



**2019, Issue #1**

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**HISTORY IN THE NEWS**

**Page 2—Trivia quiz**

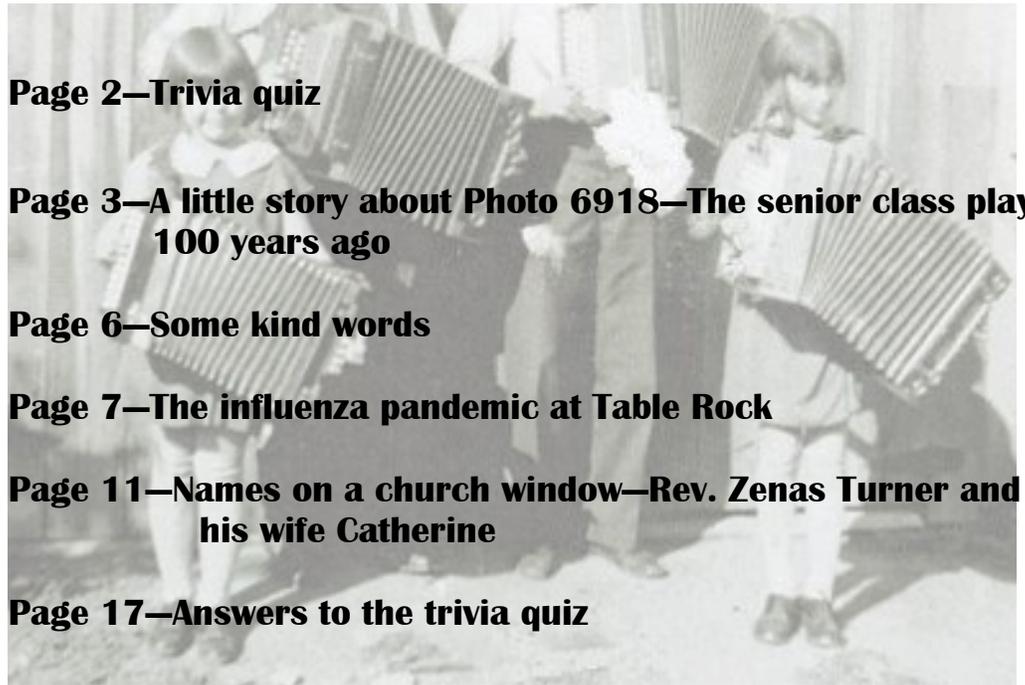
**Page 3—A little story about Photo 6918—The senior class play  
100 years ago**

**Page 6—Some kind words**

**Page 7—The influenza pandemic at Table Rock**

**Page 11—Names on a church window—Rev. Zenas Turner and  
his wife Catherine**

**Page 17—Answers to the trivia quiz**



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**JOIN!**

Do you have a Table Rock friend who is not yet a member? Tell them to give us their name and address and a \$10 membership fee (renewable yearly in January) and we will make them a member. Lifetime membership is \$100.

The annual dues for the period January 1 to December 31, 2019 are due now. Send to Table Rock Historical Society, P. O. Box 66, Table Rock, NE 68447.

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# HOW MANY QUESTIONS CAN

## YOU ANSWER? (Answers on page 17)

1. Which had more graduates, the class of 50 years ago (in the Class of 1969) or 100 years ago (the Class of 1919)?  
A. 1969 B. 1919 C. Neither
2. Of the names on the windows on the Methodist Church, one is that of a young woman who arrived with her husband in 1857. On one occasion, she was the reluctant hostess of a band of Indians who arrived and “made themselves quite at home.” Who was she?  
A. Elizabeth Ball C. Phoebe Cooper  
B. Caroline Dimon D. Clarissa Giddings
3. What event will the Table Rock American, Post 289, Brown-Hays, celebrate this year?  
A. 100th birthday of the post C. 75th Anniversary of their old hall  
B. 100th birthday of the Legion D. Grand opening of their new hall
4. Which is older, the water fountain pagoda or the library?  
A. The Pagoda B. The library
5. Who graduated first — Addie Wilcox or George Marburger’s grandma Nellie?  
A. Addie B. Nellie
6. How many post office buildings has Table Rock had since 1892?  
A. 1 B. 2 C. 3
7. How many of the Historical Society’s structures are not from Table Rock?  
A. 1 B. 2 C. 3



Below: Elizabeth Ball, in her old age, and Addie Wiar Wilcox in hers. Addie’s photo shared by Carrie Wilcox Farset



Above: the familiar bowls used for Legion soup suppers. Below: a Legion Auxiliary soup recipe, one of those taped inside of a cabinet at the hall for many years.

### Vegetable Beef Soup

- 6 lbs. roast ( some bones)
- 5# Potatoes
- ½ box barley
- 1 med. Head cabbage
- 2 # carrots
- 1 lg. Pkg. frozen peas
- 1 lg. pkg. frozen corn
- 2 c. onions
- 1 qt. green beans
- 2 qt. tomatoes (bought diced tomatoes)
- ½ stalk celery

## A Little Story About Photo 6918



**STANDING:** Carlton Norris, Cecil Sandusky, Vernon Sandusky, Edd Tomek, Alice Colling Taylor, Hazel Johnson Hitzemann, Richard Broyles, Ruth Andrew Pousch, Mabel Linn Pugh. **SITTING AT TABLE:** Ransel Layman, Helen Raitora, Elsie Schasse Boggs, Velma Nutter Ritchie, Eleanor Keenan, Ruth Bryant Throul, and Louis Sochior. The only classmates not included were Dorcas Fellers Mills and Josephine Goodenkauf Verling.

At a Historical Society meeting, Gleora Covault brought me some photographs donated by her sister, Mary McCage Siske of Pawnee City. Included in them was a postcard picture which I assigned the collection number 6918.

Written at the top of the photograph is this: "Class of 1919." Is this a class play? If so, is it the Class of 1919's junior class play or the senior class play? And where was the picture taken? Luella Hinrichsen, a lifetime member of the Historical Society, pored over old editions of the Table Rock Argus to find out. She found an advertisement for the senior class play held on May 27, 1919. It was at the Ideal Theater and the name of it was the Camouflage of Shirley. Is this picture from the Camouflage of Shirley? Almost certainly.

The Camouflage of Shirley was a play that had been written just the year before, when Americans were headed "over there" and patriotism ran high. You can read the play on Google books and the Historical Society has acquired a copy.

The play calls for a cast of 8 men and ten women. The characters are mostly young men headed over there and young women who wear their "service pins" or wish they did. The plot involves uncovering a German spy in their midst. It begins with a late afternoon tea at a summer resort, at the end of which two of the women are kidnapped, goes in Act 2 to a deserted cabin in the evening where the young women are detained, and in Act 3, to a sunroom near midnight for the denouement.

Class Play, Cont'd

I offer the flavor of the play with Act 1.

Two young college friends meet at a summer resort. Lt. Wayne and Captain Calhoun. Lt. Wayne has just been married and tries to persuade Calhoun that the love of a woman is a good thing but Calhoun says that war is his only lady love. Their conversation changes to the subject of the mysterious disappearance of state papers from the home of Lt. Wayne's new father-in-law; Lt. Wayne suggests that someone in the area must be supplying the enemy with information and tells of a mysterious signal light that he has seen flashing from a mountain top, which he thinks is received by a submarine. Calhoun is at first dubious.

Just then Lt. Wayne's new wife enters with her friend Shirley, the title character. Lt. Wayne casually

— AT THE —

## IDEAL THEATER

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**SATURDAY, MAY 24th**  
Mae Marsh in  
"Spotlight Sadie"

---

TUESDAY, MAY 27th  
The Class Play  
"Camouflage of Shirley"

---

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28  
Douglas Fairbanks in the great play  
"Down To Earth"

---

THURSDAY, MAY 29  
"Commencement"

---

FRIDAY, MAY 30th  
? ? ? ?  
"What Happened to Jones"  
This is not a movie, but a play you will enjoy  
GOODMAN'S ORCHESTRA

---

SATURDAY, MAY 31st  
Tom Moore in "A Man And His Money"  
A story of the bright lights and the youth who turned them low. Also Smiling Bill Parson's in  
"Birds Of A Feather"

---

**AT THE IDEAL**



School Notes

The school year is rapidly drawing to a close and as usual we have crowded into the last days a great many incidents that have a bearing upon the close of the year. At this time of the year, too, everyone who is doing his duty is busy and some things may be overlooked, though not intentionally.

At this time we wish to call your attention to the "Baccalaureate Services" to be held next Sunday evening, May 25th, at the Methodist church. Dr. Joseph B. Cherry will deliver the address. Dr. Cherry will speak on "Dead While Thy Live." In behalf of the class of nineteen nineteen we extend to the people of Table Rock and vicinity, as well as the parents and friends of the graduates, a cordial invitation to be present.

On Tuesday evening, May 27th, the Seniors will present the class play, "The Camouflage of Shirley." This beyond a doubt is to be one of the supreme moments in the life of the seniors. If we are to judge from the amount of energy expended by the class in getting ready for this event we have every reason to believe the public has a treat in store and there should be no vacant seat at the Ideal on next Tuesday evening. Come and encourage the seniors in their efforts by your presence.

*The May 27, 1919 Argus carried an ad for the play and talked of it in the school column.*

introduces the women without mentioning Captain Calhoun's name and this leads to a comic situation. Shirley, feeling left out because her friends are all engaged to or married to soldiers, has before the party created a fictitious fiancé. She picked his name from a list of the soldiers about to ship over. That name was Captain Calhoun's! Shirley announces that she is engaged to be married to Captain Calhoun. He is startled and bewildered, and is ribalded by his friend given their conversation

## Class Play, cont'd

about marriage, but covers for Shirley.

The young ladies mingle and have a discussion about men and marriage and war and waiting at home. One of the ladies present, Jennie, secretly delivers an envelope with stolen dispatches to a man who goes by the name of Mr. Charlton but is secretly Captain Scheppel, a German spy who has indeed been getting information to a nearby submarine.

Shirley, as she circulates, recognizes Charlton from a visit to Berlin and calls him by his real name. He denies his identity and breaks away.

Captain Calhoun confronts Shirley, his erstwhile fiancée, and asks for an explanation. When she tries to change the subject, Captain Calhoun insists, "A man who has been matrimonially disposed of naturally desires details." She again tries to deflect the question by saying that she is grateful that he covered for her.

CAPT. CALHOUN: "Don't bestow unmerited gratitude. If there had been a possible chance to escape I should have escaped."

SHIRLEY: You might have denied the story. [Seats herself right of table.]

CAPTAIN CALHOUN: "But that would have been decidedly uncomfortable for you, I fancy." [Crosses back of table]

SHIRLEY: Oh, quite. But discipline is wholesome.

CAPTAIN CALHOUN: Down in Kentucky we don't discipline women

SHIRLEY So I've heard. In fact, as soon as I saw you, I was quite sure that I might continue in my dark career of crime, unchecked

CAPTAIN CALHOUN: Don't make a comedy out of this.

SHIRLEY: Breaking one's engagement is usually considered tragedy.

CAPTAIN CALHOUN : Is it presumptuous of me to ask how long I've been appropriated? [Seats himself back of table.]

SHIRLEY: Hardly a half hour. Quite record breaking, isn't it ?

Shirley asks him to continue the charade until the next day, at which time the engagement will end with a "violent quarrel." He pauses. "I'll do my best." She says, "whimsically," "Is it so very disagreeable?" It is. He has had to listen to a lot of "twaddle." She points out that he has been a leading man with no effort at all. He tells her, "I prefer to manage my own affairs and to reach the limelight through my endeavors." "One of those masterful men!" she responds, "Dear me!"

Captain Calhoun tries to end the conversation by saying that it is getting late. Yes, she says, he probably has much to do. He says, though, "Not at all." He cannot say he has much to do because Shirley's friends arrangements for her and Calhoun to make the most of the time left before he ships out by spending the evening together.



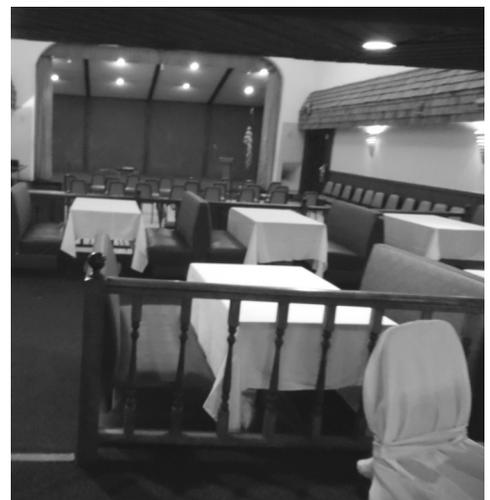
## The Theater

The Ideal Theater must have been a wonderful venue. The theater had opened just the year before, the same year the play was written. It was used for movies, plays, and concerts.

It was later known as the Roxy, and the Table Rock Theater, and it was to be owned by many, including, for short times, by Archer King (father of Historical Society member Laura Turnbull), Charlie Harlow, the local Mason Lodge (who bought it at one point in order to save it), and the Village of Table Rock (ditto).

After it was closed, it was eventually repurposed as a night club; the ground floor seats were removed and the floor leveled, but the balcony and the stage remain, although the ceiling of the stage was lowered.

The building is now owned by Table Rock Development Corporation. The theater may be toured by arrangement and is also available to rent for events like family reunions, movies, plays, or concerts.



*View of stage from under the balcony, in 2018*

## Class Play, cont'd

SHIRLEY Well, haven't I amused you? Haven't you seen my poor little house of cards collapse? Haven't you heard me bid adieu to all my hopes and dreams and aspirations? [Puts handkerchief to eyes]

CALHOUN [coming close to her] Oh, come now. If you take it like that!

SHIRLEY: [laughing] Oh, Clay Calhoun haven't you any sense of humor? [Rises]

CALHOUN: Only a keen appreciation of the ridiculous. SHIRLEY [going to steps] It's cloudy. A fitting climax to our melodrama and the proper moment for the desperate heroine to venture into the cold cold world. To be quite realistic the rain should be dashing, the thunder crashing, and the lightning flashing, as weeping she leaves the home of her childhood...."

As she stands there, Act I winds down. Everyone is preparing to leave when Shirley gets a message from Jennie, the cohort of the German spy, that "someone" in the driveway wants to talk with her about something important. Shirley's friend, the wife of Lt. Wayne, goes with her while Lt.

Wayne goes ahead to chat with someone.

Captain Calhoun "nervously lights a cigarette and idly strolls across the stage" to leave. From backstage, "a sudden shriek breaks the stillness" and Captain Calhoun looks up, "the cigarette drops from his fingers" and he starts to run toward where the scream came



from. Jennie, the cohort of the spy, prevents him from leaving by rushing into the room and fainting in his arms. Captain Calhoun looks "helplessly" at the fainted Jennie. "Great heavens!" he says. And the curtain falls. And by the end of the play, Shirley's "camouflage" of a fake engagement becomes...well,

you figure it out.

## Costumes

The character and costume changes are fun. Shirley is an "impulsive, high spirited, vivacious—the finest type of American girl." In Act 1, she wears a "summer gown and hat. In Act 2 she gets to throw on a man's overcoat. And in Act 3 she wears an evening gown. Another character plays a maid in Act 1, wearing a "black gown and sheer white apron," and is "a bit rebellious," but is a "serious" woman in Act 3 wearing a raincoat and tam o'shanter.

Other girls get to wear fun clothes, too. One, playing an "imperious and wholly conventional" woman gets to wear an "elaborate evening gown" and carry a large feather fan. Another wears a "simple, childish white dress with colored sash" and a hair ribbon

The men are not subject to such costume changes. Lt. Wayne and Captain Calhoun, described in the play notes as "splendid, earnest young men" are in uniform throughout. The spy wears a "white suit, shoes, and Panama" in Act 1 and a dark suit and overcoat in Act 2.

## KIND WORDS

### From Earline Shaw

Earline Shaw is a descendant of many people buried in Table Rock, including members of the Ward and Barrett families. She has shared many family pictures and stories with us, but she had none of her great grandparents, Will and Carrie Barrett Ward. Then we found the photo album of Malvina Ward, which had been stored in a display case in the Opera House for many years. Malvina was a sister to Earline's great grandfather Will.

Knowing Earline's relationship to the Wards, we emailed Earline a picture from the album labeled "Uncle Will Ward and Family." It was a picture of her great grandparents and their seven children. She

responded, "OMG! My grandfather would be the youngest boy in the picture. I have never seen this picture before and I'm so happy to have a copy....Thank you so much for this picture. You have made my day! "

### From Laurie Hauschild

"Thanks for ...the Historical Society photos on Facebook ... For someone who spent a large part of my childhood visiting my grandparents and other relatives in Table Rock, it's fun to take a walk down memory lane from time to time." Laurie used to visit her grandparents, Sam & Laura Day. She said about the Historical Society's Facebook page: "I've been loving the Historical Society stuff -- it's so much fun to see pictures of my relatives turn up when I'm not expecting it. "

# INFLUENZA

By Sharla Sitzman

If you were sitting at the kitchen table 100 years ago, you would still be talking about the influenza pandemic and the people in Table Rock who had died in it. Those events were only months old.

Influenza was not a surprise. In the Fall of 1918, Table Rock knew it was coming. The first wave of the virus had gone around the world earlier that year.

It was often called the Spanish flu because Spain was the first country without war-time censorship so that the first reports came from there. But ground zero was a place well-known to many of us, Ft. Riley. The actual “spark” site was in a rural area in southwest Kansas, where the virus had jumped from swine to humans. Just as the virus started to die out, it traveled with recruits to Ft. Riley, where it mutated and became a killer. As historian John Barry said in his definitive work, “The Great Influenza,” the virus adapted to man “violently.”

“Patient One,” i.e., the first positively identified victim of the mutated virus from the Kansas countryside, was a cook at Ft. Riley who at first seemed to have a cold; within hours others had sickened. Within little more than a month almost 1,200 soldiers were sick and almost 50 of them had died. In this first wave of the dead was Walter Blair of Dubois, age 26. The virus followed the troops to France, where it spread from Europe to Russia, India, China, and Africa.

The virus diminished by summer’s end but then mutated again. It was even more lethal. Flu was nothing new in those days. There had been epidemics, which means an outbreak in a limited area. However, this virus was everywhere. It was a pandemic.

A Table Rock boy who was at medical school in Philadelphia, Lloyd Andrew (Class of 1914), wrote that

the medical students had been taken out of school and sent out to care for flu victims. That presumably included his Table Rock classmate Lowrain McCrea, who had gone to Philadelphia for medical school at

the same time. In Philadelphia, drivers took the students around. Andrew reported that he had visited 35 patients a day for the past week. He wrote that when people found he was a doctor, “six or seven come and get you by the arm and drag you to take care of the sick. Sometimes I have found as many as six people

sick in one house, all in one room, and no one to wait on them. Some places you find two or three dead and three or more sick in the same room, no one to care for the dead.” As many as

600 had died in one day in that city.

As bad as its widespread path was the age of its victims. Usually flu killed only the very young or the very old, those with weak immune systems. This new flu targeted the young and healthy, especially 20 to 35-year olds. Young soldiers sent to fight in World War I were thus hard hit. 22-year-old Harold Dusenbery of Pawnee City wrote home from Ft. Riley to say he had suffered a “slight attack” of influenza but was on the mend. He died days later. Three other soldiers died within a month, Charles Wenzl of Steinauer and two Dubois soldiers, 26-year-old Ross Irwin and 31-year-old Frank Tlustos.

As the second “incredibly deadly” wave of influenza began its sweep toward Table Rock, people carried on their affairs. Miss Ethelwyn Bacus, a popular teacher in Steinauer, visited in Pawnee City. Mrs. and Mrs. Evert

Cordell of Table Rock visited in Humboldt as did Roy Leech of Oklahoma, formerly of Table Rock. Stores advertised specials, auctions were set.

As a precaution, Dr. Wilson of the Nebraska state



*In Table Rock; Lloyd Andrew, John Fellers, Lowrain McCrea, and Bill Vondrasek, in a photo labeled as the Jolly Four. Lloyd Andrew & Lowrain McCrea headed for Philadelphia after graduating in 1914 and were in medical school when influenza hit.*



*Lloyd Andrew in Philadelphia in 1917. Wrote home about treating flu patients there in 1918.*

## Influenza, Cont'd

health department – a former Table Rock resident -- suspended indoor gatherings state-wide at places like “theaters, picture shows, and churches.” People otherwise went about their business trading and visiting even as the papers began to fill with news of sick, dying, and dead friends and relatives in cities around the country.

Then the virus arrived here. Ethelwyn Bacus, Evert Cordell, and Roy Leech would all die before it departed, as would many others.

Table Rock’s victims began with 23-year-old Dale Main. He and his wife Eva, married only a year, had been in Table Rock only two weeks. He was the night clerk at the new Lincoln Hotel, at the southeast corner of the Square. Dale and Eva were sick in the same bed. He died, she survived. The Argus reported that Eva had no relatives here, and the death of her husband while she was so ill “placed her in a most pathetic position,” although “kindly hands did all that was possible.” Eva sent her husband’s body back to their hometown of Spirit Lake, Iowa. Once she had recovered, she also went there.

More died at the military training camps. Frank Petrasek of Table Rock was sick at Camp Manhattan and his father John went to see him.

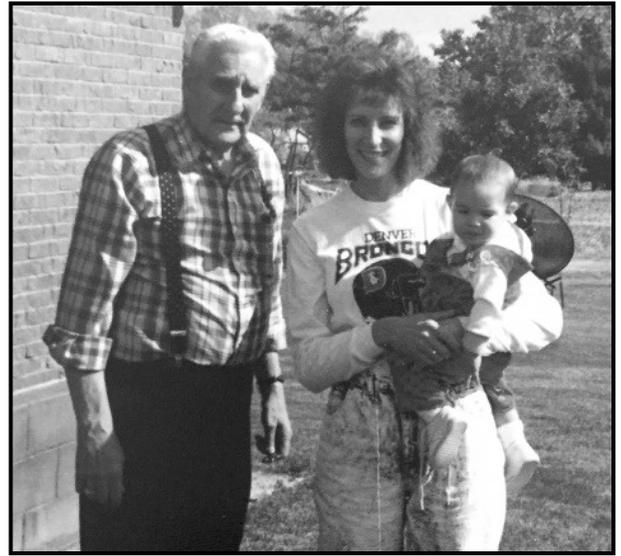
It is said that influenza struck “suddenly and severely.” Victims suffered greatly. “Within hours of feeling the first symptoms of extreme fatigue, fever, and headache, victims could start turning blue. They would cough with such force that some even tore their abdominal muscles. Foamy blood exuded from their mouths and noses. A few bled from their ears. Some

vomited; others became incontinent.” Most recovered. Some died within hours or days, often from pneumonia, a common complication.

In November, many people were ill throughout the county. However, at Table Rock “nearly every home” had someone with symptoms. They included six at the McCourtneys, two at the John Heers, and the Norris Aylor children. Alvah Norris Aylor, Sr. & his 2nd wife Lucy had been married four years and had a blended family Lorna, Laura, Cleo, and Alvah, who would have been ages 16 down to five. Those children, who we knew as Lorna Gold, Laura Day, Cleo Deubelbeiss, and Alvah Aylor survived.

As others in the area recovered, the state-wide ban against gatherings in “churches, schools, pool halls, and other places of public gathering” lifted, but not at Table Rock.

Table Rock received news of more deaths of their own. Ralph Fisher, age 22, had died two weeks before. He was a Navy pharmacist’s mate on the famous Red Cross hospital ship, Mercy. His cousin Ada Fisher had died within a week of him; she was a nurse in Lincoln and had been due to go active with the Red



*Alvah Aylor survived the 1918 influenza pandemic when he was five. Here he is 70 years later, in 1988, with daughter Susie Aylor Sochor and granddaughter RanDee. Photo shared by Susie.*



*They survived the 1918 influenza pandemic. Six at McCourtneys were ill and likely included these four in this early 1920s photo: Mike and Pat McCartney on the pony, held at its nose by their sister Maude, and with sister Hazel “cutting up” behind the pony. The girl with glasses was a neighbor. Photo shared by their niece Delores Penkava.*

Cross on November 1.

In November, W. F. August Bartels and Fred Albers, Sr., of Steinauer died but otherwise the virus was not killing as many people. Except at Table Rock.

Table Rock people continued to die in November. 26-year-old

Influenza—Continued

Jeptha (Jeff) Carter, who was “always kind and generous to everyone,” died. One day, two died in the same house, 29-year-old Wesley Loe, a young married man, and Dorris Frasier, a three-year-old boy.

By Thanksgiving, however, although many were still sick, like Charlie Harlow, who was on crutches for quite some time after he recovered, the influenza seemed on the wane. The “closing up order” at Table Rock was lifted and

people here breathed a sigh of relief.

Two days after Thanksgiving, though, the hurricane of influenza reversed direction and slammed

back into the town harder than ever. The Republican reported that it had come back “raging violently” and it seemed that the entire town of Table Rock was sick, many seriously. All of the C. S. Smith family were sick, all of the Cordell family were sick, all of the Shawhan family were sick, all of the Harry Freeman family but Harry were sick, Mr. and Mrs. Jess Price were sick,, 18-year-old Vern Talbot was sick, and Miri Shepherd, age 20, was sick.

Then Harry and Lizzy Freeman’s lovely daughter Irene, age 20, was dead, although her siblings — Cloyd, Edwin, and Ural, survived. Irene had been at her teaching job, in Burchard, and caught sick and come home to Table Rock to be cared for. She had been “loved by

all who knew her.” She lies in an unmarked grave in the Table Rock Cemetery. And 51-year-old Mary Bowen Davis mother of six, who had a “sunny, cheerful disposition,” died. She was buried in the Table Rock Cemetery, too.

The people of Table Rock were asked to be “brave, watchful, and careful.” Ministers were asked to help Dr. McCrea, who was overwhelmed.

The Argus continued to report on some of the sick. The Frank John-

And under poignant circumstances, the Argus reported that “two bodies are lying cold in death in lower town.” Lewis Chillin and Mary Rubis, ages 30 and 18, had died in the same house within an hour of each other. They were engaged and, indeed, had they lived, they would have been married by the time the paper reported their story. Lewis’s family came and took his body back to Denver. Mary’s father came from Montana but could not afford to take her body; she was buried in the Table Rock Cemetery in one of

many now unmarked, unknown graves. Around the county, there were a few more deaths, including two of the children of Heinrich



10 young women at the Table Rock High School in 1916. One would die. Left to right: Ruth Andrew Pousch, Mabel Linn Pugh, Irene Freeman, Dorothy Phillips Wilson, uhi Marshal, Neta Gallas Morrison, Leora Carter, Laura Kovanda McGinnis, Grace Scott Taylor, and Dorcas Fellers Mills. Photo 6357. Irene graduated in 1916, most of the others between 1919 and 1920.

son family was the largest to be ill, with mother and all ten children bedridden and only Mr. Johnson to care for them. The Argus reported, “Drastic measures to prevent its further spread have been promulgated by the village board.”

In December five more died in Table Rock, including three who had before been named as being ill.

18-year- year-old Vern Talbot, who had graduated from Table Rock just that Spring, died. He had come home sick from his job with the CB&Q.

19-year-old Miri Shepherd, son of the proprietors of the grand Hotel Murphy, died.

39-year-old brickyard worker Evert Cordell died, a “kind and affectionate” husband and father of two.

and Louise Bartels of Mayberry and 20-year-old Jesse Roberts from the western part of the county but the news was otherwise silent.

In Table Rock, J. S. Price and Ralph Bowen were recovering from a “severe attack” and Sydney Horton was “terribly ill.” The body of little Annabel Wheeler was brought from her home in St. Joe to be buried in Table Rock next to her father.

The Pawnee Republican reported that Table Rock observed Christmas Day “quietly.” Over 250 people in Table Rock had been taken ill since the onset of the flu but now most were recovering. The Argus reported the disease “has had its run with us” and the ban would be lifted the next week, “except as to

Influenza—Continued

public dances.” It added, “This does not mean people should become careless.”

Two more deaths occurred in the county before influenza departed. “Sadness filled the hearts of Dubois” when 29-year-old Luella Ward died two days after Christmas of pneumonia following influenza, leaving a husband and three young children. On January 3, the last presently-known death occurred: 28-year-old Bessie Irwin died. She had graduated from Table Rock ten years before and photographs showed a beautiful bright-eyed girl who had been on the 1909 girls basketball team and in 1910 had posed with the other girls of the junior class.

Others remained quite ill: Bessie’s husband Earl and their daughter Bernice, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hastings, Mrs. and Mrs. Joe Wopata and daughter Alice, Mrs. C. H. Brock, Frank Kovanda, and Mrs. Cherry and son Clifford. All recovered.

In a medical study about the genetic structure of the gene, reported in the medical Journal of Virology, it was said that the pandemic “remains the most devastating single pandemic of any infectious disease in recorded history. The virus spread globally, infecting 25 to 30% of the world’s population and killing at least 20 to 50 million worldwide, including over 500,000 in the United States.”

There is no list for Pawnee County, but I come up with at least 25 dead. Table Rock took the brunt of it. About half the deaths in Pawnee County were Table Rock people. There is no explanation why. The good thing is that the total number who died in Pawnee County amounted to far less than the world



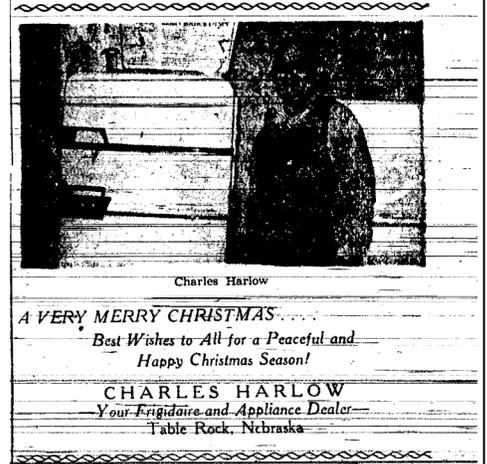
The last in Table Rock to die of the flu, Bessie Hickman Irwin, 2nd from left. These are the girls of the Class of 1911 when they were juniors: Ella Beck Smith, Bessie Hickman Irwin, Ada Mort, Callie Barrett, Addie Wiar Wilcox, Lila Jobe, Gertrude Glenn Trump, and Hazel Taylor Kuhn.

Friends in this city have received cards announcing the marriage of Miss Anna Mildred Wilson to Ledy Stewart Kenneth Clark, which occurred at Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the 7th of November. The young couple went to Chicago, to remain until the groom is ordered over seas, when the bride will return to Lincoln. The bride is a daughter of Dr. and Mrs. W. H. Wilson; she was born here, graduated from our schools, and moved to Lincoln with her parents. For some time she has been a teacher in the Orthopedic hospital in Lincoln. The many friends of the bride in Table Rock tender congratulations.

In the eye of the influenza hurricane, Dr. Wilson’s daughter Anna got married. November 15, 1918 Argus.

average of up to 5% dead, which would have had 500 fatalities here based on the population of the time. One can only imagine the number of dead in other places to put the statistical number so high.

What would happen if the virus of 1918 time traveled to today? Scientists have considered that question even as they have done their best to produce vaccinations for the virus strains expected each season. Even though there are more drugs available today and more medical technology, they fear that if they do not anticipate the particular virus, the number of illnesses could overwhelm the medical care system just as it did 100 years ago. Hospitals and manufacturers keep only so much inventory. The 1918 influenza hit hard, killing most of its victims within a few months month.



Influenza put Charlie Harlow on crutches, but he survived. He was 32 at the time. He died in 1959 at the age of 72. Here’s an ad from 1955.

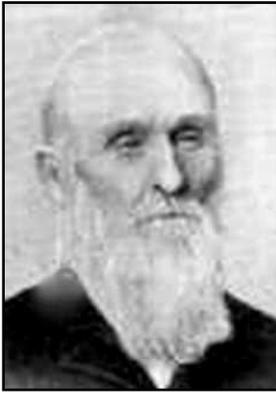
Would enough be on hand? Could more be manufactured and in the hands of care providers in time to make a difference? And would enough care providers avoid influenza to be able to care for all those victims?

It was 100 years ago. If we were sitting in the past century at this time of year, we would be talking about mostly young people in their 20s and 30s dying within days of a fierce disease as their loved ones stood helplessly by them. We would be talking about how we treated life here as ordinary even as others around the world were sick and dying. We would be talking about how we felt that “it couldn’t happen to me.” But it did happen, to us.

# A Story Beyond The Window

## A Window At the Table Rock Methodist Church Dedicated To

### Rev. Zenas Turman & His Wife Catherine



#### PREFACE

Rev. Zenas Turman and his wife Catherine left the earth over a century ago. The only visible remnants in Table Rock are their tombstones, those of two of their children, and a window at the Table Rock Methodist Church. Really, nobody remembers them. And that is too bad. Zenas and Catherine were people worth knowing.

Rev. Turman came to Table Rock only after he retired. He came here the year of the first train, 1871.

He had been a pioneer Methodist minister, a circuit rider who preached the first sermon where Lincoln now stands. On a huge south window at the Table Rock Methodist church are listed all of the Table Rock ministers until the 1912 remodeling, when the window was placed there. Because he was retired and therefore on the “superannuated” list, i.e., the list of inactive ministers,

Rev. Turman’s name is not there on the south window. Some of Rev. Turman’s contemporaries, other pioneer ministers with whom he rubbed el-

bows, are there, having come to Table Rock at one time or another, including Lorenzo W. Smith, David Hart, Francis Easterbrook, Joseph W. Martin, and Hiram Burch. But this story is about Rev. Turman and his long-suffering wife Catherine, an “earnest Christian lady” according to her obituary.

Before I go any further, I must offer my sources. I found some amount of help in the old newspapers of

Pawnee County and on newspapers.com. However, I hit the bonanza when I discovered Jeffrey Robert Fisher of Annandale, Virginia. Jeffrey is a great great great grandson of Zenas and Catherine Turman. And he has pored over records and histories to glean information about them which, along with some pictures, he freely shared. Rather than attribute each quotation to the many sources found by Jeffrey Fisher, let me say that his fully-footnoted work is available to anyone of interest.

#### A MINISTER KNOWN FOR HIS ECCENTRICITIES, & HIS BRIDE

It is rare in history to have information about the personality of someone who was not famous. For that reason, I start with an anecdote that lends a rare insight.

In 1856, Zenas was sent west to the new Nebraska Territory, which had just been formed in 1854. But first a jump forward to 1860.

In 1860, when he was 41, something happened. He met and married Catherine.

A Washington County, Nebraska history published in 1876 observed the marriage, saying that Zenas was “known far and near for his eccentricities.” He “had married recently, to the astonishment of his acquaintances and to his own also, no doubt....”

As told in the Washington County history, Zenas took his young bride to a big Independence Day celebration there. According to the history, it was quite the day. An orator of the day had his say, and a gen-

***“He had married recently, to the astonishment of his acquaintances and to his own also, no doubt...”***

## Turman, cont'd

tleman read the Declaration of Independence. "A band from Tekamah was in attendance, and altogether the affair was a grand success without precedent or parallel in the history of the county."

Then the story shifts into an anecdote about "a newly wedded wife who came near being abandoned by her husband." The anecdote is about Zenas and Catherine.

"As the people were leaving the grove in the evening, after the festivity of the day, someone in the wagon in which Turman was riding suddenly turned to him with the inquiry: 'Why, Mr. Turman, where's your wife?' The absent-minded preacher exclaimed, 'Sure enough!' and jumped from the wagon to return to the grove. 'I knew I had forgotten something,' and he ran back in search of his missing rib."

When you look at those formal words on the window: "In memory of Rev. Zenas Turner and his wife Catherine," perhaps you should not imagine a staid elderly couple without a dot of humor. Perhaps you should consider the story of the (temporarily) forgotten wife.

To help imagine the couple, take a look at a portrait shared by Jeff Fisher. It probably is their wedding portrait, as in those days that was generally the only occasion for a portrait. If you look closely, you may be able to ascertain in Catherine a certain patience, for-



Catherine and Zenas Turman's wedding portrait. Is hers the look with which she faced her absent-minded husband? "Why, Mr. Turman, where is your wife?"

bearing, and perhaps, even, a dry sense of humor.

Let us hope that Catherine found her absent-minded husband amusing over the years. It may not have been difficult. Another minister of the pioneer days later remembered him as a "genial, uncomplaining, happy, sunny-hearted minister of the gospel."

As Catherine's husband rode about



Washington County, Nebraska

encountering great dangers, let us hope that she had a solid belief that he would despite the eccentricities for which he was "known far and wide" – whatever they may have been – survive to return home. He certainly was gone a lot in those days. And sadly, it is he whose deeds have survived, not hers. The woman at home is rarely remembered. We know little more than that she was an "earnest Christian woman." For that reason, the rest of this story is about her husband.

## BEGINNING AT NEARLY THE BEGINNING

We begin just before Zenas was born. Benjamin Turman, Zenas's grandfather. Benjamin was a well-to-do Indiana farmer and a force to be reckoned with.

He "could not rest from pushing all he did with much vigor and resolution." Benjamin Turman embraced "Universalism," a Christian theology that all humankind will eventually be saved, a form of predestination.

Benjamin had a son named Jacob, who "was moved to preach the gospel" as a Methodist. The Methodists believed that man must reach out to God to be saved. Conflict between father and son happened. Benjamin Turman did not understand Jacob's choice. He felt it an "indolent" one. Why spend time evangelizing people who would be saved regardless of their personal choice?

Turman, cont'd

Benjamin discarded Jacob, and Jacob took his wife and children, including baby Zenas, "into Illinois," which was then being settled. Four years later, Benjamin relented and Jacob brought his family home. By that time Zenas was five. This was in 1824 and Indians were still about. On the first night of Jacob's return, "his father invited him to conduct family devotion, and while so engaged, Indians surrounded the house, but peeping in saw the family at prayers, and not daring to offend the Great Spirit, withdrew." The Indians went elsewhere and murdered another family.

When Zenas was 14 his father died. By that time he was one of six children. His mother never remarried, and raised the children herself.

### EARLY YEARS OF MINISTRY

Zenas became a teacher, which he did for 12 years. However, during that time he also served as a "supply" minister in the Northern Indiana Conference, i.e., he was a substitute or acting minister, and he went about marrying and burying and serving the Lord. He went to Illinois for a brief time, and for four years served as a colporteur for the Methodist Episcopal Conference, which means he was employed to distribute bibles and religious materials.

During that time, in 1848, Zenas married. He was 27. His wife, Susan, died in only a year-and-a-half.

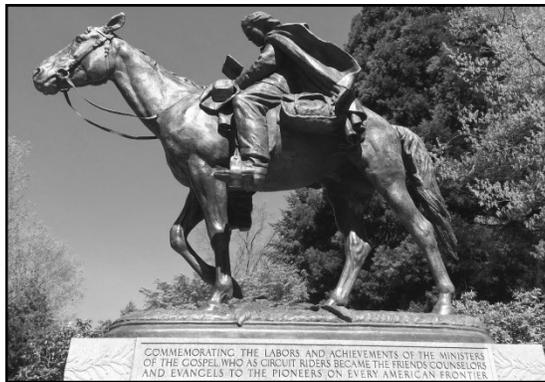
### 1856 – NEBRASKA

In April 1854, Nebraska Territory was formed, and two months later the Methodist began considering chartering churches in the new territory. In 1856, Zenas was sent to Nebraska. He first came to rest in Cass County, at Rock Bluffs.

**Rev. Turman "was known far and near for his eccentricities."**

Zenas had a large circuit, seven counties, in which he established 16 preaching places with a 500-mile circuit. It is said that on his circuit he visited Beatrice "when it was a hamlet of six or eight wooden houses. He also went to Tecumseh and Nebraska City" on his circuit.

A friend later recalled, "The settlements were sparse and confined to the streams and the distance from



*Statue of a circuit rider at the Oregon state capitol, riding and reading*

one to the other was often very great. Over these prairies, under the burning rays of the summer sun, and the fierce winds, blinding storms, and terrible winter blizzards, Brother Turman rode from settlement to settlement, and calling the people together in their rude dwellings, proclaimed to them the Work of Life."

In 1857, Zenas preached the first sermon in the place that would later become Lincoln, when that area was "nearly indisputably Indian country."

Another minister, James Eatherton, arrived that year, 1857, with the first wave of white settlers in Lancaster County. During a visit, Eatherton asked, "Do you think this country will ever be settled up?" Zenas responded, "Not till

the next comet strikes the earth." He probably meant an unimaginable time in the future.

The job of circuit rider was not for the weak or faint of heart. It is reported in an 1890 biographical sketch by Wm. B. Burford, that on Zenas's circuit, he brought the gospel to many, and "in the meantime frequently encountering storms, being out sometimes all night, and often swimming his horse across the streams. A man of iron constitution and strong will, he surmounted difficulties that at the present day would be considered almost beyond the strength of man to overcome. Upon one occasion he started from the house of a Mr. Shaw, of Beatrice, during a severe snowstorm, finally lost his way, and giving his horse the rein, let the animal proceed at its will, and at night found himself at the same door from which he had started.

Meanwhile, Table Rock was being settled. It originally was in Richardson County. That was before Pawnee County was carved off the west side of Richardson County. As Pawnee County was rented, an election for the county seat was held. On August 30, 1856, the papers reported that Table Rock had received the most votes, but because of a discrepancy all of the votes were not counted, and with that Table Rock was left one vote shy. In a subsequent election, a new site on Turkey Creek (which swiftly became Pawnee City) was thrown in the mix and won.

### 1857—MORE OF THE SAME

As Rev. Turman continued to ride, the Nebraska Settlement Company began bringing families to Table Rock. These settlers joined a few others who had already arrived and established, amongst other things, a mill on the Nemaha, near what we now call Goat Hill. A few

Turman, cont'd

homesteaders were already in Table Rock, including Peter Foale, brothers William and Andrew Fellers, brothers William and John Taylor, and William McClintock, all of whom still have descendants in the area.

#### 1858—HARSH WINTER

The year 1858 brought terrible times in Nebraska Territory. In Table Rock, devastating spring floods wiped out the crops and left rot and mold that led to great sickness. When winter came, there was little in reserve for either food or strength.

Rev. Turman, riding his circuit north of Omaha was not saved from similar conditions. He has been used as an example of the circuit rider of the time: "The weather, no matter what it may be, rarely stops a Methodist preacher on his way to an appointment. Through drenching rains, blinding snowstorms, and fearful blizzards, he is found pushing his way to meet the promised engagement. And by this heroic, self-sacrificing spirit, Methodism is planted almost everywhere."

The report of harsh conditions during the winter of 1858 is illustrated by a story about Rev. Turman:

During this winter there was no grain, and "Jack", Brother Turman's horse, had to eat potatoes. These he learned to eat with a relish, and he did nicely. At one time "Jack" was offered some old corn. It was so poor and musty, however, that he refused to eat it. Brother Turman ate bread made from the same lot of corn without making any complaints or asking any questions. In speaking of this, he once said to the writer: "We have reason; horses have not. We eat to satisfy hunger; horses, to suit their taste. We have souls; they have not. We ought to take the better care of their bodies." Not only did the stock fare hard during that winter in consequence of the scarcity of grain, but the people fared hard as well. Their tables did not groan under the weight of sweetmeats and delicious viands, ...[but] such as the people had they freely gave to their pastor. The good people invited him to sit with them at their tables, and often the only meat they had was raccoon. Whether he really relished the rac-

***"A man of iron constitution and strong will, he surmounted difficulties that at the present would be considered almost beyond the strength of man to overcome."***

coon or not, I do not know. I am inclined to think he felt a little as the man did who was asked, after having taken a meal on 'coon, "Do you like it?" He replied: "I can eat it, but I do not hanker after it." Chickens were scarce. He never got any of these birds. They went to the more highly-favored ministers who labored among more highly-favored people."

Many of Rev. Turman's labors were among the Indians, he being in Pawnee country, south of the Platte River. The Pawnee were still a fierce and dangerous tribe at that time. One winter,

"he received a request from "Spotted Horse", a chief among the Pawnee Indians, to go and preach to him and his people. Brother Turman obeyed the call, went out and met the chief, with his warriors, at their reservation on the south side of the Platte River, just opposite Fremont. He preached the gospel to these Red-men of the plains. He told them of God's infinite love in the gift of his Son....They listened with the greatest interest and the most rapt attention, and treated Brother Turman with the highest respect and the most profound reverence. The chief and all his warriors kneeled down during prayer, and looked upon the minister as a messenger from the skies. After the services were over, "Spotted Horse" said: "We believe every word you say. Our forefathers had the 'Great Book' [referring to the Bible], but lost it"."

Nevertheless, Spotted Horse never converted to Christianity. And more was reported about this particular visit:

"Brother Turman was never maltreated by the Indians, although he very frequently met them, and often preached to them. But on this occasion he was very uneasy, and not a little fearful, not that they would do him personal violence, but that they would take all his clothing from him, and that he would be compelled to return

## Turman, cont'd

to the settlements in a nude condition. This they had done with others, and he greatly feared he would suffer the same fate. They eyed him very closely, and with the greatest curiosity examined all his clothing. He was finally greatly relieved, however, by getting away with only the loss of his black cravat."

It was difficult being a witness who could persuade but not control, and this was illustrated by another story about Rev. Turman:

"At one time, while visiting their reservation, he saw a young squaw whom they had taken captive. She was a Sioux, and had been taken captive by the Pawnees in one of their raids. The Sioux and Pawnees were bitter enemies, and were at war with each other. It was the custom of the Pawnees, when an Indian squaw was taken prisoner, to give her to any one of their men who might desire her for his wife. If no one desired her, then their barbarous custom was to put her to death. In this case no one desired the young and handsome Sioux squaw for a wife. The poor captive was in the greatest agony. She knew very well what the terrible result would be. Brother Turman could do nothing. He did not dare interfere. A band of the Indians started to the grove near by with their victim, the poor captive weeping most bitterly as they disappeared. Soon after the Indians returned, but the girl was not with them. All was quiet. Not a word was spoken."



Chief Spotted Horse of the Pawnee circa 1875, a few years after he invited Zenas to preach.

**...Never have I heard a murmur escape from his lips. Rev. Turman has always been a genial, uncomplaining, happy, sunny-hearted minister of the Gospel."**

Thus, until 1860, Rev. Turman rode his circuit, a widower alone, enduring hardship, seeing many things, doing his best to bring the grace of God. "Along the valley of the Great Platte, up and down Salt Creek, the Blue, the Nemaha, Weeping Water, Walnut Creek, and Wahoo, Brother Turman first blew the

gospel-trumpet. Along all these streams, and over the hills and plains of this vast region, he sowed the seed of gospel truth, and the seed sowed by him in that early day was like a "handful of corn in the earth on the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shakes like Lebanon". He saw the stately elk, the agile antelope, the fierce coyote, the mighty buffalo, roaming over the wild prairies where the marvelous cities of Lincoln and Beatrice now stand."

## 1860-1863—NORTH OF THE PLATTE, INTO THE COUNTRY OF THE SIOUX

In 1860, Rev. Turman was assigned to work on the north side of the Platte River – the edge of the territory of the Dakota Sioux. That was the year he married Catherine.

In 1861, when the Dakotas were split out of the Nebraska Territory, he was assigned to the Dakota Mission. He traveled a circuit during times of great tension between the poorly-treated Dakota Sioux and newly-arriving settlers crowding into their lands.

In August 1862, conflict between the Sioux and the government led to an uprising in which hundreds of settlers were killed. The town of New Ulm, Minnesota was entirely evacuated – all 2,500 people. These were dangerous times and they did not pass quickly. Rev. Turman saw many things although violence did not touch him directly.

On one occasion, "he with others helped to subdue the Indians who had already murdered a number of whites, until a company of cavalry could be sent to their relief. They then started after the Indians (Pawnees), and Mr. Turman officiated as temporary chaplain for the soldiers."

In 1863, Rev. Turman received into the church a couple by the name of Wiseman who had six children. Turman and the husband joined a military command in pursuit of In-

dians. The wife left home on a trip to town a few miles away. When she returned, four of her children were dead and the other two dying. Her five-year-old son was lying on a bed

## Turman, cont'd

disemboweled and said, as his mother came in, "Indians did it," and died. The daughter was unable to speak and died a few days later. Violence and death were always close.

## THE "SUPERANNUATED, OR WORN OUT" LIST

Sickness was always close, too, and this scourge did in fact touch him, with devastating effect. In 1863, he suffered smallpox. He never recovered. Within a year or two, he asked to retire, and was placed on what was then called then the "Superannuated, or Worn Out List." He retired to Nemaha City, Nebraska. He was 54. He stayed in Nemaha for five years.

## TO TABLE ROCK

In 1871, Zenas and Catherine came to Table Rock. They farmed four miles east of town. From time to time, he occupied the Methodist pulpit as a "supply," a guest.

Zenas and Catherine had six children, born between 1863, during the Indian troubles, and about 1878. At least three – Wilson, Eva, and Nellie – were born here. Eva and Nellie did not survive to adulthood.

In 1873, Zenas spoke about "Old Time Methodism" at a district gathering of Methodist ministers. Jeffery Fisher, his great great great grandson, makes the point that even in 1873 Zenas's manner of preaching was "old time." Fisher says, "I would not doubt that as Nebraska had grown, become a State, and people began to fill the cities, that the age of the circuit rider was already beginning to be a memory of the past. The challenges of church planting and growth were forgotten and new ones were introduced."

In 1890, Zenas attended a meeting of the historical society of the Nebraska Methodist Conference, along with Hiram Burch – once a Table Rock minister but then at Nebraska Wesleyan University. (Burch was one of two men who worked to create Wesleyan a Methodist university, but after two years they could not make a go of it and it was turned over to the state as a normal school.) At the meeting, "The venerable gentleman Rev. Turman recited entertaining reminiscences of his early work in Nebraska

back in the '50s with privations endured, etc."

In 1894, at the age of 76, Rev. Turman was said to be "hale and hearty," even though on the superannuated list. However, by 1896, an undefined "illness" had struck. The Pawnee Republican reported in August that he had recovered enough to get into Table Rock two or three times. The next report was in October: Rev. Turman had died at his home at 10:20 p.m. He was 78 and his wife and the four children who had lived to adulthood were at the funeral.

At the Table Rock Cemetery, Zenas was buried near his two young daughters, Eva and Nellie. On his tombstone was the epitaph: "Our memory of Father is of a life well lived and of many good deeds done."

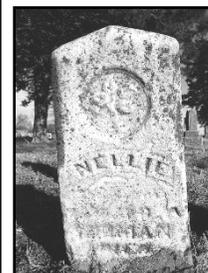
The surely-patient Catherine went to live with children in Colorado. She was 58, and had been Zenas's wife for 36 years. She died of cancer in 1909 and her remains brought back to Table Rock. If a tombstone was placed, it has not survived the ravages of time. The obituary in the Table Rock Argus said that an "appropriate sermon" was preached at the funeral and "many old time friends" came. It concluded, "Mrs. Turman was an earnest Christian woman bravely enduring the hardships and privations of early life in Nebraska."

## A PLACE FOR CONTEMPLATION

Close to the road in the northeast corner of the Table Rock Cemetery are four graves that no one looks for. Turman is the last name: Zenis – yes, it was misspelled, Catherine, Eva, and Nellie. Father, mother, and two little girls. A "sunny-hearted minister of the Gospel" and the wife who bravely endured the hardships of the early days of Nebraska Territory.

There are four graves, but only three tombstones. Catherine's grave is unmarked. Once again, the patient Catherine has been overlooked just as at that Independence Day gathering so many years ago. Go to those graves some time, and contemplate this couple who experienced so much of what we call history but they called life.

**"Our memory of Father is of a life well lived and of many good deeds done."**



At left: In the Table Rock Cemetery, the tombstones of Zenas, Eva, & Nellie Turman.

# ANSWERS TO THE TRIVIA QUIZ

1.C Equal! Both classes had 18 students!

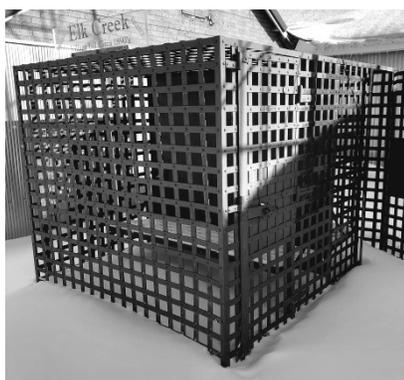
In 1969: Roy Beckman, Rachael Binder, Gary Bucholz, Linda Davis Wright, Dale Herrick, Jack Kalina, LuEtta Kroll Schneider, Patricia Mullins Nieven, John Obrist, Sharon Petrashek, Evelyn Puhalla, Mary Puhalla Wenzbauer, Richard Schultz, Cheryl Vondrasek Ebers, Joy Vrtiska Robison, Lynn Wenzbauer, Richard Wenzl, and Joyce Workman Gerdes.

In 1919: Ruth Andrew Pousch, Richard Broyles, Ruth Bryant Throul, Alice Colling Taylor, Dorcas Fellers Mills, Josephine Goodenkauf Uerling, Carlton Norris, Hazel Johnson Hitzemann, Eleanor Keenan, Ransel Layman, Mabel Linn Pugh, Velma Nutter Ritchie, Helen Raitora, Cecil Sandusky, Vernon Sandusky, Elsie Schasse Boggs, Louis Sochor, and Edd Tomek.

2.C. Caroline Dimon. The story as recorded by Doralyn Steiner in her book, "Stories of Early Settlers on the Nemaha," is that the band of young Indian men arrived and invited themselves in. Then, *"seating themselves around the fire [they] made themselves quite at home, much to Mrs. Dimon's alarm. When the fire needed replenishing she did not dare to go for firewood, fearing that her unwelcome guests would steal something while she was away. But when the temperature of the room became too cold for them, they found their way to the woodpile, returned to the house laden with fuel, and rebuilt the fire themselves, and prolonged*



*Caroline Dimon with her husband Ben on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary in 1902, many years after being a reluctant hostess for a band of Indians.*



*The Elk Creek jail at the Table Rock museums*



*Built in 1915 as the village hall, it in 1917 it held the 1st library.*

*their visits for some time."*

3B. March 2019 marks the 100th anniversary of the creation of the American Legion. The post was chartered in 1921. In 1948, the post made a hall in an old store building.

4.A. The water fountain pagoda was built in 1924 and the present library building was not built until 1926. The library had been founded in 1917 and had been located in a variety of places before that. It started with 200 volumes.

5B. George Marburger's grandma Nellie Snoke graduated first, in 1902. Addie Wiar did not graduate until 1911. If you don't know the names of George or Addie, you're not from here! Addie Wilcox was the mother of many, grandmother and great grandmother of many more, many of whom are historical society members. George Marburger of Humboldt is a well known friend of everyone; his grandma Nellie Snoke Marburger, was the daughter of Civil War Veteran Cosmus Snoke, who died, incidentally, 100 years ago, in February 1919 — and was buried in the Table Rock Cemetery, along with his wife and their triplets who died as infants.

6.B. Two since 1892, when it was a building attached to the bank, and then the present building,

7.B. The Historical Society is proud to have the Turner cabin, built near old Cincinnati in 1854, and the freestanding Elk Creek jail.

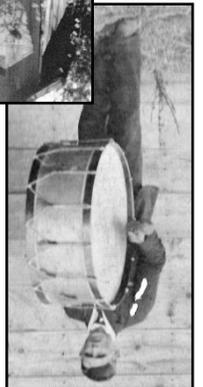
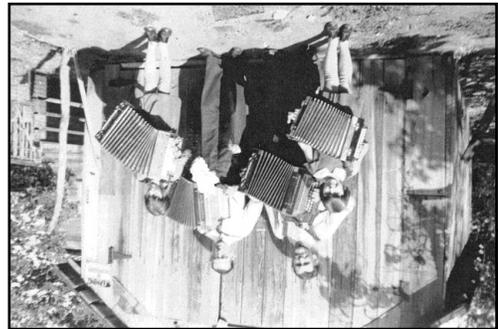
Table Rock Historical Society

P. O. Box 66

Table Rock, NE 68447

ADDRESS CORRECTION

REQUESTED



This year's summer exhibit at the Argus will be about Bohemian music in and around Table Rock. We are looking for stories and pictures and possibly the loan of instruments. Call Sharla at 402 839 3003.

