

## McHENRY COUNTY.

Historical and Personal--Sketches of the Mouse River Valley.



View of Residence Portion of Towner, McHenry County.

The first settlers in McHenry County were from Bismarck about 1880, the party consisting of Edmund Hackett, and son of the same name, Edward Tuman, Thomas McDonough and Mike McClear. While Hackett and McClear did not go there for their health there was reasons why it was healthier in some other climate and they long since disappeared.

George Hoffman, A. L. Hanscom, George Cartwright, James King, the Fish Brothers and James and Andrew Pendroy were among the next earliest settlers. George Hoffman and R. H. Copeland located at Villard, where the first postoffice was established, and was supplied from the Bismarck postoffice. Hoffman became postmaster and Copeland established a newspaper, taking an outfit up from Bismarck. Soon afterwards the postoffice at Pendroy was established and was supplied from Villard. Hanscom located in the extreme southeastern portion of the county, at Antelope Lake. Pendroy in the central portion near what is now Towner. Though there were postoffices at Villard and Pendroy there was no regular mail, the only advantage of the offices being a slosed sack should any one happen to go to Bismarck, and a place of distribution. therefore Hanscom found his nearest reliable place of getting his mail. Jamestown, one hundred miles distant. A few years later the North-

ern Pacific Railroad ran a branch line north from Jamestown and its terminous, the town of Carrington was platted and built. This lessened the distance to the nearest point for supplies and mail to sixty miles. Still later Minnewaukan, forty miles distant, became their nearest point, and remained until 1888, when they removed to Towner where they have since resided. Mr. Hanscom now owning a farm at that place, known as Riverside.

This place lies seven miles southwest of Towner in the valley of the Mouse or Souris River, which enters the state from Canada through the Northern central part of Ward County, flowing southeast into McHenry county, then turning north and passing through Bottineau county again enters Canada, where, uniting with the Canadian river Assiniboine, it flows into the Red River of the North.

The location of the farm is very picturesque, the buildings being built in the timber immediately upon the banks of the river, which bends in a semi-circular form around three sides of the place, leaving the south and southeast only unencompassed. It contains seven hundred acres of land, two hundred and fifty being under cultivation, the remainder being timber and meadow land, which furnishes a sufficient supply of both fuel and hay for the use of the farm.

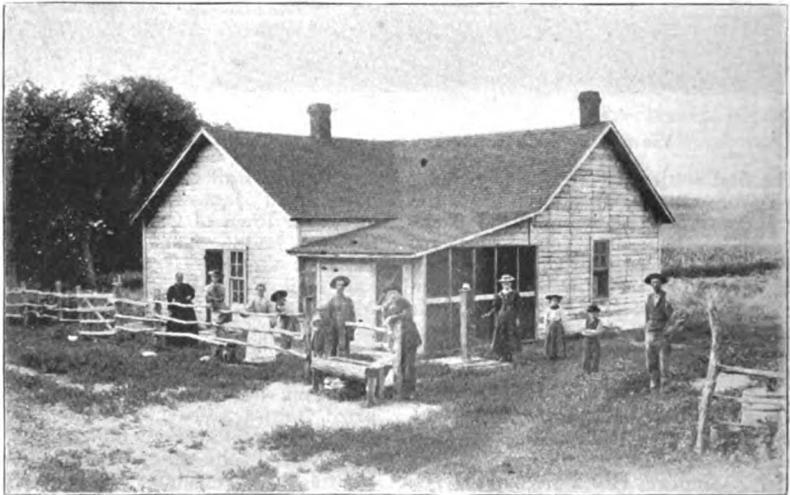
Mr. Hanscom at first engaged in

sheep growing, and while both climate and grasses were admirably adapted to the business, the country was too new for such a venture, making it too hazardous, and that the policy of the Cleveland administration drove him out, and for a time he was engaged in mercantile pursuits at Towner. He was twice elected to the state senate, and later appointed to the United States land office at Minot.

The Pendroys engaged in cattle growing, and have succeeded from the beginning, and are among the most substantial cattle growers of the state. Majorribanks and other Englishmen early located in the Mouse River Valley and became extensive growers of cattle,

find a point for miles at which we could approach nearer than a mile and a half, and these, even, were rare, and our party decided to seek a location elsewhere.

The spring floods of the early days were nearly all heavy, as the first settlers, and, previous to them, the Indians, testify. They covered the entire river bottom for miles, making it uninhabitable. The floods of later years have not been so severe, seldom being of any inconvenience even to those living immediately on the banks. At times the water rises and surrounds homes that have been built by the more venturesome close to the river brink, but not to any great depth, and this soon



Residence of W. T. Young, near Pendroy, N. D.

the valley being specially adapted to hay, which not unfrequently turns five tons to the acre, a most favorable feature for the stock grower.

One of the early settlers of McHenry County tells of his first view of the river thus: "I came upon the ridge of hills, at whose feet lay the Mouse River Valley, in 1881, with the intention of locating there, as the lowlands, or valley, along the river, through the greater part of what is now McHenry County, were well wooded, forming a favorable feature in the selection of stock ranches. Our party reached the hills in the early spring and found, to our dismay, a valley about three miles wide entirely covered with water. We were not able to

retreats, or finds an outlet in lower ground beyond, as nearly all of the land back from the river is lower than that immediately adjacent. Most of the places where the banks are particularly low were avoided as building spots, and here the overflow finds free vent. Rising gradually it passes through these places as though a ditch or waterway, and finding the lower land beyond, overflows this and "backs" for some miles over the bottoms, a feature of the river which has been found very beneficial to the meadow lands, as always after these overflows the hay crop is excellent. A flood of this nature produces little inconvenience to the settlers, as it is possible in the late years of highest water

to continue traffic by following the roads along the higher land.

Across the southeastern part of a former portion of McHenry County (now Pierce) pass the old government trails from Fort Stevenson to Fort Totten. There are two of these trails or roads, running side by side, and so deeply worn that in all the years of their disuse, now nearly thirty, the grass has never grown in them, and they still retain the appearance of roads used not long since.

Many thrilling stories are told by men who were here in the old Indian days, of surprises and captures that occurred along these well worn lines of travel.

smoldering ashes, destroyed during that night by Indians.

This southeastern corner of old McHenry County is now a part of Pierce County, having been made, by an act of the legislature in 1887, a part of Church County. The bill making this change was introduced in the house by Hon. John A. Ely, late receiver of the Minot land office, and now in Duluth, Minn. Later the second change was made in '92, when the land once a part of early McHenry County became, and still remains, a part of Pierce County.

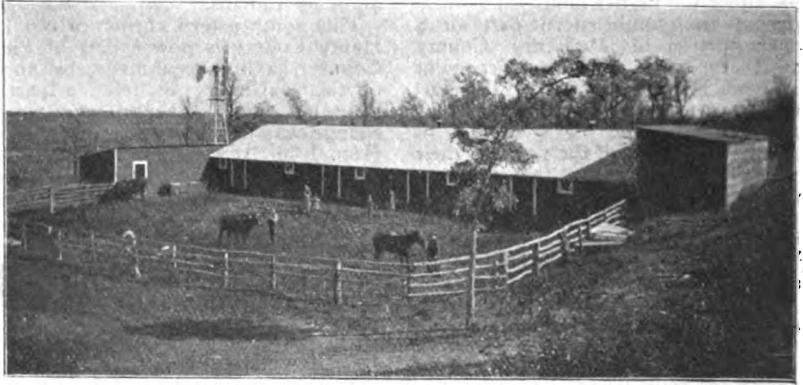
A story is told in connection with an Eastern capitalist and the postoffice of Villard. It nicely illustrates the meth-



Residence of David Clark, McHenry County.

The writer recalls one told by an old man who had been in the employ of the government as a teamster between these forts in the sixties. The wagon train of supplies came one night at about dusk to an old sod house which was frequently used by the men of the supply trains as a lodgin for the night. They debated the question of spending the night there, but it was at last decided they would push on for some distance owing to the fact that by so doing they could avail themselves of a good moon, which would go down in the early part of the night, to gain some distance on their journey. Fortunate, indeed, was their decision, as a party of men coming over the same route the following morning found the old hut a heap of

ods employed to boom the Northwest in those days, and the credulity with which the people of the East accepted all statements. The capitalist had loaned money on some land at Villard, and having had for sometime sent him, by some maliciously inclined party who ventured to describe the place in glowing terms, and to fail to mention the facts—which the papers did not set forth—the non existence of a town—reached the conclusion that the town must, indeed, be enterprising, progressive and worthy of some little interested investigation—it might have “prospects.” He accordingly decided to visit the West, and especially Villard, where his money was invested and his sympathies enlisted, or rather, perhaps, his

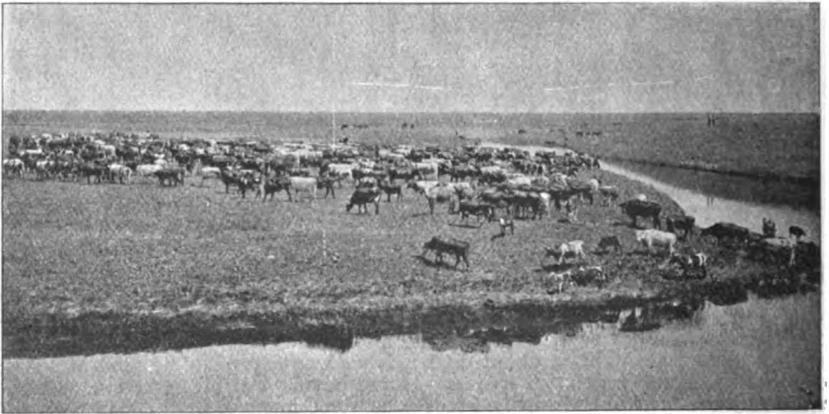


On the Ranch of David Clark, McHenry County, N. D.

business alertness aroused. Reaching Minnewaukan he found himself obliged to proceed by stage, but nothing daunted, the journey was undertaken. On the afternoon of the third day they drew up in front of two log cabins, which being the first sign of habitation seen in many miles, at once elicited an inquiry from the Eastern man. He re-

found its way home to the disillusioned mind of the "Easterner."

In the early days there were Indian trading posts at the point where Towner now stands. William Morehead and others from Pembina and old St. Joe, going there and spending the winter taking the catch of furs to St. Paul by



Grazing in the Mouse River Country.

ceived the reply that they had reached their destination—Villard. The sudden and unheralded statement proved too astonishing for immediate comprehension, and a second inquiry was ventured as to where the town might be, and the answer: "Those two houses are all the town"—the cold, cruel fact of some one's duplicity and his own credulity

cart the next spring, returning after the buffalo hunt the next fall. Morehead used to tell many thrilling stories of adventure. He was located here during the Indian war of 1862, when the Indian massacres occurred in Minnesota. At this time all kinds of wild game abounded, including grizzly bear, the brown bear, goats, and more recently

deer, moose, elk, antelope, caribou, foxes, wolves, and wild fowl of every sort. Eastern hunters who have found rare sport in the vicinity of Towner for many years, have, however, somewhat reduced the quantity.

McHenry county was created from a part of Buffalo County in 1873, which until then extended from its present northern boundary in South Dakota to the international boundary, embracing what is now Emmons, Burleigh, Kidder, McLean, Williams, Ward and others counties in North Dakota east of the Missouri and west of the James river,

of the territory and in real estate, being the founder of the Elk Valley Farm, was named as the county seat.

The principal stream is the Mouse or Souris river, which enters the county at the southwestern corner and flows north in a semicircular course through a dozen or more townships. The valley of the Mouse is generally about three miles wide, sometimes considerably more, and is encompassed by hills rising from 150 to 200 feet above the water. Below Villard the valley is much wider, and often not well defined and after it enters Bottineau county its banks are



Schoolhouse, Towner, N. D.

and was named for James McHenry, a member of the Dakota Legislature in 1855-6. Until 1880 it did not contain a single inhabitant, but the census of 1885 showed a population of 800. Its boundaries have, however, been successively changed since, though it still embraces some sixty odd townships, and is therefor, one of the largest counties in the state. It was organized in 1884 by the appointment by Governor Ordway of Aaron Pace, John Kingman and Edmund Hackett county commissioners. Towner, named for Colonel O. M. Towner, then prominent in the politics

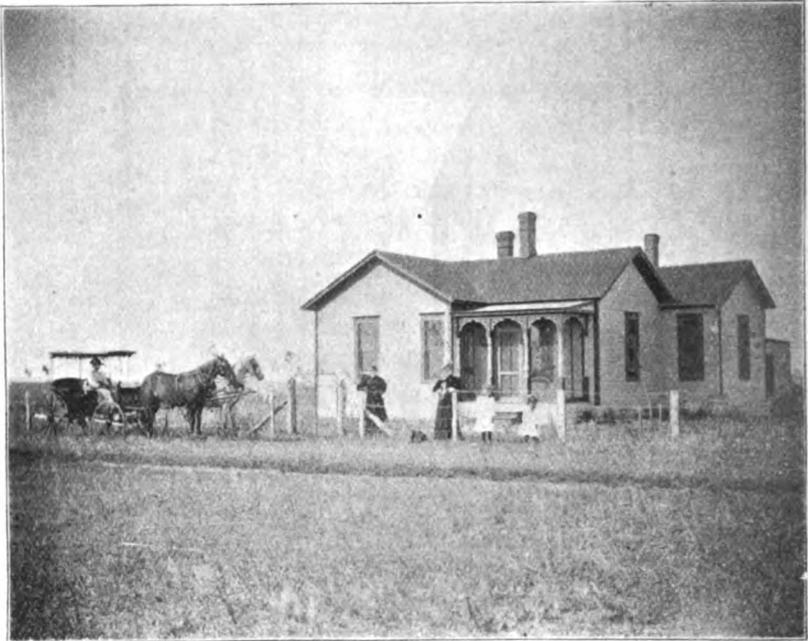
low. The Wintering, Cub, and other streams form important tributaries. There are also numerous lakes and ponds. Nearly one twentieth of the surface of the county is covered by sand hills, clothed with grass and timber affording excellent ranges for stock. Oak, ash, aspen, box elder, elm, and other varieties of timber line the banks of the Mouse. The hills are gently sloping, the prairies are rolling, the soil is a rich productive loam, aside from the sand hills region, the valleys extremely productive, and taken all in all it affords a very paradise for stockmen.

There is still nearly one million acres of government land in the county lying part in the Bismarck land district and part in the Devils Lake district. There are 357 farms in the county and about 20,000 acres under cultivation, of which 13,084 was in wheat in 1897, 3,078 in oats, 587 in barley, 609 in rye, 107 in corn, and 1,169 in flax. It had 2,223 horses, 37 mules, 8,458 cattle, 9,944 sheep, 298 hogs.

The first survey of a railroad was from Fort Buford in the summer of 1882. The prospective road was known as the Fort Buford and Mouse River Railroad.

pickerel which they pitchforked out of Mouse river. There was a saw mill at Hackett's Falls, located on the map at least, and the city he located was known as Souris City. Hackett was the first mayor of Bismarck and at one time a member of the Dakota Legislature. He was a carpenter by trade and erected several of the first buildings in Bismarck.

Ezra Cartwright came into the country with the first surveyors and located a claim at Antelope Lake. This was in 1883. There was then but about 25 people in the county.



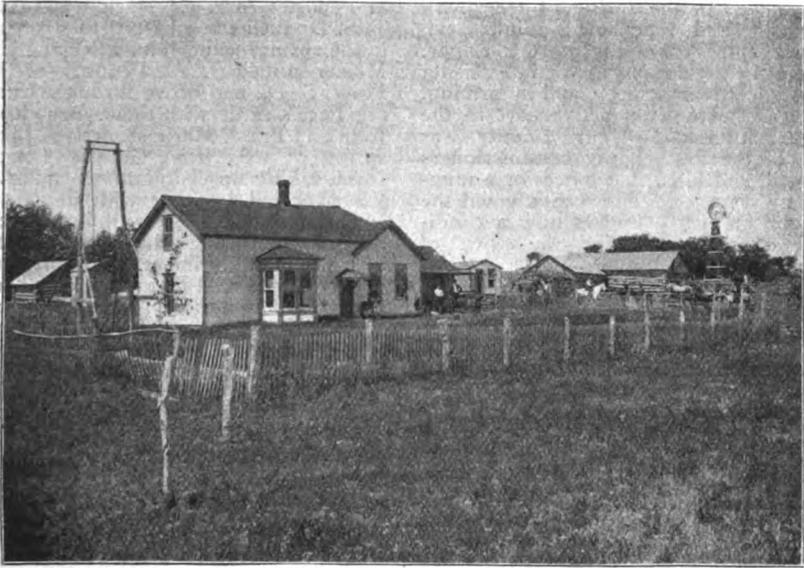
Residence of E. L. Conkling, Towner, N. D.

Upon this survey Johnson Nickcus of Jamestown located and platted the town-site of Scription. This town was afterwards moved to Towner upon the location of the Great Northern at that point. The Great Northern was built through Towner in 1885 and to Minot in 1886.

A colony of negroes was located at Scription but remained only three years. They came from Chicago and returned, mainly from whence they came.

All of the first settlers came overland. The first winter they marketed at Bismarck and Jamestown many loads of

The Mouse River was well settled, however, before 1880 by half breeds and Indians, engaged in hunting and trapping most of whom finally settled in the Turtle Mountain country. This was the favorite hunting region for the troops from Fort Buford, who often spent several weeks in autumn on the Mouse River. After one of these hunting trips General Hazen said to a party of prominent Dakota people that he had materially modified his opinion of Western North Dakota, as he regarded it the best stock region on earth, far preferable



R. A. Fox's Ranch Buildings, near Towner.

to anything he had ever seen in the southwest, where he had large cattle interests.

Up to about 1875, after leaving the agencies, Sitting Bull held undisputed sway in the Mouse River country, having his headquarters on Wintering River. After 1876 for a year or two outlaws from the settlements made headquarters on the Mouse, but a vigilance committee made short work of them, and no inquiry was ever made as to how they disposed of them, though it is known that one of them was drawn many miles by a rope attached to the horn of the saddle rode by one of the committee.

James M. Pendroy was born at Albany, Delaware County, Ind., in 1834. With his parents he moved to Marion County, Iowa, in 1849, assisting his father and older brother in improving a new farm in a new country, sharing the hardships of the first immigrants of that day. He was married to Sarah J. Baldwin in 1857. In August, 1862, he enlisted in Co. H 40th Iowa Infantry and started for the front to assist in maintaining the Union and helping to put down the rebellion. Leaving a wife and three little boys to endure the anx-

ity and hardships incident to the absence of husband and father, he was at the front battling for the flag of his country, where he remained until the close, with his regiment. He was at the siege of Vicksburg and passed through many exciting scenes, enduring many hardships while tramping



James M. Pendroy.

through the swamps of the states of Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas. He returned home in September, 1865, after which he turned his attention to farming and raising cattle. Selling his farm in Iowa in 1882 he came to Bismarck, and after looking that country over he decided to locate on the Mouse

River, McHenry County, in town 154, range 78. In the spring of 1883, with his wife and four sons: John, Levi, James and Perry, all locating claims, where he again engaged in raising horses, cattle and sheep, and in farming. In 1884 he took an active part in the organization of McHenry County, was one of the first county commissioners elected, and filled that office for a number of years. He has always voted the republican ticket, and is now a candidate on that ticket for the office of county judge.

Mr. Pendroy states the following facts relative to the early history of McHenry County at Pendroy. The first to settle at this point were Lewis Robin-

son of J. M. Pendroy with them, arriving at Pendroy Aug. 2. Marion Pace and T. S. Donnell came by rail to Bismarck in the spring, while John Pifer and Dan Mosier joined J. A. Pendroy at Elk Point, S. D., and drove through, bringing Pace's cattle with them. Ben, Reed, John and Frank Marlenee arrived in the spring of 1883 from Guthrie County, Iowa, taking up claims fifteen miles up the river, all locating with a view of engaging in the raising of horses, cattle and sheep, which they have found to be a profitable business. With the great variety of the wild and nutritious grasses that abound here, and the vast amount of hay to be made in the Mouse River Valley, they were enabled to raise horses, cattle and sheep very cheaply.



A. L. Hanscom's Ranch Buildings, near Towner, N. D.

son, Ole Hovind, Iven Gjellstade, Lewis Larson and Ole Westgard, all from Minnesota, taking up claims in the spring of 1882. Sometime in August, J. M. Pendroy, J. A. Pendroy and T. F. Berry arrived, traveling overland with team from Guthrie County, Iowa, a distance of 800 miles; J. B., a son of J. M., came by rail, and joined the party at Bismarck. After building a log cabin on the claim of J. M. Pendroy, they returned to Bismarck, J. M. and J. A. Pendroy taking train for home, while T. F. Berry and J. B. Pendroy remained at Bismarck. In the spring of 1883 J. M. Pendroy and family, with their teams and household goods, shipped by rail to Bismarck, while J. A. Pendroy and family drove through overland, driving their cattle and those

in fact at a merely nominal cost. At present they can have a steer fed and cared for from calthood to maturity, three years, for the sum of \$12 to \$14.

Most of the early immigrants locating at Pendroy were men of limited means, but most of them have built up comfortable and happy homes, and have means for old age, having fine herds of horses, cattle and sheep about them. All had to undergo the usual hardships of first settlers. Bismarck was their nearest trading point, and was 110 to 120 miles distant, over an unsettled country. They had to draw all of their supplies, seed grain and horse feed from that point. It was not unfrequent to see a settler start out to Bismarck in the winter time to procure supplies for his family, though a difficult and

dangerous undertaking at that season of the year. To illustrate: John B. and Jas. A. Pendroy started out Dec. 11, 1883, to Bismarck, with two wagon loads of Mouse River fish which they had caught with hook and line by cutting holes through the ice. After selling their fish at Bismarck and investing the proceeds in flour and other provisions for their families, they started for home, but near Turtle Lake they were overtaken with a fearful snow storm and had a hard pull from there home, traveling three days and two nights without sleep, stopping only long enough to feed the teams. They were all day and half the night going from Strawberry Lake to the Dog Den, a distance of seven miles, encountering many snow drifts, and very cold weather. Their friends became very anxious about them, but the evening of Dec. 24, they hove in sight, wending their way through the deep snow. The mother was first to see them. She exclaiming at the top of her voice "The boys are coming; they are safe." Pendroy postoffice, the second one in the county, was established in June, 1883, and J. M. Pendroy was commissioned as postmaster and still holds the office.

The first sermon preached in the English language was delivered by Rev. E. P. Roys at the house of J. M. Pendroy, Dec. 30, 1885. The first public schools taught in this Oak Valley District, was by Mrs. Eliza Masteller, and Miss Janey Strong in 1886, there being two school houses erected in the district that year. The first public printing done for the county was done by Perry A. Pendroy on a hand press in June, 1885. His bill for printing and stationery amounting to \$19.00. Perry soon abandoned the printing business and turned his attention to a more lucrative business, that of raising calves.

When McHenry county was organized Villard was the center of the settlement. A townsite had been located and as the early settlers came up from Bismarck, where they had seen a plat showing court house, school house, stores, dwellings, etc., they arranged for all these. Here Uncle Sam distributed a few letters, and wayfarers had a good meal provided by Mrs. George Hoffman. Three houses were in sight, and some others were in the hollows of the hills. The old post office still comprises Villard. The townsite and newspaper have vanished into the past, but



E. C. Stevens, Towner, N. D.

the river as it winds and the groves shelter a large number of families and there are schools within easy reach.

Colonel Oscar Towner, presided at the organization of the county. Inkster was the first superintendent of schools and Richard Copeland was the first coroner. These three men were identified with the fortunes of McHen-



Mrs. E. C. Stevens.

ry county for many years. The sad and lonely death of Colonel Towner in June, 1897 in a hotel at Towner, put a stop to the work he was busy with in plowing and breaking up new land at Buffalo lodge, twelve miles north west of the county seat. But the land has all been taken up now. He was a confederate officer but the G. A. R. of Larimore

honored themselves in paying respects to the gray and laying the Colonel away in the arms of mother earth.

Richard Copeland is now editor of The Graphic at Williston, and a power in the land, even more so than of yore. George Inkster is still with us, when he is not tripping it lightly to Klondyke and back. He was our first superintendent of schools, but he has no ache for office, and prefers to spend spare hours in studying nature and storing



Geo. Inkster, Towner, N. D.

away information that is vastly more valuable than our little politics of a day.

W. D. McClinbock, our first judge of probate, is still a resident here, but is now a weekly sojourner in Rugby, doing duty in a state bank.

The county seat was not located at Villard but at Scripton and later Towner.

We are popularly known, throughout the state as the "cow county," originally this was our only industry. It is still our best one, and we commend the accompanying tables to careful students of economic conditions, as well as to homeseekers. But our farming is good, and is growing. Witness our table of cereals and other outputs. We have several townships of fine farming land, all rapidly opening up, and our crops average well, repaying the farmer for care and outlay. These things mean homes and permanent settlement. In the northwest corner of the county we have a large German settlement, where the homes are models of industry and thrift. The steady crops of the last few years have given us a fine set of new farm houses, surrounded by groves of

young trees and excellent gardens. These townships are watered by Willow Creek. There are excellent school-houses, where an earnest effort is made to give the pupils eight months of school, and the finance is in excellent order. One curious fact strikes the observer: these Germans never seek any of the county offices.

In the north end of the county there is a large and growing settlement of Icelanders, whose neat homes are a tribute to their industry. Poles and home-made plaster are cheap. These people always look comfortable in their homespun, home dyed, home-made woolen clothing. They look rosy and well-fed, and let nobody despise their intelligence. The writer of this found them gathering together on Sunday to hold a library meeting. It was in late fall, and they were busy preparing for winter reading by providing



R. A. Fox, Towner, N. D.

books and the machinery for their circulation.

Alongside the Icelanders there is a new and growing township of Scandinavians, whose land includes a narrow strip of meadow land beside the fertilizing Mouse, and then runs backward over the bench out into the prairie. This is a Manitoba fashion, which means more neighborliness than the usual square quarters. Another Scandinavian township is east of the river and north of the sand hills, and is wholly a farming settlement. But

the stronghold of the Scandinavians is down south of Towner. Villard is almost wholly Scandinavian and Lutheran. Farther south still, the township of Walters has many intelligent and public spirited Scandinavians, whose citizenship would form a good backbone for any community. Along the river they all keep stock, and some farm a little. East from the river they farm, especially in the Norway township, where some of the land belongs to the Agricultural College, and waits for a future purchase. Fine crops are the rule here, not the exception. Yes, we are all doing well, thank you, and there's plenty of room for more.

Pendroy is full of Americans. There are three generations, all hale and hearty, and all looking up to the two patriarch brothers, Uncle Jim and Uncle Andy Pendroy. These are names of affectionate respect, for both came in the early eighties, and have grown old with us.

And further proof of a fine American element is the presence and growth of the fraternal societies among us. First and foremost are the Masonic households, Blue Lodge, Chapter and Eastern Star. The father of Masonry here is E. C. Stevens, whose earnestness and zeal have borne wonderful fruit. The fraternal idea is wonderfully beautiful, and the care and kindness shown to several brethren in serious and long-continued sickness showed the strength of the fraternal bond. By their fruits ye shall know them, and we outsiders can see these things for ourselves. The benefit orders are well represented also, but the strongest is apparently the Modern Woodmen. Temperance has cheerful exponents in a lodge of the great family order, the I. O. G. T. They have flourished ever since their organization here, and the children are well cared for in the Juvenile Temple. The G. A. R. is so strong here that we have not only Jerry Rusk Post, but a strong relief corps affiliated to it. And their record is wonderful—no sickness, no deaths, no poverty within the order since their organization, and the relief corps owns their own home and makes homeless fraternities welcome to a lodging. One church serves us with its weekly services at present, well conducted by the Rev. James Hamilton, who hails, originally, like Burns, "frae the toon o' Ayr." The church is Presbyterian, but opens its doors hospitably to other denominations as they need it.

There are Lutheran and Episcopal missions in town.

We have a fine new school, nicely graded now, and the description of its furnishings won a prize in the Journal Junior list lately.

So much for our surroundings—"where every prospect pleases, and all the men are fine." We produce a wonderful amount of square inches of human nature at least, and we'll stand by the average. Come and see, and file a homestead, while there are some left. We have nearly 1,000,000 acres of land subject to filing in McHenry County, and rejoice to know that the Great Northern Railroad will make it a point to call attention next year to the unequalled advantage for home-seekers to be found in McHenry County.

Only a word more as to Pendroy. The very name is welded into the life and history of McHenry County, and much of this is due to the "man you know" affectionately spoken of as Uncle Jim. He and his brother came in the early eighties and selected a fine location on the Mouse, where it was well wooded, well watered, and pleasant to the eyes. Here they have formed a whole community of Pendroys, descendants and collateral relatives, stalwart citizens physically and morally, such as would be an excellent backbone to any country. And they are long-lived, as they deserve to be. To attend a meeting of any sort in Oak Valley means a sight not nearly common enough in Dakota, where old and young and middle-aged form true United States. J. M. Pendroy, sr., is a veteran with an excellent record, and it is a sight worth seeing at a Decoration Day banquet when he stands up around his sons, their wives and the beautiful little grand-daughters sing: "Cover Them Over With Beautiful Flowers." When the old man is in a reminiscent mood, he enlivens a camp-fire with details that lighten the sombre gloom of war. In response to "The wives we left behind us," he paid a beautiful tribute to the sweet heart who still treads life's pathway beside him, and told of the Sunday morning letter he was always sure of when at the front. It was always written on Sunday, whensoever it reached him, and typhoid fever and malaria were fierce as the enemy then, too.

Many a tale of the overland route from Iowa to Dakota does he tell, too, and hunting episodes of Mouse and Missouri, but you will hear all these when you take a homestead here, and

maybe you will find our old friends in the courthouse again. He met his constituents in our first courthouse, a log house. 3x10, and now the republicans have nominated him again for the office of judge of probate.

Geo. W. Poague is a native of Ohio, born May 19, 1867. By his own efforts he was successful in securing a good education and began the practice of law in Indiana in 1891. In the spring of 1897 he located at Towner, and in his brief stay at that place has built up a good practice. He is now the attorney of the Merchants State Bank of Towner and of the town of Towner. He also represents the leading law and collection firms of the United States, among which are: R. G. Dunn & Co., Thomas



Geo. W. Poague, Towner, N. D

Bros. & Co., American Adjustment Co., Wilbur Mercantile Agency, Martindale Mercantile Agency, Attorneys' National Clearing House, United Commercial Lawyers and the Commercial Lawyers' Association. While a resident of Indiana Mr. Poague became a 33° Mason, Knight Templar and Shriner; also a member of the B. P. O. Elks, K. of P.; and in 1894 he was elected chief president of the N. H. A. of the United States at their annual meeting in Anderson, Ind., and became a past chief president of the same at the annual meeting in New York in 1895. Mr. Poague is the democratic and independent candidate for state's attorney for McHenry County.



Henry Erickson, Towner, N. D.

Henry Erickson, candidate for railroad commissioner on the republican state ticket, is one of the solid and substantial citizens of McHenry County. Mr. Erickson is a native of Minnesota, born Sept. 26, 1866. He had several years' experience in the mercantile business previous to coming to Towner, in 1887. He first engaged in business under the firm name of H. Erickson & Co., and in 1890 became sole proprietor. Mr. Erickson carries as fine a selected stock, in his store in Towner, as can be found in any store in the state. In 1896 he opened a store in Rugby under the firm name of Erickson Bros., and in July, 1897, organized and became president of the Merchants State Bank at Rugby. This year he opened another branch store at Velva under the name of Alfred Erickson & Co. Mr. Erickson is one of the self-made men of the state, and has never aspired for high political office previous to receiving the nomination for railroad commissioner. He went into the state convention with the solid support of the northern counties, and was nominated by acclamation.

As an example of what a poor man can and has done in McHenry County The Record gives the name of Aug. Erdmann. He came from Wabasha County, Minnesota, in the winter of 1886-7—with a borrowed capital of \$100 — and is now the owner of 1,600 acres of land, sixteen head of horses, and has good buildings on his farm. He threshed, this year, 7,500 bushels of wheat.

A. J. Ames, county attorney, is a native of Genesee county, New York, and was born Jan. 18, 1838. He emigrated with his parents to Seneca county, Ohio, in 1843. He received his education in the common and the academic schools of that state. Under the first call of the president he enlisted with Co. G, 25th Ohio, and participated in a number of the big battles of the civil war, and was mustered out July, 1865. Mr. Ames has been on the frontier the greater portion of his life. He came to Douglas county, Minn., in 1867, when there were no railroads in that part of the state, locating on government land. In 1870 he was elected Register of Deeds of Douglas county and held that office for six years. In 1871 he was appointed justice of the



A. J. Ames, States Attorney, McHenry County.

peace and held that office for eleven years. He was admitted to the bar as a practicing attorney in 1876, and soon after formed a partnership with the Hon. Knute Nelson, now U. S. senator from Minnesota. In 1884 he located at Fargo where he practiced his profession and in 1886 located at Towner, and with the exception of two terms he has been states attorney of McHenry county, since its organization.

Judge Ames, as he is familiarly called, was one of the early members of the G. A. R., becoming a member in 1886 and was a charter member of the Jerry Rusk post at Towner, and the first Judge Advocate of the state organization.

It has been 32 years since Judge Ames first came to the Northwest frontier.

David Clark, of Oak Grove, McHenry county, is a Scotchman by birth who emigrated from Aberdeenshire in 1872, then a young man. Having come from the North country, where the finest herds of shorthorn cattle were raised, his inherited love of the breed most favored at home remained with him. The ambition to secure a good cow of the shorthorn and more especially of the Aberdeenshire type, or as they are more frequently called, the Cruikshank, cattle, did not come to him till 1882, when three cows were purchased at a long figure. Some said they cost the price of a farm, but the main object was to start right. The Ontario farm was too small, in Mr. Clark's eye, therefore in June, '88 we find him in Bottineau where he secured the right of two timber claims, renting one and still holding the other as a tree claim. He moved his family to Bottineau March, 1889, also the best of his herd, and a pair of Clyde mares and some machinery. The crops of '89 were poor, that of '90 little better, while '91 was a "bumper" of a crop and put his accounts in fairly good shape. Previous to leaving Ontario Mr. Clark, like many others, lost fully \$2,000 by endorsing for others and received a lesson he has never forgotten. As he says he started in North Dakota worth less than nothing. Although he had his stock he owed \$700 to start in with. The wheat farm now consists of 640 acres. One of his sons looks after it. His ranch consists of 320 acres of hay land, with plenty of wild land for pasture. It is the home of some 60 head of shorthorn cattle, tracing in all their crosses to imported stock. The bulls used in this herd have been of the very best; the prices paid for them he refrains from stating, lest he might not be credited. The bunch of young bull calves is really a sight worth seeing, especially to one interested in beef cattle. The females in this herd are a grand lot. To describe them individually would be impossible in this space. The two stock bulls are something wonderful: Excelsior, a massive roan weighing 2,500 lbs., with a girth of 9 feet. Orange Earl, 20 months old, weighs 1,500 lbs. A few good Clyde mares are kept and some fine horses have been raised from them, but have always been used on the wheat farm. There is also large English Berkshire hogs and White Leghorn poultry. There is a fine commodious house with as good shelter as could be desired. The stable is a model in con-

struction and convenience. Some 80 head of stock can be housed under the one roof, with feed and water all under cover. A Dakota blizzard has no terrors around this establishment. A large wind mill supplies power for preparing feed, sawing wood and pumping. Mr. Clark's motto is, whatever is worth doing is worth doing well. He believes there is money in growing wheat, but that stock raising is the right arm of agriculture. Young breeding stock sold from this herd have given the best of satisfaction. Write him for any information, stating what you want and it will be answered promptly. Stock sold on order and satisfaction guaranteed.

The ranch is situated about 12 miles north of Towner and an equal distance from Willow City in the valley of the Mouse river. Post office address is Carder, N. D.

In another column is shown a cut of the pretty residence of E. L. Conkling, who is one of the old settlers of McHenry County. He came to the county in 1883, and was a rancher until '88, when he purchased and conducted the leading hardware store of McHenry County until 1897. On account of ill health he sold the store to Ole Gilbertson, and spent last winter on the Pacific coast. Mr. Conkling is one of the self-made men of McHenry County.

### First Organization and Statistics of McHenry County.

On the 15th day of Oct. 1884, a meeting was held at Villard P. O., for the purpose of organizing McHenry county. O. M. Towner presided as chairman and Ed Hackett as secretary.

Appointments were made at said meeting of the several officers to-wit: G. W. Crane, register of deeds; Michael McLean, sheriff; F. A. Frisbie, treasurer; Parley Teare, assessor; W. D. McClintock, judge of probate; C. E. Jones, county surveyor; George T. Inkster, county superintendent of schools; M. Rosmcrane, constable; R. Copeland, cornor.

By an act of the legislative assembly of the Territory of Dakota a special election was ordered to be held in McHenry county on the 2nd Tuesday in May 1885, for the purpose of electing county officers and to designate the temporary location of the county seat.

The election resulted in designating "Scripton" as the temporary county seat.

The following named persons were the first regularly elected officers of the county of McHenry.

A. L. Hanson,  
Ole Gilbertson,  
J. M. Pendroy,

#### Board of County Commissioners

Geo. T. Inkster, register of deeds; Olof Berg, county auditor; Benjamin Reed, sheriff; A. J. Oslie, judge of probate; G. A. Cameron, superintendent of schools; J. T. Bailey, county surveyor; John A. Larson, assessor; H. B. Johnson, justice of the peace; Dan Westine, constable.

On Sept. 20th, 1886, the county was divided into 5 commissioner districts with the following board of county commissioners, to-wit: Ole Gilbertson, J. M. Pendroy, O. M. Towner, E. W. Cartwright and Chas. Schilling.

At the general election held Nov. 2nd, 1886, it was decided that "Towner" be the permanent county seat of the county of McHenry and the 18th day of December 1886 all of the county property was removed to Towner, at which place all county business has since been transacted.

McHenry county contains over 1,000,000 acres of land of which about 200,000 acres are filed on. In year 1897, final proof was made on over 12,000 acres.

The county auditors report to the state statistician of N. Dak., shows as follows: AGRICULTURAL REPORTS FOR THE

#### YEAR 1895.

Wheat—Acres sown, 8892; bushels harvested, 235,415, average per acre about 26½ bushels.

Oats—acres sown, 2,353 bushels harvested, 86,921, average per acre 37 bushels.

Barley—acres sown, 394, bushels harvested, 10,327, average per acre 26 bushels.

Flax—Acres sown 670, bushels harvested, 9,606, average per acre 14 1-3 bushels.

Rye—acres sown, 737, bushels harvested, 17,256, average per acre about 23 2-5 bushels.

Corn— acres sown, 351, bushels harvested, 7,020, average per acre about 20 bushels.

Potatoes— acres sown, 229, bushels harvested, 29,862, average per acre 130 bushels.

Turnips—acres sown 70, bushels harvested 5,685, average per acre about 81 bushels.

Millet and Hungarian—acres sown 69, tons cut 157.

Other tame hay—acres sown 3, tons cut 5.

Tons of prairie hay cut 43,295.

Gardens—Value of products sold, 1895, \$627.00.

Poultry—value of poultry and eggs sold in 1895, \$896.00.

Dairy Products—number pounds of cheese made in families, 126.

Number pounds of butter made in families 61,550.

Total value of milk sold during the year \$5,995.00.

LIVE STOCK.

Total value of horses all ages in county, 1896, \$72,602.00.

Total value of mules all ages in county 1896, \$1,310.00.

Total value of cattle all ages in county 1896, \$114,670.00.

Total value of sheep all ages in county 1896, \$22,910.00.

Total value of hogs all ages in county 1896, \$2,465.00.

Total number of sheep sheared in 1895, 15,829.

Total number of pounds of wool clipped, 95,134.

Total value of stock shipped outside of the state for 1895, \$81,499.00.

Total value of stock brought into the county during 1895, \$11,290.00.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS FOR YEAR 1896.

Wheat—acres sown , 9,610; bushels harvested, 126,936; average per acre about 13 1-5 bushels.

Oats—acres sown, 2,281; bushels harvested, 47,540; average per acre about 20 4-5 bushels.

Barley—acres sown, 225; bushels harvested, 4,695; average per acre about 20 4-5 bushels.

Flax—acres sown, 1,058; bushels harvested, 9,685; average per acre about 9 bushels.

Rye—acres sown, 713; bushels harvested, 12,434; average per acre about 17 bushels.

Potatoes—acres sown, 146; bushels harvested, 17,206; average per acre about 118 bushels.

Turnips—acres sown, 2 1-4; bushels harvested, 60.

Tons of prairie hay cut, 44,243.

Value of poultry and eggs sold in 1896, \$1,451.00.

Number of pounds of cheese made in families during 1896, 5,100.

Number of pounds of butter made in families during 1896, 59,431.

LIVE STOCK.

Total value of horses in the county, 1897, \$95,370.00.

Total value of mules in the county, 1897, \$1,520.00.

Total value of cattle in the county, 1897, \$156,376.00.

Total value of sheep in the county, 1897, \$19,388.00.

Total value of hogs in the county, 1897, \$1 835.00.

Total value of stock sold and shipped during 1897, \$73,972.00.

Value of live stock brought into the county during 1896, \$9,486.00.

	1897.	Acres.
Wheat.....		13,084
Oats.....		3,078
Barley.....		487
Flax.....		1,169
Rye.....		609
Corn.....		107
Potatoes.....		150
Roots of all kinds.....		18
Hay, Millet and Hungarian.....		118
Other tame grasses.....		4

Total acres of crop including tame grasses, 18,824.

The average of 1898 will be at least an increase of 50 per cent over 1897.

The taxes on 160 acres of land in the county have averaged about \$8.00.

Total valuation of real property for year 1897, \$149,795.00.

Total valuation of personal property for year 1897, \$437,142.00.

Total valuation of town lots for year 1897, \$41,897.00.

Grand total valuation, \$628,834.00.

Total currant taxes for year 1897, \$19,992.38.

RAILWAY TAXES PAID IN 1892.

Great Northern railway, \$4,413.38

Soo railway, \$3,779.64.

Total, \$8,193.02.

Financial statement of McHenry county as taken from auditors office to June 1st, 1898.

	ASSETS.	LIABILITIES.
Cash in County Funds.....	\$12,974.46	
Taxes Outstanding.....	24,268.52	
County Bridges.....	4,300.00	
Court House, Jail and Furniture.....	4,300.00	
Bonds Issued.....		\$20,000.00
Outstanding Warrants.....		9,097.65
Balance.....		16,545.46
	<u>\$45,648.01</u>	<u>\$45,643.01</u>