poor little chapped, scratched, bruised and blackened feet looked very much like toad's backs, and he said as he looked at them, "By gosh, I bet it killed that snake."

Henry Mowrer's eldest son Willard was bitten when a child so small that he thought the snake a stick and attempted to pick it up. He was badly bitten on the hand, and though his life was saved, I think the hand was to some extent permanently crippled. Snake bites from the massasauger or prairie rattlesnake are seldom fatal. George Mann, a brother-in-law of Walter's, had the strange experience of being bitten twice at intervals of some years.

I do not know the circumstances of the first bite, but I heard of it, and it occurred when he was a boy some fifteen years of age. After he became a man he was helping to make hay and was pitching onto the stack from the sweep. For some reason he stopped work for a few minutes and threw himself down on a sweep load of hay that had just been drawn in, to take a few minutes' rest. He happened to throw his hands up over his head as he lay in the hay and a rattler that had been brought in with the sweep load struck his hand. He recovered after a good deal of suffering. I have known, however, of two or three fatal bites. After we had been in Nebraska for a few years, the reaper was superseded by a celebrated Marsh harvester, which was a very efficient machine, and continued until the twine binder, now in use, put all hand binding into the discard. On the Marsh harvester and the imitations thereof, the grain was still bound with straw and by hand, but the grain was brought by elevators to receiving table, as is now the case with the twine binders. But the men stood on platforms and took the grain, up in armfuls, turning to the binding tables and completing the binding there. This practically eliminated the danger to binders, for though it was no uncommon thing for the elevators to bring a wriggling and very angry rattler to the binding table (very probably he had been mangled by the sickle), yet he was always so tangled in the grain and so tumbled about by the elevators that he had very little chance to coil and strike. But the other dangers in the harvest field remained, and I had my most narrow escapes there. One day when Walter and I were going over a grain field binding up some gavels that had been thrown from the harvester without binding, (barefoot as usual), I had bound up a bundle, dropped it, and was about to step over it, when Walt, who had the eye of a hawk (while I was as blind as a mole), yelled at me, "Don't step there—there's a rattlesnake!" I had my bare foot in the air, but he was in time. I jumped back; but another second and I would have got the stroke. That same harvest, a little later, when we got to stacking, I was pitching bundles onto the load in the field; my cousin and friend, Elwin Harvey, was laying the load. I threw up the last bundle of a shock and stood looking up and speaking to Elwin of something. At last, having finished what I had to say, I cast my near-sighted eyes down at the ground and there comfortably reposing within a foot of my bare toes lay a good-sized rattler. Why he did not bite me, I cannot see, for I had just lifted his house from over his head and, that would naturally make any one peevisish. I was less

forbearing than he, for he instantly died by my pitchfork. These two narrow escapes within a few days so worked on my nerves that in spite of the heat I put on boots for the remainder of that harvest. Another harvest, as I was binding up some scattered gavels that had lain some time, I bound up a bundle and cast it to one side and found that I had performed the job of binding immediately over the head of a rattlesnake, and was surprised that he had not struck me. However, having killed him, I found that he had just swallowed a gopher, whose diameter was considerably greater than his own, and he was in a state of semi-lethargy. I do not remember that any other member of our family had narrow escapes except mother. It always seemed that they were always looking after mother and me.

I will close this chapter of snakes by relating two or three blood-curdling escapes.

At one time we were building an addition onto the house on the old home place and the walls of the house were, of course, partially torn out, leaving" the house open or nearly so on that side. We were living in the house while this work went on. One hot Summer day mother baked some custard pies and carried them into the pantry and set them on the flour chest to cool. A short time later she walked into the pantry and there, coiled up about the pie plate and evidently enjoying the heat therefrom, was a large rattlesnake.

But a much more terrible experience befell her at another time. The cellar under our house was not as large as the house, a considerable portion of the earth under the house never having been removed, and projected out into the cellar. The cellar stairs ran along beside this wall of earth. Mother was going down the cellar stairs, when she heard the buzz of a snake on a level with her head, as she was then near the foot of the stairs. The snake struck at her and missed; but his leap carried him off the shelf of earth and over her shoulder, so that he fell on the cellar floor and between her and the cellar door. Mother was unhurt, but so shaken that she could hardly stand, and as she had nothing in the cellar with which to kill the reptile, she had to wait until it crawled away before she could get out of the cellar. I think that was the only time that she ever let a rattler get away. Mrs. J. G. Coil also had a most startling experience with one of these pests. She was doing some cooking in her pantry one day and, needing to use some soda, reached up for the can, which was kept on a shelf almost as high up as she could reach. As she took the can away, there ensconced on that high pantry shelf lay a rattlesnake. I do not know or at least have

forgotten whether Mrs. Coil killed the snake or whether it escaped. But the question that always puzzled me was, how did the snake get there? The house was a well finished dwelling and on a good foundation. We suppose that it must have found somewhere a mouse hole and followed it up in pursuit of mice. Well, as he is practically exterminated, we will say good-bye rattlesnake.

I have stated that there were no formidable wild animals in the Logan Valley in those days, but there was one exception, or rather, the exception came into the valley after we had lived there some years, in the shape of a huge mountain lion that in some way strayed out of his usual habitation and spent a whole Summer ranging along the creek, seemingly spending the most of his time between Lyons and the reservation line. His first depredation, so far as we knew, was the killing of a sucking colt at Tom Senter's place. At that time all the bottom land along that part of the creek was either in hay land or pasture and the rank grass and the shrubbery along the creek formed an excellent hiding place for the beast, so no one had seen him; and when Tom Senter, a good deal excited, announced to his neighbors that some powerful beast had killed a colt some weeks old and had eaten a large portion of it, every one laughed. "Well," said Tom, indignantly, "the colt is dead and eaten; how do you account for it?" "Oh, some one said, "some of the other horses kicked and killed it and the dogs have eaten it." Tom snorted in disgust. "I tell you," said he, "the old mare is a fighter; and I found a bunch of hair that she had bitten off some animal, and it was no dog hair." But no one believed that Tom's theory was correct.

A few days later, early one morning, David Fletcher rode up to the house to say that during the previous night some powerful animal had entered Uncle Si's pasture, had left marks of his claws on two of the sucking colts that were running there with their mothers, and the third one he had succeeded in pulling down and killing. Dave said it was planned to turn out the neighborhood and surround the grove, which was partly in the pasture, and beat it up thoroughly in the hope of finding and killing the beast. Whatever the beast was, it had eaten, as was estimated, some 40 pounds of meat and blood and all thought that he would not go far with such a loaded stomach.

Well, we all turned out and in a short time we were searching through the grove, poking the muzzles of our guns into the thickets, expecting each minute to see the animal

break from cover. John Lyon came along where I was poking about with my old muzzle-loader at a ready, and said : "That fellow will jump out of one of these thickets and some one will put a charge of shot into him and get clawed up for his pains." Up to that time I had been thinking all the time of what I would do to the beast, and had not given a thought to what he might do to me. Even then I did not have much respect for him, but kept right on with the hunt. But later on, after I had seen the great tracks left by his claws in the soft mud along the creek, I began to think that it might be pretty dangerous to wound him with a charge of buckshot if I had no means of getting away after shooting. Walter came to the same conclusion, and while we frequently hunted him, after that we hunted on horseback. Our plan was to shoot from the horse's back and then gallop away, under the belief that he who shoots and runs away may live to shoot another day. And indeed, as our guns were only light guns loaded with a mixture of buckshot and birdshot, the chance of killing such an animal with a single shot was exceedingly small. The longer he stayed in the community and the more we saw of his work, the more cautious we became, our respect for the beast's prowess growing when we saw that he did not hesitate to attack two-year-old colts. So far as I knew he never succeeded in killing anything larger than a sucking colt. But every horse in our pasture under three years old had the marks of the lion's claws on its haunches. Its mode of attack appears to have been to creep up to the intended victim, leap upon its back and, fixing its hind claws in the hams of the colt, reach forward, fixing its front claws in the colt's withers, stretch its head and neck forward, aiming to fix its fangs in the jugular vein of its prey. While this method of attack speedily brings a deer or a young colt to the ground, so far as we could judge from the appearance of our band of horses on the mornings after he had made an attack, the powerful young yearlings and two-year-olds always managed, though scratched and bleeding, to shake him off and escape. Well, our first day's hunt came to naught, but in a few days someone saw him on the Logan bottom about a mile north of the village, and reported it in town. Every one felt the necessity of killing the animal or at least driving him out of the country, for no one knew how soon he might change his diet from colts to children. So again everybody dropped everything and went lion hunting. I say every one—I mean all who could well get away. We formed in a line across the bottom and marched away up the creek, hoping to

start him out of some of the patches of dead grass. Mr. D. Mines, who was at that time running a store in the village, could not leave his store, but after a while, finding no one about, took a small telescope and went up into the loft of the mill, where he could command a good view of the hunt for two or three miles of the bottom. After the line of hunt had passed a diagonal road that then ran across the prairie and bottom directly from Henry Mowrer's place to town, Mr. Mines, looking through his glass, saw a child walking along that road crossing a little rise of ground, and within a minute or two after the child crossed the elevation which placed him clearly in view, the lion crossed the same roll of ground. Clearly he had slipped through the line of hunters and apparently was stalking the child. One can imagine the feelings of Mines. There, brought apparently within a stone's throw by the glass, yet really more than two miles away, was the helpless, unsuspecting toddler; and there a few rods behind it crept the huge cat. There was nothing the watcher could do but to watch the apparently inevitable tragedy. But even as he gazed a wagon came driving rapidly down the road from beyond the rise. The lion heard it, listened a moment, leaped from the road into the grass and disappeared. The child, unconscious of the terrible fate it had escaped, trudged on its way. Shortly after this, Waldo H. Lyon, who for some cause had been unable to go with the others when the hunt started, took his gun and started out, following the creek along the water's edge, and before he had gone a mile came upon the fresh track of the lion in the soft mud near the water, leading south. Evidently it thought there were too many men up creek, and after abandoning the stalking of the child, made off down the valley, going south, while the hunters went north. Of course, that hunt was a failure. In short, although hunted again and again, no armed man ever saw it. Often and often it was seen by unprepared people. At that time Walter was running a store in town and always came home to the farm every night, and he always rode a little saddle horse, of which he was very fond. Often he worked very late and would ride home at ten or eleven o'clock. One night he got along to where the bridge crosses the ditch about a quarter of a mile from Mr. Fritt's house, when the horse gave a start and stopped. There, a few yards away on the other side of the fence, and with his forepaws on the top board and his huge neck and head reared high in the air, stood the lion, gazing coolly at Walter and the horse. And Walter has told me that while he and the horse gazed in

astonishment, the huge beast opened its jaws in a prodigious yawn, as if its contempt of a man was so great as to make it tired. That settled it for the horse; he bolted and Walt hung onto the saddle.

Along in the early Fall, Z. D. Yeaton was looking for cattle on the edge of the reservation and, riding along the shore of the little lake, when glancing across, he saw the lion asleep on the opposite shore. He was unarmed and rode over to where a party of us were working on the road. We immediately left work and, getting guns, started hunting. A fox hound was procured and placed on the lion's trail; but the instant he smelled the track he decided that he was not going to risk his valuable life in hunting one. Each time that he got a whiff of that terrifying smell he would yell with fear and wrath, but not a step would he follow the trail. So far as I knew, that was the last time the lion was seen, and we heard of no more depredations. I think he must have strayed out of the country just as he had strayed in.

I have already referred to the grasshoppers, but I think, as they were for years one of the more detailed account of them. The flying grasshopper, or Rocky Mountain locust, is a creature of mystery. It came out of the great unknown in countless millions, borne like thistledown on the wings of the wind; and when it had tormented the settlers for its allotted time, it again mounted on the wings of the wind and passed into the unknown just as mysteriously as it came. The insect when fully matured is about an inch and a quarter in length, with wings that are about a quarter of an inch longer than the body. The hind or hopping legs are powerful and are of a bright red color. The prevailing color of the insect is brown. They first appeared in western Iowa and eastern Kansas and Nebraska about 1866, and the last that I ever saw or heard of, were hatched out along the Sioux River in South Dakota in the Spring of 1879, and flew away in June, after completing their work of crop destruction.

The first that I ever saw sailed down upon our little crop the first Summer that we lived in Nebraska. We had only a little patch of two or three acres of corn and about an equal amount of oats. It was just when the oats were almost ready to cut and the corn was just silking out. It is a peculiarity of these insects that they seem to instinctively direct their attack in such a manner as to do a maximum of damage with a minimum amount of effort.

If they alight in an oat field when the oats are headed out, they do not eat the leaves or even the grains, but they attack the little threads or fibres that attach the grains to the straw and eat them off, dropping the grains to the ground. As a few cuts of the powerful mandibles of the insect severs the slender filament, the destruction of a field of oats is soon accomplished, with the straw left standing and the oats scattered on the ground. In case of the corn, if it is earing, they attack the fresh silk only and, eating that off, prevent the fertilization of the grain, and leaving a field of worthless stalks.

At the time that I speak of their alighting for the first time on our land, our little patch of grain was just in condition for quick destruction. The hoppers came down like snow, but seemed to get more numerous in one corner of the field than elsewhere. So numerous were they in the road that passed the field that it seemed to me they were piled two inches deep. We gave up the crop as lost, but suddenly, obeying some whimsical impulse, they arose in the air and sailed away. The corner of the field where they had been most numerous was badly damaged, but so short had been their stop that the greater part of the grain had suffered but little. For many years after that there were great flights of grasshoppers every Summer. Sometimes for many days at a time all one had to do was shade his eyes and look up toward the sun to see myriads of what looked like flying snowflakes speeding along with the wind, and know that there were enough of the insects overhead to devour every green thing, should they be seized with a whim to alight. Thousands of settlers lost crops in that way, but we were fortunate. Several years they dropped in on our settlement in the Fall and left a legacy in the shape of a few billions of eggs. Their favorite place for doing this was a closely fed pasture or ground that from any cause was nearly bare of herbage. Each female locust is furnished with a very efficient boring apparatus, with which in a very short time she makes a beautiful smoothly cut hole in the ground (apparently the harder the ground, the better she likes it), about an eighth of an inch in diameter and an inch deep, which she fills with her eggs. These eggs lie through the Winter and hatch along in April, when the sun begins to warm up the ground. As soon as the young hoppers come out of the ground they begin to eat any green thing that may be at hand. Let us suppose that they have hatched out in a pasture adjoining a wheat field; they all go into the wheat field. But what seems queer, they do not scatter over the field,

but instead they go like a line of battle in close order and they sweep every green thing as they go on. They will occupy but a few feet of ground from front to rear, but will perhaps extend their line the whole length of the field. In front of their phalanx all is fresh and verdant; behind it the earth is black as though swept by fire. Taking advantage of their way of sweeping through the field in a mass, Uncle Si saved a field of wheat one Spring by hauling a lot of dry straw to the field where they were and strewing it in a windrow in front of where the line of attack was. As night came on the hoppers, feeling the evening chill, crept into the dry straw for warmth. Then after dark Uncle Si and the boys went out with torches and set fire to the straw in many places and the great majority of the hoppers were destroyed. But, of course, nothing of that kind can be done when the matured hoppers light down upon the crops.

Well, I ought to apologize for going so much into detail about the grasshoppers; but they nearly ruined many early settlers and for a long period were a source of anxiety to all of us. And as we hope that they will never come again, it is well for the coming generations to know something of them.

I have said much about the hard and disagreeable things of the pioneer days, but I don't want my children and grandchildren to think it was all unpleasant. I think there were more real pleasures, as well as more hardships, in those days. To the sportsman, Burt County was at that time a paradise. Prairie chickens bred there in countless thousands. And in Spring and Fall there were myriads of geese, brants and ducks of all kinds. Fishing was fairly good, and in the Spring high water the buffalo fish used to come out of the creek onto the overflowed bottoms and we used to spear them with pitchforks close up to the barnyard on the old farm.

Then there was a sense of freedom on those wild prairies, with the scanty population, that never can obtain in an old settled community. The feeling of neighborliness is so strong under those conditions—a family may live ten miles away, but they are your neighbors, and you know them far better than you do the family on the next lot in the city.

I could write on indefinitely of the happenings of those old days, but I know that it is much less interesting for those who read than it is for me who writes, so I will stop.