

A SHORT BIOGRAPHY

of the life

of

FANNIE CLARISSA GIDDINGS

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Written By

A. Gaylord Wilson

Dec. 25, 1932

FOREWORD

The following pages contain incidents which occurred in the life of Fannie Clarissa Giddings.

This short biography is based on material gained from several conversation periods during interviews with her.

These interviews took place periodically during the 90th and 91st years of Grandma Norris's life.

The writer has attempted to give the most of the data as given by her in her own words.

Additions and corrections will be made from time to time as the information develops.

---The Writer.



FANNIE CLARRISSA GIDDINGS
AGE 90

Born June 27, 1841

Died Feb 22, 1930

PARENTAGE

- - -

Father--Charles Woodbury Giddings
Born at Hartford, Connecticut May 28, 1810
Died - - - - - December 23, 1879

Grandmother--Lucy (Demming) Giddings
Born Preston, Connecticut June 17, 1783
Died Herrick, Penna June 18, 1861

Grandfather--Captain James Giddings
Born Preston, Connecticut June 30, 1781
Died Herrick, Penna December 26, 1863

Mother--Clarissa Griffing Giddings
Born December 29, 1810 Richmond, Mass.
Died Table Rock, Nebraska October 17, 1880

Grandfather--John Griffing
Grandmother--Lydia Griffing

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CHILDREN

- - -

Charles Ira, Table Rock, Nebraska
Born December 3, 1860 Died June 6, 1946
Clarissa Emeline, Table Rock, Nebraska
Born March 29, 1862 Died January 7, 1933
Sue Love, Table Rock, Nebraska
Born March 9, 1864 Died February 3, 1957
Benjamin Franklin, Glendale, California
Born March 30, 1866 Died August 29, 1946
John
Born June 28, 1869 Died September 23, 1870
Laura Holmes
Born January 26, 1872 Died August 1, 1873
Royal Hobart, Upton Wyoming
Born November 2, 1874 Died December 1959
Horace Lathrop, Hyannis, Massachusetts
Born November 26, 1876 Died September 29, 1947
Clinton Chauncey, Omaha, Nebraska
Born January 8, 1879 Died December 10, 1947
Lydia Gertrude, Hemingford, Nebraska
Born February 18, 1881 Died September 19, 1963

(Revised)

(Refer to "The Family Tree" prepared by John Charles and Elizabeth Norris Martin and presented to Grandma Norris on her birthday in the year 1932)

FANNIE CLARISSA GIDDINGS

I n the little town of Newark Center, New York, on June 27, 1841, life began for Fannie Clarissa Giddings. This new life was destined to become one of the loveliest and one of the most wholesome characters that God ever new.

For nearly 92 years, this sweet-dispositioned, home-loving personality has been spreading joy and happiness to all those with whom she came into contact.

After a visit with "Grandma," for that is what we all call her, one leaves with the idea that life is very worth while, especially if thoughts are of others. For Grandma lives and thinks constantly of others. The happiness of her loved ones is her happiness. Their sorrows are her sorrows.

When we call her "Grandma," it is with a feeling of reverence and respect--for to know her is to love her and respect her--because of the life she lives.

Grandma's life is filled with tales of adventure, romance, pathos, courage, humor, and history.

It is to relate a few of such incidents that we reveal the results of a few interviews with her.

As to her parentage, we refer you to the preceding pages where you will find the names of her family for at least two generations back.

"What do you remember of your early childhood, Grandma?" she was asked.

"I cant seem to remember any good things," Grandma would reply in her modest way. "About the first thing I remember was the time sister Louisa and I were sitting on the step of the woodshed. I was three years old then. Louisa had a candy apple and I wanted it. So I pushed her off the step and knocked the wind out of her."

"Did you get the candy apple?" I asked her.

"No. All I got was a whipping."

"My father always believed in the saying, 'Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child.' He was a Methodist minister and believed that his children should be a guiding pattern for all other children. I guess that is why I liked to have some real fun when he wasnt around."

"I used to like to climb trees. There were

lots of trees where we lived, and I spent lots of time climbing them. One day, I remember, my young brother Giles and I were out in the yard playing. I climbed up a tree, and Giles tried to follow. He climbed part way, then fell and broke his arm. As usual, I got a whipping. I guess I got a whipping most every day when I was young."

"One day at the table, sister Lydia took a spoon and chewed it. Father blamed me, and, of course, I got a whipping. He whipped me until I was almost sick. I finally had to tell him I did do it, so he would quit punishing me."

"Father was very strict about what we read. We had to let him read everything first before we were allowed to read it. I once got the book "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and forgot to show it to Father first. I started to read the story. Father found it out, and I got a whipping for it. He didnt object if I read the book, but he whipped me for not showing it to him first."

"We had to move every two years. We lived in New York State until I was eight years old. Then

we moved to Troy, Pennsylvania, and later lived in Wyoming Valley. Other Pennsylvania towns where we lived were Pittston, Homesdale, and Carbondale."

"While we were living in Carbondale, Father had a little school house on his circuit called Smoky Hollow. This later became the city of Scranton, Pennsylvania."

"We lived in Susquehanna Valley shortly after the Indian Massacre. Pittston and Kingston, where we lived, built monuments to commemorate this massacre."

"The Methodist Conference Seminary that Father attended was held at Kingsford, Pa. This was the home of former Governor Weaver. Mr. Weaver's mother attended this Seminary for four years. This was called the Wyoming Seminary, and was attended, also, by Bishop Keeney."

EDUCATION

The most of Grandma's education was received in her home. She did not attend a school until she was 13 years of age. Only three months of her life

were spent in a public school. She studied three and a half years at a Conference Seminary at Kingston, Pa. This was a privately owned school, and, of course, was not financed by public funds. There were very few public schools at that time. Most of them were private, and education was at a premium.

School discipline at that time was very rigid. Boys and girls were kept separated constantly, with one exception. About once a week, the school would sponsor a social function at which both boys and girls were allowed to attend. These affairs, of course, were well chaperoned.

Lights were out at 9:00 o'clock every night. Monitors checked up on all the girls both in the school dormitory and in private homes, to see that school rules were obeyed.

At the school social affairs, the entertainment consisted of singing and games. Then a grand march with the boys was allowed to the tune of music. No dancing nor eats were allowed. The girls were not allowed boy escorts to their homes. They were chaperoned on the way home by monitors.

"Whenever we left the school to go anywhere,"

said Grandma, "we had student monitors for chaperones. One went in front and one behind us. Sometimes we girls would run ahead and try to get away from the chaperones, in order to get a little freedom. We used to dodge up the alleys and try to get away from them."

"Did you ever succeed in getting away?" I asked.

"Yes, once in a while."

"What did they do about it?"

"I had to carry a cork arm around with me for a while. The principal tied a string around my arm and then fastened this to a cork arm. Another time I was punished by having to stand in the corner for a while."

"What subjects did you study in school?"

"I remember Geometry. We had to memorize every Theorem, rule, and principle, and recite them word for word. I studied French, Latin, and German. I didn't like Latin. I liked German, but all I can remember is what I used to speak to our German hired lady who worked for us. I knew enough to put her to work, and keep her at it." (What words does it take to do that, Grandma?)

"Other subjects taught at the Seminary included instruction in Washing, Ironing, Sewing, Darning, Embroidering, Knitting, and most everything else in home work, except Cooking. We had to learn that at home."

WESTWARD

During those early years, men with a spirit of adventure and pioneering, had the longing to go west. One man who had this desire was Charles Woodbury Giddings, the father of our "Grandma."

He had gone west to the plains of Nebraska and had found a location he thought was a suitable place for his family to find happiness.

Returning to Pennsylvania, Mr. Giddings organized a company of pioneers and made plans for starting west.. This organization, called the Nebraska Settlement Company, was made up mostly of Methodist ministers. However, men of other occupations and professions were included. There were blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, dentists, and others.

The members of the company bought land from the government at \$1.25 per acre.

"The first of May, 1858, we started west. I was seventeen years old then. We traveled by train to St. Louis. This was the farthest point west the trains ran at that time."

"There were only four cars on the train and they were very crowded. We had to sit three or four in a seat. And we had to sleep that way on the train for three different nights."

"Our train was detained at one place in Indiana where high water had washed out the tracks. They had to build a narrow board bridge so that the passengers could be unloaded and taken to dry land until the high water receded."

"This was the only time we were off the train during our journey. Our rail trip ended at St. Louis and began at Scranton. Ten years before this time, there was no city of Scranton. Then they had a boom, caused by the building of this railroad and the mining of anthracite coal."

"We spent about two days in St. Louis. During this time, Father bought a horse, wagon, and some supplies to take with us. Our furniture was shipped from Scranton. We took it up the river and stored

it at Aspinwall until we had a place for it. Later we returned with an ox team and took our furniture to Table Rock. "

"We arrived in St. Louis about a week after leaving Pennsylvania. Mother's brother, Uncle James, who lived in Topeka, a missionary working with the Indians, met us at St. Louis and went part way with us up the river. The boat went up the river once a week from St. Louis to Omaha."

"Boarding this river boat at St. Louis, we started up the Mississippi toward St. Joseph. All went well until the boat struck a snag and tore off one of the big water wheels. It also rammed a big hole in the prow of the boat. This happened just a short distance from St. Joseph. We were stranded here nearly a week awaiting repairs. We stayed right on the boat most of the time. We took one trip to see an Indian camp, but the rest of the time we just waited on the boat. At that time St. Joseph was just a few little old shacks. Indians would flock around the bank of the river begging from the passengers on the boat, but the Indians were not allowed on deck."

"The Mississippi River was clear and the Missouri was muddy. You would see clear and muddy streams

running along side by side in the river for many miles before merging."

Landing at Aspinwall, the remainder of the journey was to be made by team and wagon, and afoot.

"Father, Mother, and four of us children made the trip together from Aspinwall. I walked behind the wagon, holding on to it to keep from stumbling and falling. This was during the rainy season and in some of the bottom lands, we had to wade through water from shoe top deep to deeper."

Leaving Aspinwall at noon, at midnight, on May 25, 1858, a tired, footsore, and I imagine a bit homesick family pitched camp at the present site of Table Rock. This was to be their future home.

Another company of settlers had preceded this party. Included in the group were: Will Fellers, the father of Billie Fellers, Andrew Fellers, and Ephram Wheeler. (Mrs. Wheeler was a sister of the Fellers'.)

In order to be granted a town site by the government, it was necessary to have eight buildings. The land was bought from the government at \$1.25 an acre, and homes were soon built.

"Father had come out before--looked over the country and decided on a place for the settlement. There were already three buildings when we arrived. Father built one for a store and postoffice."

"The first building to be erected was a two-story frame hotel building. This was built by the Settlement Company on the site where the present Methodist church building now stands. (Clara Norris was born in this building.) Father loaned the money to build the hotel, but it was unsuccessful and he had to take it over on a foreclosure. Homes were built of log or mud. Most houses had a fire place for cooking. We bought a stove while we were in St. Louis, so we didnt need a fire place."

"We used wood for fuel most of the time. We later dug up some coal down in the pasture which is now located south of the railroad, by Edgar's home. We made our own candles from tallow gotten from cattle which we butchered."

LIFE IN NEBRASKA

"The first summer after we arrived, Father fixed up some seats in the front room of our house, and I

was the school teacher for the neighborhood children. I started with fourteen pupils. Some of my pupils were older than I. School lasted all during the three summer months. The only books we had to use were those we could gather up from the families there. Some had brought a few books with them."

"Pupils studied together out of the same books. We studied Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. First we learned the A, B, C's and the multiplication tables. We learned the times tables by singing them."

"One of my pupils did not know one letter from another. He was older than I. Two of my pupils were the McNeill boys. They were cousins of Charlie Brock's. Both enlisted in the army during the Civil War. One was killed. The other married a southern girl and stayed in the south to live. One of the McNeill girls was a wife of Gabe Morton, and the other was the first wife of Ben Herr."

"What salary did they pay you for teaching, Grandma?" I asked.

"One family who sent two boys to school gave me a sow pig. Another family sent me some sorghum molasses. That was all the salary I got."

"The first school building was built back off the road near where the Karas garage is now located. This was a stone school building, erected in the spring of 1859. The school was paid for by those who were interested. Most of the building was paid for by Father. The first school teacher in the building was a Mr. Tyler."

"We held church every Sunday at our house. We had several ministers in our company, so we had no trouble in getting leaders for our meetings. George Griffing, the father of Ole Griffing, and young George Griffing, was one of the ministers who came out with our company. He lost his wife during the first year in Nebraska."

We later held church service in the school house. It was three years before our first church building was erected. The first church building was the one which is now occupied by the McKnight family east of the creek. Rev. Arnold was the first to organize a church. He later took typhoid fever and nearly died. He returned to Pennsylvania shortly after that."

"Once in a while we drove over to Pawnee City

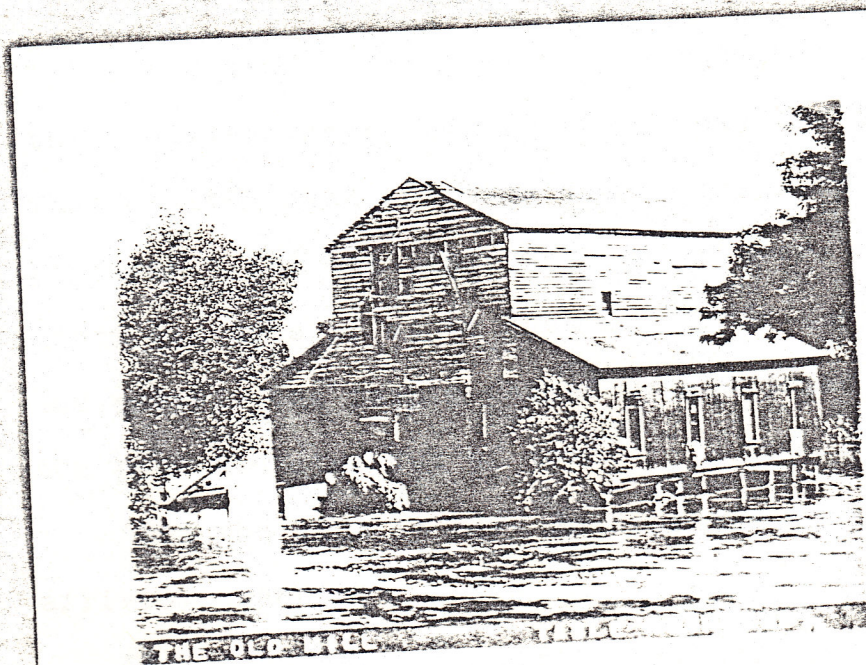
in an ox cart to attend meetings there. We were quite a Methodist family. My Father, Grandfather, and Great Grandfather were all Methodist ministers."

"Did anything exciting happen after you came here, Grandma?"

"Well, I remember the first excitement after we arrived was the hanging of some horse thieves. Two fine horses belonging to Andrew Fellers were stolen. Two of the thieves were caught the next day and were hung from a tree this side of the bridge, just north of the old mill by the Nemaha. The third thief got away, but they caught him the next day when he stopped to get aid for a wound. He was hung down by the Nemaha."

"It was about the third year we were here that the old mill was built down by the Nemaha. This is where everyone took their grain to be ground. I remember one day a lady went to the mill to see her husband who worked there. She was standing by the mill wheel talking to him, when her dress caught and she was thrown against the big wheel and instantly killed."

"We used to hold camp meetings down near "The Rocks." Meetings were held here each year for sev-



A scene at THE OLD MILL during one of the many floods of the Nemaha River. North of this mill was the scene of the hanging of the horse-thieves from a tree. This is the mill where the run-a-way slaves were brought to be met by friends who would take them on to the next underground station.

eral years. People would come from all directions to tent during the whole season."

"At one of these meetings, during his prayer, the minister prayed for a (spiritual) cyclone. That night a real one came and nearly blew everyone away. All the tents were blown down, and the storm did lots of other damage. After the storm had passed, the people ganged up and tried to run the poor minister out of town."

"Did you like it here in Nebraska when you first arrived, Grandma?"

"I was homesick at first. Father promised me when I came out that I could go back to Pennsylvania after four years, but I never did get to. But I didnt care much. I liked it out here after I had been here for a while."

"The second year out here was a hard one. For three months we had no sugar or flour. Most everyone had enough money they brought with them to last through the first year. We had supplies sent up to us from Brownsville. But the second year, no one had any money, and crops were very poor. We had lots of fruit, and got along as best we could. There were some tomatoes, but we couldnt eat them. We

thought they were poison. We called them "Love Apples."

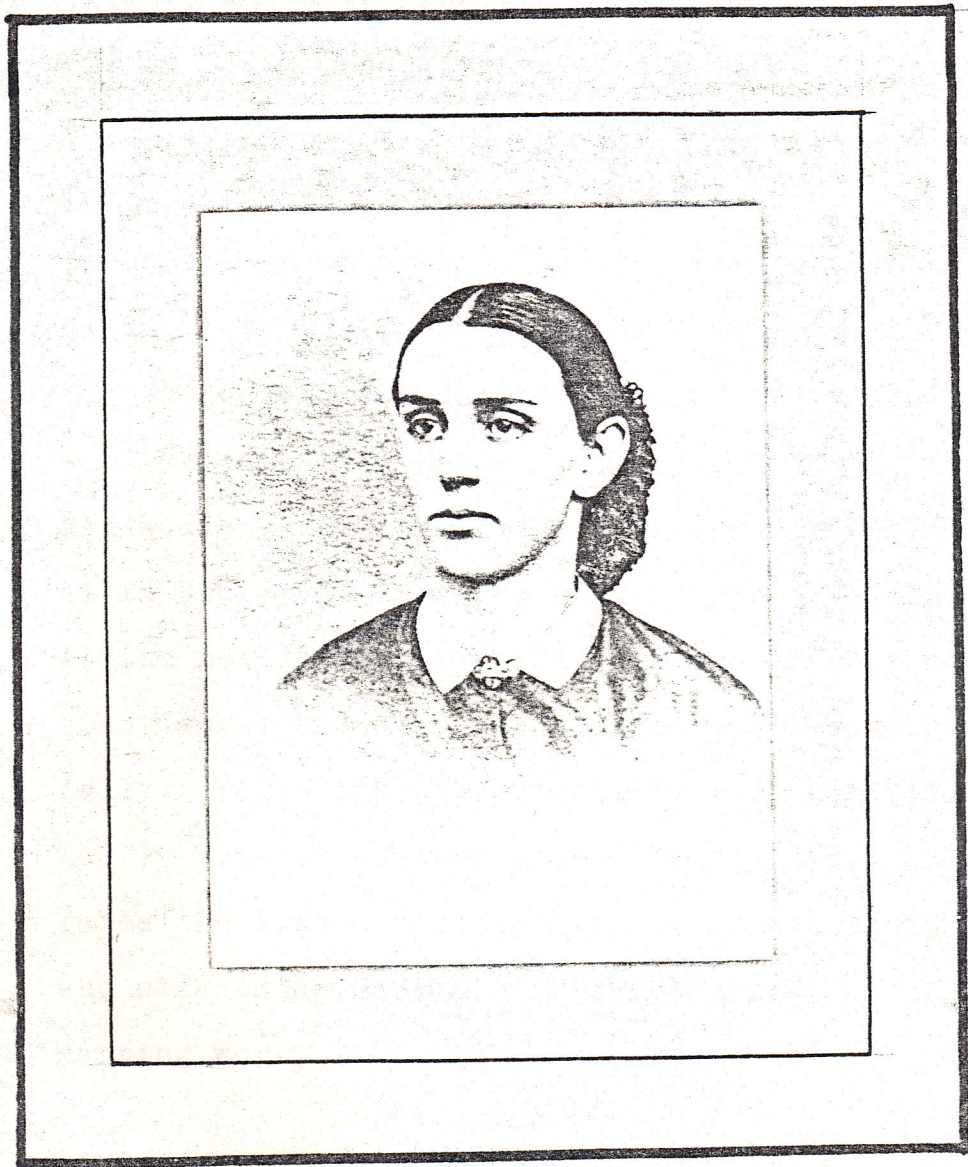
"The trip to Nebraska as a whole was a disappointment. It was more of an undertaking than Father had thought for. We went through lots of hardships, and competition."

"Some Brownsville men had begun a town on the east side of the Nemaha. They tried to stake off a town on the west side, but Father bought them off. A man had to stay six months in order to prove up on a claim. During the time some of the men were proving their claims, we kept them at our house."

"What did you do for good times?" I asked Grandma.

"We young ones had a good time all the time. There were 20 boys in the neighborhood and only 6 girls. Why shouldnt we have a good time? We had ox cart and horseback parties. Every Sunday all the boys would come to see us six girls and we would have a big time."

"I remember my first trip to Lincoln. A group of men wanted to start a salt mill near Salt Creek where Lincoln is now located. They wanted Father to



Fannie Giddings

Age 25

invest, and help promote the project. Father, sister Lydia, and I drove to the place so Father could investigate. There was no town of Lincoln then. It took us the most of three days to make the trip one way. We stayed at farm houses at nights. We looked over the salt mill proposition and Father did not accept it, so we returned home."

Grandma then went on to explain how a Literary society was formed the fall after their arrival in Nebraska. Both boys and girls were members. At the meetings, the first part was devoted to literary work, and the rest of the time was spent socially. (This probably grew into a matrimonial bureau.) However, Grandma, then Fannie Giddings, was rated the finest looking girl in Pawnee County. And she also later carried off first prize on her darning work.

MARRIAGE

Fannie Clarissa Giddings became the wife of Chauncey Norris on March 1, 1860. The young bride was 18 years of age.

"Chauncey boarded at our house. That is the



Chauncey Hobart Norris.

way we became acquainted. But we young folks always went places in a group. I had never been anywhere with Chauncey alone. We were engaged to be married just one day. He proposed marriage one night and we were married the next."

"There were three couples of us who used to go places together. We would vie with one another over which would be the first to be married. We all planned together just what we would do to the couple who got married first. This all happened the night we became engaged. Then we up and got married and skipped out the next night. Chauncey rode horse-back to Old Cincinnati on our wedding day to get the license."

"We had a fruit cake for our wedding. The fruit was dried tomatoes, dried plums, and dried grapes. The tomatoes were soaked in molasses and then dried. The cake was made from corn meal."

"We were married at Griffings, with only Mr. and Mrs. Griffing and one of my uncles present."

"We left shortly for Falls City where Mr. Norris managed a store for Mr. Burbank. The business failed and Burbank sold the store to Mr. Norris on credit."

"We lived in Falls City for six years. One and one-half years of this time Mr. Norris spent in the service during the Civil War. The store building and the house next to it burned down. We had some insurance on it, but not enough."

AT THE INDIAN RESERVATION

At the time of the Civil War Mr. Norris organized Company G, with men from Richardson County. He ranked as First Lieutenant. The company stayed at Falls City during the winter. They were then mustered in at Omaha and sent on up to Sioux City. From here they went to South Dakota to fight Indians. The Indians took advantage of the war period and had an outbreak at the same time. The Otoes and Potawatama Indians camped near Table Rock that winter.

Following the war, Mr. Norris was given the rank of Major, and was sent to the Indian Reservation down between Rulo and White Cloud, Kansas. He was given the Agency of this reservation by the government. This "Agency" included the territory where Hiawatha, Kansas now stands, on this side of the Nemaha.

"When Grant was elected president, he placed Quakers in charge of all Indian Reservations, so we stayed at the Agency just three years. We took four children there with us: Charlie, Sue, Clara, and Frank."

"The Indians were very friendly most of the time. I remember one time I was awfully scared. I was alone with the children. Mr. Norris had gone to Washington."

"The Railroad Company wanted to buy some land belonging to the Reservation. Mr. Norris and the Chiefs had to go to Washington to consult Officials. The young Indians wanted to go too, and they did not like it that they couldnt. It was necessary for Mr. Norris to meet the chiefs at the station at night so the young Indians would not know when they left. The young fellows found it out, and they were angry. They called a mass meeting, donned war paint and had a war dance. They would come up close to the house and open their blankets to show their war paint in order to try to scare us. They did scare us. Nothing happened and when Mr. Norris returned, the Indians quieted down."

"One time while we were living on the agency, I started on horseback to the postoffice. Sue, then three years old, followed on foot. I turned at the fork of the road and she went the wrong way and became lost. An Indian found her crying, and took her to his home. A girl at the Indian's home who had worked for us, recognized Sue, and the Indian brought her home, after she had been gone about three hours. Mr. Norris gave the Indian two dollars. A few days later, another Indian came to our home bringing Frank, thinking he would get paid. Frank had not been lost, however. The Indian said, 'Squaw two dollars, little chief worth five dollars.' Mr. Norris told him to get out, and he got. None of the children needed bringing home after that."

Another time Grandma was alone in the house working on a pattern on the floor. The children were in the yard playing. An Indian walked boldly into the house, planted himself in an easy chair, and got out his big whip. He waived this back and forth in front of Grandma and demanded that she give him some money. He kept this up for a while until Grandma slipped out and called a man who was outside working.

The Indian quickly left, but he was reported to the chief. The guilty Indian was forced to leave before nightfall.

It was lawful for Indians to have as many wives as they wanted. And since the government was paying each male Indian according to the number of children he had, the Indians took on plenty of wives in marriage. It was a good financial investment.

"The Indians used to play ball much of the time. They used a stick with a small basketlike affair on one end, and they would catch and throw the ball with the use of this. They did not touch the ball with their hands."

"Indians would travel constantly between the White Cloud Agency and Barneston. There was another Reservation near that place at that time."

"The first time Indians ever visited our home, we learned lots about Indians. There were several who had stopped at our house for breakfast. We passed them a plate of griddle cakes. The first Indian took the plate, unfolded his blanket, and dumped the whole plate full in it. When the sugar was passed, the first one dumped the whole bowl full in his blanket. They took all the doughnuts we had. So the next

time we had Indians at our house, we pro-rated all of the food, and none was passed."

"A few men from Table Rock had gone to Kansas near the Reservation to homestead. At this time sister Lydia and her husband were living at the Agency. Lydia's husband, John Gere, was a teacher on the Reservation. This was in 1871. The Indians had become angered because of the white men taking so much of the land, and driving so many buffalo from their land, so the Indians did not have any hunting."

"John Gere, and four other men were out planting corn at one time. Usually they took their guns with them for protection, but this was the first day they had left their weapons at home. They had just a few more rows of corn to plant, when they were attacked by Indians. Having no means of self-defense, they were at the mercy of the Indians. Three of the men were killed. The other two escaped down the creek and crossed over under cover of the underbrush."

"Lydia and her husband lived at the Agency about a year and a half. Mr. Gere was hired by the government to teach the Indians how to farm. All of the

Indians had houses, but they would build tepees in their front yard to live in. They did not like the houses. Lydia taught school for six months on the Agency while we were there. Clothes were given all those who attended school. Some Indians would come just long enough to get the clothes and would then quit. They did not attend school if they didnt want to."

"Indians were given their pay allotment twice a year. At this time, all kinds of swindlers would be on hand to try to get as much of the Indians money as possible. These men would offer the Indians liquor for their extra money. Swindlers became such a nuisance, the Indians would not have enough money left to pay for their groveries, etc. The store-keeper was finally compelled to charge to the Indians, and then he would get his pay first, before they had time to spend it for liquor, or other things." Sometimes it was necessary to have State Troops on hand payday in order to keep order and see that justice was done."

"One Indian got dead drunk on payday. Some of the other Indians were drunk also, and they thought

the one poor fellow was really dead. So they took him and buried him. It was not discovered until a day and a half later, and then it was too late."

THE UNDERGROUND RAILWAY

After leaving the Reservation, Grandma and her family returned to Table Rock, where Mr. Norris entered the Mercantile business which he managed for the rest of his years. One of the most interesting tales of early life in Table Rock is that of the "Underground Railway" for the run-a-way slaves.

Congress had passed a law making everyone responsible for picking up and arresting run-a-way slaves. A reward of \$300 each was offered for the return of these slaves. No slave dare be away from home without a written permit from his master. He would be liable to arrest if he did not have this permit.

Many were not in sympathy with this action, and since others were on the constant lookout for the run-aways, an "underground railway" was established with Table Rock as one station. At each station were those who were sympathizers of the slaves, and would



THE SECOND NORRIS STORE BUILDING

The south part of this building still stands.
The Argus office stands to the right, with
F. H. Taylor seen standing in front.



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conceal them from reward seekers, then send them on to the next station enroute to Canada where they would have permanent freedom.

"Father had charge of the station at Table Rock and used the basement of the house for this purpose. Mr. Norris was not in sympathy with the run-a-ways, and this is the main cause for the two men not being^{on} such friendly terms. One cold winter night, four negroes stopped at our house for protection and food. One was an old man, and father could not turn them out. He gave them warm straw beds in the basement. They ate their meals in the kitchen. We had to keep them four days. When they were ready to leave, some friends took their clothes and belongings and put them in bags making believe they were going to the mill with grain. In the meantime, the slaves crept down the creek to the mill where the wagon awaited to take them to Peru and on to the next underground station. The negroes were always well-armed and ready for anything. They were willing workers, cutting wood or anything else that should be done in return for their keep."



"GRANDMA"

Age 42



This building was located on the site just south of the present highway No. 4 leading to Humboldt and to the west of the Lincoln tracks. It was at this station that Grandma boarded the first train to run from Table Rock to Lincoln.

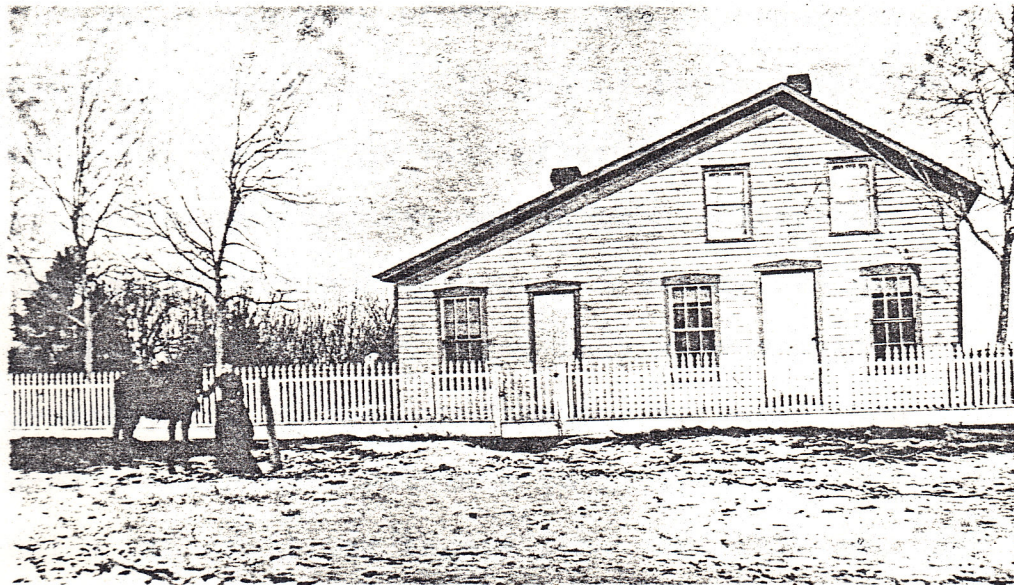
Seen on the handcar from left to right are: Ed Regan, section boss; Mr. Stafford; Nick Goodenkauf, father of Frank; Mr. Schafer; and standing on the platform with thumbs behind vest is Charlie Chambers, the depot agent.



Before the fire!



After the fire of 1920



THE FIRST NORRIS HOME IN TABLE ROCK

This house was built on the present site of the Norris home. It was built and occupied just after Grandma and her family returned to Table Rock from the Kansas Indian Agency. The left part and second floor was used as a home, and the right section for a store room where the original Norris Mercantile store was located. Clara Norris may be seen to the left, holding the bridle of the horse.

GRASSHOPPER DAYS

About the 20th of July, 1874, Nebraskans witnessed a plague caused by one of man's worst enemies. It was in the late afternoon. The sun grew dim and a haze covered the horizon. Everyone thought a storm was brewing. A cloud rose higher and nearer. The next thing they knew a myriad of grasshoppers stormed in from the northwest and covered everything. Within a short time, there was not a bit of living vegetation. The thriving crop of tall corn became short, bare stocks. Houses were plastered up to a foot thick with the insects. Trees were literally covered.

The following description of "Grasshopper Days" in Nebraska is taken from the book, "A Lantern in Her Hand," by Bess Streeter Aldrich.

"For a moment they stood together looking out over the raw rolling acreage. Even as they looked, the sun darkened and the day took on a grayness. They looked for the storm, and heard it as soon as they saw it, a great black cloud roar out of the west, with a million little hissing vibrations. Their

eyes on the sky, neither moved. Then there was a cessation of the roaring, a soft thud of dropping things, and the cloud of a billion wings lay on the fields.

"Grasshoppers," they said simultaneously.

The grasshoppers swarmed over the young waist-high corn and the pasture and the garden. By evening the long rows of corn had been eaten to the plowed ground. The tender vines of the tomatoes were stripped down to the stalk. The buds of the fruit trees were gone. Part of the garden was a memory. The chickens had feasted themselves to the bursting point. The farm was a squirming, greenish-gray mass of them.

By the next night the stalks of field corn were skeletons, a few delicate veins of leaves left, like so many white bones bleaching on the desert of the fields. At the end of three days the oat field was stripped almost as bare as the day the plow had finished its work. The young orchard was a graveyard of hopes. Some of the small grain previously harvested had been saved, and luckily, one digging of early potatoes was in the hole in the ground where they

were stored. But everything else went through the crunching incisors of the horde. It was as though the little grayish-green fiends became a composite whole--one colossal insect into whose grinding maw went all the green of the fields and the gardens, all the leaves and tender twigs of the young fruit trees, all the dreams and the hopes of the settlers.

There being no doctor for several years after returning from the Agency, Grandma seemed to be the one who was called on whenever anyone was sick. She would be called out at most any time. And she did this at the same time she was caring for her ten children and doing her home work. Every case of sickness found Grandma there doing what she could. Grandma became mother to ten children in twenty years. Charlie, the oldest, was 20 years of age when Gertrude, the youngest, was born.

After the Burlington had first put through their first road, Grandma was a passenger on the first train which ran from Athison to Lincoln. This was a free excursion and made the trip up and back in one day. All of the passengers had their names

in the papers.

Mr. Holmes, the second husband of Grandma's sister Lydia, was the engineer who laid out the track to Lincoln and Wymore from Table Rock. The first road was built from Atchison to Lincoln. The road to Wymore was built later. The superintendent of the road, Mr. Firth, was a very good friend of Mr. Holmes. The town of Firth was named for him. While riding on the cow-catcher of the engine one time, the train plunged into an open river where the bridge had been washed out by high water. The superintendent was killed.

Grandma attended the laying of the corner-stone of the Nebraska Wesleyan University. At this time Lincoln had horse cars. One line ran from Lincoln out to the Wesleyan campus.

Grandma subscribed to the first State Journal ever published.

"What about your mail and the general news in the early days, Grandma?"

"We got our mail once a week from Old Cincinnati south of Dubois. Of course there was no Dubois then. It took about two weeks to get a letter from Penns-

ylvania. The mail came by train and boat as far as Brownsville, then the pony express or stage-coach took it on west. There was a stage line from Brownsville to Beatrice and on west. We got a weekly newspaper from Brownsville. We didnt know about the death of President Lincoln until about a week after it happened."

"There were no roads at that time. Everyone traveled the ridges, and forded the streams."

"We had the first Woman's Club in the state. Our purpose was mainly in working for Woman's suffrage. Other clubs formed later would not let us affiliate with them because of this. A few years later we started a drive to try to drive out the saloons. One saloon in Table Rock was reported as selling liquor to young boys. We were going to investigate to see if this was true, and see what we could do about it. We worked in shifts. Two ladies would go down and sit in the saloon for a day at a time. They would take fancy work and stay there all day long. Mrs. Griffing and I spent one day there. The men would laugh at us and make fun of us in order to try to get us to leave. The next day we noticed

the front door was locked but we saw young boys go in the side door. We went around to the back door and got in that way. After the second week of this the saloon closed and the men got out of town. There was a clause in the town agreement that there was to be no liquor ~~to be~~ sold on the town site."

Grandma may not possess many gold medals or flowery titles, but her record of service to her community, and to her people stand as a tribute to her that never could be expressed by words alone.

Following are some of the ways in which she quietly and modestly served her community:

Member of the Methodist church at Table Rock since 1856. She taught a mixed Sunday School class in this church for 40 years. (At one ~~group~~ group of special meetings, all eleven young men of her S. S. class went forward, a wonderful demonstration of their respect for her teaching and influence.)

Member of the official board of the church for fifty years.

Communion steward for 51 years. She held this position actively until she could no longer attend