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HISTORY OF FRIENDS IN NEBRASKA  
LEADING UP TO ESTABLISHMENT  
OF THE YEARLY MEETING

HISTORY of FRIENDS in NEBRASKA LEADING up to the  
ESTABLISHMENT of the YEARLY MEETING

by

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A T H E S I S

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Correspondence as noted in footnotes with - Edwin Andrews, Bert Benton, Plinney Fry, Jennie Grey, D. Riley Haworth, Dr. S. L. Hall, Frank Jordan, Mary E. Lewis, Calvin Marshall, Herbert Mott, Edith Mendenhall, Aaron Smith, Philip Stein and Katie Turner. Most of these friends wrote of their own personal experiences in the founding of the work in Nebraska. In three cases, the information given was based on the minutes in various meetings.

Christian Worker, 1889-1899.

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## History of Friends in Nebraska Leading up to the Establishment of the Yearly Meeting.

### I. Introduction.

In the seventeenth century in England there developed a group of worshipers known as Friends or Quakers. There were no birthright members to begin with, only people longing to know Truth and God. George Fox and his early followers waged an active campaign to spread their message the length and breadth of the land. The leading of the spirit was most clearly felt and marvelous was the result of the service of those early workers, who, though not ordained by man to be ministers, gave their whole lives freely and lacked for nothing. At the death of George Fox in 1691 or after a period of about fifty years of actual ministry, it is estimated that one hundred thousand souls had accepted the message of Friends.

In many respects the early work of Friends in Nebraska was similar in its development. Here, after three years of work, was organized a Quarterly Meeting with a membership of eight hundred convinced Friends. It has been said that this was the first time in two hundred years of Quaker History that a Quarterly Meeting had been established without a birthright member within its limits.<sup>(1)</sup> When Nebraska Yearly Meeting was established in 1908, there were less than two per cent. of birthright members. The field in Nebraska was ready and ripe for the rapid spread of the Quaker message to those hardy, strong pioneers of the west. They were not what we term heathen in the sense of no spiritual or cultural background, but people who, having spent their time making a home in the untried land of the west, had been separated from any church relation or spiritual food for years. They had faced bare reality all of their lives, and only a real vital faith could meet their need.

Nebraska, in the middle west, is one of those sternly regular shared states with no personality at all on a map. However, it has in its story a most romantic chapter of sacrifice, and labor, yet satisfaction and joy, of challenge to the big of heart and vision and reward for faithful response. To such people and under such circumstances, came the message of Friends to Nebraska. Can one wonder that the work spread and has developed into one of the promising fields of Modern Quakerism? The early development of this Quaker work in Nebraska is the subject of this study.

(1) Mott, Nebraska Central College, pamphlet 3.

## II. Indian Work.

Many and interesting are the stories of the American Indian, and to them Nebraska has added her due share. Very few Indians lived on the plains of Nebraska originally. It was their hunting ground. As civilization pushed farther West, the Indian reservations were moved before it. In time Nebraska became distinctly a state of Indians. This state comprised what the government termed the Northeast Territory for Indians and it was in connection with the aborigines that Friends made their first contact with that part of the United States.

On March 6th, 1869, a message from President Grant, carried by an Indian, E. S. Parker of General Grant's staff, came to a committee of Friends in Baltimore, Maryland. It requested them to send a list of names of those whom their Society would endorse as suitable for Indian Agents. General Grant wished to make an improvement in Indian conditions as well as administration, and, "Appreciating fully the friendship and interest which the Society had ever maintained in their behalf", honored Friends with this request. As a result, Samuel Janney, his brother Asa Janney, Isaiah Lightner and many other splendid personalities with a real concern for the Indians, came to Nebraska where the Santee, Pawnee, Otoes, Winnebagoes and Omaha Indians lived.

The placing of Indian agencies under control of Friends caused much indignation among those who had found that work very profitable. But Friends, having carefully considered the situation, decided that there was "nothing incompatible with the principles of Friends in the duties of Indian agent, and that it was a Divine calling to fulfill, so they gave their best and truest service."<sup>(2)</sup> Only touches of this Indian work can be profitably included here, but a few significant incidents are valuable.

Samuel Janney, the first Indian agent, tells of his arrival in Omaha in May 1869. His family too came, for there was much work for women as well as men in the attempt to help the Indians find a "more abundant life." Many problems awaited him on his arrival to the new field. The Indians had always been pushed on from each location to a poorer one as white men wanted their homes. Friendly Indians had suffered from the suspicion and fear aroused by the warlike tribes. Exorbitant amounts had been charged against the Indians, by the government for these forced moves. Their appeal for justice in this last matter was carried by Samuel M. Janney to the Government. His petition was granted and the amount returned to the Indians. <sup>(3)</sup>

(2) Janney, Memoirs of Samuel M. Janney, 150.

(3) Janney, Memoirs of Samuel M. Janney, 162.



The condition of the Indians, physically and morally, was far from satisfactory. Withal the work of the Agents was a giant task, but in this as in all pioneer work, the results were so evident and tangible that it greatly encouraged the workers. We do not wonder that the Indians greatly respected and revered the Quaker workers when we read of such principles as this one found in a speech of Samuel Janney to the Indians: "Brothers, I do not come here to make many promises; I wish to make few promises and always keep them."

Peace among the Indians and lawful conduct were also problems for the agents. In the case of one murder attributed to Indians in Nebraska into which Samuel Janney was investigating, he met this proposition: "Our relatives are killed and our stock is stolen by white men and we cannot get justice. We are willing to call it even if the white man will cease to hunt this murderer." Threat of withholding Government supplies was necessary before they would allow a search. In another instance, three Indians were arrested on suspicion for a crime some one man had committed, and were kept in prison twenty-two months awaiting trial. Samuel Janney then succeeded in getting them out "on bail", after which the matter was dropped.<sup>(4)</sup> The agents found great need for reform outside of Indian territory as well as on it.

Through their persistent effort, land was allotted to each Indian family. They were persuaded to build permanent homes of logs. Farm implements were provided for all. Gradually they learned the principle of individual ownership and bought stock for their farms. Many supplies of clothing and of food for the sick, as well as liberal contributions, were given by Eastern Friends for the Indian work.

The young men soon took up with the principles taught them, though they naturally translated them into Indian methods. They organized what they called "Civilized Bands," of those who realized that the old chiefs were reactionary and that they could not advance under such leadership. By the help of the Agents, it was arranged to choose a chief by vote every few years. Here again the cautious mind of the Indian must be satisfied, and it was found necessary to take the vote by lining up the supporters of the contestants on either side, respectively, of a long road where they could be counted by all.<sup>(5)</sup>

The men now took up farming and raised good crops. The women were released from outdoor duties, leaving them free to do their housework. Here the Quaker women played their part, going

(4) Janney, Memoirs of Samuel M. Janney, 265

(5) Kelsey, Friends and the Indian, 193

into the homes of the Indians and teaching them hygiene and household economies. These ideals, though not completely accepted, were effective in many homes. Eventually, a field matron supported by Friends was sent and this proved a decided advantage to the work there in Nebraska. (6)

In education too, the Friends did a great work for the Indians. One of the agents sent out was Isaiah Lightner, agent to the Indians of Knox County, where he lived with his family for nine years. Three times he resigned but the need was so great and his work so efficient that he was urgently sought to remain longer. His work was mostly in the field of education. The Government sent a practical boss farmer to work among the Indians. In the school, the Indians were taught blacksmithing, carpentry, harness making and such practical occupations. (7) Isaiah Lightner, being a minister, organized a First Day School in connection with the government school. Here each Sunday the children sat in silence for one-half an hour and then all marched by him and shook hands.

The following amusing incident is told by his daughter, concerning her own experience in the First Day School in 1874. "One thing we all had to do at First Day School was to stand and recite a verse of Scripture. Father always told his own children they must speak loud enough to be heard well, and set an example to the Indians. Imagine his surprise one day when Louisa J. Roberts, a dear friend from Philadelphia, was present to see his son rise and say 'Blessed are the rich for they shall inherit the earth' ". Very human were these pioneers of the faith, yet how true and sincere their service.

When he resigned, Isaiah Lightner bought land near Genoa, Nebraska, where his work had been done. Other Friends did likewise as it was a rich, valuable home site. A Meeting was organized in the school house there, Eighth Month Eighteenth, 1877, auxiliary to the Prairie Grove Quarterly Meeting. This is the earliest record of a Friends' Meeting in Nebraska. Another group of Friends in Lincoln started a Meeting soon and the two formed what was known as the Nebraska Half Year Meeting, under Baltimore Yearly Meeting. With the death of the older generation, the Lincoln Meeting died out. In like manner Genoa finally was laid down in spite of the faithful attempt made by the few loyal Friends to maintain it. In 1924, the property was sold, thus closing, as far as organization is concerned, the epoch begun by Indian Agents, members of the Society of Friends of the Hicksite

(6) Kelsoy, Friends and the Indian, 197.

(7) Fry, Niobrara News, clipping (no date).



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branch. But their spirit and the help of their descendants in the work of Friends will never end. Today in Nebraska, many of the younger Friends have never heard the distinction Hicksite and Orthodox. To them all Friends are co-workers for Christ's Kingdom.

After President Grant had retired from office, there was much disagreement and difficulty among government officials, concerning the matter of Friends holding the positions as Indian Agents. It was a very lucrative position when not too conscientiously superintended. In the face of this constant difficulty, the Friends soon decided to withdraw from the service.

As Nebraska developed, the Indians were again moved on, so that today we find only a few Indians living near Genoa. The Indian school is still there and is recognized equally with any of its competitors. These Indians are thoroughly civilized and are making a valuable contribution to the State of Nebraska in the form of good citizens of the highest class.

### III. Early Friends in Northeast Nebraska.

In later years, by other groups of Friends, outposts were planted in Nebraska. These meetings were established mostly under Iowa Yearly Meeting, although a few in the southern part of the State were set up by Kansas Yearly Meeting. With these groups, the more permanent work in Nebraska found its beginnings.

Springbank, which in turn set off Elk Valley and Kenma, was established by Pleasant Plain Quarter of Iowa Yearly Meeting in 1862. Its location in the rich valley near the Missouri River made it an attractive home site for pioneers. They were mostly Iowa Friends and this first meeting as established was due, not to additions to the Society, but redistribution of those already members. In 1880, a Sunday School and Preparative Meeting (a) were started. Two years later it was recognized and established as a Monthly Meeting with twenty-nine charter members. ~~Andrews~~ Andrews was the first clerk and held that position for many years.

(a) An organization formed temporarily until the size and strength of the group warranted the establishment of a monthly meeting. It is not an official part of Friend but served as a nucleus around which work could develop in those districts isolated from Friend's Organization.

during the early years, while they were yet a part of Greenville Quarterly Meeting, (b) very active church work was carried on. Some evangelistic services were held and the membership grew splendidly.

John O. Emry, Aaron Roberts, Jr., William R. Gregory and Robert McDorman were recorded ministers in the Spring Bank Monthly Meeting during those first ten years. Preparative meetings were organized in nearby communities which were later established as Monthly Meetings. In 1892, Spring Bank Quarterly Meeting, composed of Spring Bank, Elk Valley, Kemma and Highland Monthly Meetings, was set up by Iowa Yearly Meeting. Edwin Andrews was also made clerk of the new Quarterly Meeting, a position he held for several years. (12)

Friends here were foremost in community reform movements and were a power for good to all who came within their influence. (9) The work was maintained, in the face of all the difficulties and hardships, by the consistent effort and faith of those concerned. Writing of the work at Elk Valley, Bert Benton says, "In the spring of 1891, I rode horseback over the hills that overlook the meetinghouse now. I found a man by the name of Minter holding forth in the Sabbath School. They had no pastor nor organization. I never dreamed that beautiful spring morning that the mantle of that man would some day fall on me. It has been my fortune now for thirty-five years to have Elk Valley as my place of worship. Under God's hand, I think I have kept that meeting going, when without me and my family it would have perished." (13) The young people who were developed and guided by those meetings and who today are leaders in the Friends' work, bountifully repay the self-sacrificing service of such faithful workers. The Smiths, Roberts, Ellis, Bales, Emrys and Andrews, descendants of some of those early pioneers, are today the staunch workers in that Quarterly Meeting.

This work was carried on entirely separate from other work of Friends in Nebraska as a part of Iowa Yearly Meeting. It was just across the border from Iowa, and Nebraska as a State had as yet scarcely been touched.

(b) They had been transferred to this Quarterly Meeting.

(12) Andrews, Edwin, Letter to present writer, Dec. 15th, 1926.

(13) Benton, Bert, Letter to present writer, Nov. 1st, 1926.

#### IV. Early Friends in Southern Nebraska.

In 1873 a group of Friends living in southeast Fillmore County, Nebraska, requested of Bear Creek Monthly Meeting, Dallas County, Iowa, that a preparative meeting be established at Pleasant Ridge Schoolhouse. This work, though separate from that in Northeast Nebraska, was the result of the same type of a movement. A tiny group of Friends, mutually interested and congenial, came west seeking new homes. As soon as they were able to give their efforts to other than the physical needs of their families in this new pioneer land, they turned their attention to some permanent religious organization.

In this group was Jesse Griffiths, a minister who, with the loyal support of his fellow pioneers, felt deeply the concern that their children have the privileges of a Friend's Meeting. As a result, the Pleasant Ridge preparative meeting, as already mentioned, was established. Their membership was not large enough to warrant the establishment of an independent monthly Meeting. Their number was gradually increased by the addition of several families who moved there.

The period of growth and prosperity of Pleasant Ridge meeting was comparatively short however, for the years of drought and grasshopper scourge in the later seventies scattered again many of these families. Most of them never returned to the community. A Sunday School which was maintained jointly with other Christians of the community was carried on for years with prayer service and occasional preaching. (14)

At Tobias, a few miles from Pleasant Ridge, another group of Friends lived. They requested and were granted a monthly meeting through Pleasant View quarter of Kansas Yearly Meeting in 1886. The membership was scattered, some coming as far as fourteen miles to service. Conditions were such that securing the necessary living meant a continuous struggle. The only means of transportation was a team of heavy work horses that had worked in the field from ten to sixteen hours every week day. Under such circumstances, getting to Meeting was a real sacrifice. However, the Divine benediction upon their faithfulness was such that their Meeting grew and prospered so that during its first year the quarterly Meeting thought it wise to record as ministers of the gospel, three of its members. (11) A new meeting house was built and the work generally prospered until the severe drought of 1893-94. The attendant financial depression made it necessary for many to sell their homes and seek again cheaper land.

(14) Hall, Dr. S. L., Letter to present writer Nov. 10th, 1926.

(11) Nebraska Friend, Nov. 1901, p. 15.

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The new element which took their places was foreign and mostly Roman Catholic so that eventually the meeting dropped. In 1901 the meeting house was sold for a school house. (14)

It is interesting to note that many of these families moved near to Central City, Nebraska, which later became the center for Friends in Nebraska.

A Friend's center developed about this same time near Elwood, Nebraska. This was in the same section of Nebraska as the Tobias Meeting, though just a little farther west in Gosper County. Friends first settled there in 1880 and their number increased with the years. Settlers belonging to other denominations quickly followed. In 1884, a Union Sunday School was organized. It was held alternately in two of the sod homes of the community.

With the coming of the railroad in 1885, the country began to prosper. Services were held in connection with the Sunday School. The work continued with varying success until the coming of George McGraw, a minister from Iowa. Under his leadership, the work grew and Pleasant Hill Monthly Meeting was established in 1889. This was later called Gosper Monthly Meeting.

He also started another meeting about twenty miles north of this one and preached alternate weeks at these two places during all kinds of weather and all seasons for over twelve years. A meeting house was built and a Monthly Meeting granted at this new point called Highland. It was a thriving little meeting.

In 1899, Highland and Gosper were united under one pastoral charge. Their membership numbered 123, but the decline had begun with those terrible years of crop failure. Many were scattered to other states. The membership dropped nominally to 90 with few close enough to attend, so that in 1902 the meetings were discontinued. (17)

We must of course credit those failures, in a degree, to the lack of a spiritual vitality sufficient to carry them over the testing time. But back of it all was the great need for determined, courageous leadership. How greatly they needed inspiration and encouragement from fresh personal contacts. Their own discouragements and difficulties loomed so large to them, and not being in touch with other fields of Quakerism, their courage failed. Here, as at many of the other sites of early Friends' Meetings in Nebraska, we now have no meeting. It is because of the old and ever present need for leadership of the kind that understands the people and can lead them to that fuller self-development of which they are capable. Quakerism can and must meet this need.

(14) Hall, Dr. S. L., Letter to present writer Nov. 10th, 1926.

(17) Nebraska Friend, November 1902.

One other meeting was established in connection with these three already mentioned. It was at Clarks, Nebraska, considerably north of Tobias, near Central City. Pleasant View quarter of Kansas Yearly Meeting established it in 1887. Its further development blends into the later movement of Friends in Nebraska. (15)

These four meetings in south Central Nebraska, Pleasant Ridge Preparative and Tobias, Clarks and Cooper Monthly Meetings were all mainly the result of migration of Friends from farther East.

So in 1885 we have, three contemporary Quaker developments in Nebraska, the hicksite work in the central part, the Kansas Yearly Meeting work in the South Central side and an Iowa Yearly Meeting group in the northeast corner. (16) The great heart of Nebraska had not been touched. Such was the setting for the great movement with its definite emphasis on the Nebraska field for Friends.

#### V. Beginnings in Central Nebraska and Consequent Development.

##### THE LAND.

Picture to yourself the great state of Nebraska, especially its central and western sections, with its great spaces of level, treeless prairie stretching mile on mile and covered with a luxuriant mat of buffalo grass. Across the center of the state runs the North Platte River with only one branch where the North and South Platte Rivers join. It is indeed a beautiful country, true of another type from much of nature's beauty, yet the bigness, the vast spaces of vision, the almost ceaseless wind keeping the air fresh and pure, and the calm of evening with the most gorgeous sunsets ever seen—these are the glories of this land. It is not a tourist's type of beauty but the challenge of the grandeur of the prairie. The land was created for pioneers, for youth and strength and courage. If you can sense the spirit and setting of the country, you can more truly understand the story of Quakerism there.

##### HIAWATHA QUARTERLY MEETING

In 1889, ten years before the opening of Nebraska Central College, real home missionary work was begun in Nebraska. Herbert J. Mott, a minister of New York Yearly Meeting went to Hiawatha, Dundy County, Nebraska, on a business trip. He was to

(15) Nebraska Friend, Nov. 1902, 15.

(16) Mott, Nebraska Central College, pamphlet 2.



have been there, as he thought, for only two or three hours, but during that time a "far reaching door," unexpected, unsought opportunity opened wide for six weeks evangelistic meetings among those unacquainted with Friends". (16) That spring Hiawatha Monthly Meeting was established by direction of Ackworth Quarterly Meeting of Iowa with a membership of seventy. Within that year it increased to one hundred and twelve. From the beginning, though the country was newly settled, the members and attenders entirely supported the work. During that summer, Bates Monthly Meeting, just seven miles from Hiawatha, was also granted. (22) The Providence of God alone led in this splendid work.

From the beginning, the need for workers was a great challenge. In reference to this first trip to Western Nebraska, Herbert Mott writes, "From this place to the head of the valley, over ninety miles, there are no religious services of any kind. People come miles to the meetings. These people are not cannibals or worshippers of idols, as most missionaries deal with, but they are brothers in Christ who are gospel hungry. There is urgent need for fifteen men and women at once." (18) Another report from the work at Mahila, Nebraska, that same year, tells that the house was crowded to capacity at all evening meetings. They greatly needed a minister who could stay permanently. (19) G. W. Kinnar says of another of their new meetings that it was organized February 21st and within a month had doubled in size. From nearby places came many earnest calls for help. "The need for workers is very urgent." (20).

These instances show something of the great need for leadership which was, and is today, the real key to the situation in Nebraska. They needed the right kind of leadership of course-not just those who had failed to make good anywhere else, where they had had a definite organization to back them and carry them along. Nor indeed, did they demand only those with exceptional ability. What they did need exceedingly was workers with energy, perseverance, self-denial, faith and "sanctified common sense." These people were intelligent, practical

(16) Mott, Nebraska Central College, pamphlet 2.

(22) Nebraska Friend November 1902, p. 9. Christian Worker May 30, 1889.

(18) Christian Worker, March 7, 1889.

(19) Christian Worker, Feb. 28, 1889.

(20) Christian Worker, March 28, 1889.



and hard-working folk, and so the last qualification was very necessary.

An illustration of the real earnestness of these Nebraska Pioneers is the case of three young men who worked all day in the field until their horses were too tired to travel. Then they walked twelve miles to service. Two of these boys became members and officers of the Meeting. Many of the people had not heard a sermon in more than three years, yet their schools were of so good a standard as to be a credit to any community. Their religious life alone seemed to be neglected. (21)

Urgent calls for workers were sent out through the Friends' papers. A special plea was made to young people who felt a call to such service. Many conscientious, sincere workers came in answer to these appeals. Among them were G. H. Eddy of Glens Falls, New York, and Micaja Henley of Moravia, Indiana. Joseph Sophor with his wife and two children came from Iowa in 1890 and settled in Perkins County, Nebraska, where he was a loved leader. Anna McPherson, a Friend gifted in music, faith and prayer, and instrumental in getting a sympathetic touch with young people, was associated with Herbert Mott in evangelistic work. William C. Pidgeon came from Indiana as a teacher and Christian worker. Benjamin Compton from Ohio did his part in the work by organizing Bible Schools which later developed into meetings. Alden Knight, after graduating from Penn College, came to Nebraska where he served as pastor for several years in different parts of the State. These and many others of similar vision responded loyally as the future development proved.

One letter received in answer to the call for workers was, "I am fifty-six years old but I feel almost ready to answer the call. My heart has long gone out toward such work. But my wife says I am too old, thee will not want me." It was beautiful to meet such a response. If only more in the prime of life could sense the vision, how wonderful the advancement would be.

The almost desperate need of the work constantly was for more competent leaders who could understand that particular field and those people. It was not an easy need to fill, for these leaders were equally needed in many other places everywhere.

Let us consider for a moment the type of work done before discussing the actual progress. First, evangelistic services were held. They presented merely the gospel message without any denominational content and their length depended entirely upon the particular situation. After this type of service had ended, announcement was made that for the next week there would be meetings held presenting definitely the Quaker message and their vision of the way of life and service. Anyone who wished to come were invited. The simple, practical message of Friends with its definite bearing on common, everyday living was wonderfully appealing to these people. Many would desire membership with Friends. Such a group would be organized temporarily as a Preparative Meeting until the time when it would seem best to establish there a regularly organized Friend's Meeting. In the meantime, they were developing Quaker ways of worship and service preparatory to taking up the responsibilities of a Monthly Meeting when it was granted. True, one would not mistake them for Birthright members of Friends, yet the vital message and principles of Quakerism were there.

In November 1889, Hiawatha Quarterly Meeting was established, composed of Hiawatha and Bates Monthly Meetings. John Henry Douglass, Superintendent of Pastoral and Evangelistic work of Iowa Yearly Meeting, and a Committee from Iowa Yearly Meeting, of which Laurie Tatum was chairman, were present for this occasion. Their messages and their approval were very helpful to the local workers. Within one year after the establishment of this Quarterly Meeting, six other meetings had been established, making eight in all. They were Douglas, Pleasant Valley, Spencer, Elizabeth, Union and Greenfield. In many cases, Meeting houses were built, and the residence of the pastor owned by the Meeting. Several pastors served for more than one meeting. Among this group were Anna Nicholson, Emma Spencer and Elizabeth Larkin. (23) By the end of the year 1890, regular services were being held in fourteen points in three counties, but with only seven ministers in the field.

Realizing the fact that leaders were needed so much faster than they could possibly be secured from the East, and also that a work to be really successful must be self-sustaining, emphasis on some means of training their young people was stressed from the beginning. Definite plans for an Academy to

(23) Christian Worker, October 24, 1889.

prepare the young people of their own communities for future leaders were begun with the early steps of the work.

By the fall of 1890, a commodious two story Academy had been built and was opened for school. On the second floor were the classrooms and on the first, a large auditorium which served as a Meeting house as well as for school purposes. The building was about 40'x60' and cost around Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000.00).<sup>(c)</sup> The Hiawatha Townsite Company helped the Quarterly Meeting in providing the cost of the building. It was comfortably furnished and completed free of debt. Isom P. Wooten dedicated the Academy and school opened with William C. Pidgeon as principal.

Professor Swaisgood became principal for the second year. During that year, forty of the students were taken into membership with Friends, several of whom later were recorded ministers.

Here again the terrible drouth years of 1890, followed by the worse one of 1894, left its record of havoc behind. The country was left desolate. The crop failure was so complete that the people even lacked seed to plant for the coming year. Herbert Kott made a trip to eastern Friends in 1891, raising funds to enable the homesteaders to stay in Nebraska till the next crop. In New England Yearly Meeting he received \$856.82, in New York \$402.10, and in Philadelphia \$690.00, making a total of \$1948.92. He also received forty barrels of clothing.<sup>(56)</sup> This proved a wonderful help to many.

Yet about three-fourths of these homesteaders left the country. Those remaining were unable to keep the school going. The building was used for a meeting house for years, but the school was never re-opened. Though this attempt at a training school did not succeed, the need was no less. The re-establishment of that work was kept constantly as an aim before the group.

By 1898 there were only four Meetings of Hiawatha Quarter held regularly. There were Hiawatha, Douglas, Greenfield and Pleasant Valley. From eight states, all the way from North Carolina to Alaska, came loving remembrances from those who had found the fuller life while in Nebraska.

(c) The cost of labor and materials was relatively inexpensive then as compared with now.

(56) Christian Worker, March 5, 1891.

### PLATTE VALLEY QUARTERLY MEETING

While the work in Hiawatha Quarter was going forward, urgent calls came from Benjamin Compton of Alda and Benjamin Able of Clarks, saying that the opening for Friends in Central Nebraska was exceedingly promising and the need was very great. The possibilities of the work had been well expressed by J. Henry Douglas in his statement that if Friends in Hiawatha Quarter would be true to their mission, before many years Friends would become established in central Nebraska and eventually there would be a Yearly Meeting of Friends in Nebraska. Under the challenge of the work, the calls were answered and a meeting begun in Center Schoolhouse northwest of Alda in 1894. The same fall meetings were held in Alda, Clarks, Prairie View and Schumersville, each resulting in the establishment of a Monthly Meeting by Hiawatha Quarter.

### CENTER MONTHLY MEETING

The real beginnings at Center Meeting date back several years to the time when a Sabbath School had been established by a Friend, Benjamin Compton. To his faithful, earnest Christian influence, was due the preparation for Friends there. Visiting ministers of many faiths, as they chanced to come through the country, had been invited to hold services. When finally Herbert Mott came, the field was already and sown and the harvest ripe. The meeting grew spiritually under his ministry for a year and a half. He was succeeded by Alden Knight, then Elden Knight, and Oliver Underwood. In the fall of 1899, when Henry Vore was pastor, a meeting house was built and dedicated free of debt. The membership had reached about forty-five. Although the numbers in each meeting seem small, it must be remembered how scattered the homes were in this, a homestead country.

### ALDA MONTHLY MEETING

At Alda, the people came for miles around, eager and receptive. It seems one can recognize clearly the effect that common and general approval had on the work. "Every one is doing it" is an urge to many who would otherwise not have shown an interest. But the pathway was not all so easy as the beginning. Keeping the work going meant real earnest effort by the people and the steady grind soon eliminated those whose interest was only shallow.

It is to the credit of the leaders that the whole movement did not result in an emotional, temporary type of thing. The Yearly Meeting of Nebraska today, a substantial Quaker group

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after only thirty-five years of work, is a monument to the depth and permanence of these early endeavors. It must always be remembered that this work was carried on among those who knew absolutely nothing of Friends before this time. There was not one birthright member in Hiawatha Quarterly Meeting when it was established, except the minister.

The preliminary meeting at Alda was established with sixty-two members. In 1895, when the Monthly Meeting was granted, it had grown to seventy-five.

#### CLARKS MONTHLY MEETING

Platte Valley Monthly Meeting at Clarke, as referred to under the earlier work of Kansas Yearly Meeting, had been holding its own nicely. In 1892 a regular pastor had been secured and a Meeting house built. Herbert Mott conducted a meeting there in 1895. Many were added to the Monthly Meeting. In 1897 the name was changed to Clarks Monthly Meeting.

#### PLEASANT HILL MONTHLY MEETING

The work at Pleasant Hill began with an association of all Christians for worship without any official organization. Prayer meeting and Sabbath School were held regularly. The coming of Herbert Mott to this group for meetings was very much appreciated. The usual program was followed here and after three weeks, a preliminary meeting was organized. Pleasant Hill Monthly Meeting was regularly established, having been set off by Alda Monthly Meeting December 1896. In 1898, through the earnest work of this new meeting, a branch Monthly Meeting was established at North Loupe.

Pleasant Hill had the distinction in 1902 of never having had as a regular pastor one who had gained his experience elsewhere. O. M. Frazer, Oliver P. Underwood, C. C. Schultz and Joseph M. Andrews were among those whom this Meeting trained.

#### PRAIRIE VIEW MONTHLY MEETING

A small meeting at Prairie View was established in 1895 as a result of Evangelistic services held in that place.

This was the home of one of the most capable and effective of these early workers in Nebraska, Turner B. Able. Referring to his wonderful Christian character, a friend once



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said, "When I think of faith I think of Abraham and Turner Able." Friends in Nebraska owe sincere praise to him for his faithful service there.

Prairie View, in 1900, reported a Meeting house and parsonage with no indebtedness and Junior and Senior Christian Endeavor Societies, beside the regular services. This is one of the earliest Christian Endeavors recorded for this western Nebraska work.

Schaumpsville monthly meeting, just five miles from Alda, was established in 1895, but in 1902 it was discontinued and its twenty-two members transferred to Alda.

#### CENTRAL CITY MONTHLY MEETING

Concerning the Meeting at Central City I will go more into detail. It is a typical example of the way all of these meetings were begun and of the faith and courage entailed in the work. Also, because of the far-reaching results of this particular work which has become the center of Quakerism in Nebraska, it deserves a detailed presentation.

As already suggested, the great need for Nebraska to become self-supporting in the matter of home trained, home produced, leadership was growing ever more urgent as the work developed. There was always the possibility that Hiawatha Academy might be re-opened. However, the work was spreading to the central part of the State which was a more thickly populated and better developed section. That section then seemed a more logical location for a school.

In the summer of 1898, a committee composed of Turner L. Able, Charles White, John Cole, Elwood Knight, Benjamin Able and Herbert Mott, met at the home of John Cole, Clarks, Nebraska. The day was spent in conference and prayer. "Wonderfully the divine presence filled the place where we assembled. With a great reach of faith that almost startled ourselves, we determined unanimously to establish a school of the Prophets. We had no money but a far greater treasure, an Unlimited Almighty God." (26)

Several years before this, in 1865, six hundred and forty acres locally known as the College Section, had been purchased by the Methodist Church. It cornered Central City on the northwest. On the east half, a College building had been erected at a cost of Fifty-four Thousand Dollars (\$54,000.00). A mortgage for Twenty-five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) had taken the property during the financial panic of 1894. The College was closed and abandoned. Insurance could not be placed on the building and a severe hail storm had battered out all of



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the windows.

The building was going to ruin and though property values were at the bottom, the non-resident owners decided to sell at any sacrifice. A brewer from Omaha, Nebraska, came up to Central City to buy it.

In Central City lived James Stephens, a Scotchman. He was a business man owning a fine home, lumber yard and grain elevator, somewhat past middle life and comfortably settled in his business. He felt enough concerned that the building be saved for College purposes to sell all of his property, even his home and buy the College Section. He had no definite plan in view as to the use of the place, but with his family moved into the dilapidated basement of the College building and began life over again financially. The college had been used as a storage place for hay and grain and little resembled a seat of learning. (26)

The Committee above referred to learned of this building. They immediately held a conference with James Stephens who told them the story of his leading in holding the College for things worthwhile. Arrangements were made soon for a year's option of purchase on the east half of the section for Nine Thousand Dollars (\$9,000.00). This included the College building and was about one-sixth of the actual cost. The contract was signed and One Dollar (\$1.00) paid down to make it legal.

A large campus was then reserved around the College building and the remainder of the half section was surveyed into lots and small acreage tracts. These were sold at the rate of Forty Dollars (\$40.00) an acre to Friends or others for homes. Much of it was sold on time and James Stephens took these notes at par value on the purchase price. No commission was paid to anyone. By the end of one year the property had been paid for in full and the treasury still held Nine hundred and forty-eight Dollars and Sixty-one Cents (\$948.61).

The building was repaired and painted inside and out. New furniture and equipment was secured as far and fast as resources would permit. On June 26th, 1899, Nebraska Central College was dedicated "to the service of youth and the glory of God." There was great rejoicing on that occasion, it being just one year from the day the committee had made their decision at Clarke, Nebraska. Now this property was owned free of debt. (26)

(26) Mott, Nebraska Central College, pamphlet p6.

When the preliminary arrangements for the College property had been made, it became evident that a meeting at Central City would be the next logical step. It would be a strategic point for Quakerism in Nebraska. Central City had been established in the sixties and had grown steadily. Its population in 1898 was 1368. It was the center of population for the state with rich agricultural surroundings and a prosperous people. Nestling in the broad valley of the Platte River, one hundred and thirty miles from Omaha as the river runs, it had a beautiful climate, rich soil, abundant water and pure air. (27)

Herbert Mott went there in the fall of 1898 and found only one family of Friends. With that as a nucleus, he began immediately to erect a Meeting house. The matter was laid before the business men of Central City, who responded generously with Thirteen Hundred Dollars (\$1300.00) of the necessary Sixteen hundred and fifty Dollars (\$1650.00) which the building cost. Turner Able of Clarks, Nebraska, offered the free use of his bank account in order that the work might not be delayed. Within a few months the building was completed free of debt even to Turner Able.

All things being ready, the fifteenth day of January, 1899, was chosen as appropriate for setting apart this newly-erected house for divine worship. On the evening of the fourteenth, an educational address was given by President Rosenberger of Penn College, to a large and appreciative audience. On Sunday morning every available foot of space was occupied and scores could not gain admittance. In the audience were those who had not been in a religious sanctuary for years. For weeks they had seen this minister and his helpers in workmen's clothes building their own Meeting house, and they had all been invited to come. In solemn stillness there was reverent waiting upon the Lord. In a few plain words, Zenas L. Martin of Iowa Yearly Meeting set forth the purpose and responsibility of the new undertaking. (28)

It was a small frame building 40'x40', with two hundred substantial assembly chairs and drop seats around three walls. It was well-heated and lighted, had carpeted aisles, and in all was furnished complete from organ to fire tongs and shovel. All of this preparation was made when there was only one family of Friends. It seemed a house without a congregation.

(27) American Friend, June 1898, p. 678.

(28) American Friend, January 1899, p. 90.

The life and labors of these Friends are surrounded by a spirit of adventure that is extremely fascinating.

The usual series of meetings was then begun, lasting several weeks, with a crowded house. The preliminary meeting was organized in March 1899, which carried on the necessary business until August 2nd, 1899. Then the regular Monthly Meeting was authorized by Platte Valley Quarter. The Central City meeting had a phenomenal growth. Inside of one year there were over one hundred members. In this case, there were some birth-right Friends in membership who had come to the community and bought homes on the College Section. (28)

#### NORTH LOUPE MONTHLY MEETING

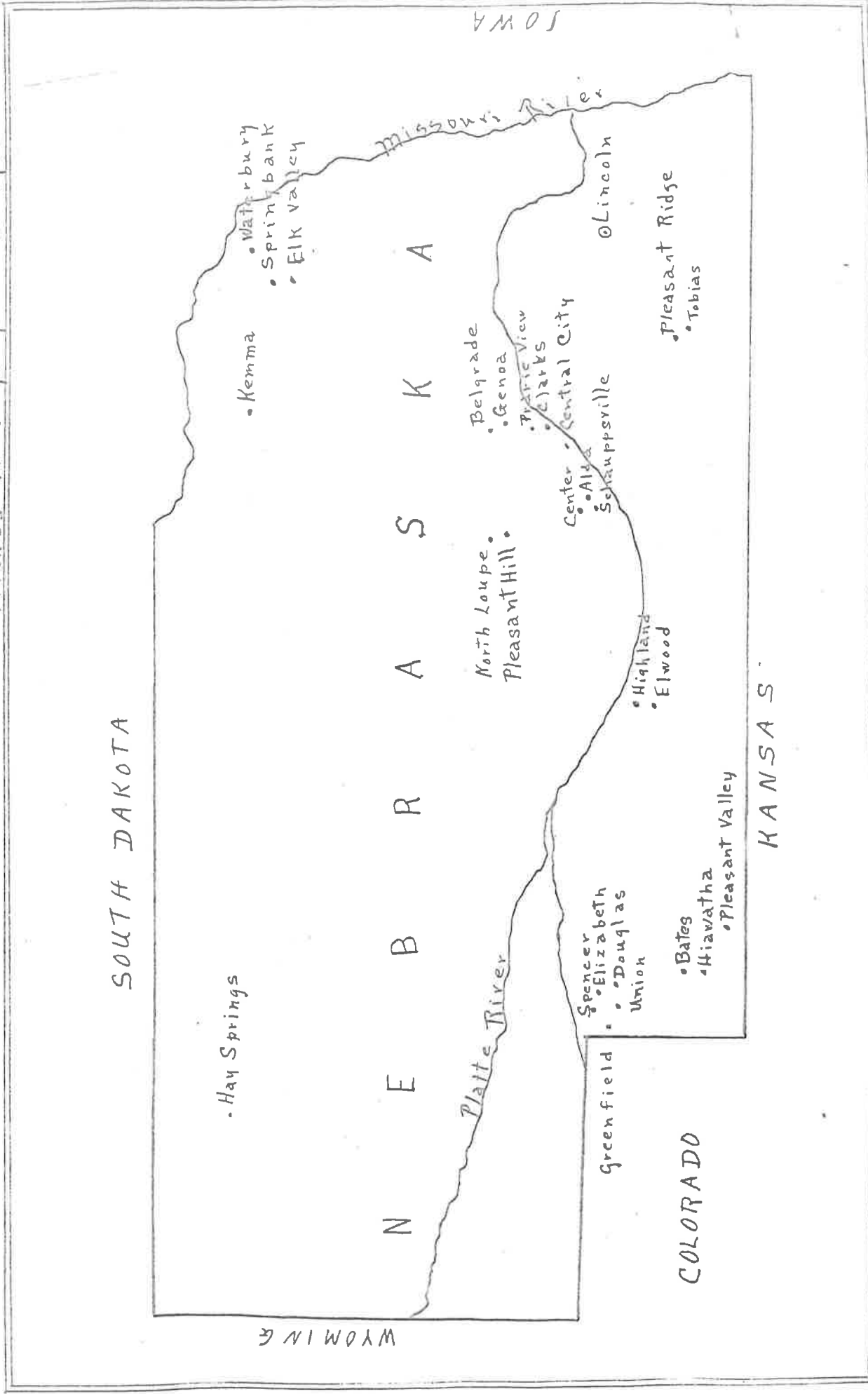
The North Loupe Monthly Meeting was set off by Pleasant Hill Meeting, as already mentioned, and felt very grateful for the maternal care extended by that Meeting. Platte Valley Quarterly Meeting was held there the first time in May 1898, and was a memorable time for all. Anna Draper and Levi Rees of Iskalooza were visiting Friends. Many drove as far as fifty miles and some seventy-five miles to attend. (29) The meeting grew and doubled within a year of its establishment. A meeting house was built in 1900. From the first, a regular pastor was supported.

The same winter a meeting was set up at Belgrade, about twenty-five miles east of North Loupe. This, however, proved to be a relatively temporary one lasting only a few years.

This completes the survey of the development of Platte Valley Quarterly Meeting which, in 1898, included Center, Alda, Clarks, Schauppsville, Pleasant Hill, Prairie View, Central City, North Loupe and Belgrade Monthly Meetings. It was and is still the strongest Quarter in Nebraska, largely due to the College.

(28) American Friend, January 1899, p. 90.

(30) American Friend, June 1898, p. 535.



## VI. Nebraska Church and Educational Association.

A really problematic situation now faced the Nebraska work in 1898. Here were two Quarterly Meetings in Central and Western Nebraska with sixteen monthly meetings. They were a part of Iowa Yearly Meeting, but the distance separating them from Iowa Friends, <sup>and</sup> the expense of travel made it impossible for them to attend or know much of their Yearly Meeting. Distance involved much more than it does now. Again, in the southern part of Nebraska was another group of monthly meetings belonging to Kansas Yearly Meeting. They also were of necessity unable to attend their yearly meeting. Neither did they have any official intercourse or connection with other Friends in Nebraska. Still another separate group of Friends in Spring Bank Quarter, northeast Nebraska, were in a similar situation. In each of these groups not only were they isolated from their central organization, and ninety-five per cent. of all Friends in Nebraska had never attended yearly meeting, but they were mutually unacquainted.

These isolated groups were very much in need of encouragement and help. They were facing an up-hill row, facing all sorts of obstacles and discouragements everyday of pioneer life on the prairie. Nineteen of these monthly meetings were the outgrowth of church extension work. They were new in membership as well as in organization, for ninety per cent. of the total number of Friends in Nebraska were members by conviction. All of these groups were facing very similar problems yet they scarcely knew of each other. (30-31)

Sometimes visiting representatives and leaders came from their respective Yearly Meetings, but not often as they were only outposts of these larger organizations. Without any suggestion of a lack of interest or effort on the part of the Yearly Meetings, it was clearly recognized that there was need for more direction and help than could be received from that source alone. They were not yet ready for a new Yearly Meeting, but there was great need for some organized cooperation in the Nebraska field.

Furthermore, the College property at Central City had been secured. The intention was to offer the first year of college work in 1899, adding an additional year's work each fall until a full course was offered. It must have some organization to support and direct it. Iowa and Kansas each had their own

(30) American Friend, June 1898, p. 335.

(31) American Friend, June 1899, p. 312.

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Colleges and could neither one be expected to divide their support by taking over Nebraska Central College. Here was another vital need for centralized work in Nebraska. The leaders saw this whole situation clearly.

Consequently in October 1898 was incorporated the "Nebraska Church and Educational Association." It represented no thought of division or separation in the yearly meetings, but only a temporary expedient to meet the demands of a geographical situation. Its stated purpose was to "bring all meetings and memberships into acquaintance, intelligent relation and cooperation in the great home mission field in Nebraska; to cultivate a mutual interest, sympathy and Christian love; to foster our educational interests and direct their development; to furnish opportunity for representative Friends to meet each year for deliberation, instruction and encouragement, and at the same time afford a most favorable opportunity for Friends from other parts to deliver any message they may have for us. Also, it will make it possible for the officials of both yearly meetings to meet one another and us. The Association has to meet and solve new problems that can be delayed no longer, to do a work that, please God, shall profoundly affect not only the Quakerism of this and the next generation, but the spiritual pulse of this great westland." (32)

The Association decided that the official record of its proceedings should be published in a monthly magazine to be called "The Nebraska Friend." This paper should also serve as a medium of exchange of news between the various meetings, directing thought to common problems and giving practical suggestions and inspiration. This one publication was also to serve as a publicity agency for Nebraska Central College and temporarily for the catalogue of that institution.

The first regular meeting of the Nebraska Church and Educational Association was held at Central City, June 20-27, 1899. Cooperation was entirely optional, though all Monthly Meetings were invited to become members. (d) Twelve were repre-

(32) Nebraska Friend, November 1902, p. 16.

(d) This same movement spread into South Dakota, where many meetings were established. Crossing the State line from Nebraska into South Dakota was the only distinguishing feature as they were all a part of the same work. In all the future organizations and developments of the Nebraska work, South Dakota had her part, which was an important contribution. Their more detailed development is not covered in this paper, but the fact of her contemporary growth and her cooperation should be borne in mind as making possible the larger development in Nebraska.



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sented at this first meeting. Edgar B. Ellyson, S. A. Wood and Zenus D. Martin were the leaders and sixty-two delegates were present from outside the state.

At this first conference, the group caught a glimpse of the great work before them; but only a glimpse since the work was untried. The dedication of the College was part of this first session. Mutual acquaintance and interest was made possible among those present, as well as added strength gained through facing common problems. Many came to love the circuit rider, Alfred W. Neville, who traveled thirty-six hundred and forty miles a year to his appointments. (53)

The Conference proved a great inspiration to all, as well as effecting an organization to greatly facilitate the future development in Nebraska.

Rufus M. Jones, as editor of the American Friend, wrote thus of the Nebraska work: "The fact remains that while some good Friends have been wondering whether Quakerism has a future or not, and whether any mission remains for us or not, a few faithful men and women who believe very much in God have been building up scores of meetings and transforming hundreds of homes in the great state of Nebraska. Probably not one of these earnest workers has ever questioned whether Quakerism had a future or not. It never occurred to them to ask such a foolish question because they were too busy doing the work which lay straight before them to bother their heads with abstract theories.....It should be noticed that the old Quaker idea of carrying religion and education along together is maintained in this new field. The school goes next to the meeting house. The Church flourishes best when it grows up around an institution of learning, and Nebraska Friends have realized it and started to work it out in their own field. (53) The center of interest for this first annual meeting was the starting of Nebraska Central College and the problems thus involved.

The next year's meeting of the Nebraska Church and Educational Association, June 20-25, 1900, saw an increased attendance and a more general representation. The theme chosen for the conference was, Education and Church Extension. Especial interest was shown in the report of the first year's work of Nebraska Central College. President A. Rosenburger of Penn College was present giving invaluable service to the association. Also, William Jasper Hadley, General Superintendent of Bible School work, and Viola Smith, Superintendent of Christian En-

(53) Nebraska Friend, July 1899, p. 12.

(53) American Friend, August 1899, p. 17.

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desavor, all of Iowa Yearly Meeting. Benjamin Andrews was also present, of whom it was said, "Thank God for men who never grow old!"

A plan for local home missionary societies was adopted, whereby each meeting should carry on some church extension work. As soon as these new points become well-established and self-supporting, they should become monthly meetings and the society sponsoring them would then begin at a new place. (35)

The very interesting consideration and discussion of the type of leaders needed in their present and future work stressed the fact that Nebraska needs pastors who can teach the newly convinced Friends the principles of faith that will make of them the staunch christian characters which birthright Friends have always personified. This would prevent the starting of emotionally based meetings which would soon be abandoned, as was characteristic of the first evangelistic efforts of Friends. (34) The new year was begun with new zeal and faith, due to the contacts made at the meeting and the courage born of united attack on problems.

By the time of the third annual session of the association June 5-9, 1901, the meeting had fallen into the regular routine of business and everything moved off on time. The representation was broader, including most of the meetings of the State. Charles W. Sweet, President of the International Christian Endeavor Union, and P. W. Raidabauch of Plainview, Indiana, were present as Bible instructors.

The business was transacted very unitedly. Among other arrangements was one that the Publishing Committee, who had charge of the Nebraska Friend, be authorized to take over the selling of the few remaining lots on the College Section. They might receive a commission, one-half of which should go to the "Nebraska Friend." Two hundred dollars (\$200.00) was raised among the monthly meetings for Church Extension work. All money was raised by contribution as there was no assessment of any meeting made.

Herbert Mott, who had been General Superintendent of the Nebraska Church and Educational Association from its beginning, and who for years had worked ceaselessly and effectively for the spread and development of Friends in Nebraska, was forced to leave the work on account of ill health. The office of General Superintendent was left vacant. Again the report of

(35) Nebraska Friend, July 1900, p. 4.

(34) Nebraska Friend, December 1900, p. 50.

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a most successful school year for Nebraska Central College under F. Riley Haworth as President, cheered and encouraged the assembly. (26)

The fourth meeting of the Association held in June 1902, chose Samuel Haworth as General Superintendent for one year. For his support, Three Hundred Dollars (\$300.00) was subscribed by the members present with the request sent to others that they add to this amount, if possible. Always in financial considerations, it was kept in mind that the constituency of the Association was homesteaders in a newly developed country, with little money and the membership in each meeting was relatively small. The home meetings were being splendidly upheld without debt, but any additional financial help must be purely voluntary. The work could progress only as fast as the field was able to support it, as there was little, if any, outside help financially. Realizing the condition clearly, and that any indebtedness under the circumstances would be fatal to the work, a limitation for legal indebtedness of one dollar was placed in the articles of incorporation.

A very encouraging and interesting distinction was gained by the Central City Christian Endeavor when, at the Iowa Yearly Meeting, it was reported as the fourth largest in the whole yearly meeting. Their senior section had a membership of forty-eight. Ellison R. Purdy and Jasper W. Hadley attended this session of the Association. (29)

New pastors were reported at several places. W. H. Perry of Damascus, Iowa, had taken the work at Central City and Isaac Macy that at Highland. (37) The year's work at the College was reported. On the whole, it could be classed as successful, though the change in president and several faculty members made the work somewhat difficult.

The growth in membership of Friends in Nebraska for the next few years was very small compared with the phenomenal growth of the earlier period. However, there was steady progress even in numbers throughout the whole period preceding the establishment of the yearly meeting.

Balking the work of the next four years, we find that the now had all worn off, and the test of the steady grind was being faced. In the beginning, the work had been urged on by the enthusiasm of new meetings springing up rapidly and the

(35) Nebraska Friend, June 1901, p. 65. Nebraska Friend November 1902 p. 17.

(29) Nebraska Friend, June 1902, p. 67.

(37) Nebraska Friend, June 1902, p. 77.

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other usual and encouraging results of a new work. The next motivating development came with the establishment of the Nebraska Church and Educational Association. This work again was new and interesting and carried on with the enthusiasm of a youthful enterprise. Now even that was beyond the age of an experiment. The case of the General Superintendent of the Association is a typical example of the situation. This position was held by Herbert Mott for the first few years, without a salary. As it became necessary that he give up this strenuous work, the necessity of filling that position faced the Annual Meeting. In 1902 Samuel Haworth was appointed to the place, but the burden of financing such a worker grew to be heavy, and in 1903 the Annual Meeting felt it wise to merely consider the Superintendent of Evangelism and Church Extension of Iowa Yearly Meeting as holding this same position for the Nebraska Association. (28) This was in reality dropping the supervision of such work in the Nebraska Church and Educational Association since the Iowa Superintendent had always held such a relation to Nebraska anyway. This really marked the end of the emphasis and especial effort at Church Extension made by the Association.

In 1905, the Denver Quarterly Meeting of Friends composed of Denver, Paonia, Boulder and Colorado Springs meetings, joined the Nebraska Church and Educational Association, making the representation cover the three states of Nebraska, South Dakota and Colorado. (e) An interesting report was submitted by Colorado Friends concerning the work of one of their members, Ida Draper, and her system of follow-up work with those just released from prison which had gained much favorable recognition. (39)

The financial committee reported the installation of a new heating plant in the College. This had been accomplished without incurring any debt, due to the efficient work of the College Board and financial committee in raising the money. (39)

(28) Nebraska Friend, April 1903, p. 51.

(e) From this time on the Colorado Friends work was definitely organized as part of the Nebraska field. In 1905 the membership of the Quarter was reported two hundred and ninety-six. It was through the work of Herbert Mott that the work in Denver Quarter began its rapid development. Other efficient workers lead in its further development.

(39) Nebraska Friend, November 1905, p. 2.

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Reports were received the same year of the visits to various meetings, of one of our former missionaries. The resulting total contributions from the Association meetings was over one hundred and seventy dollars (\$170.00). Most of the monthly meetings reported missionary societies. (40)

The Central City Meeting showed remarkable advance in membership, due to the increasing success of the College and the opportunities it offered for young people. (41) Theodore Foxworthy, a graduate from Nebraska Central College, returned to Nebraska after some further preparation and took the pastorate work at Hanna Meeting. (42)

In 1906 the young Friends of Central City Meeting organized a Sunday School just east of their city. A year later it was reported as being kept up very successfully. (43).

## VII. Nebraska Central College.

Nebraska Central College was the vital center of interest for Nebraska Friends from the time of its establishment in 1899. A survey of the early work of Friends in Nebraska would be quite incomplete without some record of the development of the College.

The building was cleaned, repaired, furnished and opened for school in the fall of 1899. Joseph Phelps, one of the newly convinced Friends at Central City, built on the College section a dormitory for men. This building, Phelps Hall, was ready for occupation that first fall.

The first year's faculty was composed of nine members with D. Riley Haworth, B.A., from Payville College, East Tennessee, as President. (44) In the curriculum one year of college work was offered. Most of the courses were in academy work, with a preparative course for those below academic standing but who wished to further their education. The total enrollment for the year was one hundred and twenty-eight, divided

(40) Nebraska Friend, October 1905, p. 5.

(41) Nebraska Friend, May 1905, p. 7.

(42) Nebraska Friend, February 1906, p. 5.

(44) Nebraska Friend, September 1899, p. 1.

as follows: College two, academy thirty, grammar sixty-nine and specials twenty-seven. (44) "Special students" referred to those who took the commercial course, which proved to be one of the strongest departments that first year. There were three graduates from the Academy that year.

In telling of his experiences during those early years of the College, D. Riley Haworth writes, "Mr. Shelton bought and gave to me a horse and buggy, with which to canvass for students. And so through heat and cold, sunshine and rain, I drove hundreds of miles across the prairies of mid-Nebraska in search of prospective students. I remember one late fall day, probably November, I had driven in the open buggy down southwest of Central City to see a family about sending their children to school. In the afternoon, as I was returning, a norther came sweeping across the plain, the thermometer dropped about forty degrees, the sleet blow into my face, and by the time I reached the College I had developed a very bad case of neuritis in my face. I was propped up in a big chair by a roaring fire and for two hours friends worked with large cloths basking the neuritis out of my face. I had never before had an experience either with neuritis or with a Nebraska norther, but I learned to always go prepared for any and all kinds of weather and sudden changes". (45) There were many necessary experiments in all of the work of organizing and classifying students and faculty that first year. One girl enrolled and after one week returned to the office saying, "You were right. I'm not ready for College work. I want to unroll." (46) By the end of the year the work was nicely settled into a smoothly running system.

Again quoting from D. Riley Haworth, "The tuition was small and the endowment was nothing so the faculty income was meagre. Taken in all, the faculty was a good one and was very popular with the students and the people." (47) The plan for the salaries of the faculty was very unique. The teachers in the regular courses received all of the tuition money, out of which they paid all of the running expenses as fuel, supplies, etc. The remainder was divided among them in proportion to an estimated salary schedule. The tuition was only Twenty-five Dollars (\$25.00) per student for the whole year. The special teachers, as music and commercial, paid all their own expenses and kept the receipts from the special fees charged for their work. One could never accuse that faculty

(44) Nebraska Friend, July 1900, p. 3.

(45) Haworth, D. Riley, Letter to present writer, December 30, 1926.



of working for salary only. They were indeed motivated by a real concern for the education of young Friends. Nebraska Central College has never lost that wonderful spirit with its emphasis on the fullest development of the lives of boys and girls and on the future progress of the principles of Friends.

There was good cooperation between the community in general and the College. The College faculty were entertained by the Central City teachers. The business men of Central City gave one hundred and fifty dollars (\$150.00) to place a five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) insurance policy on the College building. (46)

The second year the College and Academy departments doubled in enrollment. Fourteen graduated from the Academy. The Commencement exercises consisted in orations given by each graduating student. Samuel L. Haworth, then pastor at Central City, gave the Baccalaureate sermon. (47)

D. Riley Haworth resigned as President at the end of the second year and D. E. Gilbert took his place. In the fall of 1902, Samuel L. Haworth was made President. There was a gain of fifty-eight in the enrollment that year and the fourth year of College work was offered. In general, courses were offered in Classical Languages, Science, English and Literature, Normal training, Bible, Commercial, Music and Public Speaking.

The first graduating class from the College Department had two members and received their degrees in the spring of 1902. That year brought the graduates of the Academy to an even forty. Four full years of college work were offered regularly from that time on. The grammar school work was dropped, having served its original purpose of bridging the gap for some who were older and had not prepared for possible advanced work.

In 1906-'07, money was raised and a brick dormitory was erected for the girls. It was two stories high with sixteen rooms and was opened to the students April 10th, 1907. The Twenty-four Hundred Dollars (\$2400.00) necessary for the building was raised entirely within the Nebraska Church and Educational Association territory.

Thus the College advanced and developed, doing a great piece of work for Nebraska Friends. Students from the college went out into the work as teachers and pastors. Today,

(46) Nebraska Friend, July 1900, p. 3.

(47) Nebraska Friend, April 1901, p. 51.

some of the leaders in Nebraska Yearly Meeting and the College are these very young people of early Nebraska Central College days. The College was terribly handicapped financially, as has been shown. The temporary nature of the organization and provision back of the College were not conducive to confidence on the part of those who could give permanent financial help. The need for a strong centralized support back of the College, such as a Yearly Meeting could offer, was felt to be a necessity for the future of the College.

#### VIII. Establishment of Nebraska Yearly Meeting.

The need for some change in policy had become very evident as the Association met in 1906. The Nebraska Church and Educational Association had not proven sufficient to meet the entire need. The advisability of organizing for a new Yearly Meeting was the subject of an intensely interesting discussion. The membership of Friends in the Association had grown steadily but not as rapidly as at first. The lack of centralization of the work was a deep concern with many, as a hindering influence to the work.

Reviewing briefly the discussion, we find such arguments as these. Nebraska needed a Yearly Meeting. The one great objection was that they were not strong enough, but would they gain strength by waiting? Many felt that they would not, for several reasons. Iowa Yearly Meeting had only a missionary interest in Nebraska. The building and support of the work there for in Nebraska had been accomplished mostly by their own efforts. Nebraska was too far from Iowa to create any great personal interest. Iowa Yearly Meeting had all that they could do effectively in supporting their own pastors and evangelists so that they could not be expected to do more for Nebraska. "The central nucleus of Quakerism is her educational institutions. Iowa Yearly Meeting must stand back of Penn College. We could not wish it otherwise for her strength depends on Penn. That takes all of her energy and strength and we cannot expect help from her. Just so, Quakerism in the Middle West depends on Nebraska Central College. It must have the united support of the nation it would serve if Nebraska Central takes her place among her sister colleges. The College has a good start and no debt. The Nebraska Church and Educational Association, and individual responsibility have carried it so far. The Nebraska work needs centralization of pastoral and evangelistic forces. A Yearly Meeting would attract Western Friends to our section. The very life of the College is in peril and demands this step." (43)

(43) Nebraska Friend, May 1906, p. 2-5.

On the other side, such argument was presented that Nebraska could not support her work without the leadership of Iowa Yearly Meeting as she had always had. It was quite generally agreed that a Nebraska Yearly Meeting should be the aim for development, but some felt it should be delayed. This was considered in the light of the fact that at that present time the monthly meetings were losing strength and that leaders had too large fields to cover. The work demanded united backing. It was too far from the base of supplies. The Nebraska young people, potential future leaders for the work, needed education and they could not afford to go to Penn. (43)

After a full discussion, the proposal to apply for a new Yearly Meeting was sanctioned without a dissenting vote. "No one felt exultant over it, but all felt the great responsibility that would be on us. Encouraging words from our Iowa Friends greatly cheered us on this occasion." (54) At this session, Twenty-two Hundred Dollars (\$2200.00) toward a College Endowment Fund was subscribed.

Nebraska Central College was incorporated June 1906 and the property deeded to it by the Association. The trustees appointed were: Jesse A. Davis, Orissa K. Stephons and Turner Able for one year, A. C. Johnson, Belle Kellogg and A. E. Hadley for two years, B. W. Townsend, S. S. Turnagen, and Marley W. Moore for three years, W. D. Gibson, Cynthia Hiett, and Dr. S. L. Hull for four years, and Josiah S. Joyce, Elijah Roberts and George W. Ayres for five years. (54)

The application for a new yearly meeting, presented at the next Iowa Yearly Meeting assembly in 1908, met with entire approval. The step then needed only the sanction of the Five Years' Meeting which would be held next in 1907.

Herbert Mott was sent to the Five Years' Meeting as a representative from Iowa and also to present the request for a Nebraska Yearly Meeting. After due consideration, their approval was granted and a committee was named to go to Nebraska.

The October 1907 issue of the Nebraska Friend printed on the first page this simple but profound statement: A special telegram was received October 19, 1907 stating, "Nebraska Yearly Meeting authorized today-opened in June." This issue was held up a few days for this report.

(43) Nebraska Friend, May 1906, p. 2-5.

(54) Nebraska Friend, June 1906, p. 5.

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Much interest was shown for the new work from all over Quakerdom. The Evangelical Friend says, "It will be an unusual privilege to attend the opening for a new yearly meeting." (49) A minute was read in London Yearly Meeting of the coming event and a special message of greeting was sent from that body. (50)

Thus it was that on June 4, 1908, at 10:00 A.M., the group assembled for the opening of Nebraska Yearly Meeting. On the investigating committee from the Five Years' Meeting came Allen Jay, David Hadley, Eliza Armstrong, John P. Hanson and Eliza H. Carey. Another committee of five represented Iowa Yearly Meeting. They were A. M. W. Hamblen, J. W. Stribling, Laurana Terrell, Viola Smith and Zeno H. Dean. Among the other visitors of note were Charles S. Winslow from Indiana Yearly Meeting, Caleb H. Lewis from Wilmington Yearly Meeting, Aaron McKinney from Kansas Yearly Meeting, Alfred Newson and wife, Susanna Newson, and Mary Russell from Dublin Yearly Meeting, James Pean and Charles Webbotts from California Yearly Meeting and Bunji Hida from Japan Yearly Meeting. (51)

Friends in South Dakota and Colorado also asked to become a part of Nebraska Yearly Meeting so the territory covered these three states. (51)

Thus was Nebraska Yearly Meeting established, composed of seven Quarters, thirty-four Monthly Meetings and about eighteen hundred and seventy-two members. (52) It was the result of the diligent labors of faithful workers and the conscious blessing and leading of God. It was the first and only Yearly Meeting ever established by the Five Years' Meeting of Friends in America so far.

(49) Evangelical Friend, June 4, 1908, p. 366.

(50) British Friend, June 1908, p. 163.

(51) American Friend, June 28, 1908, p. 408.

(52) Minutes of Nebraska Yearly Meeting 1908, p. 18.