

The Neiswanger Monuments



During the 1920s and 1930s, D. F. Neiswanger, a stone-cutter from Cambridge, created and erected monuments marking locations of historical significance in the surrounding area. Sometimes these monuments were paid for by donations or a commissioning organization, but often Mr. Neiswanger bore the expense himself. In either case, D. F. Neiswanger left an enduring legacy - one that was truly etched in stone.

NEISWANGER HAS INTERESTING HOBBY

(By Ole Buck)

D. F. Neiswanger of Cambridge, has an interesting hobby. It is marking points of historical interest in Nebraska. His business is selling monuments and tombstones. He buys the rock in the rough and carves it out to suit the desires of his customers. He takes other pieces of stone of suitable proportions, and carves upon them historical information to suit the places where they are to be erected. The place where early immigrants lost their lives in a flood is marked by one of his monuments. The point where the Buck surveying party was massacred will be marked. He is constantly looking for opportunities to erect examples of his skill and interest, which will mark places worth remembering. Mr. Neiswanger has resided in Cambridge for more than forty years. For thirty years he was a barber. Then he took up the monument business. It might not be safe to suggest that the experience he had in amputating tough whiskers qualified him for working in stone. Anyhow, the state is greatly indebted to him for the useful and interesting work he is doing.

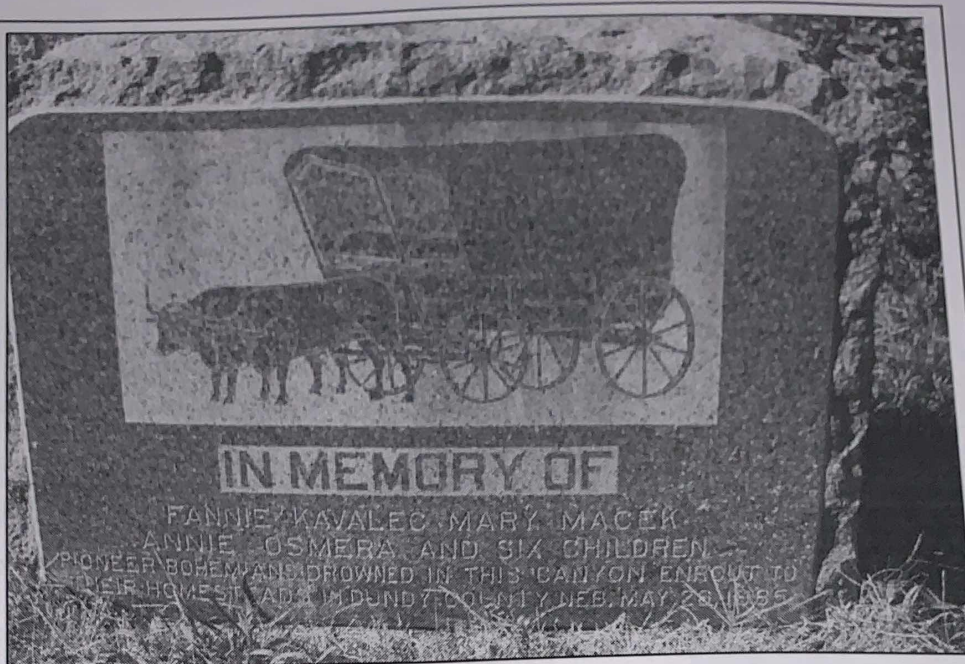
Cambridge Clarion - April 17, 1930

Neiswanger Monuments

During the 1920s and 1930s D. F. Neiswanger from Cambridge put up a number of markers or monuments to note places of historical importance in southwest Nebraska. These include:

1. Bohemian Emigrants (1924) – Memorializes the three women and six children who died in a flash flood in route to their homestead in Dundy County on May 26, 1885. Located on north side of highway between Cambridge and Bartley.
2. Sky Chief Springs (1924) – East of Cambridge, north side of highway on Dr. Stear's property in honor of Pawnee Chief Sky Chief. Marks the last campsite of the Pawnee prior to their massacre in 1873 battle near Trenton.
3. Monument at grave of Eena Teglaka (1928) – Arbor Cemetery at Stockville.
4. McPherson Trail monument #1 on north side of highway west of Holbrook.
5. McPherson Trail monument #2 (1927 or 1928) - Located about twelve miles north of Cambridge, and one mile west of the Afton Church – now Trail 12 on east side of Medicine Creek Reservoir.
6. McPherson Trail monument #3 (1927 or 1928) – Located three and one half miles east of Stockville on south side of highway.
7. McPherson Trail monument #4 (1930) – On west side of road near the mouth of Cottonwood Canyon in Sec. 20, Maxwell 6, Lincoln Co. This monument recognizes various early settlers and plainsmen.
8. Nelson Buck Massacre in 1869 (1930) – Monument located west of Danbury near where it is believed the party of surveyors was killed by Indians.
9. Duke Alexis Hunt in 1872 (1931) – Monument originally located at site of the duke's camp, now located in Hayes County Courthouse. A replica has been erected at campsite.
10. Frontier County Courthouse at Stockville (1934) – This monument recognizes various historical events of Frontier County.
11. Historical events of Nebraska & Organizers of City of Cambridge (1934) – Originally located in McKinley Park, now in front of Cambridge Museum.
12. Texas Trail Marker (1934) – West of Trenton, north side of highway.
13. First Homestead in Red Willow County in 1872 (1934) – North side of Hwy. 6 & 34 near Red Willow School.

14. Bur Oak Canyon (1934) – Located southwest of McCook.
15. High Water Marks (1936) – Eight markers marking the high water of the 1935 Republican River Flood (one not located).
 - A. Haigler – North of main street crossing the railroad and continue to River Bridge, 200 yards south on the east side of the road.
 - B. Trenton – South of the river on the main street to the head of the “T” in the road, walk south about 100 feet beyond the fence.
 - C. Indianola – Removed from location south of the Republican River and now in City Hall.
 - D. Bartley – On the northwest corner of the intersection of Commercial (main street) & Cedar Street (one block south of highway).
 - E. Cambridge – Faw Motor Company’s lot, twenty feet south of the intersection, flush in the ground.
 - F. Cambridge – Northwest corner of the intersection of Pacific & Nelson (Roy tenBensel’s yard).
 - G. Edison – City Park on a pedestal three feet high. 100 feet north of the NE corner of the intersection of the main north-south street on old Highway 6.
16. First Homestead in Furnas County in 1871. Located at west edge of Arapahoe, south of highway. (date unknown)
17. Frontier County – Site of the organization of the county in 1872. Located on minimum maintenance Frontier County Road #397 near the center of Section 17, Stockville Precinct. (date unknown)
18. Doc W. F. Carver’s homestead on Medicine Creek from 1872 to 1874. Located southeast of Curtis on Frontier County Road #395 west of the Medicine Creek. (date unknown)
19. A. A. Anderson – Died May 3, 1880, “First person buried in Fairview Cemetery” at Cambridge. (date unknown)
20. Monument at grave of Henry Jacobson, 1820-1875, “One of the first homesteaders.” Located in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 25, Garfield Precinct, Frontier County. (date unknown)



On May 26, 1885, four families of Bohemian emigrants traveling in three covered wagons drawn by ox teams camped in Richmond Canyon about midway between Bartley and Cambridge. Around nine o'clock that night a wall of water resulting from heavy rains further up the canyon swept the entire camp away. Of the seventeen members of the party, three women and six children were drowned.

In 1924, D. F. Neiswanger of Cambridge erected a monument near the place where these emigrants camped for the night to commemorate this tragic incident in the early history of Red Willow County. About twenty-five hundred people gathered for the May 25, 1924 dedication of the monument. The exercises consisted of music by the Cambridge band and addresses by Hon. C. E. Eldred of McCook, Hon. B. F. Butler of Cambridge, Hon. A. M. Keyes of Holbrook, and others.

The ceremony was especially solemn because of the presence of John Osmera and Mary Osmera, two of the three living survivors of the tragedy. John Osmera's account of the disaster, which he could not give publicly, but which he told individual inquirers, was that he and his sister who had survived, were sleeping in one of the wagons. That evening the water from a cloudburst somewhere to the north came down the canyon. His father was aroused and rescued John and his sister, then went to the assistance of his mother and another brother and sister, who were in another wagon, but it was too late. They had been swept away.

The only women in the party, Fannie Kavalec, Mary Macek, and Annie Osmera, all perished.

(Information from Ne History & Record of Pioneer Days Vol VII, no 2 (part 2) @ <http://www.rootsweb.com/~neresour/OLLibrary/Journals/HPR/Vol07/nhrv07p6.html>

& Czechs in Nebraska – Butler County @ <http://www.rootsweb.com/~neethnic/czechs/cz-pg195html>)



A monument dedicated in 1924 to the Pawnee leader Sky Chief stands near a spring fed pond on the Sky Chief Springs Ranch along Highway 6 & 34 east of Cambridge in Furnas County. It is believed this was the last campsite of the Pawnee prior to their massacre by the Sioux Indians in a battle near Trenton, Nebraska, in 1873.



Sky Chief was killed in the battle of "Massacre Canyon."



Erected in Cambridge's McKinley Park in 1934, this monument recognizing historical events of Nebraska and organizers of Cambridge, now sits in front of the Cambridge Museum. Inscribed on the front:

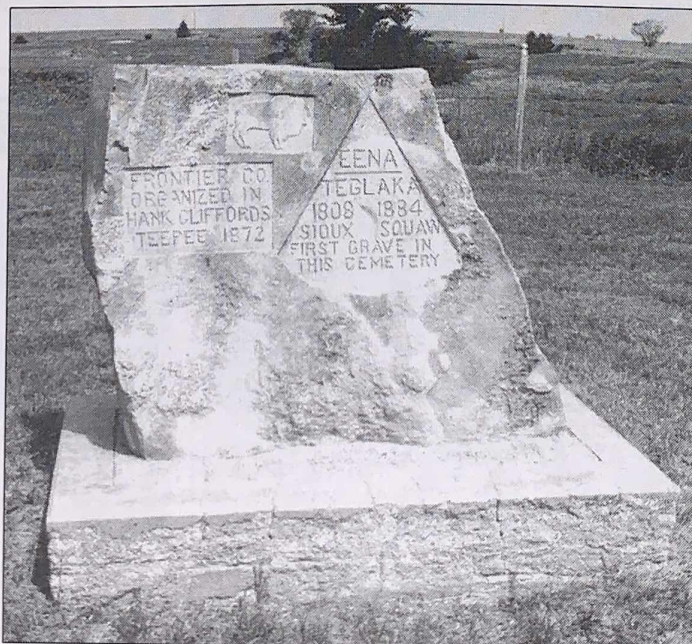
Last of the Buffalo and Indian Troubles 1870 to 1880
UP RR from coast to coast on 1888
Pony Express 1860 & 1861
Buffalo Bill Cody Chief of Scouts died in December 1917
Gen. Custer's last battle in Montana 1876
Black Hills Gold Rush 1876

On the reverse side is inscribed:

Historical Events
First Homestead in Nebraska by
Daniel Freeman January 1, 1863
Cambridge Incorporated 1885
First Council: W. H. Faling
W. E. Babcock
James John
J. W. Pickle
W. P. Bennett
Dist. 21 organized 1874, Minnie Finch first
teacher, 7 pupils
George Karotherrs, First Postmaster
Dedicated 1934 to E. R. Keyes, Pioneer

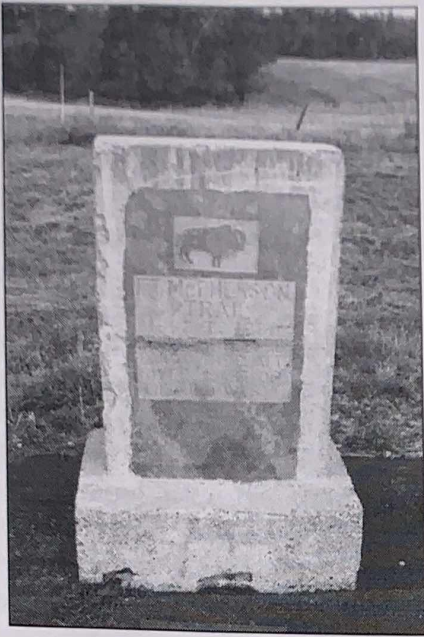


Ambrose Shelley and James Gammill stand on either side of a monument of native Nebraska stone, which was unveiled at an Old Settlers Reunion in Stockville in 1928. The monument was to be erected at the grave of the old Lakota Sioux woman, Eena Teglaka. The widow of French trapper Augustin Lucian who was killed at the Grattan Massacre in 1854, Eena Teglaka was the mother-in-law of early Frontier County settler Monte Clifford. She was buried in Arbor Cemetery with her bow and arrows, tomahawk, and Indian blankets.



Although the monument gives the date of death as 1884, it is believed Eena Teglaka actually died in 1887 or 1888. Her burial was the first in Arbor Cemetery.

**Fort McPherson Trail Markers
erected by D. F. Neiswanger in
the late 1920s...**

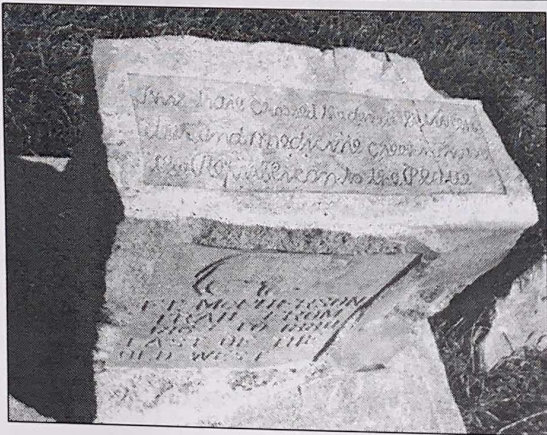


The first of four monuments marking the McPherson trail is located on the north side of the highway west of Holbrook. The inscription reads:

"Ft. McPherson Trail – 1863 to 1880 –
From the Republican to the Platte River.
Last of the Old West."



The second McPherson monument is located about twelve miles north of Cambridge on Trail 12 on the east side of Medicine Creek Reservoir



The inscription on the top of the third McPherson monument reads: "This trail crossed the divide between deer and medicine creeks from the Republican to the Platte."



The third McPherson monument is located three and one half miles east of Stockville on the south side of the highway.

Several Visit Ft. McPherson Party Gathered Interesting Facts Concerning the Old Trail

D. F. Neiswanger, W. H. Faling, E. R. Keyes, A. E. Thorndike, R. H. Rankin, Dr. B. F. Stewart, Chas. Alberti, and F. E. Holmes autoed to Fort McPherson National cemetery Friday morning.¹ They visited other points of interest along the trail and enroute pictures were taken. The day was ideal for the trip and they reported crops in a finer condition than they had ever seen them. The canyons are well grassed and the wild fruit trees are loaded. The party gathered some interesting facts concerning the old McPherson Trail during their trip.

The old Fort McPherson trail was in use in 1860 and was abandoned in 1880. The immigrants started with their ox teams from Kansas City and St. Joe in 1860 and came to Nebraska City, Nebraska. They then took the trail from there on up the Republican River and crossed one mile west of Holbrook taking a northwesterly course between Deer Creek and the Medicine, coming out across the Walter Newcomb farm north of Cambridge and south of Freeman Rhoades' place. The trail then proceeds in the same general direction coming out in the Platte Valley near North Platte. The two trees planted about one-quarter mile south of the Rhoades farm are interesting land marks. They are about sixty years old and were planted there by a homesteader on this road.

D. F. Neiswanger has been instrumental in putting up several markers along this trail. A few years ago he placed a marker at the Chas. Correll ranch and another at the C. Gugelman farm three miles east of Stockville. Two years ago, a marker was placed in the northeast corner of the Stockville cemetery for the grave of Eena Teglaka, a Sioux squaw, mother-in-law of Monte Clifford. She was born in 1808 and died in 1884. Clifford was one of the organizers of Frontier County. A week ago Tuesday Neiswanger put another marker at the mouth of Cottonwood canyon. This was sponsored by the citizens of North Platte to commemorate the old scouts who roamed the plains in the [1860s].

A. S. Shelley, who lives on Medicine creek southeast of Stockville, was one of the chief organizers of Frontier County. He with the assistance of Paddy Miles, Jack Bratt, [and] Monte and Hank Clifford helped to organize this county in 1871 [*i.e.*, 1872]. Mr. Shelley built the first log house in the county during this year. He lived among the Sioux Indians from 1867 to 1872. He could speak the Sioux language very fluently. The Indians came to love him and were very loyal to him. Shelley was sent out to this country by Prof. Marsh of Boston University to gather prehistoric relics and while here he decided to homestead the farm. He has had the log house moved to Stockville and it is on exhibition every year at the Frontier County fair.

Jim Gammill is another old timer of that neighborhood. He can relate much interesting early Frontier County history. He worked as a track layer and surveyor on the Union Pacific railroad from 1867 to 1868.

The party from Cambridge also stopped at the W. S. Osterhoudt soddy northwest of Stockville on the Curtis road and took a picture of it. The Osterhoudt's still live in the soddy. It is well kept up and they have a well improved farm.

¹ Article reprinted with some editing from 7/3/1930 *Cambridge Clarion*.

The Fort McPherson National cemetery is located about twenty miles southeast of North Platte. The government owns twenty acres of land there. The caretaker is a Spanish American War Veteran. His mansion is located within the grounds. Formerly a Civil War Veteran had charge of the grounds. All visitors are required to register upon entering the place. About three thousand people register here every year. A four and a half foot high wall surrounds the cemetery. Beautiful cedar trees, shrubbery, flowers and grass make the cemetery a place of beauty. The caretaker informed the party that there are 915 graves in the original plot and 201 buried beyond the west wall, making a total of 1116 bodies buried there. The 201 bodies were brought there from Fort Sidney in 1922. Many World War Veterans are buried in the Fort McPherson Cemetery. A number of the headstones have the pictures of the soldier and the regiment in which he fought engraved upon them.

In relating historical facts of the early day pioneers of our vicinity the writer is reminded of the experiences of H. P. Waite of McCook, who is well known by several of the old timers here. He homesteaded southwest of Wilsonville in the early days. In 1879 in company with four others in his section Mr. Waite made a hunting trip up the Aricker stream west of Haigler. They were hunting buffalo and came upon a herd near where Yuma, Colorado, is now located. They killed five buffaloes, skinned them and put up the meat. That night a terrible blizzard overtook them on the prairie. It lasted three days and during this time they had only buffalo meat and chopped meal for food. In those days wild horses were numerous on the range and they would circle around a tame horse and get it away. One of Waite's horses was lured away in this manner and he was forced to walk ten miles before overtaking the animal. On this same trip two members of the party got lost from camp. After wandering about all night they discovered when morning came they were only about a mile from camp.

In the early '80s Mr. Waite took several four-horse wagon loads of flour from Wilsonville to the Black Hills. In going out of Fox creek canyon into the Cottonwood canyon they had to use their spades to open up the cut between the canyons to get through with their heavy loads. He finally made it to the Hills and sold his outfit while there. He had many other experiences of the early days in this country that would make interesting reading.

Many are the tribulations and hardships that these early day pioneers had to go through in settling this country. The present and coming generations owe them much and should revere their memory and pay their respects to the work they have done. Cambridge is proud to have one in the community who devotes a large amount of his time preserving the early day history of these old pioneers by means of markers erected to the memory of them and their work. D. F. Neiswanger is doing his bit for the community and state through this medium.

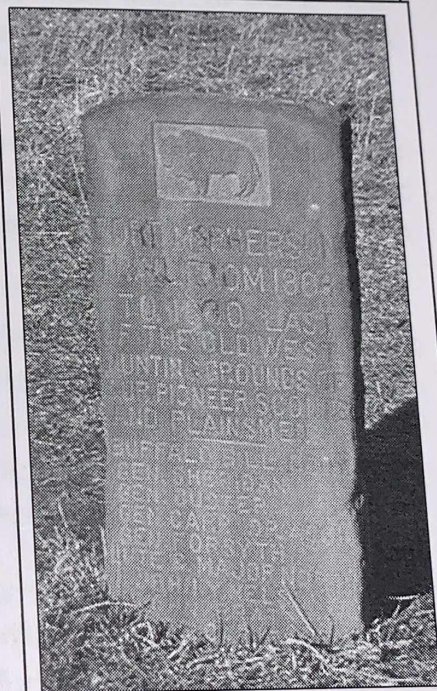
Since we made this trip, others would like to make it. On July 10th, Neiswanger has agreed to take another crowd of our people over the same trail. Anyone that would like to go, see him and he will help to make the arrangements. This time we will take our dinners along and eat at the cemetery, and after dinner go on up to North Platte. There Harold Day and W. H. McDonald will show us a lot of historic places. From there [we] will come back to Maywood and go through "Dead Man's Gulch."



This photo was taken in 1930 soon after the erection of the monument in Cottonwood Canyon about nineteen miles north of Curtis. Pictured left to right: F. E. "Flint" Holmes, Dr. B. F. Stewart, R. H. Rankin, D. F. Neiswanger, E. F. "Ed" Keyes, A. E. "Bert" Thorndike, and W. F. Faling. The photo was probably taken by Charles Alberti, who was also on the road trip taken by this group, which was reported on the July 3, 1930 *Cambridge Clarion*.

FORT McPHERSON
TRAIL FROM 1868
TO 1880. LAST
OF THE OLD WEST
HUNTING GROUNDS OF
OUR PIONEER SCOUTS
AND PLAINSMEN
BUFFALO BILL CODY
GEN. SHERIDAN
GEN. CUSTER
GEN. CARR DR. ASCH
GEN. FORSYTH
LUTE & MAJOR NORTH
JOHN Y. NELSON
JOHN BRATT
DOC CARVER
PADDY MILES
GRAND DUKE ALEXIS
SEE OTHER SIDE

IN MEMORY OF
*Early Settlers of Cotton-
Wood Springs and Fort
McPherson 1854*
*Chas. McDonald built
and operated first store.*
*John Burke Sr. built first
Bridge across the Platte.*
*Fred Erickson first Black
Smith, M.C. Keith first
Extensive Cattleman*
*Cyrus Fox, Theo. Lowe,
Chas. Hendy, R. McMurray*
*Surviving Soldiers of
the Old Fort McPherson 1930*
*John Gilman, J.P. Boyer,
Sam Ritchie, John Burke Jr.*
*and four Brothers, all
Ranchmen and Holders
of various Government
Contracts, W.H. McDonald*
First White Child born...



Shifting soil has covered the base and part of the monument shaft. The inscription is in upper case print on the front and cursive on the back.

Historical Trip to Ft. McPherson¹

Last Friday morning, August 1st, about eight o'clock, a number of Cambridgeites, including a few persons from McCook, under the direction of Frank Neiswanger, sponsored by the Commercial Club, set out for old Fort McPherson. There were six cars that contained on an average, five persons to the car... Three cars joined the party at Stockville. Altogether there were forty-five people or more in the party. The day was very auspicious, not quite so hot as usual, very little dust due to the recent rain, clear and ideal for such a trip. All were keenly interested and anticipated much pleasure in the day's outing...

The trip was made, following as near as possible, the old McPherson trail. Wherever the road crossed this old trail it was designated by a neat marker placed there by one of our townsmen, Frank Neiswanger, who has taken a great deal of interest, given a good deal of time, and gone to some expense in preserving these old landmarks. Two of the markers contain almost identical inscriptions as follows: "In memory of the Old Fort McPherson Trail, 1863 to 1880, when it was abandoned." That word, "abandoned," means a great deal in this connection; it means progress. The old trail had its day and paved the way for something better. It reminds us however, in an impressive way, of the pioneer life not far removed from our own day. Yet there is considerable distance between the old ox-cart and a modern automobile, between the old trail and an up-to-date highway.

The first of these markers referred to is located just this side of Holbrook where the trail leaves the Republican River, the trail taking a north-westerly direction between Deer creek and the Medicine. The second is located about twelve miles north of Cambridge, and one mile west of the Afton church; the third, three miles east of Stockville and a fourth near the head of Cottonwood canyon...

Driving on to Stockville we were shown John Howe's collection of relics, housed in the back room of his store. Most of these were found near Stockville. Some of the interesting specimens of this collection are a dinosaur's tooth that weighs thirteen pounds, Indian skulls, elephants' bones and a huge petrified turtle.

In the Stockville cemetery, about two and a half miles northwest, is a marker that marks the grave of the first person buried there. She was an Indian woman that figured in the early history of that section. She was popularly known as Eena, but I was told her real name was Teglaka. She was eighty-four at the time of her death. Mr. Neiswanger with the assistance of some Stockville friends placed this marker there...

We stopped at Curtis and visited the Agricultural College, which appears to be a fairly well equipped branch of our State Agricultural School... A buffalo cow is one of the prized specimens, said to be the last buffalo killed by Bill Cody, Buffalo Bill. The taxidermy work was done by Reese Heaton, a resident of Curtis. His arrangement of the specimens shows a knowledge of nature and wild life.

¹ *Cambridge Clarion*, August 7, 14 & 21, 1930. Originally written by A. T. Evans and reprinted with some editing.

Proceeding to the pass at the head of Cottonwood canyon, we stopped while pictures were taken by Alberti and others hoping to get a good likeness of the party, with the pass and high hills as a fine background. This was the most rugged and picturesque part of the country over which we traveled. While standing at the foot of this pass Mr. H. P. Waite told us that in 1880, the year the Fort was abandoned (some soldiers were still there however) that he drove a team of six horses and two mules over this pass down into Cottonwood canyon on the other side. At that time Mr. Waite was engaged in freighting flour from Beaver City to the Black Hills. That mode of freighting was quite a contrast to one of our modern trucks making its way over that pass today. But then, there was no cut made thru the pass; Mr. Waite had to go up over the top and the road was far from being what it is now...

As planned, we arrived at the sight of the old Fort about noon. We had been talking about going to Fort McPherson, thinking of what it would look like, and when we got there the Fort was not there. So we had to be satisfied in viewing the sight of the old Fort. However, we saw a picture of the Fort, shown to the party by Mr. W. H. McDonald, about whom we shall have more to say later. By using the imagination a little one could see what it must have looked like and understand how important it became in the life of the early settlers.

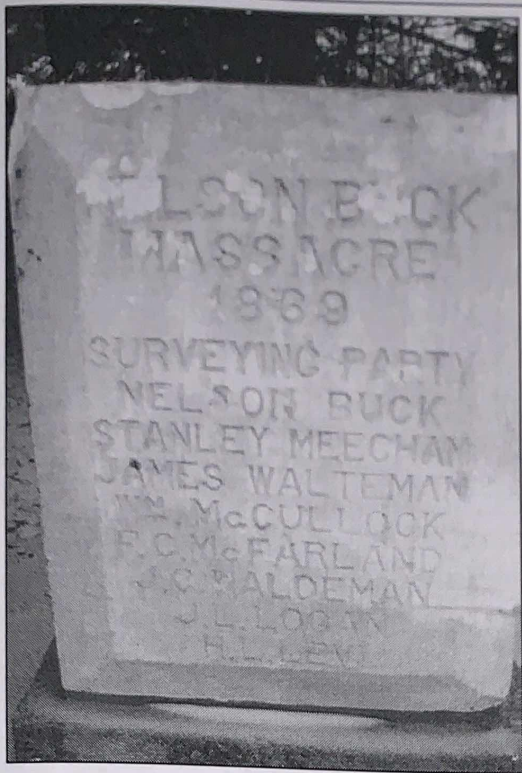
The site of the old Fort is marked by a statue of a Union soldier, carrying the old musket and garbed in a military uniform that prevailed in that period of our history. On its base are inscribed the following words:

Erected by the people of Lincoln county in the year, 1928, to perpetuate the sight [sic] of old Fort McPherson and the Oregon trail. This Fort made possible the first settlement in Lincoln county, located here and known as Cottonwood Springs. This monument marks the sight of Fort McPherson's flag-staff, said Fort established in 1863, disbanded in 1880.

There is also a list of names of soldiers on the back of the statue.

But the place of interest that is still presided over by Uncle Sam is the national cemetery there, about one mile northwest of the site of the old Fort. To those who have not visited this historic spot there remains for them a surprise. I did not know we had a national cemetery so close to Cambridge. There are about ten acres in the cemetery. A brick wall about 18 inches thick and about six feet high encloses the grounds. No one is allowed to enter before sunrise or to gain entrance after sunset. About twelve hundred soldiers are sleeping their last sleep there. Over two hundred were brought there from Sydney, Nebraska, about three years ago and buried back of the cemetery proper, that is, they are not within the brick enclosure. Uniform stones or markers are placed at the head of each grave, marked, "Unknown." So we have the graves of the unknown soldiers quite near us.

There are suitable buildings for housing those whose duty it is to care for the grounds. The cemetery is well kept, presents an appearance that honors the dead that rest there. There is a restfulness that comes over one as he lingers there in the presence of the dead. They sleep well. There are trees scattered here and there thru the cemetery and their leaves, in response to the gentle breeze that blew that day, whispered of struggles, of victories, of patriotism and loyalty to the flag that floated gracefully over all; high over all



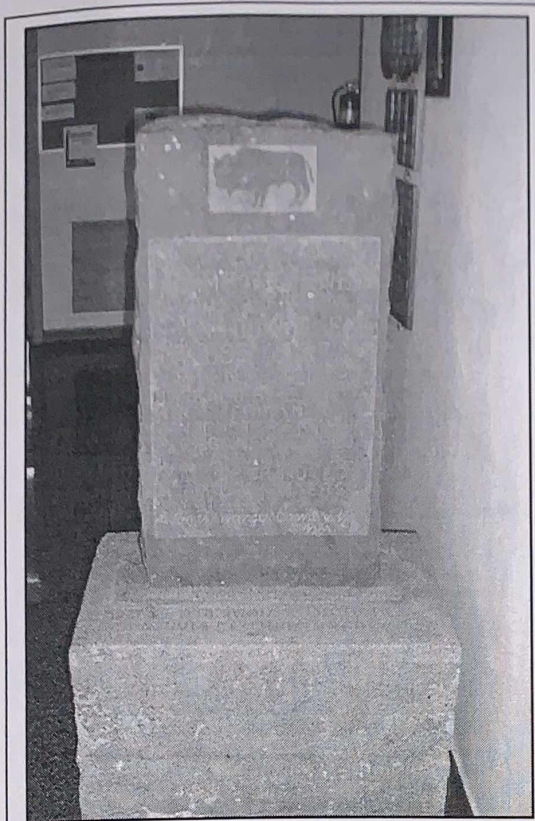
Erected near Danbury in Red Willow County in 1930, this monument pays tribute to those lives lost in the massacre of the Nelson Buck surveying party in 1869. Besides Mr. Buck, those who died included Stanley Meechan, James Waltzman, Wm. McCulloch, F. C. McFarland, J. C. Haldeman, J. L. Logan, and H. L. Levi.

Sixty years of age at the time, Nelson Buck had stated a desire for employment where he could "see the West" when he secured the surveying contract in western Nebraska. Having failed to secure adequate arms and ammunition, and lacking military escort, Buck and his party of young surveyors – none over twenty years of age – proceeded south from Fort McPherson in July of 1869. They were a few miles from Beaver Creek when a large band of Indians under Pawnee Killer attacked them. Chief Pawnee Killer later told a *World-Herald* reporter that the whites were very brave and many of his warriors were wounded.



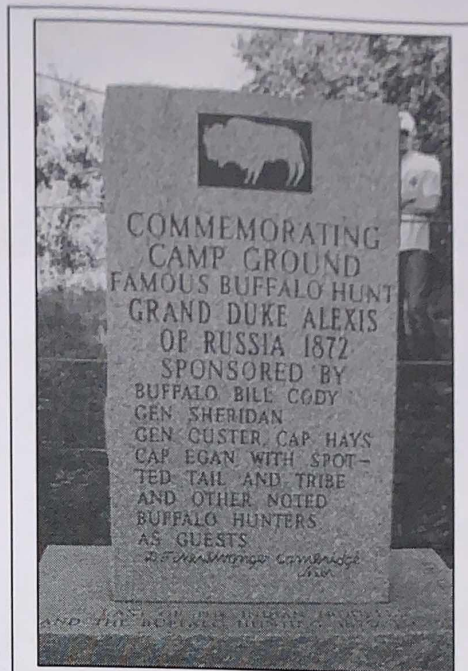
This marker erected on the north side of Highway 6 & 34 near the Red Willow School east of McCook is inscribed:

FIRST HOMESTEAD
IN RED WILLOW CO.
FILING MADE BY
WILLIAM W. W. JONES,
JANUARY 10, 1872.
BEGINNING OF THE
WHITE SETTLEMENT
AND DEVELOPEMENT
OF THE COUNTY
LATER HON. W.W.W. JONES
STATE SUPT. PUB. INST[RUCTION]
1874 AND 1875
DEDICATED 1934 TO
GEORGE C. HILL, PIONEER



D. F. Neiswanger's monument erected to commemorate the buffalo hunt staged for the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia in 1872 is now located in the Hayes County Courthouse in Hayes Center. A reproduction of the original has been installed at the site of the Duke Alexis camp. The stone bears the names of hunt sponsors Buffalo Bill Cody, Gen. Sheridan, Gen. Custer, Cap. Hays, Cap. Egan with Spotted Tail and Tribe, and other noted buffalo hunters as guests.

On the reverse side are carved the names of early settlers, Samuel Tate, first settler (date not learned); John Ryan, 1881; Joseph K. Paxton, 1870; Mary A. Keeler, 1870; Elisa Keeler, 1872; L. K. Sitler, 1874; Samuel E. Clifford, 1880; W. R. Braugh, 1868; Edna S. Keeler, 1874.



Reproduction of original monument commemorating the camp ground of the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia.



The news item in the August 2, 1934 *Cambridge Clarion* announcing the unveiling of this monument in Stockville read:

"Stockville is the mecca for everyone attending the Old Settlers picnic there today. The Frontier Old Settlers Association has a very interesting program planned that will make this year's event one of the best ever held. An important feature of the program will be the unveiling of a monument in memory of the first settlers of the county. The monument has been carved by D. F. Neiswanger of this city and will be erected on the Court House lawn in the Frontier County Seat." *Photo from the Robert Van Pelt Estate.*

7-26-1934
**Monument To Be
 Unveiled Aug. 2**

**Frontier County Citizens To
 Erect Monument In
 Honor Of Pioneers**

D. F. Neiswanger is working on a monument that will be erected on the court house lawn of Frontier county at Stockville August 2. The monument is a tribute to those who were the pioneers of that county. It has four sides, with a little history of the county on each side.

The following is the history that is being carved on the monument by Mr. Neiswanger.

The first white children born in the county, Mary Nolan, July 12, 1874; Anna Sanders, June 9, 1875; William P. Waits, June 23, 1875.

First settlement, April 1870, Arthur Ruff, Clifford Bros., and John Y. Nelson.

Frontier county was organized Jan. 18, 1873 in H. C. Clifford's Indian lodge.

The first officers appointed by the governor of Nebraska were: J. W. Kirby, clerk; Levi Carter, treasurer; S. F. Wats, judge; H. C. Clifford, sheriff; Elias Miller, assessor; E. G. Nasbit, superintendent; J. D. Kerr, registrar; John W. Nelson, surveyor; A. S. Shelly, coroner; commissioners, John Bratt, W. H. Miles, M. H. Clifford.

The first two filings made in Frontier county were John A. Lockwood, July 11, 1873; and Arch M. Mason, July 11, 1873.

The monument will be unveiled at the Old Settlers picnic in Stockville on August 2. Citizens of that county and others donated money and time to make the marker possible.

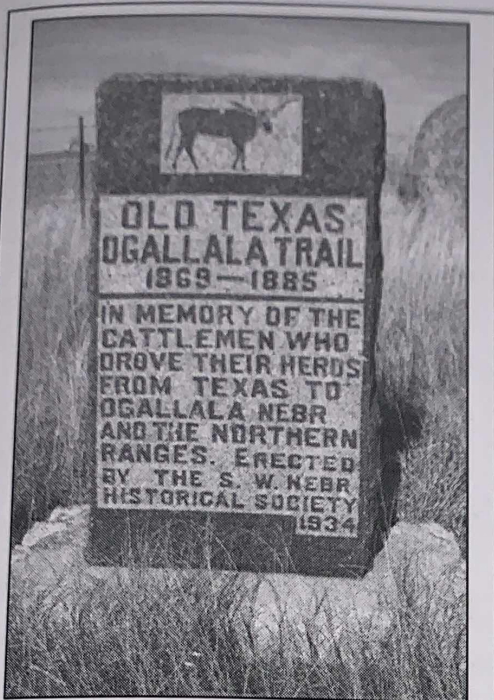
*Cambridge Clarion, July 26, 1934 as
reprinted from Trenton Republican-Leader:*

Texas Trail Marker To Be Erected Soon On Trail At Trenton

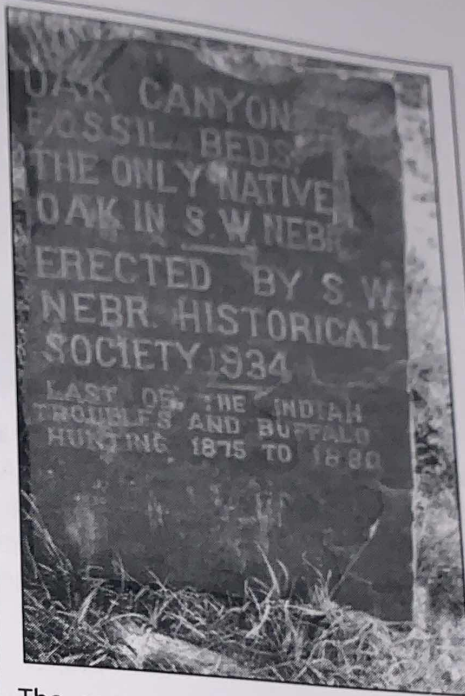
A granite monument about four feet high is in the process of manufacture at the monument works of D. F. Neiswanger, Cambridge, and will be erected within the next ten days on a site just west of the orchard in the former T. H. Britton farm west of town and will mark the course of the old "Texas Trail" as it passed through this section.

The marker will cost \$40 and is being paid for by the Southwest Nebraska Historical Society and a few personal subscriptions. The marker is to be inscribed with these words: "Old Ogallala Trail, 1869-1885. In memory of the cattlemen who used this trail in bringing their cattle from Texas to Ogallala, Nebraska and the northern range. Erected by the Southwest Nebraska Historical Society - 1934." The picture of a Texas steer will be carved above the inscription.

Arthur Carmody and W. D. Otis have been working on this proposition since last fall and have this week completed the arrangements. Mr. Carmody was in McCook Monday conferring with the secretary of the Southwest Nebraska Historical Society regarding the funds for the marker and went on to Cambridge and gave the order for cutting the stone to Mr. Neiswanger. Erection of the marker will be within the next few days so that it will be ready for inspection during the Pow Wow. The monument will be in plain view from the highway and will give Trenton its second fine historical marker, the other being the Monument to the Battle of Massacre Canyon.

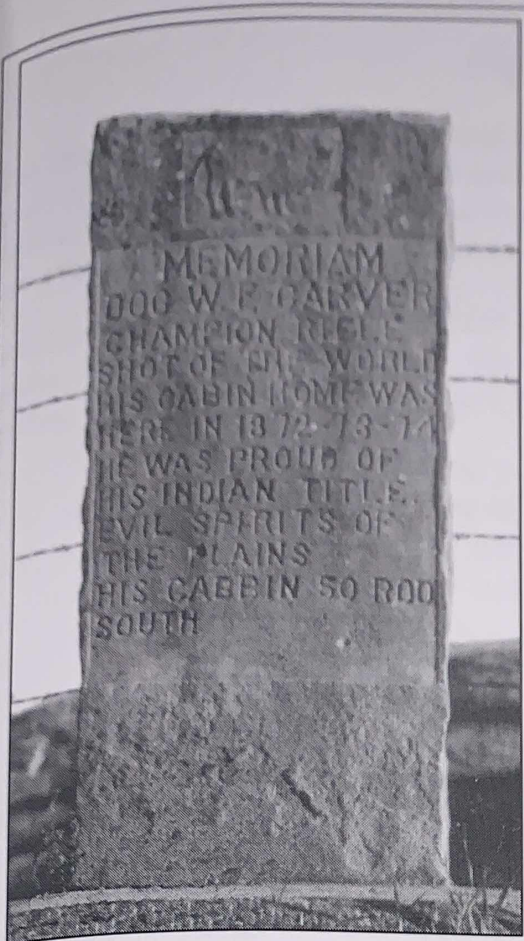


The Texas-Ogallala Trail marker is located on the north side of the highway west of Trenton in Hitchcock County. The Texas-Ogallala Trail was used to bring cattle into this section of the country from the state of Texas where there was a surplus following the Civil War. The marker was placed one mile west of Trenton near the original site of an early settlement known as Trail City.



The monument recognizing Bur Oak Canyon also notes the last of the Indian Troubles and Buffalo Hunting 1875 to 1880.

The above photocopy of a newspaper photo is from the October 1, 2008 *McCook Gazette* and was taken during the Bur Oak Canyon Symposium on September 8 & 9 of 2008. An ancient and isolated stand of bur oak trees, which follows a creek bed in a two-mile canyon southeast of Culbertson near the Kansas-Nebraska state line, presents a myriad of perplexing questions to arborists and foresters. The oldest surviving tree is estimated at 200 years old, but it is believed the stand itself is thousands of years old.

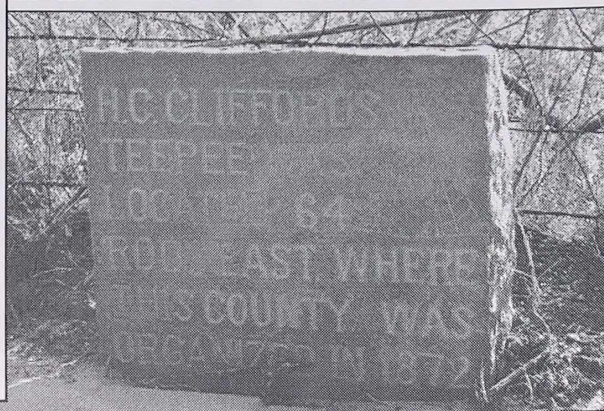


This photo of the monument memorializing W. F. "Doc" Carver and his Frontier County homestead was taken some years ago. Since then the exposure to harsh Nebraska weather has defaced the surface. The inscription reads:

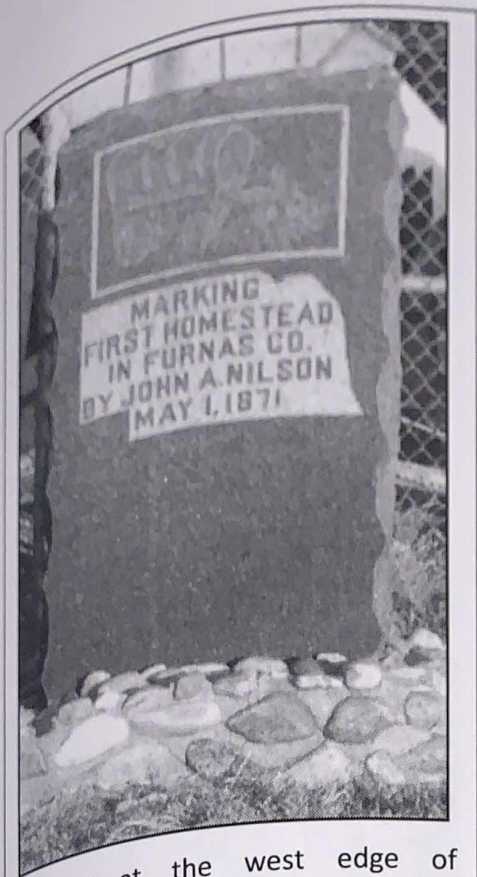
MEMORIAM
 DOC W F CARVER
 CHAMPION RIFLE
 SHOT OF THE WORLD
 HIS CABIN HOME WAS
 HERE IN 1872-73-74
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 HIS INDIAN TITLE
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 HIS CABBIN
 50 ROD[S] SOUTH



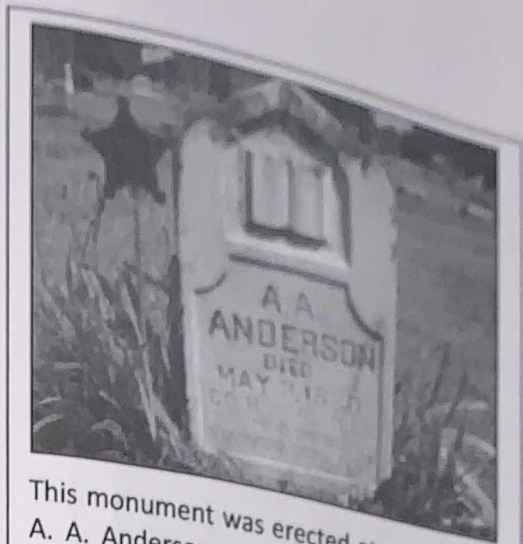
This is the way the Carver monument located just west of Medicine Creek on Road 395 southeast of Curtis appeared in 2006. Though it looked as though it might fall off the bank and was overgrown with trees and brush, the area was a bit more scenic than it is since the county road was rerouted, the low water bridge replaced, and the monument resituated in 2012.



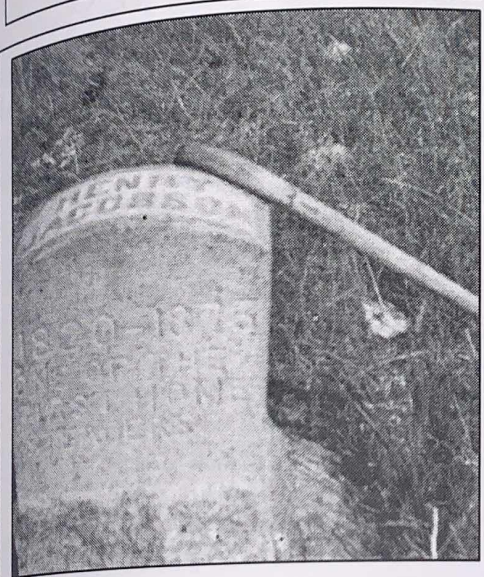
This marker on Road 397 sits on a plateau above the point where Coyote Creek once flowed into the Medicine Creek. This is where the camp of Cut-off Sioux was located at the time Frontier County was organized in Hank Clifford's teepee in 1872.



Located at the west edge of Arapahoe, this monument notes the first homestead in Furnas Co.



This monument was erected at the grave of A. A. Anderson who died on May 3, 1880. He was the "First person buried in Fairview Cemetery" at Cambridge.



This monument marks the grave of Henry Jacobson, which is located in the NE 1/4 of SW 1/4 of Garfield Precinct in Frontier County.

Photo made Sept 1973 at the
 Grave in Frontier County
 by George Mousel
 Monument placed about 1930
 by Frank Neiswonger
 on Mousel land

HENRY
 JACOBSON
 1820-1875
 ONE OF THE
 FIRST HOME
 STEADERS

NE 1/4 SW 1/4
 SEC. 25
 Garfield P.

George Mousel made detailed notes on the back of the photo to the left.

High Water Markers

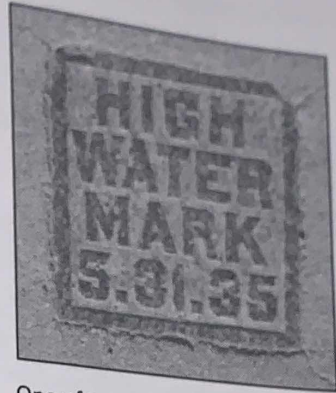
The flood that swept through the Republican River Valley on May 31, 1935, "destroyed everything within its path, a swath several miles wide that enveloped the entire valley, bluff-to-bluff... It wreaked death and destruction unbelievable to those persons who had lived their entire lives on the river bottom of the normally placid, meandering stream."¹

With the devastation of the Republican River flood still fresh on the minds of Republican Valley residents, D. F. Neiswanger launched another project that employed his stone-cutting skills. As reported in the January 23, 1936 Cambridge Clarion:

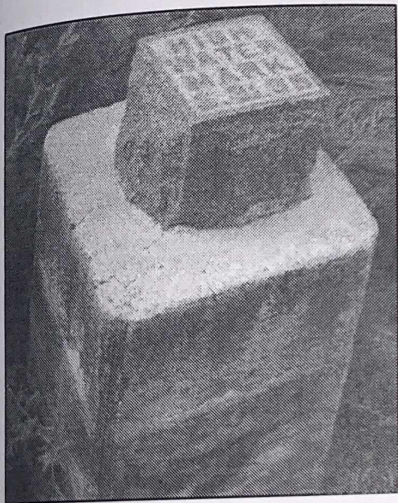
D. F. Neiswanger is cutting a marker to be placed here in Cambridge to mark the high water mark in the May flood. The stone will be placed by the curb near the Cambridge Lumber Co. and has the following inscription: "High Water Mark, 5-31-35."

At the time of the flood a mark was made near the Lumber Co. to show where the water came to when it was the highest. Mr. Neiswanger says that in future years people would probably guess, wonder and argue as to the highest point the water reached, and this marker will settle all arguments for Cambridge people, and remove any doubt from anyone's mind.

The marker is small and will stand only a few inches above the ground and will serve the purpose in years to come...



One of two High Water markers in Cambridge is located at Faw Motor Company's lot, twenty feet south of the intersection, flush in ground.



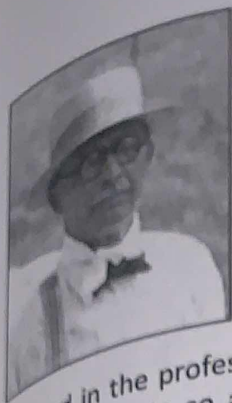
This marker is located south of the river bridge on the north side of Haigler, Nebraska.

It is believed eight of these markers were set in the following months, although only seven have been located. The markers were of granite with a flat, polished top measuring eight by eight inches. The inscription was cut in raised letters.

The high water markers that have been located include two in Cambridge, and one each at or near Haigler, Trenton, Indianola, Bartley, and Edison. The Indianola marker has been removed from south of the Republican River and is now in Indianola's City Hall.

¹Hastings Daily Tribune, date unknown, as quoted by Marlene Wilmot in *Bluff-to-Bluff; The 1935 Republican River Flood*, (Greeley, Colorado: Wilmot Ventures, Inc., 1995), p. 4.

The Life & Legacy of D. F. Neiswanger



D. F. Neiswanger passed away at the age of eighty-one in April of 1939. In reporting his death, the April 20, 1939 Cambridge Clarion declared, "*Cambridge probably never has had a better friend than Frank Neiswanger. He was true and loyal to his many friends in this community, and was loyal to the town.*"

David Frank Neiswanger was born at Washington, Iowa, in 1858. He migrated to Nebraska in 1879 and lived several places before moving to Cambridge with his wife, Arminnie, in 1883. He first started a livery stable, which he operated for one year. He then engaged in the profession of barbering for thirty-five years. As a sideline Mr. Neiswanger sold monuments so after selling his barber shop he established a monument business, Neiswanger Monument Works.

It was stated in his obituary that he sold his barber shop to devote more time to the monument business, "*and also to making and placing of historical markers at various points of interest.*" Certainly the most enduring evidence of his many contributions to the community and the surrounding area are his monuments – the "Neiswanger Monuments." Between the years 1924 and 1936 it is believed that Mr. Neiswanger placed twenty-nine monuments marking places of historical interest. All but two of these have been located, or at least identified by a photo. One of the missing two monuments is a high water marker, and there is no description of the remaining elusive monument.

While most of the Neiswanger monuments were made of Colorado sandstone, some were made of native Nebraska stone. It seems that for the most part the stone was secured expressly for the purpose of the monument Neiswanger had in mind, but at least one appears to be a monument originally intended for a cemetery headstone.

It has been eighty or ninety years since these monuments were erected. Depending on their location and position some have stood the exposure to elements in fine shape; others have not. The monument to the buffalo hunt of the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia is now sheltered in the entryway of the Hayes County Court House. The monument, which at one time stood in McKinley Park in Cambridge, has been moved to a more protected and visible location in front of the Cambridge Museum. Several monuments have been surrounded by a protective barrier of concrete, or have in different ways been more firmly secured; others still need help. Some stand along major roadways where they can be easily viewed; others are located in obscure spots and offer a challenge to the adventurous history buff willing to seek them out. All are a lasting testimony to the vision of D. F. Neiswanger and his desire to "set in stone" the history of southwest Nebraska.

High Water Markers

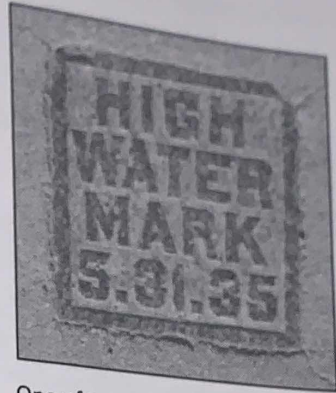
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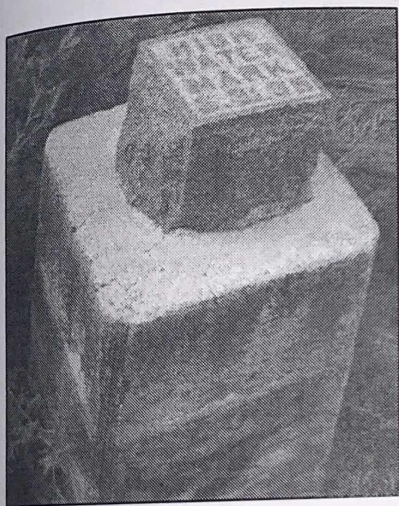
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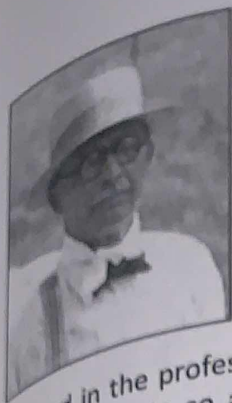
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Turnas County Genealogical Society

PO BOX 391
BEAVER CITY, NE 68926-0391

*Eula M. Brown
P.O. Box 166
Beaver City, NE 68926*

September 26, 2007

Att: Virginia Roberts

Enclosed are the following on the Neiswanger name.....

1. Community Mourns Death of D.F. Neiswanger
2. Obituary of David Franklin Neiswanger
3. Obituary of his wife - Arminna A. Neiswanger copied from the Cambridge Clarion- 3 July 1947
4. Pages - 157- 188- 158- 194 - 220 - 249 - 157 - 188 - 158 - 194 - 220
5. copied from the Cambridge History Book 1874 - 1974
5. Copy of Cambridge Neiswanger burials
6. Copy of the Frank Neiswanger Obituary file cards showing the mention of the 29 Historical markers he erected
7. Copy of the file card - David Neiswanger -the father of D.F.
- 8, 9. Copy of the full obituary of David Neiswanger showing that D.F. Neiswanger had a sister named - Elmira Snyder - I found that her husband was Jacob Snyder and they had three sons one of which was named Ralph Snyder buried in the Cambridge Cemetery 1875 - 1936. His obituary file card told that his parents were Jacob Snyder and Elmira.
Jacob Snyder is buried in the Tyrone Cemetery and Elmira is buried in the Cambridge Cemetery as well as Ralph Snyder.

NEISWANGER

D. FRANK NEISWANGER

- B. 18 Jan 1853 Washington, Iowa
- M. 31 Aug 1881 Wilber, Nebraska
- D. 13 April 1939 Cambridge, Nebraska
- B. Cambridge Cemetery
- S. Arminnie Randolph
- C. Gladys

Cambridge Clarion 20 April 1939
(cont)

NEISWANGER

Came to Cambridge, Nebraska in 1883
started livery stable for one year.
Started and operated barber shop for
thirty-five years, Left this trade and
opened monument shop for fifteen years,
also had hardware, farm implement manufac-
turing plant. While in monument business
had hobby of marking historical places.
Erected monuments on Old McPherson Trail,
First homestead in Furnas County and
Several other's, twenty-nine all together.

Cambridge Clarion 20 April 1939