



Pioneer Press



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Nov./Dec. 2015 / Jan. 2016

INCREASED ACTIVITY AT THE MUSEUM

By DarlAnn S. Rial, Corresponding Secretary

August and September brought a flurry of activity as volunteers continued upkeep of the museums and grounds. Melvin Baker and Bob Ackerman scraped and vinyl patched the front steps of the Temple of Honor Military Museum. Melvin painted the door, steps and scraped/painted the columns white. Doug Ackerman of Ackerman Lock & Key donated a lock and keys for the insignia/patch showcase in the T.O.H. Ray Thieme will prepare the insignia for display. A tree trimmer was hired to cut excessive limbs off of the Hackberry trees on the lawn of T.O.H. New doors were installed on north sides of Annex I & II. Strings of LED lights were installed in the three Honeyman showcases, in the Burger room and on the outside Annex I sign. Funds were approved to install LED lighting in the jail exercise area and install electricity to the second floor school room. Four clubs have reserved the meeting room at the museums and over 27 tours have viewed the museums this summer. A new laser printer and scanner were donated to the museum and our grant application to the Seneca Travel & Tourism Committee for the printing of two tour brochures has been approved. Four volunteers supported Director Diane Rottinghaus as she coordinated a Kansas Humanities grant to clean, scan and preserve 1,087 glass plate negatives from the Strathman Photography Collection. Images were printed on photo paper and mounted in 16 loose-leaf notebooks for viewing at the Oct. 4th Open House. An Evening at the Museum has been scheduled for Wed., Oct. 14, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. where David Tangeman will present the Doughboy story. These preservation activities were possible due to the five successful fundraising events held this past summer: the Sixth Annual Golf Classic, the Sixth Annual Tractor Cruise, the Car Show coffee bar and snow cone booth and the Highway 36 Treasure Hunt Garage Sale.

The board of directors are appreciative of the years of service to the Nemaha CO. Historical Society made by Eugene Visser, who has submitted his resignation as a board member effective 08-11-15. Filling his position #7 will be Marlene Swart Geyser, a Special Education teacher specializing in English and Math at Sabetha High School. She attended Wetmore High School and graduated from with a B.S. from Emporia State Univ. & a Masters in Education from Baker University.



"All of the board members agreed that the turnout at the Oct. 4 Open House exceeded their expectations." Follow this story as well as others under Museum News on Page 4.

MEMORIALS

WILMA THOMPSON

b. June 23, 1943 - d. Aug. 27, 2015
Woodlawn, KS.



WILFRED F. BERGMAN

b. July 16, 1922 - d. Sept. 7, 2015
St. Benedict, KS

RITA ALTENHOFEN HOLTHAUS

b. Dec. 28, 1924 - d. Oct. 6, 2015
Seneca, KS.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

August 22, 2015

Dear Mr. Newlin,

Members of Bancroft Preservation Association certainly appreciate the articles and announcements you have provided to publicize the Museums re-opening and the annual picnic. And the information included in the N.C.H.S. Newsletter is a nice reminder that we will "open for business" at other times.

My fondest memories from the development of the Museum and other projects are how many kind, talented and supportive people we have worked with...yourself included. Again, our thanks.

Mary Leighty, B.P.A. Secretary – Treasurer

Dear Readers,

I have for the past 2 years been advertising all of the seasonal events of the Bancroft Depot Museum on all of the radio stations in N.E. KS. & S.E. NE and in print at 8 N.E. KS. Newspapers, 2 western Missouri newspapers and 1 in S.E. NE.

Greg Newlin, Editor NCHS • P.O. Box 41 • Seneca, KS. 66538



I am writing in regards to your "Nemaha County Art" in the Sep-Oct Pioneer Press. I have a cameo with "The Princess of Prussia". She is Princess Louise Mecklenburg-Strelitz. She married Frederick William III in 1993. So she was Queen Louise William III. Everyone loved her as she was so beautiful. My Great Grandmother came to America in 1868 when she was 22 and brought the cameo with her as a gift from her Grandmother. Just thought I would add her name to your art work.

Julie Ford, from the JHH Ford family of Seneca, KS. Tigard, Oregon

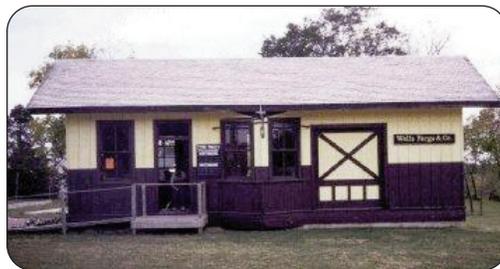
BANCROFT DEPOT MUSEUM

By Freda Dobbins

The Bancroft Depot Museum had a successful summer in 2015 with more visitors than the last couple of years. The museum will not have regular hours for being open this winter.

Please put on your calendars that the museum will reopen Memorial Day weekend in 2016 and during June, July, August and September the museum will be open from 2-4 on Sunday afternoons. The annual Bancroft Depot Museum picnic will be held on Sunday, June 26, 2016. If you have visitors who really want to see the museum this winter, call 786-866-5288 or 913-608-5197 to see if a time to visit the museum can be arranged.

At least plan a trip this fall to the museum to see the foliage and all the outside exhibits, including a new display that features items from the Bancroft School. To get to the museum, take KS Highway 9 west from Goff to KS. Highway 62. Turn left, or south on 62 and go 3 miles to 24th Road, turn left, or east and proceed 3 miles on 24th Road. The museum is just east of the intersection of 24th and S Roads.



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WYANDOTTE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION PART XI

The Wyandotte Constitutional Convention was the first constitutional convention in Kansas in which all factions participated, and it was organized on party lines. An informal Republican caucus was held to decide as to who should be secretary. There were a number of applicants, but when somebody suggested John A. Martin, of Atchison, there was a general acquiescence. Martin, who at the time was 21 years-old and considered by many to be little more than a boy, but this young man had already bought out the Pro-Slavery paper at Atchison and had turned it into a Free-State journal, so he was favorably known. John Alexander Martin was born Mar. 10, 1839 at Brownsville, PA. to James and Jane Montgomery Crawford Martin. His maternal grandfather, Thomas Brown, was the founder of Brownsville, PA. He was discreet and sensible and very attentive to his work....as, indeed, he was to everything he undertook.

Brown CO. Genealogy Moment NO. 460

HOME ASSOCIATION

Written by Abijah Wells in the 1881 Seneca Tribune

The West has been the object of the wildest expectations and the scene of the grandest successes and bitterest disappointments that mankind have achieved or suffered, and of all the bright anticipations and Utopian dreams that have impelled humanity onward in their ever moving march toward the setting sun, there have been few brighter, fairer or more ephemeral than that which inspired the formation of the Home Association, the legitimate progenitor of our now thriving village of Centralia. This organization was originated in Knox County, Illinois, in the summer of 1858. A constitution and code laws were adopted and a committee appointed and sent to Kansas to locate the site of the new Garden of Eden to which should be attracted the ability, culture and refinement necessary to make it The Land of All On Earth Supremely Blest. The committee, after a careful examination, selected six miles square, in the exact center of which was located the town of Centralia. The next winter a charter was granted them by the Territorial Legislature, and within a year hundreds of people had flocked to the new settlement, and a town had been built as if by magic, while on every hand new farms greeted the beholder. A building was erected, designed for the south wing of the Centralia College, to serve as the germ of the future grand educational institution that was to be developed there. The outside world was invited by a well prepared circular, gotten up, we believe, by C.H. Chitty, then secretary of the association, and now practicing law in Metamora, Illinois, to come and see a portion of bleeding Kansas transformed into a blooming garden.

For a time it seemed as if the highway of success was opening for the undertaking, but ere long private jealousies and sectarian prejudices were awakened that caused contentions to grow among the members of the society, which culminated on March 10, 1862, in which was for years afterward known as The Centralia Riot, and for which the writer hereof, with some fifteen others, was arrested by John H. Rogers, then sheriff of Nemaha County, taken before H. H. Lanham, then as now a justice of the peace in Seneca, and after a week spent on preliminary examination, were bound over to appear at the next term of the district court, where the trial took place, and all were acquitted. James P. Taylor prepared papers for the arrest and assisted in the prosecution, that being his first appearance in a Kansas court. In his closing argument he told the court to "Have mercy upon the boys, but to sock it to the old d__l." The defense was conducted by F. P. Baker, now of the Topeka "Commonwealth," and John C. Scott, who, years after, committed suicide in Marshall County, while William Histed acted as a sort of lay attorney, he at that time not having been admitted to the bar.

Thus ended the brilliant hopes and bright promises of the Home Association, and with it the bubble of one more ideal "Utopia" burst. The organization went down; many of the citizens, now thoroughly disgusted, sought new homes, or went back to "her folks." A good share of the houses were moved away or torn down. Among those moved to Seneca, Kansas we may mention that of F. P. Baker's dwelling, which furnished the germ of the house now occupied by John H. Peckham, while the office is now the front part of Joseph Behne's dwelling.

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NEMAHA COUNTY ART & ARCHITECTURE

The Sabetha United States Post Office built in 1936 located at 122 South Ninth Street. The one-story, buff brick and limestone building has a western facade orientation. The building measures approximately 65' from north to south and 74' from east to west. A transomed, double door pierces the center of the building's facade. Steps lead up to the doorway. Two pairs of large, multi-paned windows flank the doorway. Similar windows fenestrate the lesser elevations. This post office is an example of the smaller class C or D standardized Moderne design type.



Photo taken by Contractor Ernest Rokahr & Sons on the day of the new construction's completion Dec. 1 1936

A varnished, wooden vestibule projects into the lobby, cutting off some of the view of the mural. The lobby interior is a traditional design feature found in most of the post offices. The mural entitled "The Hare and the Tortoise" is above the postmaster's doors and bulletin boards measures 14' by 4' and is within a wood frame. This is a traditional location for Section artwork in the smaller class C and D post offices. It is an oil on canvas that depicts a Pony Express rider galloping past an Overland Stagecoach on the pony express route that crossed northeastern Kansas between 1860 and 1861. The coach and the rider have just



rounded a rock outcropping as they continue along the rutted trail. The rider waves to the stagecoach as he speeds past them. The guard waves back and smiles.

The mid-spring, northeastern Kansas countryside is marked by low shrubs and some trees. Bluish hills mark the horizon. Overall "The Hare and the Tortoise" is representative of the historically based, regional, illustrative realism. Born in 1873 in Concordia, KS., artist Albert T. Reid's father operated a stagecoach line from Concordia to Marysville. Reid had become one of the country's most prominent political cartoonist's, serving as the cartoonist for the Republican National Committee frequently during the first four decades of the 20th century. His career as a political cartoonist began with a submission to the Topeka Mail & Breeze. His syndicated cartoons ran in such publications as the Kansas City Star, New York Herald, McClure's and the Saturday Evening Post. As a business leader, he established the Reid-Stone School of Art with George Stone in Topeka, this eventually evolved into the Washburn University Art Dept.

Reid who received \$570 for this work spent several months working on this mural from his Long Beach, N.Y. Studio. Other section murals of his appear in post offices in Olathe, KS. and Sulphur, OK. Albert Reid passed away Nov. 26, 1958 in New York City. Both the post office and mural are listed on the National Register of Historical Places. Information and contractor's photo supplied by the U.S. Government.

MUSEUM NEWS

If you have not been to the museum lately, it can be seen better since the recent installation of lighted display cases in both the Burger annex as well as the Exercise Room of the jail. Like the lighted display cases at the Temple of Honor, these are quite tasteful and create a dramatic effect that highlights all of the exhibits. It was interesting to observe those among the large crowd gathered at the October 4th Open House touring the museum, gazing into these well lighted display cases. Many thanks goes to Board member Robert Ackerman who originally made the suggestion for this installation.

continued on page 6

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HOME ASSOCIATION

continued from Page 3

The old Leatherby house, now on the bottoms east of the town of Seneca, was originally built in Centralia by William Holden. The Centralia Hotel, after many transformation, is now the wooden part of the Cowdry building, the lower story being occupied by Johnston Brother's land office and Parsons & Smith's boot and shoe store. And of the Centralia College, which was expected to become the Harvard of the West, nothing now remains but the building, transformed into a farm house, and occupied by our venerable friend, Robertson.

Of the early settlers of Centralia, but few now remain. Dr. Hidden, Stephen Barnard, A. W. Slater, O. P. Gallaher, Rueben Mosher, Alexander McCuthcheon, John Hodgins, T. A. Campfield, the Sams and Yillmer families, Judson Stickney and probably some others whose names now escape our memory, live in or near Centralia. E. D. Hymmer died a few weeks ago; his family still live near town. William Histed is probate judge in Nemaha CO. Joshua Mitchell, county clerk; Dr. Shelton and Hugh Hamilton live in Beattie, Marshall CO. Seth B. Hough, the generous, whole-souled, good-natured Seth, is married and rearing a family in Berlin, MN. Scott B. Humphrey has a valuable farm near Seneca, upon which he lives. Dr. N. B. McKay is practicing his profession in America City. J. W. Tullor, after serving Nemaha CO. faithfully as county clerk some eight years, was called home from earth some eight years ago. F. P. Baker, who was then practicing law in Centralia, and that winter represented his district in the Legislature, who, before leaving for Topeka, called his fellow citizens in Centralia together and in a well written address explained to them what great things he intended to accomplish for Home Association and the Centralia College, has since made for himself a name, and fortune, we hope, as editor and proprietor of the Topeka Commonwealth. If he reads this article he will probably smile as we do (in a strictly temperance manner) at the bright picture we then saw of the glorious results to be accomplished in the then future, and remember with a chuckle and a spasmodic contraction of the muscle of one side of his face, the secret society organized in his office, with its magic pass word and glorious object, and later, the obituary poetry, of which the grandeur of its conception was equalled only by the elegance of its style.

Born June 12, 1840 to parents William R. & Betsy K. Skinner Wells and reared in Susquehanna CO., Pennsylvania, Abijah Wells came to the Territory of Kansas with his parents in 1856 where they settled along Illinois Creek in central Nemaha CO. In 1867, after having taught school for three years, Abijah was elected Clerk of the District Court serving out this term before being elected Register of Deeds, and re-elected then elected to serve a second term before he was elected to serve as County Superintendent of Instruction, serving in this capacity from 1874 to 1877. From an early age, Mr. Wells had studied law and in 1866 was admitted to the bar of his county. In 1881, he formed a law office partnership with J. F. Curran and during that year he became proprietor and editor of the Seneca Tribune.

Taken from the History of Nemaha CO. by Ralph Tennial; Pub. 1916

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NEMAHA COUNTY PICTORIAL HISTORY BOOK

By Editor Greg Newlin

Just as the last Pioneer Press had gone to the printer, I already knew that the chances of the Pictorial History of Nemaha County, Kansas book becoming a reality were very slim. Without admitting she had made a serious mistake, the managing editor provided to me by Arcadia Publishing was removed from the project by her supervisor. The supervisor indicated he was aware of our past communications and that we still had an opportunity to continue. Promising to take over, it soon became all too apparent that he actually knew very little and could be of little help. After two weeks had passed with no further response from the supervisor it was likely this book project was dead and I prepared a statement to the press. In it I indicated that after spending an entire summer scanning all of our photos three times a piece at the required intensity of 300 dpi in tiff that little progress had been made and it was the consensus of myself and my volunteer that we had lacked the necessary guidance and support from either of the editors to make this a success.

What we have learned from this experience is something that everyone should know, that in order to preserve the integrity of your old photos they must receive better care than being isolated on a shelf, drawer or in a box. Photos that are sent from other sources must be scrutinized as to their virtue as they must be original, and that includes copies of scanned photos. I wish to thank everyone who has sent and given me the opportunity to use their photos for this project. Those who have heard this story from me personally have been supportive and this negative experience has not discouraged me from attempting another project as this in the future. However, after I submit my credentials I will request that the publisher do the same for whoever they assign for a managing editor.

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MUSEUM NEWS

Continued from Page 4

Over 78 visitors answered the invitation for the open house to specifically view and to possibly identify family and friends in the images produced from the Strathman Photography glass plate negatives collection. An added attraction



was the vintage camera collection on display. In addition to viewing the Historic Jail and Sheriff's Residence, the visitors also toured the Temple of Honor Military Museum in the next block at 33 North Sixth St. Restoration Director for the Strathman Collection Diane Rottinghaus and the members of the Board of Trustees all agreed, "the turnout exceeded their expectations".

The images of this collection can be viewed on Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. From October through April, or by calling N.C.H.S. President Anita Heiman at 785-556-4094 for a private showing. High resolution photos from this collection can be purchased for \$10 each at the museum, while watermarked photos in reduced resolution will be posted on Facebook in smaller groups for viewing and identification. This preservation project is funded in part by the Kansas State Humanities Council, a nonprofit cultural organization that connects communities with history, traditions and ideas to strengthen civic life.

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NEMAHA CO., KS. HARRIS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 42 IN HARRISON TWP.

BY MORRIS WERNER

From an Aug. 17 2013 in a letter to Editor Greg Newlin

Harris School Dist. NO. 42 was organized in 1870 and held the first term of school in their new schoolhouse in 1871. The school was named for Benjamin Harris, the first settler in S30 T4 R13 in 1869. 19 year-old Laura Gossick, who lived in the Benjamin Harris household was perhaps the first teacher.

Dist. NO. 42 was the second district organized in Harrison Twp., preceded only by the Fairview Dist. NO. 39. The district consisted of 12 sections, of which 6 sections were owned by the Central Branch of the Union Pacific Railroad, and one section (S16) was school land. The schoolhouse was located in S30, and became the cultural center of the community. There were 40 children of school-age living in the district in 1871. Eight families lived in S30, seven in S20, six in S18 and two in S28. The Wm. W. Worley family of Cherokee CO., GA., moved to S13 T4 R12 in about 1865 and was the only family living on railroad land in 1870. Eight of the first settlers were Civil War veterans.

Pleasant Hill Cemetery was dedicated in Sec. 20 on land belonging to Joseph Stark. The first burials in 1873 were two infant daughters of Wm. & Mary Snodgrass who burned to death playing with matches in a straw shed. The cemetery was known locally as the Harris Cemetery after Benjamin Harris who died in 1887. It was abandoned in 1900 and several graves, including Benjamin Harris were moved to the Corning cemetery. Once a well kept repository, the tract became overgrown with ornamental shrubs and cedar trees which invaded grave sites and grew to immense size. A cottonwood bordered lane connected the cemetery to a public road which bisected Sec. 20. This road was closed after 1912, and the cemetery is no longer accessible to the public.

The school district was 1 ½ miles northeast of Corning, platted on the Central Branch Railroad in 1870. The 1877 Atlas of Nemaha CO. shows only six buildings on the Corning townsite. There was no depot, stockyard, school house or church. Edward Kepler was the first postmaster and railroad agent; Dr. Napoleon B. McKay was the first doctor and druggist. The Central Branch was constructed through Nemaha CO. in 1867 and was subsidized by alternate sections of land in the townships through which it passed.

In Oct. 1871, shortly after the opening of the school, the school house was threatened by a prairie fire which started along the railroad 2 miles east of Corning.

Fanned by strong south winds, the fire swept north through Harrison, Adams and Gilman townships before burning itself out at Deer Creek 8 miles north of Seneca. No lives were lost and only one house destroyed, but hundreds of tons of stacked prairie hay were burned and many farm structures and fences destroyed.

Nemaha CO. has very limited records of Dist. NO. 42. The 1870 Census is the main source of information on the first families and their school-age children. Descendants of the Harris, Hilbert, Rucker, Thompson, Steele, Kemplin, Snodgrass, Henning and Worley families continued to live in the area 50 years later, and many attended Harris School.

Dist. NO. 42 was located at the head of the South Fork of the Nemaha River and was virgin prairie in 1870. The Homestead Act of 1862 provided 160 acres of free land to settlers who would build a house, cultivate the land and live on the claim for 5 years. Most land in the district was acquired by pre-emption at a cost of \$2.50 per acre, with payment required in 3 years. Railroad land required payment up front, and was the last to be settled.

Many of the original claim houses remained in use in 1930, although some had been converted to other uses. The Rucker, Thompson and Garver houses were occupied. The Hilbert house was abandoned. The Randel house had been converted to a hog house. The Adams house was used as a barn and razed in 1930, and the Harris and Snodgrass houses had been razed. The Kempin claim house was moved to a new location adjacent to a new 6 room house.

Windbreaks and orchards were considered a necessity. Wind breaks consisted of cottonwood, mulberry and black walnut. Osage Orange, planted in double rows, served as fences to protect cultivated fields from cattle herds roaming the open range. Windbreaks died during the drought years of the 1930's, and were replaced by the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, which also subsidized terracing, crop rotation and farm ponds.

Originally the basis for this article was published in "Kanhistique" in 1988 and according to Morris, he revised it to include information from the 1870 U.S. Census to identify families who lived in the District when it was organized.

Born at Corning, KS. In Sept. 18, 1919, Morris Werner, the son of Arthur & Jessie Neill Werner, attended Harris School Dist. NO. 42 from 1925 to 1933, and Corning Rural High School from 1933 to 1937. Morris passed away Nov. 39, 2014.

OVER 78 VISITORS ATTENDED THE NEMAHA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S OCT. 4 OPEN HOUSE



FEB. 3, 1905

Bern Public Schools ending Jan. 27, 1905: Minnie PAULI, Anna MORRIS,; Inez MINGER; Beulah MANSHARD; Albert SHOBER; Hulda LEAR; Chas. TICKNOR; John GROSSENBACHER; Peryl ATWOOD; Pearl ATWOOD; Carroll KENDALL; Hazel MINGER; Johnathan REINHART; Willie HILT; Floyd MINGER; Wilbur SCHUTE; Lelian BEDEA; Fred GROSSENBACHER; Sophia GROSSENBACHER; Vera MAUSHARDT; Mildred RAMSEY, Edith SHOBER, Ruby SCOTT, Bennie SCHUTE, Joseph INFIELD; Lela NUSBAUM; Susie, Evan & Norman CORDILL; Ruth SCOTT; Margaret GROSSENBACHER; Elinor HILT; Mae ROTH; Rosa , Sammie & Walter GRIMM; Lyle INFIELD; Edna and Floyd HAXTON; Otto SPRINGEMANN.

Charles F. BRAY, the machinist, who was taken from Falls City to Lincoln Hospital for the insane, died Sunday morning. He was found badly frozen and raving crazy by the railroad track in the eastern part of the county January 14. An undertaker in Philadelphia sends word for the body to be embalmed and shipped to that point, so it is supposed his relatives live there.

-Humboldt Leader

A daughter born to M/M Ben SCHROCK, Sunday Jan. 29. August and Bertie BEYER left for their home in Loveland, Colo.

Mrs. PERKINS of Sabetha, is visiting her daughter, Mrs. HILT and other relatives.

Misses Leta KEELER and Susie SPRING went to Seneca to take teachers' examination.

Fred LIONBERGER and family who have lived around Bern for several years, moved to a farm near Steinauer, Nebraska. Charles MOST visiting in Bern moved recently to Oklahoma with his folks.

Albert FELDMAN, Middleburg died at his home Tuesday, January 24, after only a few days of illness. He was one of the stockman in this part of the country.

Mr. Andrew CLARK and Miss Nora DUN were married last week and left the first of week for Formosa, Kansas, where they will make their new home on a farm which Andrew recently purchased near that town.

Edward L. OLOUGH and Miss Eva Lucy MINNICH were married at Cleveland, Ohio, January 21, and will be at home after February 15, at the Manhattan at that place. The groom is a son of the founder of the Republican. He is now editor of Finance, a financial weekly published in Cleveland.

-Sabetha Herald

Henry KOEHLER went to Valley Falls and bought a farm. Mr. KOEHLER has lived here thirty-two years and it will be a loss to this community – Seneca Tribune

Nemaha Valley Items

Bruce EATON, of Furnas County, Nebr. , is spending a few days with his brother, Bert and family.

The MORTON families were called to Chicago on account of the illness of their daughter and sister.

To be continued in Vol. 33 – Issue 3



**Nemaha County Historical
Museum**

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